

STORA HÄLSINGEGÅRDARS VÄG

Knåda at Roprabäcken

THE SASSMAN DISTRICT AND THE VILLAGE OF KNÅDA lie between the two lakes Ullungen and Vagnan. The Voxna river meanders gently through a network of lakes, wetlands and leafy groves which flood in the spring when the snow melts. Typical ancient farming country, with its fields, pastures and cowsheds, stretches away on both sides. The farms nestle against the edge of the wood, well-protected from the river's floods. The exceptions

Author Hans Lidman, pictured in 1951. He coined the term 'the singing valley'.



PHOTO STIGG ELVÉN

are Näs farm, which cuts a solitary figure in the middle of its pastures, and Hoppet farm, south of the river. These farmers built embankments to try to protect the farms from the annual floods. The interplay between nature and culture has helped get this area classified as one of national interest. A total of 150 species of bird have been found here, and author Hans Lidman has called the area 'the singing valley'. The old main road, which runs parallel to the south bank of the river, was renowned as one of Sweden's most beautiful roads as early as the mid-19th century. South of Knåda you will find Roprabäcken, which has been a river crossing for southbound travellers since time immemorial. Thanks to its location, Knåda was an early trading point, one to which farmers came from near and far and where one of Sweden's most famous marketplaces was established.

Knåda market

In the past, the markets were places where farmers sold the surplus from their farms and bought what they could not produce themselves. Knåda has been famous throughout the ages for its annual market. People congregated at Hans and Olpas farms for a few days on and around 20 January to buy, barter and socialise. Knåda market was a stop on the way of the regular winter trips made by the people of Hälsingland, Jämtland and other northern provinces to the towns of Falun, Kopparberget and Hedemora in Dalarna.

The Falun street Hälsingegårdsvägen (Hälsingland farm road) bears witness to these trading links. The markets were not only important for the farmers' economic situation; they



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The Jämtlanders arrive at Knåda market. Painting by Olof Nilsson.

were important for the rest of the population too. Maids and farmworkers went to the market to strike up contacts and buy goods. The market became a source of income for the farms in Knåda. Some farms provided overnight accommodation; others opened an inn or leased premises for magic shows and acrobatics; and in the middle of it all was the market street and market square.

Olof Nilsson painted many scenes from the Knåda market.



PHOTO OLOF JOHANSSON



PHOTO MARIA ENGBERG

The farms in Knåda nestle against the edge of the wood in the north.

By 1843, Knåda market had become so important that it was noted in calendars as a national trading market. This resulted in further expansion of the market, which reached its peak in 1850–1867, at the same time as a new age was dawning and Edsbyn was establishing itself as a new trade centre in the area.

The old market street in Knåda is now called Bodgatan, and is still a commercial street.

The farm Olpas, where the market once took place.

