

# ***A walking tour of Roskilde's springs***



Roskilde Domkirke

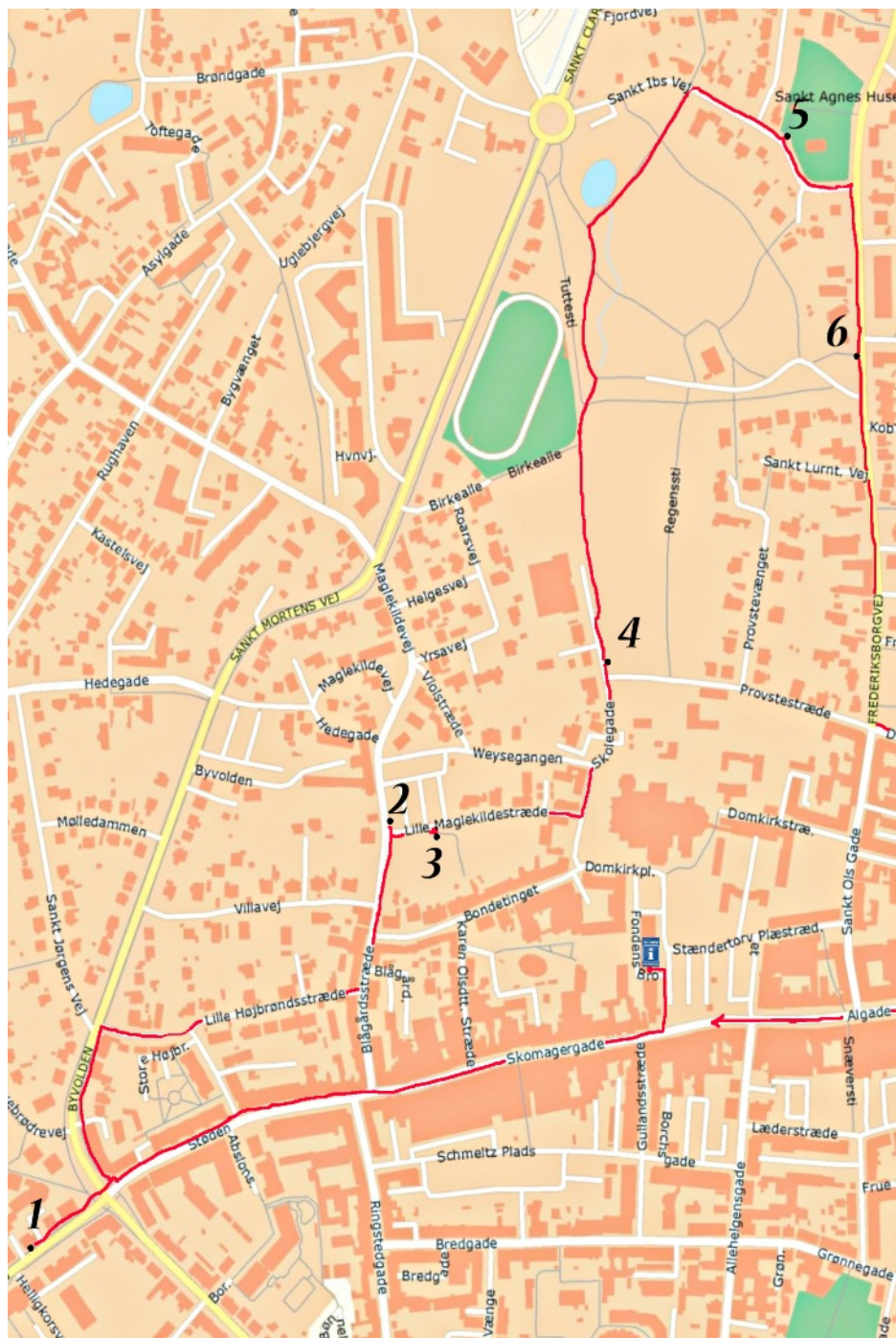


Sanct Hans kilde

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NORDEA  
FONDEN





- (nr.1) Helligkors Kilde
- (nr.2) Maglekilde
- (nr.3) Rektorkilden
- (nr.4) Skt. Hans Kilde
- (nr.5) Skt. Ibs Kilde
- (nr.6) Skt. Gertruds Kilde
- (nr.7) Klosterkilden
- (nr.8) Lovise Kilde



start/end

**kontakt**

**Roskilde-Egnens  
Turistforening**

**mail@roskildeturist.dk**

**www.roskildeturist.dk**



## A walking tour of Roskilde's springs

“There are few places on this earth which can demonstrate so many and so prodigious springs, as Roskilde. Since Arild's time, the town has been famed for its many springs”. This was how Roskilde was referred to in 1832.

