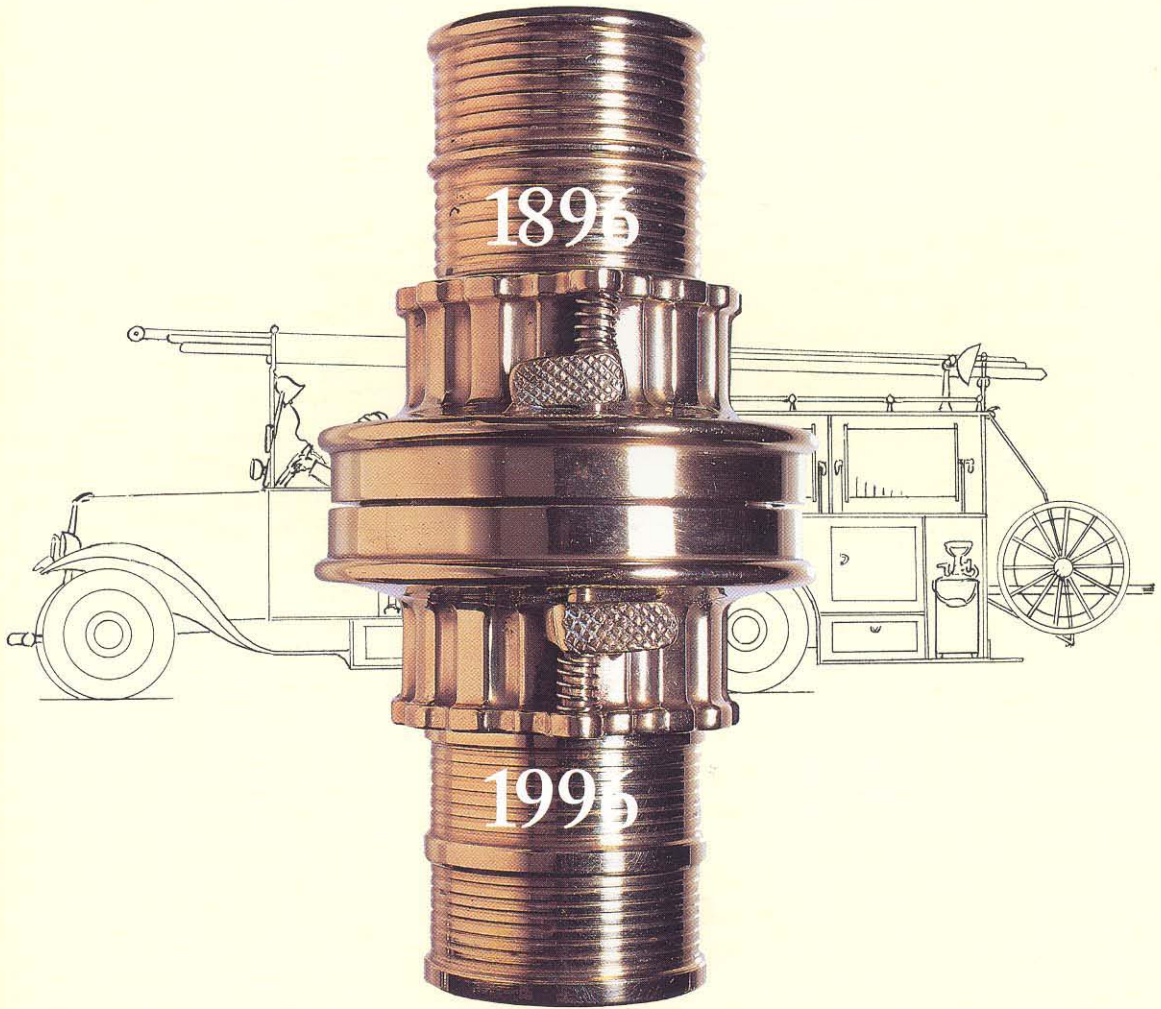




1896 • 100 years • 1996





Artist: François Bonte

100 years

A whole century of memories of people, friends, products, development, efficiency, shut-downs, diversification, specialisation, customers, crises, banks, investments, problems, innovations, travelling, marketing, environmental considerations, unemployment, safety factors, business ratios, book-keeping, annual reports, insurance and personnel.

