



1_Karl-Johan-slo-flytebro-over-Svinesund-under-angrepet-på-Norge-i-1814_Bro-ble-liggende-i-mange-år_Her-illustrert-i-1826-av-WR-Wilson_HhS---Kopi.jpg

DESTINATION SVINESUND

Welcome to Destination Svinesund – and a walk through the history of the borderlands.

On each side of the bridge you'll find trails and information signs telling you something about the place where you're standing. You'll be walking on country paths, so make sure you're sensibly dressed. On the

Swedish side, the walk will take about 60 minutes. There are benches at several places along the route, so you'll be able to sit down and take a breather. There is a table for coffee and snacks under the bridge. The area is privately owned, so please don't litter and do not disturb the plants and animals. All walks are at your own risk. Have a pleasant outing, and enjoy your walk!

The area on the Swedish side of Svinesund has been declared of national importance for the preservation of our cultural heritage; the ferry station is one of the National Road Administration's highway monument areas. On the Norwegian side, Gamla Svinesund is protected by the Heritage Conservation Act.

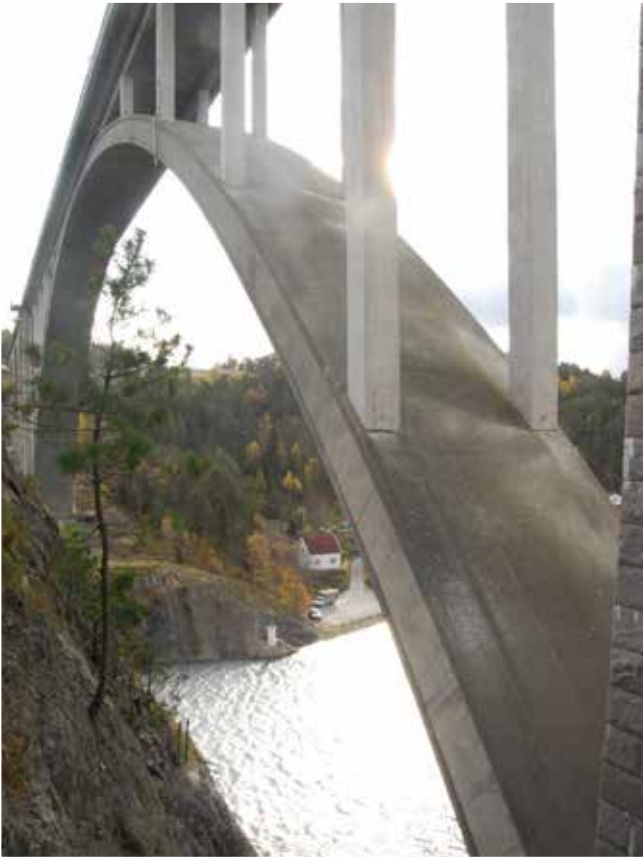
Svinesund – the History

The origin of the name Svinesund has not been fully explained, although it goes back a long way – at least to the days of Harald Fairhair (9th-10th cent.). It is mentioned several times in Snorre Sturlason's 13th-century Chronicle of the Kings of Norway. During the middle Ages, Svinesund formed the border between Ranrike and Borgarsyssel. In 1658, Bohuslän became Swedish, and the national border between Sweden and Norway was drawn along the middle of the sound.

Svinesund – a strategic point

Svinesund has always been a strategic crossing point and relics abound of many of the wars and battles that have been fought here. At the end of the 17th century, Sweden became a great regional power that under the leadership of Charles XII spread fear and disquiet across a large part of Europe. However, Sweden's European ambitions came to an end on the death of the king at Fredriksten fortress in 1718. A few years previously he had ordered the fortification of Sundsborg and constructed a number of forts and defensive positions on both sides of the Swedish abutment.

From 1814 until 1905 Sweden and Norway formed a unified whole. Towards the end of this period – the Era of Union – tensions arose between the two nations, and in 1901 – 1903 a large fort was put up at Hjelmkollen on the heights east of the Norwegian abutment. The fort was armed with a battery of modern artillery pieces, including two French Schneider-Canet 12-centimetre armour-piercing guns. The fort was decommissioned almost immediately after the union between Sweden and Norway had been peacefully dissolved. The Germans rebuilt the Hjelmkollen fort directly after the invasion of



5_Svinesundbroa_detali_Foto-Svein-Norheim_DSC_6772.jpg

Norway in April 1940. A large network of fortified trenches was constructed on Kjeöa further to the west. Along the fiord were several places that became of strategic significance for the stream of refugees and displaced persons fleeing the war.