At one time Roskilde had 12 named springs, of which eight remain, a figure that puts Roskilde at first place outside the Alps. In addition to the eight named springs, there are also springs by the fjord and around the town's parks – over 20 in total.

The water in Roskilde has always been regarded as special. The various springs all had different purposes, and three were considered sacred. If you were sick and drank from them, it was believed you would become well. Three springs were primarily used for washing and bleaching clothes. The springs were also used to operate mills and as a water supply for both people and animals. There were wells around the city, but the dunghill could often be situated next to the well, so it was considered better to collect fresh water from the springs.



**From the tourist information office, turn right and walk down Skomagergade and Støden. From Støden, cross the street to Helligkorsvej, past Gimle and continue until:**

### Helligkors Kilde

(no.1) This was Roskilde's best-known sacred spring, and there was an annual

fair here on Skt. Hans Aften (*Midsummer's Eve*) right up until the 1830s, though it was said more spirits and beer was drank than water.

In 1729, King Frederik IV was taken ill. The doctors were baffled, but suggested the king be given water from the old sacred spring in Roskilde. Water was brought and the king soon recovered. From that point on, water was regularly collected from the spring for the Royal Court. For example, at a 10-person lunch on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1771, eight bottles of Roskilde spring water were consumed.

The spring water was supplied to the Royal Danish Court until around 1847.

In 1905, a monument designed by Professor Jacob Kornerup was moved to mark the spot where what was probably Roskilde's best known spring had stood.

The monument is made from travertine limestone. The spring water in Roskilde is extremely rich in calcium. When water comes into contact with the air, calcium is deposited. Every one of the town's medieval churches were built from travertine, as were the existing cathedral's predecessors.



**Return to the corner of Byvolden and Støden.  
Walk a short way down Byvolden and turn to the  
right and walk up a small set of stairs.**



To the west, there were originally three springs: *Store Blegdams Kilde*, *Højbrøndskilden* and *Helligkors Kilde*. All three ultimately be-

came part of the public water supply when Roskilde established its public waterworks in 1880. *Højbrøndskilden* was located in this area. The spring is closed off, but remains active.



**Walk out onto Lille Højbrøndstræde to Blågårdsstræde.**

**Turn to the left and walk down Maglekildebakken. On the right side is the outlet from:**



### **Maglekilde (no. 2)**

The outlet has the shape of a lion's head, but in fact it is the water god Neptune, who lifts his jaws so the water can run freely. "Magle" means great and this is, and always has been, Roskilde's most plentiful spring, able to provide 43,000 litres of water an hour.

**Walk a short way back to Lille Maglekilde Stræde and over to the 6-sided 'spring house'. Here is the source of the Maglekilde spring.**



Most of the travertine was deposited next to *Maglekilde*. There was a large quarry here in the Middle Ages. Once it had been more or less mined, water from the spring was led into the quarry and Maglekilde Mill Dam was formed. In addition to Maglekilde Mill, the spring water was able to operate a further four mills.

In 1846, a curative spa and a soft drinks factory were built. The spa was never successful however, and was soon abandoned. The complex was owned by both private and public interests before it was torn down in 1972, along with the soft drinks factory's old building, although production had anyway moved to other sites many years before. In 1974, the spring was restored and listed as a protected site. The existing 'spring house' was built in 1927 in connection with a reorganisation of the soft drinks factory.

One of the few traces that remains of the spa is a 'lake mermaid' (*søjomfrue*) on the roof of

the spring house. Her tail ends in a collection of leaves, while in her hand she holds a bulrush. She is the guardian of freshwater.



**Walk over to the green area directly opposite the spring house. In to the right is:**

**Rektorkilden (no. 3)**

The spring was situated in a garden which belonged to the rector's house at *Katedralskolen* School and was therefore a private spring. Rector Hauch was so thrilled with the birth of his granddaughter, that he named the spring *Kirsten's Kilde*.