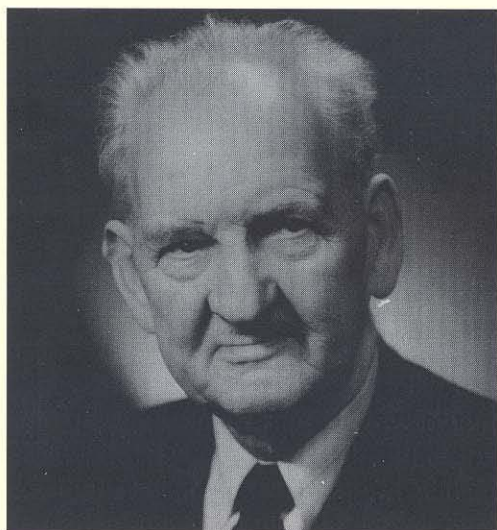
All companies work under the same conditions, the only difference being the number of zeros you add on at the end.

In grateful memory of all those who have contributed to making ABA what it is today.

Nils Bergström
Managing Director

The founding of the company and the years up to 1930

The General Firefighting Equipment Store was founded in 1896 by engineer Knut Edwin Bergström (1865–1950).



Inventor and Contractor

On completion of his education and apprenticeship K.E. Bergström was employed by a chemical laboratory in Stockholm where he stayed for seven years. During this time he participated in a number of research projects and experiments under the auspices of Professor Cullberg, which were to prove important to his continued development. He also became interested in the art of glass-blowing, developing his skills in his spare time. As a result he was subsequently employed by Dr Gustav de Laval's personal experimental laboratory where his

glass-blowing skills were put to good use. Gustav de Laval was an inventor and businessman whose mechanical separator had prompted the founding of AB Separator in 1883, the precursor to Alfa-Laval.

Mr Bergström then spent one year at Strehlenert's light bulb factory in Stockholm where a German master glass-blower helped him perfect his skills, especially in the art of blowing light bulbs.

The Svea light bulb factory, E. Bergström & Co.

In 1889, Mr Bergström began experimenting with his own light bulb manufacture setting up a pilot factory on leased premises at Humlegårdsgatan 17, Stockholm. This was a mere nine years after Edison had invented the carbon filament lamp. Under the name of Glödlampsfabriken Svea, E. Bergström & Co. the factory manufactured about 150 light bulbs a day. The filaments were made of bamboo cane and the price of a light bulb was at the time approx. 5 SEK. Soon the premises at Humlegårdsgatan became too small and in 1890 the activities were moved to a new factory in Sundbyberg. The market being very



Glödlampsfabriken Svea

limited the products were difficult to sell and the factory operated on a very small scale. Gustav de Laval, who had become interested in the electrical sector in the early 1890s, acquired a half-interest in the enterprise. In 1895 the name was changed to De Laval's Glödlampsfabrik Svea. In 1896 Mr Bergström withdrew from the partnership, selling his shares in the company.

General Firefighting Equipment Stores, E. Bergström & Co.

Having wound up his business association with de Laval, Mr Bergström proceeded to found General Fire-

fighting Equipment Stores, E. Bergström & Co in the same year. The main reason for this was that he had invented an equilateral screw coupling, a problem he had been working on for some years.

As Engineer Bergström's screw coupling had been awarded patents in a number of different countries a solid basis existed for continued activities. His curiosity and innovative work characterised the years to come and new inventions led to new patents. These included a manual fire-engine with flexible metal piping instead of rubber hoses, mechanical ladders for up to 30 metres, and rescue ropes.

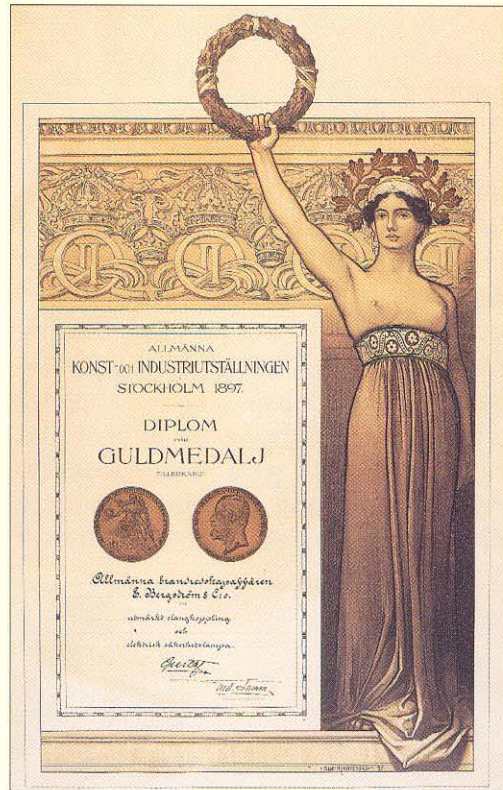
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29	100	2900			
30	100	3000			
31	100	3100			
Summa			Summa		

