



## Welcome to Vadstena Town Museum



The aim of this exhibition is to show everyday life in Vadstena within the whole context and ordinary people's history. Major institutions such as the abbey, the castle and the mental hospital have got their own museums in Town. The museum is run by Vadstena museum association with roots in the 1920's. In 1949 we were then offered the current museum building that consists of two parts: the older half is probably built in the 15th century, but no later than the beginning of the 16th century. Its original function is unclear. The plot and the stone house were sold in the 1550s by Arvid Guldsmid's (Goldsmith) heirs. It was owned somewhat later by the councilor Sven Knutsson Tailor, ancestor of the noble family Ödla (that means Lizard). The younger half, consisting of one room, was built in the first half of the 19th century. The building has among other things housed a bank before the Museum association took over the premises. The plot has one of the most prominent locations in the medieval Vadstena: near the town hall, at the city's only square.

## Room 1

### City dwellers with foreign background

#### Brothers Harder, traders

Henrik Harder, citizen of Vadstena and died in 1653, first married to Brita Broddesdotter, daughter of Mayor Brodde Svensson and then to Diwer Johansdotter, daughter of Councilor Johan Apotekare (Pharmacist).

Herman Harder, Merchant, Parliamentarian 1617, mayor 1631 – 1635 married to Anna Larsdotter, dead 1653

children:

\* Udde Harder, dead about 1640

\* Margareta Harder, dead 1669, married to the councilor Olof Kiälling

\* Anna Harder, dead 1680, married to the councilor Lorentz Nilsson

\* Elisabet Harder, married to Joachim Arentz

One Hans Harder from Ditmarschen (north of Hamburg), a citizen of Lübeck, co-organized the *Hansan* loan to King Gustav Vasa during the 1520s.

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#### Bernt von Münster, stonemason

The name is not a surname, but shows his origin in the city of Münster in Germany. He worked as a stonemason from the 1580s at Vadstena Castle under Arendt de Roy, Peter De la Roche and later Hans Fleming, all three immigrants.

Bernt von Münster has, among other things, worked with a baptismal font donated by Queen Gunilla Bielke to Säby church in Småland and Duke Magnus' grave monument in the monastery church in Vadstena. He also stands behind a number of gravestones in the church. His own and his wife Annas gravestone can be found in at Sancta Birgitta klostermuseum. Opposite in the same house is also the touching gravestone after their three daughters Engel, Judit and Margareta, carved by the father himself. There, in now illegible writing (modernized): *God gave them all a blessed resurrection. We are what you will become. We have once been what you are.*

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#### Arend Styke, pirate

In the monastery church one finds the tombstone of Arend Styke and his son Albrekt Styke. The stone is very worn but is found along the southern long wall, after (counting from the entrance) the stone with two coats of arms, the left with a seven-pointed star and the right with a wolf. Albrekt Styke owned a house property with stalls on the south side of Rådhusstorget and his father Arend was a German pirate and one of the chiefs of the Vitalians who supported the deposed Albrecht of Mecklenburg around the turn of 1400. The Vitalians were a large and powerful organization with the Swedish island Gotland as an important base and the motto of *God's friends and everyone's enemies!* Other leaders were the knight Sven Sture and not least Klaus Störtebeker, whose memory lives strongly in northern Germany. Störtebeker, whose ship was called *The Red Devil*, was executed in 1401. A legend tells us that when Störtebeker was

beheaded in Hamburg, he bet that he could walk after his head had fallen and that as many pirates he could walk past would be free! Störtebeker stood up though he lost his head and walked past 11 pirates before the executioner thought it was enough. The executioner was paid for each head he cut off, so he laid the hook for the Störtebeker. But he won the bet, 11 pirates were free .