**Walk further along Lille Maglekilde Stræde up to the square, Domkirkepladsen and then turn left. Walk past Oddfellows Palace and further down Skolegade. Upon your right is:**



**Skt. Hans Kilde (no. 4)**

The spring was considered sacred and is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, which made it especially popular on Skt. Hans day. If you were very sick, it was advised that you stay overnight by the spring on Skt. Hans Night. The next morning, you should drink from the water while praying for good health. You should then smash your cup and throw the pieces into the spring's well.

In 1834, the spring's outlet gained its current appearance and the well, which is situated outside

the driveway on Provstevænget, was excavated. It was 11 metres deep and had a cover with shards of 6 metres.

After being repaired in 1969, the spring was made a protected site.



**Walk further to Tuttesti. To the right the remains of the town quarter that burnt down in 1443 can be seen. The foundations of the church of Skt. Hans Kirke can be seen in the field. A**

**little further along to the left, where there is now a playing field, was the site of Skt. Clara Kloster (St. Clare's Convent). Go into:**

**Byparken.**

Here, a small stream and a lake have been reproduced. It is water from *Skt. Hans Kilde* and from





*Maglekilde* in particular, which bubbles up through the millstone.

From the lake, the water is led under the roads to the green area along Skt. Clara Vej. In the stream, the water runs into the garden of the Museum Lake at the Viking Ship Museum.



**Walk alongside the stream, past the lake and straight forward to Skt. Ibs Vej. Turn right, and a little further ahead is Skt. Ibs Kirke (St Ibs Church), of which only the nave remains. To the left of the entrance to the churchyard is:**

### **Skt. Ibs Kilde (no. 5)**

Both the church and the spring were dedicated to the apostle James the Great, who is buried in Santiago de Compostela Cathedral in northern Spain. St. Ibs Church was included as one of the points of prayer on the pilgrim route from Scandinavia to Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela. The spring was thought to be sacred, perhaps because of the ochre coloured and slightly greasy water.

**Walk past the church and to the right on Frederiksborgvej towards the town centre. Just past the junction with Klostervang is:**



### **Skt. Gertruds Kilde (no. 6)**

Gertrude was the abbess of a convent in Nivelles, where she took care of the sick and destitute as well as travellers. A St. Gertrude hostel would often be located just outside the town walls.

The spring has taken many different forms. It disappeared from May 1934 to summer 1985, when it suddenly sprang back to life. There was so much water that it was decided to give the spring a new form. In dry summers it can be necessary to recirculate the water.

**Go further along Frederiksborgvej. At the junction, turn left onto Dronning Margrethes Vej until the entrance to Marie Park on the left. A short distance ahead to the right is:**

### **Klosterkilden (no. 7)**

The spring belonged to *Sortebrødre Kloster* (Blackfriars Monastery), which was located roughly where Roskilde Convent is now situated. As of 1832 there were three large springs and a further 30



in the surrounding area. The oldest picture of the current grotto and its spring dates from 1849.

The spring was primarily used for drinking water. As recently as 1928, water was collected for daily household use by the residents in a small house nearby. The spring water also ran five windmills, before being released into the fjord.

The grotto and its spring were completely restored in 1985 so that they looked more or less as they had done in 1849. It can provide 2000 litres of water per day and is a protected site.

**Go further along to Klostermarken and follow the path to the left. Along the way you will pass part of Roskilde's fortifications. Walk past the first of the lakes, which were once carp lakes for Blackfriars Monastery and ahead to the amphitheatre. To the right is:**



### **Lovise Kilde (no. 8)**

The spring once lay on the border between Klostermarken, which was *Det adelige Jomfrukloster* park (The Convent for Noble Maidens) and an open area, which was also owned by the convent and which Roskilde Municipality purchased in the 1930s and used as the site for the amphitheatre.

It was one of the 'noble maidens' from *Det adelige Jomfrukloster*, Lovise von Wimpfen, who allowed the spring to be framed in a primitive stone circle in front of a small bank of earth. On the right were bushes and the water ran out of a spout in the stone circle, down onto a carved-out stone. Over the spout stood the name, which the noble maiden had given the spring: her own: *Lovise Kilde*. She died in 1872 after having lived at the convent for 49 years.



The spring was restored in 1917 and, in 1943, began getting its water from Roskilde Waterworks. In 1983 it became apparent that the spring had been revived and it was restored, the millstone replacing the plant from 1917. In dry summers it can be necessary to recirculate the water.

**Walk through the park and up to Dronning Margrethes Vej. Turn left to Roskilde Library, continue up to the stairs to the left through the Biblioteksgangen and out onto Algade.**