The first ledger 1896

The Stockholm International Fair 1897

At the International Art and Industry Fair in Stockholm in 1897, Mr Bergström's achievement as an inventor was amply rewarded.

He received two gold medals – in itself a unique occurrence – one for his screw coupling, the other for an electric safety lamp. The fact that his old firm, Glödlampsfabriken Svea, and his new company ABA, also received awards confirmed his strength as an innovator and an entrepreneur. Engineer Bergman and ABA continued to receive distinctions for their high product quality. At the first ever International Trade Fair for firefighting equipment held in Berlin in 1901, ABA received the Prussian State Diploma, ABA also received top distinctions. At trade fairs in Gävle, Norrköping, Halmstad and Gothenburg in Sweden and in Björneborg in Finland.



Gold medal received at the International Art and Industry Fair in Stockholm, 1897

1900–1920s

General Firefighting Equipment Stores continued to develop along two main lines: manufacturing and sale of firefighting equipment.

ABA was initially situated in David Bagares Gata in the centre of Stockholm. After a few years the firm moved first to Scheelegatan 22, and then to Scheelegatan 28 where ABA still has its head office.

In 1911, ABA were appointed Purveyors to His Majesty the King of Sweden, and in 1918 a Royal decree was issued stipulating that only the "Ideal Coupling" – later called the ABA standard coupling - be used as fire hose coupling in Sweden. This exclusive approval significantly boosted ABA's chances for future development.

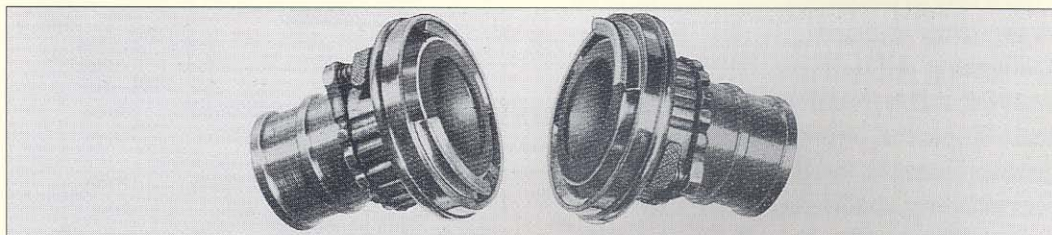
From the very outset ABA engaged in lively correspondence with a large number of customers and suppliers in Sweden and abroad. This active approach enabled the company to enlist new agents and reach a wider circle of customers. All activities including manufacture took place at Scheelegatan 28. In addition to hose couplings and other firefighting equipment the range included fire extinguishers, rescue ropes and wheeled fire escapes. Before turn-table ladders came

into general use, high places were reached by means of wheeled fire escapes. The most popular ladder of this type on the market was the so-called Stockholm ladder made by ABA.

In order to increase production capacity ABA acquired Nya AB Henricson's Motor- and Sprutfabrik in 1926 whose range of products for the fire services complemented the ABA range thus strengthening the company's position on the market.

It's no exaggeration to say that during these years engineer Bergström contributed greatly – via ABA – to the establishment of effective fire-fighting services in Sweden as well as in the other Nordic countries.

Of key importance was the hose coupling – later known as the ABA standard coupling. Thanks to excellent contacts with leading foreign companies in the same business, ABA were able to offer not only their own fire fighting products but also the very latest by way of innovations. They also provided the best service available in the field of firefighting.



