



Foto: Vallsnäs Camping

A place near nature

Vallsnäs camping is located on the shores of Lake Unnen and offers varied recreational and leisure activities, for example canoeing, tours with rowing boats and fishing. Autumn and spring are the best seasons for fishing. There are also good opportunities for a swim in Lake Unnen. There are several small beaches at different locations along the lake shores.

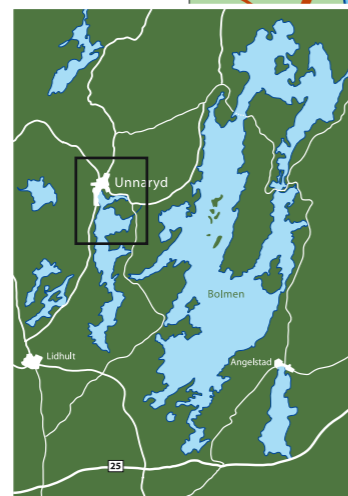


A good tip is to rent a cottage at Vallsnäs. Make use of your free time for sightseeing and explore

the lake and its surroundings. Hire a canoe for a visit to Kungsholmen. Swim in Lake Unnen's clean water. Enjoy a tasty meal at Tiraholm some 7 kilometres away or at the Alebo Inn which is just nearby in Unnaryd! Make an outing to the ancient graveyard Bedja Rör. Bedja Rör and several other interesting places are well within cycling distance so bring your bikes!

More reading!

About Vallsnäs Camping: www.vallsnascamping.se



GPS (RT 90 2.5 gon V)
 Vallsnäs: 1361800 E, 6314800 N
 Vallsnäs udde: 1361667 E, 6314684 N
 Kungsholmen: 1362223 E, 6315322 N
 Kvinnaholme: 1361900 E, 6313994 N

How to get there?

Drive from Unnaryd towards Bredaryd and Reftele. Follow signs towards Vallsnäs Camping. You may also reach Vallsnäs by boat on Lake Unnen.



IN THE WAKE OF EBBE SKAMMELSON



The wind whispers in the trees, there is fairytale and mysticism over the King's Isle. Our ancestors' deeds are forgotten, their names are not inscribed in the historical records. Only a few stones remain. These are our reminders of past times. Mosses have covered the ground and the paths, ground where once the local people of Finnveden struggled to exist. The King's Isle is now peaceful and tranquil, well protected from strong winds by its old and magnificent pine trees.

Albert Wester: "Kungsholmen". The Yearbook of Unnaryd-Jälluntofta Local Society for Cultural Heritage 2000.

Illustration on cover: An old decaying tree stump on Kungsholmen. **Main sources of information:** "Några blad ur Vallsnäs historia" by Carl Lindstén, from "Södra Unnaryd-Jälluntofta Fornminnes- och Hembygdsförenings Årsskrift 1949"; "Kungsholmen" by Albert Wester, from "Södra Unnaryd-Jälluntofta Fornminnes- och Hembygdsförenings Årsskrift 2000"; "Vallsnäs" by Anita Kindstrand, from "Södra Unnaryd-Jälluntofta Fornminnes- och Hembygdsförenings Årsskrift 1997"; Information on Unnaryds kyrka; Rickard Englund, Vallsnäs. **Research:** Malin Ekwall. **Text:** Karin Tengnäs. **Photo from 1940:** From "Vallsnäs" by Anita Kindstrand, above. **Photo where there is no other indication:** Karin Tengnäs. **Logotype:** Lars Lidman. **Design:** Tecknargården/Willy Lindström. **Production:** Naturbruk AB/Bo Tengnäs. **Project coordination:** Bitte Rosén Nilsson, Hylte kommun. **Copyright:** Naturbruk AB. **Year:** 2006. The brochures "In the Wake of Ebbe Skammelson" are available on www.unnaryd.com and www.hylte.se



A scenic and mysterious place

Vallsnäs is a beautiful peninsula at Lake Unnen. The area offers rich opportunities for memorable moments close to nature; a get-away from hectic daily life. A visit to Vallsnäs brings you near to both forest and water. The number of permanent residents in this small settlement is again increasing and Vallsnäs has become a popular place to visit with a camping ground as well as a place for a swim in the lake.

The buildings of Vallsnäs are now located on the peninsula but that has not always been the case. There is a small island called Kungsholmen (“The King’s Isle”) nearby. Fairytales and stories about this islet have been passed on from generation to generation. People have visited it with deep respect and a degree of curiosity, wondering what the sparse remnants of buildings really indicate. Generations have tried to reveal the secrets of the islands.

The remains of a rectangular building are clearly visible on Kungsholmen. It has been argued and speculated that these are remnants of a temple for the old Æsir



Gods or of a royal fortress. Ridges of earth and stone are still clearly visible on the south-western part of the islet. There are also remnants of an ancient jetty in the lake whose old oak timbers are anchored by big stones used as weights.

The King of Västbo

Vallsnäs is located in a region that once belonged to the ancient Kingdom Finnveden. Finnveden included the three old jurisdictional districts Östbo, Västbo, Sunnerbo and some minor adjoining areas. According to local tradition, the King of Västbo once had his residence on Kungsholmen. The ruins could be

remnants of his fortress dating back to the 5th to 9th century. These kings lived a relatively primitive life and were often in a state of war with kings of neighbouring regions. For protection it was common that they lived on small islets. The last king on Kungsholmen was, according to tradition, a wild and cruel ruler. The local people feared him and hatred was widespread. He lived the “high life” on his fortress and continued building it even higher. But, according to legend, his adventurous life came to an abrupt end. One evening, as he sat looking out from the fortress, he saw a large group of warriors approaching. He gathered his men immediately and a fierce fight followed. In the end, the fortress was captured and demolished.