Svinesund: facts and figures

1658: Bohuslän becomes Swedish after peace negotiations in Roskilde. The new border with Norway runs along Idefjorden and Svinesund.

1666–1946: Ferry connection across the sound.

1675: The Norwegians erect Sponviken fortress.

1716: The Swedes, led by Charles XII, construct Sundsborg fort and build a pontoon bridge across the sound.

1906: The first car is rowed across the sound.

1900–1935: Several Swedish proposals for a railway bridge across the sound.

1946: Svinesund Bridge inaugurated.

1950: A customs house is built on the Norwegian side.

1984/1986: New customs houses are built on both sides.

2005: The new Svinesund Bridge is inaugurated. The old bridge is classified as a historic building.

The 17th century was marked by Swedish strivings to become a great European power and by the regular wars that were fought as a result. The inhabitants of Bohuslän experienced no less than four wars or feuds as they were called. After the treaty of Roskilde in 1658, the region became more and more Swedish. Towns were built to encourage trade, although strategically situated and heavily fortified. Strömstad is one of them (1668). The wars continued into the 18th century, this time with Charles XII in command of the Swedish armies.

For several years, Charles XII had secretly laid plans for the invasion of Norway, intending to head straight for Christiania after his failed campaigns on the European mainland. Charles was set on showing his enemies that there was fight in him yet. Starting in 1716, he built up gigantic stocks of provisions, weapons and ammunition in Strömstad and other places.

Several defensive positions were prepared, including the fort at Sundsborg. Today, about 20 relics of Charles' preparations for war – forts, camp sites, roads – can still be seen in the surrounding mountains. Svinesund, with its strategic position, was an important place to guard and keep under observation. Control over the crossing at this narrow part of Idefjorden afforded room for manoeuvre in the conduct of the war. Both countries therefore kept close watch over the sound. Charles XII counted on transporting materiel into Norway by this route and on blocking the sound for Danish-Norwegian

ships. A pontoon bridge was an important step towards accomplishing these plans.

On 9 April 1940, the Germans invaded Norway and immediately began work on various fortifications and observation posts on the northern bank of Idefjorden. At the same time, the Swedes built a great number of fortified positions, defence posts and bunkers as a protection against any attack along the southern shore of the fiord. Here at Svinesund, the remains of fortifications put up during the time of Charles XII were often re-used, occasionally making it difficult to determine the exact period of history during which a given position was installed.

The ferry station

The first ferry station was built in 1658 directly after peace had been restored between Sweden and Norway, and a ferryman was employed to take travellers across the water. There was also a frontier outpost office, customs stations on both sides of the fiord, and, on the Swedish side, an inn. Starting in 1758, Norwegian mail destined for countries abroad was routed over Svinesund. The first car was rowed across the sound in 1906 using oars that were seven metres long! In 1917, engines were installed in two barges that could each carry two cars. They remained in service until 1946, when the bridge was opened.

From the royal road to E6 highway

An important bridle path known since early times as *Kungsvägen*, or the Royal Road, ran between Copenhagen and Christiania (Oslo), the previous capitals of the Union. The road was used by riding postmen, by bishops, army officers and royal envoys. Journeymen and itinerant pedlars travelled the road on foot – it was something of the E6 highway of its time! Today, traces of the old road can still be seen in many places; this is one of them. The steep hills leading down to the ferry stations were notoriously dangerous, especially in winter, when cart teams sometimes had to be restrained with ropes, logs and stones to prevent them from running downhill too fast – at breakneck speed. In days gone by, travelling was a real adventure. The stone monument on the wall at the crossroads commemorates a much-needed improvement to the road carried out in 1840.

In the early 19th century, Carl XIV Johan, Sweden's new king, drew attention to the imposing features of the local countryside. Tradition has it that he ordered the construction of the white building with the hipped roof for use as his personal summer residence. The building is known as the King's House to this day, even though the king himself never returned to claim it.