The ABA Standard Coupling

Photo: Andrzej Markiewicz



KUNGL. HOFLEVERANTÖR



SILVERMEDALJ GEFLE 1901
1:sta pris HALMSTAD 1912



GULDMEALJ STOCKHOLM 1897



STATSDIPL. BERLIN 1901
1:sta pris BJÖRNEBORG, FINLAND 1913

ALLMÄNNA BRANDREDSKAPSÄFFÄREN

E. BERGSTRÖM & C^o Stockholm

KONTOR: SCHÉELEGATAN 28

ABA

IDEAL



PROTEKTOR

Varumärken

TELEFONER:
Kungsh. Kungsh.
(5)322 98 (5)322 59

TELEGRAMADRESS:
»IDEAL»

CODE: BENTLEY'S

POSTGIRO
N:o 109

den 21/10 1931

TILLVERKA OCH FÖRSÄLJA:



ABA & IDEAL
ASSURANSSPRUTOR

med metallrör
i stället för slang.

Tillförlitliga, kraftiga,
hållbara!

Fördödade av hrt brandchefer och
försäkringsbolag.
Över 30,000 i bruk.

ABA & IDEAL-KOPPLINGAR
LIKSIDIGA

Tåta för sug och tryck.

Konstruktion: 1/4 skruv och 1/2 mutter
i vardera kopplingshalvan



Tillverkade av oss sedan 1896 under namn
av Idealkoppling, men äro de senare åren för-
bättrade och förändrade under namn av »Assurans-
koppling». Dessa ha däremot utömnat så stort
förtroende att de blivit i lag av den 6 juni 1918
föreskrifna till brandstöret.

Märket »ABA» ingår i varje kopplingsdel
är lagenligt originalfabrikat.
Ideal och ABA av vårt fabrikat passa i
varandra.

Över 100,000 i bruk.

SLANGAR av alla slag,
kontrollerade vid egen slangprovingsanstalt.

BRANDAUTOMOBILER

MOTORSPRUTOR

»ABA»-PUMPAR

stationära eller för montering i automobil.

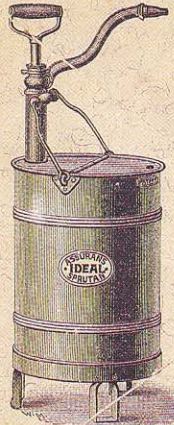
HANDKRAFTSPRUTOR

REDSKAPS-, UTRYCKNINGSS- o.
SLANGKÄRROR

STEGAR

Fullständiga
brandkärsutrustningar

Förslag utarbetas



Nytt! Idealsprutan.

(Ledbart metallrör i stället för slang)

Solid!

Patenterad!

Tusentals
i bruk!

Kraftig!

Berömda
över allt!

Hållbar!

Allmänna Brandredskapsaffären

E. Bergström & C^o.

Förändrar & moderniserar gammal brandredskap.

Tillerkänd 1:sta pris

GULDMEALJ vid Stockholmsutställn. 1897.

Kontor: SCHÉELEGATAN 22.

Telegramadress »IDEAL».

STOCKHOLM Rikstelefon 22 38.
Allm. Telefon 124 96.



Leverantörer till Kgl. Arméförvaltningen, Kgl. Flottan, flera
Kgl. slott, Statens Jernvägar, Stockholms och flera brandkårer,
industriella anläggningar m. fl., m. fl.

Leverera all slags brandredskap.