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#### Joseph De la Porte, linen weaver

During the 1700s, many manufactures came to be founded in Sweden. Manufacturers were an intermediary between crafts and industry and show that the period was a transition between pure craftsmanship and industrialization. At Vadstena Castle, a weaving mill was started for finer fabrics, chamber cloth, which was a thin, fine fabric that could be used for handkerchiefs and blouses etc. and Damask, a fabric that could be used for tablecloths and furniture fabrics, etc. To be able to start the business, knowledge was required and a company of French weavers, who had fled from religious persecution, became the core of the activities of the mid-18th century. Joseph De la Porte led the work to begin with. After half a century, the weave moved from the castle, to Udd Jönsson's house here at Rådhusstorget. In 1756, the first director of the factory became Gustaf Vult von Steijern. Just like De la Porte and his French colleagues, of foreign origin. However, he was not born abroad, but an ancestor, Elias Vult, had moved to Sweden from Silesia in Central Europe.

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#### Albert J. F. Jeziorsky von Mosczinsky, teacher

He is said to have been born in Potsdam in 1825 and should have served as a Prussian officer, but had to flee because of his Polish sympathies. In 1857 Jeziorsky was a trader living in Uddevalla and was then married to a virgin in the city, Amalia Fredrika Blomstervall. Two daughters were born in Uddevalla and a Gustava Jeziorsky from Hamburg stands as a baptismal witness. The family then came to Östergötland and Albert served as a teacher in German at the educational institution in Vadstena. He lived in different Swedish towns and in 1886 in November, he moved to his last address, in Norrköping. In the summer, Albert von Mosczinsky died, during a trip, in Kläckeberga parish just north of Kalmar and was buried in Kalmar town parish. The cause of death was cerebral haemorrhage.

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#### Galathea Hanström, patroness

Galathea Hanström lived in the Hanströms house, today the guest house of the Saint Birgitta convent. It was designed by architect Henning Möller, for her and her husband, patron A. G. Hanström. They had moved in to Vadstena in 1916 from outside the town. The Hanströms house was bought by the Saint Birgitta sisters when they returned to Vadstena in the 1930s. Galathea Hanström died in Linköping in 1943. She was born in 1867 in Stockholm as a daughter of the textile manufacturer and later consul in Stockholm Simon Berendt, born 1835 in Copenhagen as the son of Aron Eibeschutz and Serle, born Levi. The mother, Henrietta Berendt was born in 1829 in Kiel. Simon Berendt set up several funds to support girls.

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## Halina Bolt (Schedlin-Czarlinska), opera singer

Halina was born on March 4, 1888 in Poznan, Western Poland. During the years 1908-1912 she studied music and singing in Berlin, Dresden and Milan. She appeared in many opera houses and in many theaters in Europe: eg. Gdansk, Saarbrücken, Vienna, Trier and the city theater in Torun in central Poland.

After marrying the mayor of Torun Antoni Bolt (19 October 1927 in Warsaw), she left the scene and devoted herself to social activities and charity. She was chairman of the Central Council of the Association of Ladies of Charity in St. Vincent de Paul in Pomerania, an association for support to the unemployed in Torun. She represented Poland at the International Congress of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Budapest. For this activity, in 1934, she was awarded the papal award "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice". She was also a member of the board of the National Organization for Women in Torun, participated in the work of the Committee on Combating Communism, chaired the Torun Summer Camp Committee and member of the Museum of the Earth Pomeranian Committee. In 1937, she was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit, the highest civilian award in Poland. During the Nazi occupation of Poland, her husband was arrested by the Gestapo in Pyzdrach, where he was hidden, and murdered in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in December 1941. Halina Bolt was imprisoned and taken in April 1940 to the concentration camp in Ravensbrück. After the liberation in April 1945, she came to Sweden, where she stayed until her death.

From 1953 she worked at the National Archives in Vadstena, but continued to devote herself to charity. She supported the Catholic Church in Poland and the world, the Department of Blind in Laski, Hospital for Leprosy in Uganda and others. Halina Bolt resided with the S<sub>ta</sub> Birgitta nuns in Vadstena and died childless on February 8, 1981. Her struggle in the Ravensbrück camp has been recognized in Israel - where a 26 tree grove has been planted in memory of her.

