

STORA HÄLSINGEGÅRDARS VÄG

Edsbyn: industry and folk tradition



EDSBYN IS A LIVELY, free-thinking industrial town and the hub of Ovanåker Municipality. Before the industrial age, Edsbyn was a farming community like any other. It was initially part of Alfta parish, but the parish was divided in 1639 and Ovanåker, where the chapel stood, became the ecclesiastical centre.

This was not, however, where the town came to grow; it grew in Edsbyn, which was the biggest village in the new parish and home to a quarter of its farms. There were well-established tra-

Trolin's shop.



de routes towards the coast, inland towards Norway and south towards Falun, and Edsbyn became a crossroads. So it was here that craft and commerce began to expand. In 1832, Daniel Trolin, a trader, opened a general store in Edsbyn. It was the only one of its kind within a 70-kilometre radius. People travelled long distances to buy items such as wallpaper from Trolin's in Edsbyn. This wallpaper remains in the old Gammalgården building in the Fågelsjö Heritage Centre in northern Hälsingland. The first village centre grew around Trolin's shop.

The new forestry industry and the life-giving Voxna river influenced the location of industries from the mid-1850s onwards. A sawmill, steam-powered sawmill, saw frame factory, ski factory and timber processing factory are examples of early industries that are the roots of much of modern industry in Edsbyn.

When the railway tracks were being laid from the coast towards Dalarna and a railway station was being planned, Edsbyn was the obvious choice. The village centre began to form around the station.

Master builder Olof Johansson

Olof Johansson (1867–1933) has been called 'the man who built Edsbyn'. He left his mark everywhere in Edsbyn and in its surrounding villages and district, in shops, banks, homes, schools, religious meeting halls, cowsheds and farmhouses. He was also an industrialist, farmer, local historian, liberal politician, parliamentarian and religious leader. Professor Fredric Bedoire wrote that Johansson probably regarded everything as parts of



The farmyard at Mårtes, with the vast red buildings.



There is a fine collection of traditional artefacts at the farm.

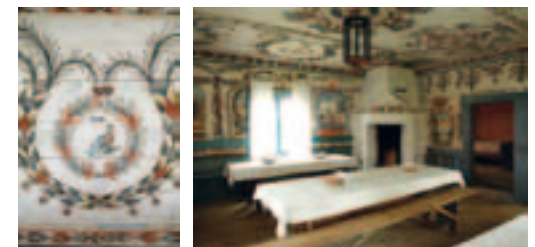
the same whole: 'to build a new community, with strong belief in progress, while keeping respect for the folk culture that was in the process of being broken down'.

The Mårtes farm

Mårtes farm is Ovanåker Heritage Association's heritage centre. It contains buildings and objects collected by the Association since it was formed in 1915. The farm was named Mårtes because of the magnificent farmhouse that was moved here in 1921 from Mårtes farm, which was on the opposite side of the road (now Hembydsgatan street). The farm is most famous for its Baroque-style 18th century paintings in the 'men's cottage', painted by Hälsingland painter Jonas Hertman. Mårtes is open

to the public during the summer months. The Heritage Association also runs Edsbyn Museum, open all year round.

The men's cottage with its colourful paintings by Jonas Hertman.



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