Lager af

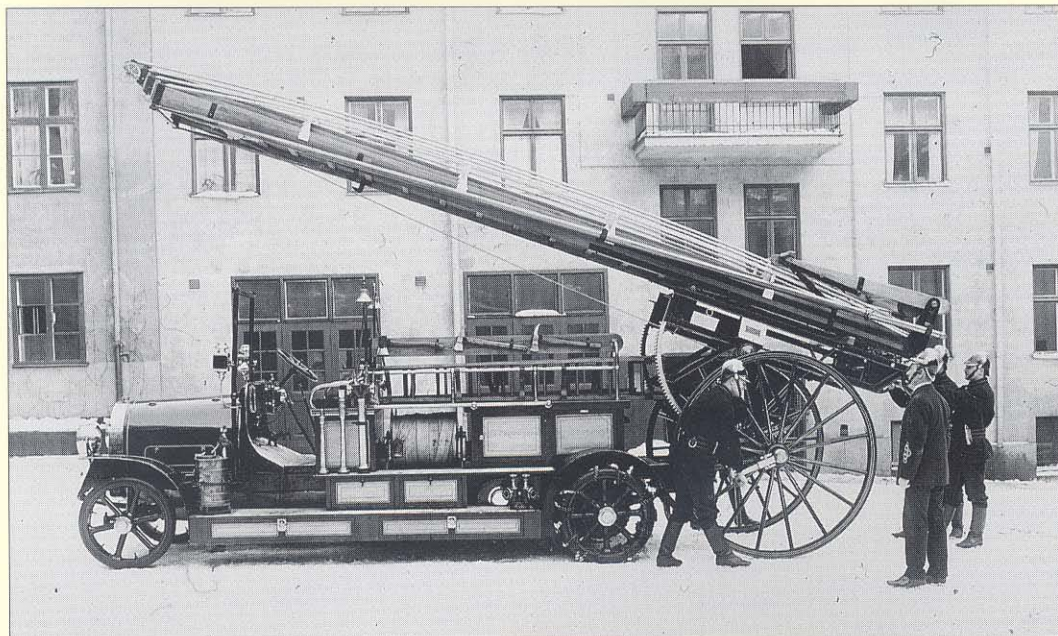
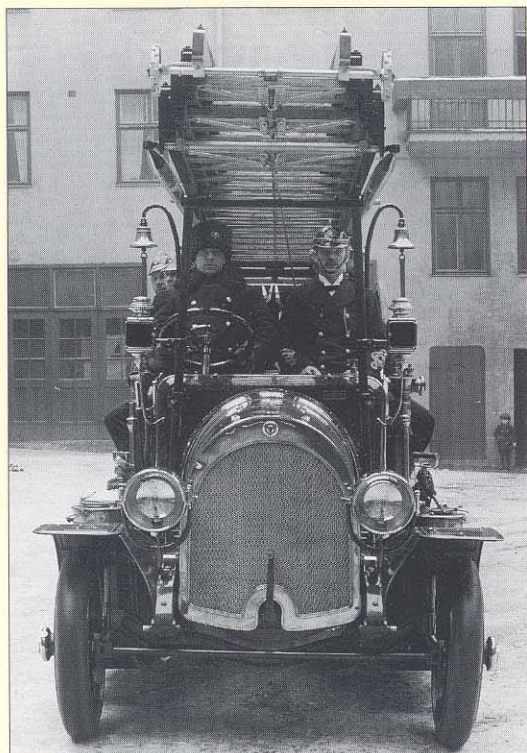
Kontrollerad Slang, Sprutor för olika ändamål af
mest praktiska modeller, Idealkopplingar, liksidiga, tätta
för såväl tryck som vacuum, m. m., m. m.

Högaktningfullt

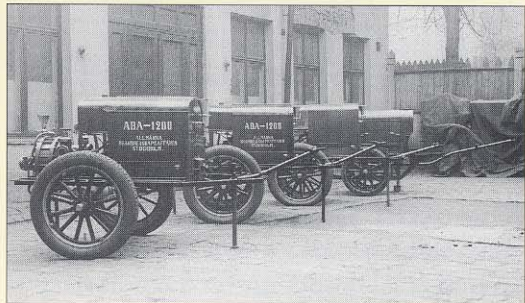
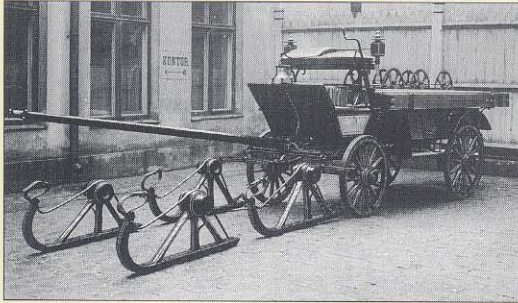
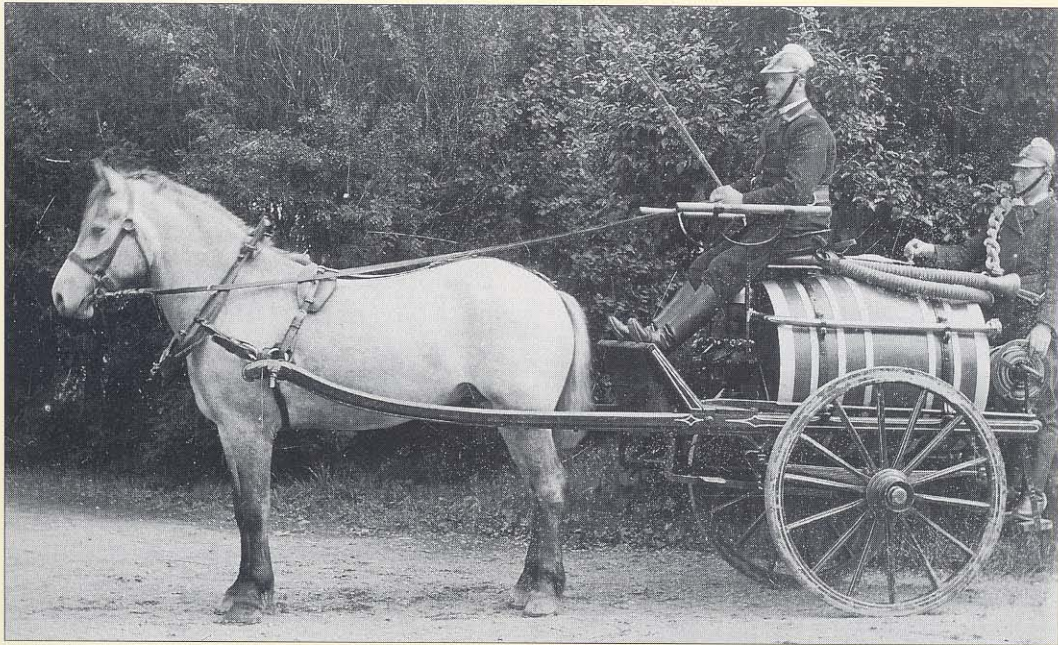
ALLMÄNNA BRANDREDSKAPSÄFFÄREN

