

# Discover the Old Town of Kristinehamn

Follow the signs for an insight into the history of the town.



The map on the back page shows where the signs can be found!



Kristinehamns kommun

Photo: C. G. Rosenberg.  
Kolorerad av Jon Magnusson.

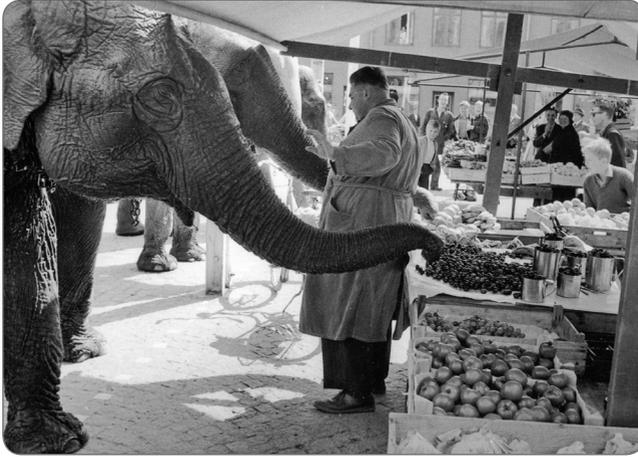


The historian and author Christopher O'Regan inaugurated the Old Town signs during the 2016 Kristinehamn Culture Festival. Photo: Veronica Gustafsson

## The cultural history of Kristinehamn

It is important to understand the past if we are to understand the present. The Old Town project focusses on the cultural history of Kristinehamn. This system of signs is a part of this project, and comprises nine signs that document the history of the town in different ways. The text and images provide insights into the environments and events that were important to the development of Kristinehamn.

This brochure contains a selection of images and texts that appear on the signs. The map on the back page shows where the signs are located.



Interested customers pay a surprise visit to the well-known market stallholder John Lundell. Photo: Mats Holmstrand

## I. Södra Torget – The Southern Square

The market place of Bro, which later became Kristinehamn, received town rights in 1642. This was mainly due to its location on Lake Vänern, and is the reason why the town has a vessel, known as a “boeier”, in its coat of arms.

The Southern Square has been the town centre ever since. During the 1700s and 1800s, the “Fasting Market” was held for three weeks each year. People came from all over Sweden to visit it for business reasons but also for pleasure. Contacts were made and contracts drawn up, including those that affected the world price of iron at that time.

The pump in the square was a central meeting place in the town. Water was taken from the well, but its quality deteriorated over time. The town’s first water pipe was therefore laid down in the mid-1800s. Water was brought to the square from the Kullkällan spring through hollowed-out tree trunks. Many people took their drinking water from here as late as in the 1900s. Maybe it was this pump that inspired the Swedish poet Gustaf Fröding to compose the poem “Torgpumpen” (The Pump in the Square)!



The two Canadian poplar trees known as “Adam and Eve” outside the hotel Stadshotellet form a gateway into Gamla Kyrkogatan. Postcard.

## 2. Gamla Kyrkogatan – Old Church Street

In 1858, when the new church was complete, Kyrkogatan (Church Street) was renamed Gamla Kyrkogatan (Old Church Street). There have always been shops, tradesmen and impressive buildings here, such as Hasselbladsgården and Stadshotellet, as well as Juhlinska gården with its beautiful garden. It was also where the Canadian poplar trees known as “Adam and Eve” could be found: they stood here for 200 years before they were removed in 2015 due to old age.

The red building closest to the Varnan river was built after the fire in 1893, and was called The Bazaar. Today, it accommodates businesses, as it did then, but also a café and a ceramics workshop. The hotel was built in the 1870s and became Stadshotellet, the town’s main hotel, when it was bought by the town in 1909. The hotel was owned by the town for over 100 years. The building on the site before the hotel was built was relocated to the street Tullportsgatan and is known locally as Träslottet.

The normally very quiet Gamla Kyrkogatan livened up immensely when students graduated from the high school at the end of term.



Gustaf Fröding as a boy, holding a book. Maybe he was reading Sir Walter Scott, one of his favourite authors. Photo: unknown. Coloured in by Jon Magnusson.

### **3. Nya Kyrkogatan – New Church Street**

Nya Kyrkogatan was previously called Hovslagaregatan (Farrier Street). The street changed its name in 1858 when the new church was completed. This is where Frödinggården, the house owned by the Fröding family in the 1870s, was located. It was here that the poet Gustaf Fröding spent his early childhood.

The ship owner Axel Broström, who founded Broströmskoncernen, lived on the other side of the street. His son, Dan, who was born here, developed the company into the world-leading shipping company Göteborgsrederi.

The town's biggest wooden building, Assembléhuset (The Assembly House), lay where Nya Kyrkogatan met Assemblégatan. Built in the 1700s, it was a very important place for business and pleasure alike. Up to 300 people could dance here when a ball was held. The building burnt down in 1955.

Part of Nya Kyrkogatan was destroyed in the great fire of 1893. After restoration, it returned to being an important and lively commercial street. The town centre was modernised in the 1970s and 1980s: new facades were constructed, and the new Assemblégatan was created. This changed the town's 17th century street system for the first time.