## Room 2

### Overview

#### Prerequisites and prehistory

People inhabited this area from very early days – the oldest traces of human activity are about 8.500 years old. Lakes Vättern and Tåkern, as well as the fertile soil in this part of the country have always offered excellent fishing and agricultural conditions for people who wanted to settle. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the royal family chose this region to build a palace which was transformed into the Saint Birgitta abbey about hundred years later. After the canonisation of Saint Birgitta in 1391 the abbey experienced a flood of pilgrims which resulted in a sudden growth in the service sector in Vadstena – the number of inns, eateries, craftsmen and merchants increased rapidly. Thanks to this growth Vadstena was granted its town charter in 1400. In this respect, Vadstena was already developing in a very special way from its very beginning – and in a way unlike most Swedish towns, which typically evolved around an administrative centre, instead Vadstena grew around the abbey.

#### Medieval Vadstena – a big town

Already in the 12<sup>th</sup> century there was a small village with a Roman church and a prominent manor where Vadstena is situated today. This fact, combined with the natural prerequisites, probably made the royal family build their summer palace here around 1250. After the foundation of the convent in the former palace in the mid 1300's, the town became one of the spiritual, cultural and financial centres of medieval Scandinavia. Thousands of pilgrims visited Vadstena every year and this was one of the reasons to grant the village its town charter. In the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century Vadstena was once again the centre of royal splendour as Gustav Vasa ordered the construction of a fortress, which was later transformed into a magnificent Renaissance castle by his sons.

#### The years 1600-1862 – an ordinary town

The rise of the strong nation state in the 16th and 17th centuries brought progressive changes to Sweden, just like many other European countries. Typical developments in these years were far-reaching financial reforms, the expansion of the administration and the nationalisation of the Church.

One of the most important urban reforms in the beginning of the 17th century was the creation of two urban categories: exporting towns and towns working on the domestic market. As a result of this reform, every coastal town south of Stockholm was granted permission to export. For other towns, however, there was a ban on foreign trade; any external contacts had to be taken via the exporting towns. Many towns suffered from this system, not least Vadstena since also the abbey was closed down at the same time in the wake of the Reformation.

Because of this new order Vadstena lost its important position and it was transformed into an ordinary Swedish town. As this administrative system – which would govern

urban life for 250 years on – was fixed at the beginning of the 17th century, Vadstena shared its gloomy destiny with many other towns.

### From 1860 and on – a small town

Around 1860 a reform period started in Vadstena as well as in other Swedish towns, thanks to liberal political currents at a national level. In 1862 there was new legislation which paved the way for local autonomy. Free competition was encouraged and the obsolete guild system was abandoned. There was certain optimism in Vadstena. The Göta Canal, the new waterway through Sweden, was already in use, and the town had built a new harbour for the canal ships. There was also a railway connection to the eastern part of the national railway network and the town was also part of the growing telegraph system. However, many of the hopes were frustrated and at the end of the 19th century bitter experiences were piling up. The new infrastructure investments were very expensive and when one of the local banks went bankrupt general pessimism was strong.

However, Vadstena also made it through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not as one of the most important Swedish towns but with other roles. For a long period Vadstena was a *town of institutional care* and the mental hospital “Birgittas sjukhus” was the most important local employer. But at the same time as the importance of the hospital started to decrease Vadstena’s role as a *town of culture and tourism* started to grow, and is still growing. In the last few years – in a blend of old and new – Vadstena’s dormant identity as a *town of pilgrimage* has been brought back to life.

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## Room 3

### Bourgeois culture

Here you will find a mix of objects from the bourgeois culture of the 19th century. The furniture in the corner comes from a house that belonged to the goldsmith Holm and his wife. The house and the magnificent garden were demolished in the 1960s. What remains of the settlement is the yellow summerhouse which is now located behind the museum.

Don't miss the dollhouse or the toilet's historic exhibit.

Here you also can watch the historic film *Vadstena 1593* in VR (and in swedish).