E. Bergström & C^o

"Those were the days..."



The "Stockholm" ladder



KONS. TEL. 23 38
**ALMANNA-
BRÄNDRÄSKAPSAFFÄREN** Stockholm
 TELEFONN. 12848
 SÖDERSTRÖM 21
 JULI 1918

Liffräddningslinan "IDEAL".
 Afsedd att från en eller flera våningars höjd nedföra sig själv eller andra personer.

Denna apparat är synnerligen lämplig för beståden, hotell, skolor, fabriker etc.
 Den består af en STARK linna med spännade öglor i brändesved, metallbroms, gördeln, Ögelskrufven samt lämpligast i rögen tillfärd Knästycken (se nedre delen af figuren) af 1½ meter eller längre.

Hvar ögla är utrustad på sådant sätt, att den kan användas och kan öfverlämnas.

Vid användning läggs gördeln dubbel om lifvet, haken tröjes genom gördelns andra ända och haken hängs på linans, bromsen gördelns hake hängs i linans ögla etc. *Räddning af andra eller i bromsen och själfräddning.*

Räddning af andra.

Bromsen upphänges på Ögelskrufven, gördeln släts om lifvet och dess hake hängs i linans ögla.

Själfräddning.

Linans ögla hängs på Ögelskrufven, gördeln släts om lifvet och dess hake hängs i bromsen.

Svällningshugghuorn angöras på ett annat sätt med en hand.



Equipment supplied at the beginning of the century

1930–1940s

In 1932, ABA received a visit from a representative from O J Dahl of Oslo, a Norwegian firm who were sole agents for a hose clamp on all the Nordic countries.

This meeting was the upshot of the ABA clamp, today one of the leading clamps on the market.

The meeting with O J Dahl's representative, resulted in ABA's being awarded the agency. For some years, ABA had been selling different types of hose clamps in connection with various firefighting equipment. The new clamps were worm-driven, so it was something of a gamble when ABA decided to begin marketing them.

Between 1932 and 1939 ABA featured the clamp as part of its range and made an effort to introduce it on the Swedish market.

The ABA Clamp

The outbreak of WW 2 in 1939, put an end to all importation from abroad for ABA. It soon became necessary to try to start up manufacture of a Swedish made worm-gear hose

clamp. ABA began slowly outlining a possible design for the necessary tools and the clamp itself. But the hose clamp did not carry top priority since the company was fully engaged throughout the war in manufacturing personal safety equipment. The turning point came when the Royal Swedish Airforce urgently called for a Swedish made hose clamp: "We will place an immediate order for 100 000 clamps if you start up production in Sweden". Prompted by this large order ABA intensified their attempts to make an all-Swedish worm-gear hose clamp.

