

Värmland's fire history

The aim of the Club is to show the development of firefighting and fire safety within the County of Värmland. We explain the many connections from the past to the modern organisations and show a steady thrive to reduce fires. Our list of fires and prevention actions starts around year 1400 and has 2100 dated notes where we can follow fires and precautions side by side. This shows a development in many small steps driven by kings, governments, insurance companies and by new techniques in both prevention and fire fighting.

We also illustrate the influences in all of Sweden which have come from our county. The drama of fire has also been used by some of our famous authors (Semla Lagerlöf, Gustav Fröding). The Club reminds visitors of the fire risks and the need for fire safety.

Storfors Fire House – Fire Museum since 1998

The old Fire House in Storfors was built in 1897 by the industry and was used as a fire station until 1973. It is typical for the period when the industries got their own well-equipped fire-brigades which also served the local community.



John Ericsson (1803-1890)

1803 The great inventor was born in Långban, Värmland, Sweden

1817 Participated in the building of the Göta Kanal at the age of 14 years

1829 Made the very **first Steam Fire Engine in London**. He made it together with Mr Braitwaite.

1829 A locomotive of his design, The Novelty, participated in a competition with Stephenson's Rocket

1836 Patent on a double rotation propeller

1840 Moved to USA and **constructed a Steam Fire Engine**. Won the first prize and a gold-medal.

1861 The American Congress order one ship of the Monitor type

1862 The Monitor was ready to sail



1889 Died

1890 The corpse brought to Stockholm onboard the cruiser Baltimore

1890 Buried in Filipstad, Värmland

Alfred Nobel (1833-1896)

In Zurich, in the end of 1880:s Nobel constructed a yacht in light metal, the very first boat made in aluminium. His aim was to create a fire-safe yacht. He suggested better smoke ventilation in theatres and safer theatre ramp lights. By several accidents with nitro-glycerine and dynamites he was well aware of explosion risks. Those accidents also resulted in new laws both for transport and industry in 1868 and 1869.

Alfred Nobel lived and worked at Björkborn in Karlskoga (Värmland) the last three years of his life. Alfred Nobel came to Karlskoga in 1894 when he purchased the Bofors mill. And it was here at a local assizes that his will was ratified and the foundation of the Nobel Trust was laid.

Karlstad

In 1891, in Karlstad, a system was introduced which combined fire and police in the same organisation. It is known as the Karlstad-model.

Town Fires

All houses in the towns was built with wooden frames and narrow streets so there were several town fires. In 1694 Filipstad lost the town charter since there was not timber enough for both mining and for rebuilding Filipstad. The last and greatest town fire in Karlstad took place in 1865 when 237 out of the 241 large houses were burnt and 4700 people lost their homes. Kristinehamn has had three town fires, the last in 1893 when 200 buildings were on fire.

Fire-Support in early laws (brandstod)

Already in the 1100-century a form of help had to be given after fires. The law rules of the Swedish provinces stated an obligation to help those who had suffered from fires in the countryside. The fire-support should help the misfortunate yeoman to a fast and new start of the activities. In 1350 the different laws were brought together into a new law, by the King Magnus Eriksson, which included the fire-support.

That medieval system had to be replaced by something else and the first local "fire-support-union" was established in 1687. In 1843 the insurance company "Länsförsäkringar Värmland" was formed covering the whole county and offered fire insurance in a modern sense. It still exists.

LM Ericsson (1846-1926)

Lars Magnus Ericsson, born in Värmskog and founder of the Ericsson telecom industries which early developed different kind of fire alarm systems.