During the conflict of 1808, Svinesund was once again the centre of attention. Defence posts were reinforced and a Swedish officer lost his life. On the corner of the rock inside the grounds, to the right, a carving commemorates the event. A "promising young military man", Count Axel Oxenstjerna, was careless enough to be walking on the road when a shot was fired from a window on the other side of the fiord. The ball found its mark and proved fatal. Another conflict was sparked off in 1814, when a large pontoon bridge was thrown across the fiord and Swedish troops marched into Østfold. In August, peace was restored and, in the town of Moss, Norway and Sweden signed the convention establishing a personal union between the two nations.

An impressive bridge

After the union between Norway and Sweden had been dissolved, proposals were put forward for a rail link between Bohuslän and Østfold, but these were rejected. In 1932 it was suggested that a combined rail and road bridge be built across Svinesund. As time passed and road traffic increased, the need for a bridge became urgent.

In 1938 the Swedish *Riksdag* (Parliament) and Norwegian *Stortinget* (Parliament) decided to build a road bridge of concrete and Swedish granite. The Swedish negotiators had pressed for a granite bridge in an effort to stimulate employment in the quarrying and stone-working industries. Work began on 1 April 1939 under Swedish supervision.

On 9 April 1940, Germany invaded Norway and building came to a halt. Both the Swedes and the Germans mined the bridge in 1940–42. On 6 July 1942, an explosion occurred on the Swedish side that destroyed large parts of the bridge, which had been almost completed. The explosion was probably caused by lightning striking one of the Swedish charges, although it may also have been a case of sabotage. At the end of the War in 1945, building was resumed and the bridge was opened amid great celebrations on 15 June 1946. Sweden paid about 85 percent of the building costs.

Svinesund is Norway's largest and most important border crossing. In 1946, a total of 6,300 vehicles crossed Svinesund on their way from Norway to Sweden. All were checked by the customs. Almost 5.8 million motor vehicles crossed the bridge in 2004, or an average of 15,650 vehicles per day. The record was set on 19 July 2003, when 25,025 vehicles crossed the bridge.

Svinesund Bridge: facts and figures

1938: *The Swedish Riksdagen and Norwegian Stortinget decide to construct a road bridge.*

1 April 1939: *Commencement of building.*

9 April 1940: *Germany invades Norway and building operations are suspended.*

1940–1942: *Swedes and Germans mine the bridge.*

6 July 1942: *Explosions on the Swedish side destroy large parts of the bridge, which has almost been completed.*

Specifications

Length: 450 metres

Height: 65 metres

Clearance: 60 metres

Two-lane carriageway: each lane 3.5 metres broad.

Two footpaths: each 1.25 metres broad.

Swedish side: six granite pillars

Norwegian side: two granite pillars

Amount of granite: 8,650 m²

Volume of concrete: 1,750 m³

Machine guns and barbed wire

On 9 April 1940, Germany invaded Norway and Svinesund teemed with soldiers on both sides of the fiord. Building operations on the bridge, which had got under way in 1939, were suspended, and instead of construction workers and stone-cutters, soldiers now stood guard on the half-completed bridge. The German Wehrmacht established a base at Svinesund only a few days after the invasion and then went on to construct an extensive network of trenches on Kjeöa outside Sponviken further to the west. These were primarily intended to

keep track of movements on the Swedish side and to guard the entrance to Idefjorden.

Lookouts were also stationed on the summit of Hjelmkollen to observe Swedish troop movements and the extensive installations that were being put in place for military purposes. The noise from blasting charges echoed round the mountains and concrete was mixed by the tonne. Kilometre after kilometre of barbed wire was rolled out, and fences and other barriers were erected to strengthen defences against attack from across the fiord. In all, some 70 defence posts, shelters and machine-gun nests of various types and sizes were built in the area. Some were designed only for the protection of individual soldiers; others could house several heavy artillery pieces. The rock has since eroded away in places and has recently been sealed so as to avoid the risk of injury to the general public. Only a few defence posts have been preserved to this day.

This defence post is a splinter-proof concrete shelter accommodating two or three machine guns that covered the closest part of the fiord and the abutment on the Norwegian side. Two soldiers, a gunner and a loader, manned each machine gun. Barbed wire entanglements ran round these closely-spaced defence posts and all the way up and round the top of the mountain above the shop. About 800 men were stationed in Svinesund during these five years.