Experience showed that other clamps had a tendency to come apart on the underside of the housing. As it expanded under load the housing would slip and the screw would lose its grip on the grooved metal. The idea of making the housing of a solid tube



and then pressing it into its present shape originated with engineer Edwin Bergström. A major problem in developing a truly "hard housing" was finding a suitable material which wouldn't crack when tempered. In its efforts to solve this problem ABA received useful assistance from Sandviken's ironworks and Uddeholmsbolaget.

A suitable material was needed not only for the housing but also for the coiled rolled strips into which the threads were originally cut.

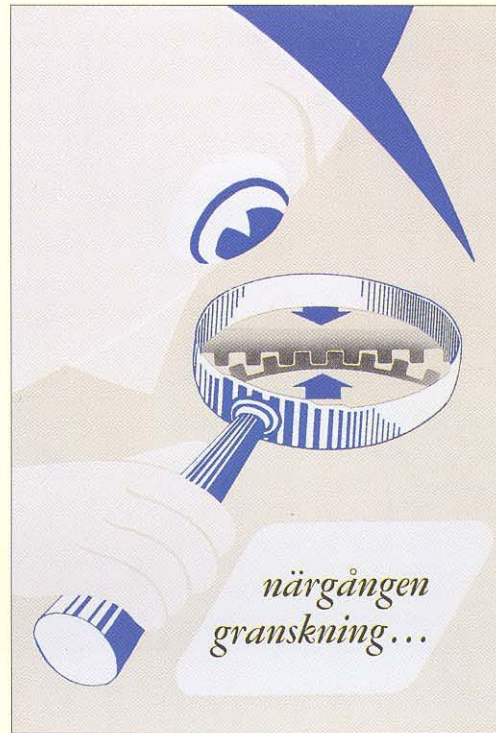
There were considerable difficulties in cutting the screws: the work was done on small lathes and the threads were cut bit by bit.

What was needed was an automatic screw-cutting lathe which could cut the thread in one go, but machinery of this type was not available in war-time. Finally, however, a couple of units were found at a scrapyards. Threading dies were installed and the manufacture of screws could begin.

Once the initial technical difficulties had been sorted out it was possible to manufacture a hose clamp of sufficiently high quality to meet the requirements of the Swedish Royal Air Force and Volvo Flymotor AB. Since they would be employed in sensitive applications and human life was at stake, the clamps had to satisfy stringent requirements.

By 1943, it was possible to start manufacture of the ABA clamp at Scheelegatan 28.

The ABA clamp would eventually also come to be used within civil aviation. Soon wholesale pipe and tube suppliers, ironmongers and, not least, the Swedish State Railways began asking for the company's clamps.



Early ad

Engineer Erik Bergström, son of Knut Bergström, and Managing Director between 1950–70, travelled extensively, visiting a large number of industries in Sweden and abroad, the latter in connection with trips arranged by the Swedish Association of Engineers and Architects, whose meetings he attended regularly. Wherever he went he always brought along a number of clamps which he would present to engineers in the various industries.

The foundation was laid and the company continued to develop.

The clamp was not only in demand on the Swedish market, by the 1940s it had gained an international reputation. Today, the ABA Clamp with its blue housing and rolled-up band edges is one of the best known clamps in the world.



Wattholma Bruk

Wattholma bruk

Soon ABA needed additional premises for production. As building was prohibited in the courtyard at Scheelegatan 28, the company purchased Wattholma Bruk in 1939. The newly acquired premises were situated some 120 km north of Stockholm and included an iron foundry, a mechanical workshop and a saw mill.

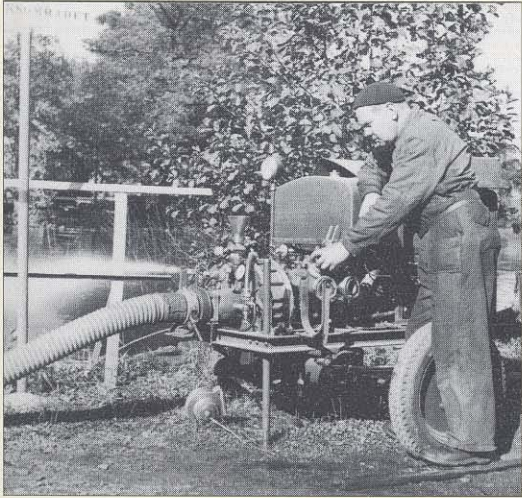
Wattholma Bruk, a manufacturing estate dating from the 12th century, was acquired after the demise of Baron Fredrik von Essen. The then manager of the estate Captain Fredrik Kuhlberg, was retained by ABA to stay on as local manager until the mid 50s. Soon after the purchase all manufacture of fire engines, towed motor-driven fire engines, fittings for fire-fighting equipment, ladders etc. was transferred from Scheelegatan 28, Stockholm to Wattholma.