A medieval farm designed for defence Beyond legend certain facts have been verified scientifically. The earth and stone ridges on Kungsholmen are remnants of the old Vallsnäs settlement. There is written evidence that there were buildings and habitation here in the 15th century. In documents dated to 1425 Vallsnäs was recorded as ‘Valsnaes’. However, it is likely that there was a farm here with defences already in medieval times. From a defence perspective, the location on an islet was a

wise choice. Subsequently the farm was inhabited by a series of men with great influence in Finnveden.

Remnants of a manor-house

In 1917 Mr. Bror Kugelberg started an archaeological excavation on Kungsholmen. He concluded that the ridges were remnants of a building that Jöns Larsson Bölja constructed as a manor-house in the 1530s. By then Jöns Larsson Bölja was the District Judge of Västbo Jurisdictional District. He was killed in the Dacke revolt in 1543 and the manor-house on Kungsholmen was demolished around that time. The name Kungsholmen (“King’s Isle”) is said to date back to a period after the attacks by the Danes in 1563. For some time thereafter Vallsnäs was state property. The remnants consist of 1–1.5 metres high ridges that surround a rectangle of 28 metres by 13 metres. As a long time has passed since the islet was inhabited trees have grown up – these old pine trees create a feeling of a “troll’s forest” if you visit it now. Fantasy is easily set in motion, moving the mind to a world of fairytales. The very observant visitor may find Yellow Bird’s Nest flowering in July and August. It is one of the few plants in the Swedish



Yellow Bird’s Nest

flora that lacks chlorophyll hence it is yellowish white colouring. Dams with Crucian carp The inhabitants of Kungsholmen safeguarded themselves against famine by keeping Crucian carp in dams that they had dug on the mainland north-west of the islet. As the name implies the Crucian carp is a carp fish, closely related to the more common roach and the well-known goldfish. The Crucian carp can survive in a wide range of conditions and may constitute a good living source of food when needed such as in times of famine. The remains of the old dams can still be traced.

Kvinnaholme (“The Women’s Isle”)

Kvinnaholme is located quite far from Vallsnäs in a southerly direction on Lake Unnen. According to tradition it got its name from measures taken in times of unrest or war. During such periods women and children were taken to that islet for protection from the enemy. Tradition does not explain how they could survive there.

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Good luck while fishing was certainly required in order to get supplements to the food that may have been brought with them.

In 1940 reeds had to be harvested for livestock feed

The agricultural conditions at Vallsnäs have been good. The ground consists of sand and is well drained and easy to work. However, in 1940 drought caused unexpected difficulties for the farmers. That year the livestock had to eat reeds instead of hay. Altogether, all farmers in Vallsnäs only managed to harvest 12 horse-cart loads of hay as compared to some 50 or 60 loads in a normal year. The farmers were forced to co-operate and they decided to try to harvest reed in the lake. The water table of the lake was so low that the reeds could be harvested by horse and a mowing machine. The reed was dried and bound to sheaves. The sheaves were then distributed fairly among the farmers.

The christening font

There used to be a large loose rounded rock at the shore on the northern side of the peninsula, just below some of the current residential houses. It has a depression in the top and it has been speculated that this might have been a bowl for offerings dating back to pre-Christian times. The depression was round as was the rock, indicating that its shape was the result of man’s work. According to tradition, blood from the sacrificial animal was placed in the bowl-like depression in the rock. From there the blood is said to have been splashed on people as well as on other animals. Another theory is that the rock is an old baptismal font from the church in Unnaryd. An old record of items in the church dated 1639 includes a “funktätel”, possibly the font that later ended up at Vallsnäs. It is quite possible that the font was discarded in the countryside as it was common that items from the churches were sold on when they were no longer needed. Whatever the real history may be, the font lay at the lake shore until the winter 1909–1910. That winter, the clergyman arranged for it to be brought over the ice to the church yard in Unnaryd. Later it was moved into the church where it is currently used as a baptism font. The rock’s mystery has still not been fully revealed and it may never be...

At the very westerly end of the peninsula there is an old cairn that tradition claims to be an “offering cairn”. There are plenty at Vallsnäs and that can set the imagination in motion....



The christening font

A manor (säteri, sätesgård) was originally a land holding owned and inhabited by a person belonging to the nobles. As the nobles had privileges such land holding was exempted from land tax. The building was supposed to be well maintained to match the status of the owner. The tax privileges could be jeopardised if the building or the land was neglected.

The Dacke Revolt is one of the most widespread farmer-revolts in the Swedish history. It took place 1542–1543 and was named after its leader, the Smålandic farmer Nils Dacke. The revolt was a reaction to King Gustav Vasa’s politics that resulted in a strong central power at the expense of the freedom that the provinces had enjoyed earlier. Measures by the state led to manifold increases of the tax burden in some parts of the Province of Småland. Initially the revolt was very successful. The King had to agree on a cease fire and allow Dacke to rule the Province of Småland. But later the King organised more troops and defeated and killed Dacke.

Västbo Jurisdictional District is located in the western part of the Province of Småland. A Jurisdictional District represents an old administrative division and it used to be the larger unit comprising several parishes. A parish is an area where people belong to the same church.