The Varnan river, viewed from the site of the old church, in the latter part of the year 1800. The court-house is visible in the background. Artist: W. L. Rydberg.  
Hand-coloured by Jon Magnusson.

## 4. Trädgårdsgatan – Garden street

Trädgårdsgatan was once called Prästgatan (Vicar Street), because the vicarage was located here. The footbridge over the Varnan river was used by the vicar and churchgoers to reach the old wooden church. The footbridge was replaced in 1908 by a bridge painted green, which gave it the nickname Gröna bron (The Green Bridge).

The area around this bridge is where the composer Lille Bror Söderlundh played as a child. Nils Ferlin, who was to become a famous poet, also lived here at around that time. Later on, Söderlundh set many of Ferlin's poems to music.

The park Nordenfeldtparken stretches out along the river. This area was donated to the town by Mr. C. H. Nordenfeldt, the mayor. The park also acted as fire protection in earlier times because it created an open space between the many wooden buildings.

The house known as Grundelsgården was where the local newspaper Nya Kristinehamns Posten had its offices and printing works up until 1928. The handicraft workers' house Blombergsgården was one of the few buildings that survived the great fire of 1893. It was relocated here in the 1970s from Södra Staketgatan.



Tennis, a pastime enjoyed by the wealthy. Date: around 1900. Photo: unknown.  
Hand-coloured by Jon Magnusson.

## 5. Norra Torget – The Northern Square

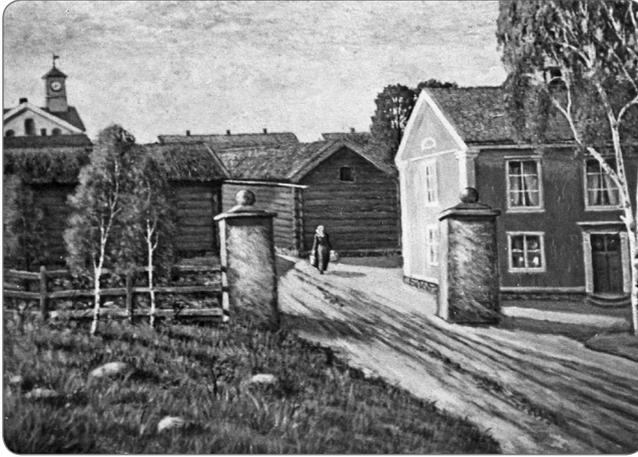
Norra Torget used to be called Spannmålstorget (The Grain Square). It has always been an important meeting place for the townspeople, even before it was paved in the 1840s.

The park Severinoparken connects the three parks Vågparken, Rådhusparken and Nordenfeldtsparken together, and is named after the district judge Mr. Severin Löwenhielm. It was on his initiative that trees were planted along both sides of the river.

Rådhusparken is where the sculpture “Daphne”, the work of the artist Eric Rafael Rådberg from Kristinehamn, can be found.

The collection box “Lusseasken” used to be placed at the Kungsbron bridge. It was emptied on the 10th December every year, which is Lucia (Lusse) day. The money was distributed between needy families who worked in the shipping industry.

Along the northern side of the square lay some of the town’s finest houses, such as Geijersgården and Vågmästaregården. Royalty spent the night at Vågmästaregården when they travelled between Stockholm and Oslo.



Norrtull in the first half of the 1800s. Artist: unknown.

## 6. Norrtull – North Toll

The name Norrtull and Tullportsplan (Toll Port Place) go back to the time when customs fees were charged for goods that were being brought into towns. This fee was abolished in 1810, after which it was free to transport products to market places in towns.

The first trains entered Kristinehamn in the 1850s on the narrow-gauge railway track. They were pulled by horses along the last part of the track: from the street Västerlånggatan to The Inner Harbour and Järnvågen, the Iron Scales used to weigh iron. The horses were replaced in 1858 by steam engines, which meant that more goods and people could be transported by train.

Many buildings from the 1800s remain in the area around Norrtull, The Court House, The Bank and the offices of the railway company Mora-Vänerns Järnväg.



The first steam engine produced by the local company Christinehamns Mekaniska Verkstad was called "Vaulunder". It was sold to the town of Köping when the railway track Sjöändsbanan was no longer used, and trafficked the line between Köping-Uttersberg under the name of "Hedströmmen". Photo: unknown. Hand-coloured by Jon Magnusson.

## 7. Nedre Station – The Lower Station

The new railway station was completed in 1862. It meant that the town now had modern tracks, turn-tables and engine sheds. Railway traffic was very important to the town at this time. The old track on the street Västerlånggatan was abandoned and a new one was laid that lead to the new harbour instead.

One of the steam engines that was used often, "Vaulunder", was built by the local company Christinehamns Mekaniska Verkstad. Although they made mostly trains, they also made boats and, later on, they came to focus on turbines and propellers. These products were eventually used throughout the world.

West of the station lies the old industrial area. It was here that Lars Albin Larsson started up a small workshop at the beginning of the 1900s. He invented the "Albin pump" and Erik, his son, constructed the company's first boat motor. The Albin workshops grew and became to be sizeable and important places of work in the town.