## Room 4 (upper floor)

At Vadstena Town hall on April 23, 1582 (from the court records)

*On the same day the Royal Majesty's builder, Master Arent, came to the court and complained that Gertrud, wife of Olof Buss, had told him, Master Arent, that he was spreading rumours about her. She also accused him of being an adulterer and many other things, and she should also have said that she would hurt him, which she denied. And so Gertrude says that Master Arent came into her shed in the dark when she came in to pick up a pitcher of beer, Arent said that she would get a thin malt and promised her that her house would be untouched if she promised to do what he wanted. He denied to have said so, but not to have been in her shed. A student at the school, Erik Arvidsson, who was a guest at Olof Buss, came before the court. He testified that when he got out into the shed to take some food, Master Arent was there. Then Erik asked what he was doing there. Arent then said that he heard that Erik had threatened him, which Erik denied. He also asked who had said this and then Master Arent replied that if the woman who had said this did not want to admit it, he would not care about it further. Erik Arvidsson was also questioned about the fight that had been last weekend. Erik told that an old man had given him beer when a soldier came in to them and a quarrel started and a farmer hit Erik in the back with a knife. Sven Skräddare (Tailor) witnessed that the soldier confessed that Olof Buss wife Gertrud beat him with an ax. Gertrud's assault on Nils Larsson's wife Kerstin was also discussed and Gertrud was sentenced to 8 mark, which would be divided between the King and the town. Gertrud had also called the town guard Per Slätte (probably = hairless). Gertrud was sentenced to 8 mark, which would be divided between the King, the town and Per Ingemarsson himself. Regarding the case between Master Arent and Gertrud, Abraham Jogansson and Brita, wife of Anders Sweningsson witnessed that they often had heard Gertrude calling Arent an horrid adulterer. Then the bailiff Anders Griis sentenced Gertrud to a fine that would be divided between the King, the city and Master Arent, who donated his part to the town hall building. It was also decided, that if she accuses anyone either Master Arent or someone else, poor or rich, then it is allowed to reprimand her with a firewood or whatever he has in his hand.*

### RÅDSTUGUMÖTE (TOWN HALL MEETING)

Construction of Vadstena Town Hall presumably began in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Before, the town had another town hall, probably destroyed in a city fire in 1487. Formerly, the town hall comprised only the central housepart with a council chamber ("rådssal") on the upper floor. The tower was assumed to be constructed in the early 1500s. This picture shows the town hall by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, but it was similar by 1582. The ground floor, with the council chamber above, comprised a cellar with serving of alcoholic beverages. Beneath the tower, the town jail (called "ugglehätt", the owls hat) was located.

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The model shows the council chamber during the meeting on 23 April 1582. Just at the moment, they try to get clarity in a conflict between the castle master builder and one of the townswomen.

1. Mayor Jöns Krämare
2. Mayor Jöns Guldsmed
3. Bailiff Anders Grijs
4. Gertrud, a townswoman, accused of defamation of
5. Arendt de Roy, the castle master builder, who in turn is accused by Gertrud of sexual molestation.

You will meet those persons in the rest of this exhibition, and read the whole story of the quarrel between Gertrud and Arendt in the division about women's situation.

*At this time, a new fashion had a breakthrough, which was the black Spanish dress ("spanska dräkten") with a white "collar". On the epitaphs, kept from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, you constantly see the Mayors and their families wearing the dress. In this model, all the Mayors wear the Spanish dress as office uniform.*

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## TOWN PRIVILEGES

Vadstena received its privileges as a "market town with town book and town court" on 8 December 1400, following a Council of the Realm meeting on 7 December, when the abbess and the townsmen applied for town privileges to Queen Margaret I and her heir Erik XIII. By then, the abbey became the largest place of pilgrimage, and there was already a built-up area outside the abbey's walls.

By 1582, Vadstena was still a significant town in Sweden. The abbey became discontinued, but the king built a big castle at the other end of the town. Despite its significance, the town presumably had fewer than one thousand inhabitants: The core of the inhabitants consisted of merchants and artisans with their families and servants.

Every man who wanted to manage handicraft or trade had to apply for "burghership" (the state of being a townsman), which demanded "being legitimately born", good reputation and at least six years' education in his occupation. Besides the townsmen, the inhabitants also consisted of many people related to the court and the construction of the castle, and some people related to noble families' households. Lastly, the town consisted of an unknown number of poor persons begging or making their livings through work on the owner's land ("dagsverken").