The warehouse Brännvinsmagasinet dominated Fisktorget (The Fish Square) for a long time. Photo: C. G. Rosenberg. Hand-coloured by Jon Magnusson.

## 8. Inre Hamnen – The Inner Harbour

Inre Hamnen has always been of importance to the development of the town. It was here that iron was brought from the mining districts in Värmland. The iron was weighed on the giant scales before being loaded onto barges in the shallow waters of the Varnan river. It was taken out to vessels tied up in the Varnumsviken bay, which then transported it across Lake Vänern. The river was dredged in the mid-1800s so that larger vessels could enter the actual harbour.

In the 1860s the railway, and much of the trade associated with it, were relocated to the new harbour. The Inner Harbour was turned into a green area: the park Vågparken.

The Nordenfeldtska house, built in 1771, lies close to the Inner Harbour. It is the town's oldest house and is believed to be on the site of Duke Karl's Bro Gård. The house is built of stone, and has therefore survived the many fires that afflicted the town.

It was at this wharf that Axel Broström's very first vessel, "Mathilda", had its berthing place. Broströmskoncernen was later to become one of Sweden's largest and most important shipping companies.



The vessel "Baltzar von Platen" from Gothenburg is tied up at Fiskertorget sometime in the 1920s. Photo: unknown. Hand-coloured by Jon Magnusson.

## 9. Vågenkvarteret – The Scales Quarter

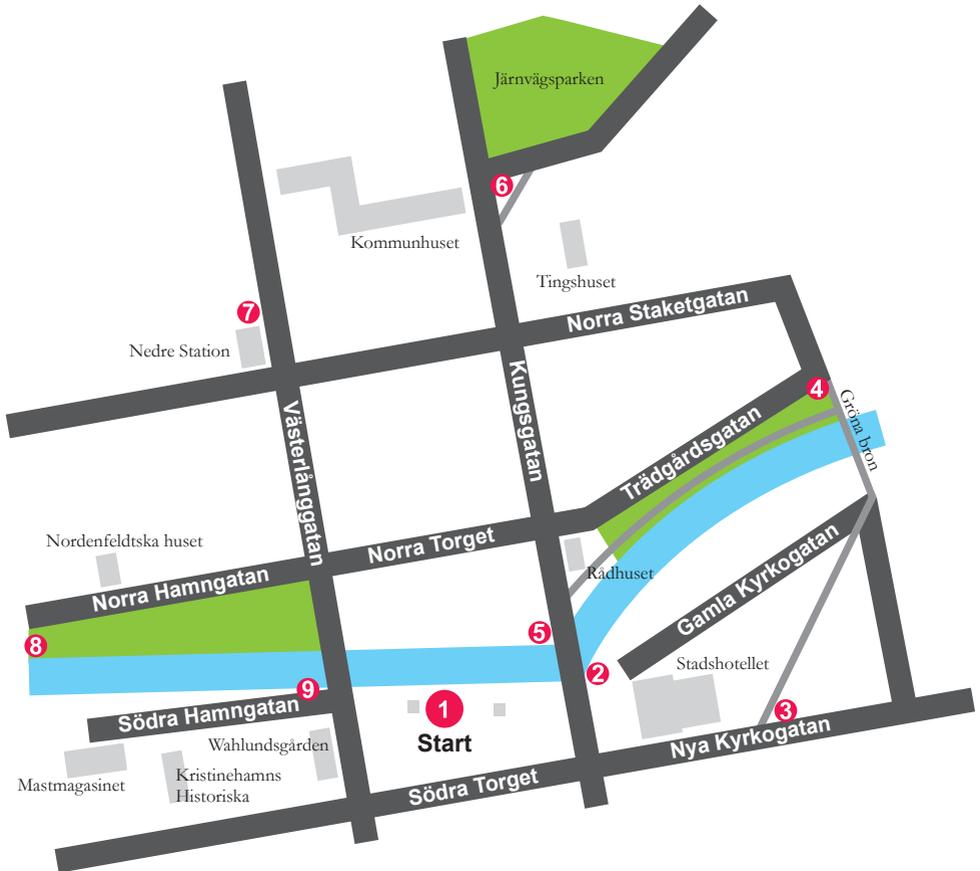
Vågenkvarteret formed the heart of the town for centuries. Shipping has dominated and shaped this area, and the Varnan river gave it life, pulse and character.

A railway track was laid over Vågbron (The Scales Bridge) when the railway company Christinehamn-Sjöändans Järnväg started up here in 1850. However, the trains were too heavy for the bridge and it eventually collapsed. It was replaced by a stone bridge in 1875, and still remains today.

The dominating building in the quarter is Wahlundsgården, which faces onto Södra torget. The house was built after the town fire of 1804. Its present design dates back to the mid-1800s and is the work of the mill-owner Gustaf Wahlund, who owned it at the time. The area is still characterised by older wooden buildings.

Today, the quarter is mainly a centre for cultural activity, and is where Kristinehamn's Image Archives can be found, along with art galleries, studios and artists busy at work.

**Map**  
The signs of the Old Town  
of Kristinehamn



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