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During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and for a long time in future, towns and countryside had different legislation. Magnus Eriksson's town law applied for the towns while the national law ("Landslagen") applied for the countryside. The town was governed by a council of mayors and judges, all of whom were townsmen, and mainly merchants or artisans, working for the council besides their usual occupations.

The council, officially called "Magistraten och Rådhusrätten", governed the town jointly with the bailiff and administered the town. It was also the town's court that judged civil actions as well as criminal cases.

According to the town law, election of the council members should be held before Saint Walpurga's day (1 May). However, there were no open elections, but the council itself ruled, with the bailiff's approval, who should be elected as members.

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The protocols were collected in so called "memory books" ("tänkeböcker"), in which one may follow the history of Vadstena and its townsmen over four centuries ago, including business deals, hearings and judgments and debates over problems and the everyday life. (Due to lack of "memory books" from the Middle Ages in Vadstena, the oldest kept "memory book" is from the late 1570s.)

By following those, we may have an image of the 16<sup>th</sup> century's Vadstena.

## WOMEN IN THE TOWN

*"When a townsman or his wife dies and a child survives them, son and daughter, the son inherits equally as the daughter and the daughter equally as the son." (excerpt from Magnus Eriksson's town law)*

The townswomen had more freedom than the women on the countryside. Daughters and sons inherited equally, and a townswoman inherited a half of her husband's property, although a woman might only appear as an independent legal person if her husband had died and she was a widow. In Vadstena, several widows took over their husbands' occupations, appearing as independently as him.

However, a woman's stand was formally fully subordinate to men. A woman did not even have right to witness or otherwise be present herself in the town court. In practice, it could be totally different; for example, Gertrud appeared alone in court, without obvious respect for the authority, and in the "memory books" several women appear in the same way, mostly during quarrels and conflicts, as the "memory books" mostly are the town court's protocols. Those women are not representative for all the townswomen, but rather mostly part of the lower social stratum.

## Anders Grijs

was bailiff as of 1582. During virtually every town hall meeting occurred "in the honest and virtuous man's Anders Grijs' presence". The bailiff's job was to maintain law and order within his area and to ensure that the king's taxes and incomes came in. In Vadstena, the bailiff was also the castle's commander ("befallningsman"). A half of the town's incomes, as taxes, fines and fees, fell to the king's lot, and was often important for the royal economy. This is noted in the "memory book" by formulations about "the king's thing" and "the town's thing".

The King of Sweden has had a uniquely strong influence over Swedish towns, which were next to directly under the state's control. The bailiff or his representative had to be present during all the council's meetings. The history of Vadstena is a bit special. In the Middle Ages, the king handed over all his privileges to the abbey. Gustav Vasa reclaimed the privileges and began to build on the castle.

## THE CASTLE AND THE TOWN

A model (called "Slottsschamplunen") showing the future castle as planned by Johan III and Arendt de Roy. Arendt de Roy, the master builder and architect of the castle, realised King Johan III's vision of a stately renaissance castle. He probably lived, at least until the end of his life, in the town, on Hovslagargatan ("Ferrier Street").

In 1545, construction began of Vadstena Castle, as a fortification. Later, it was rebuilt to a castle habitable for the royal family, when Gustav Vasa selected Vadstena as centre of the duchy assigned to his son Magnus. By that time, however, Magnus had a mental and his brother, King Johan III, had a big interest in Vadstena castle and the town. He stayed here for long periods and extended the castle's construction plans. Today's castle is mostly Johan III's creation.

The town was influenced both by the construction of the castle which was ongoing in several phases from the 1540s to the early years of the following century, and by royal families staying here for longer periods. A whole town district was demolished before the construction of the castle, as well as the quarters nearest the castle, to give space for the castle and its expanding area. A large part of the town's inhabitants consisted of people connected to the castle's construction or royal families, and formally not part of the townsmen. Although the castle would have given many job opportunities for the town's inhabitants, it caused conflicts. In the "memory books", you will encounter some quarrels between townsmen and knights, and some arguments that the castle's artisans took jobs from the town's artisans.



Fishermen and others in front of the castle, ca 1700-