There ABA manufactured emerg-

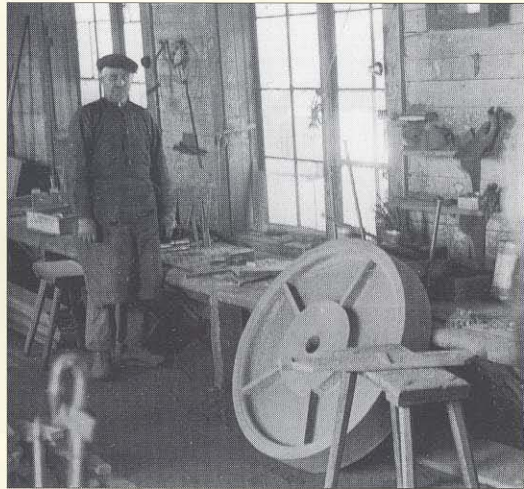
ency ambulances, towed fire engines, laundry and sterilisation trailers, ladders, etc. for the Swedish and Finnish armed forces. Among the larger orders received by ABA was an order from Poland for 20 fire-engines which were delivered during and after the second world war. The estate manufactured a total of approx. 150 fire engines prior to 1950.

The period leading up to 1960 was characterised by intensive marketing of Wattholma's own products, primarily personnel carriers, band saws, cement piercing units, spiral staircases, ladders for fire engines, and castings made of iron and other metals.

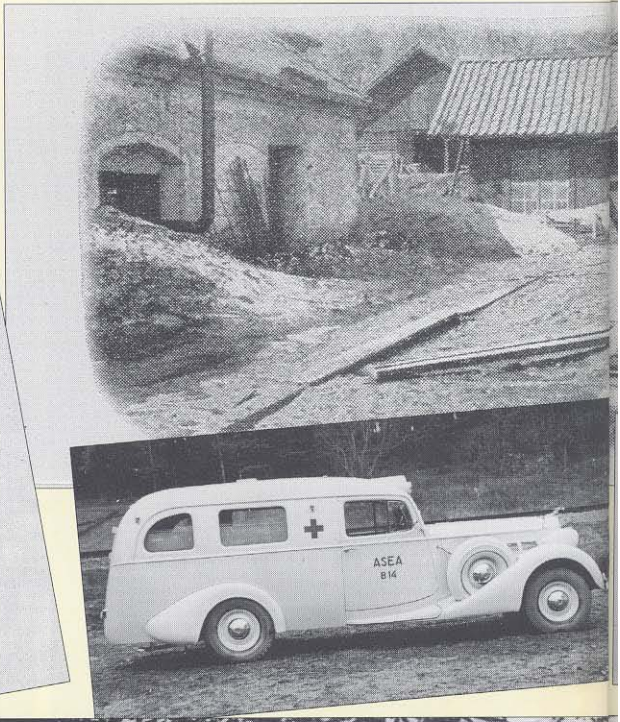
One of the most popular products was the so-called "Wattholma angel" of which hundreds of thousands were made. They were sold as souvenirs and soon became a symbol of Uppsala.



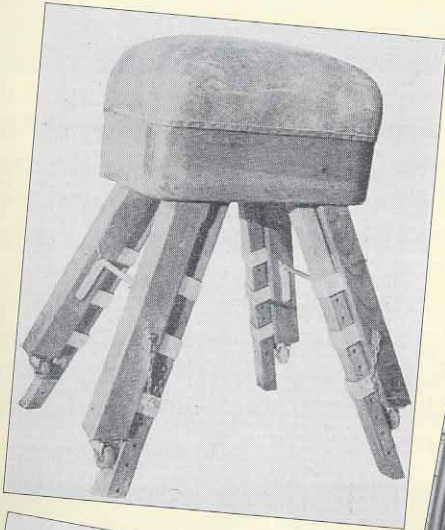
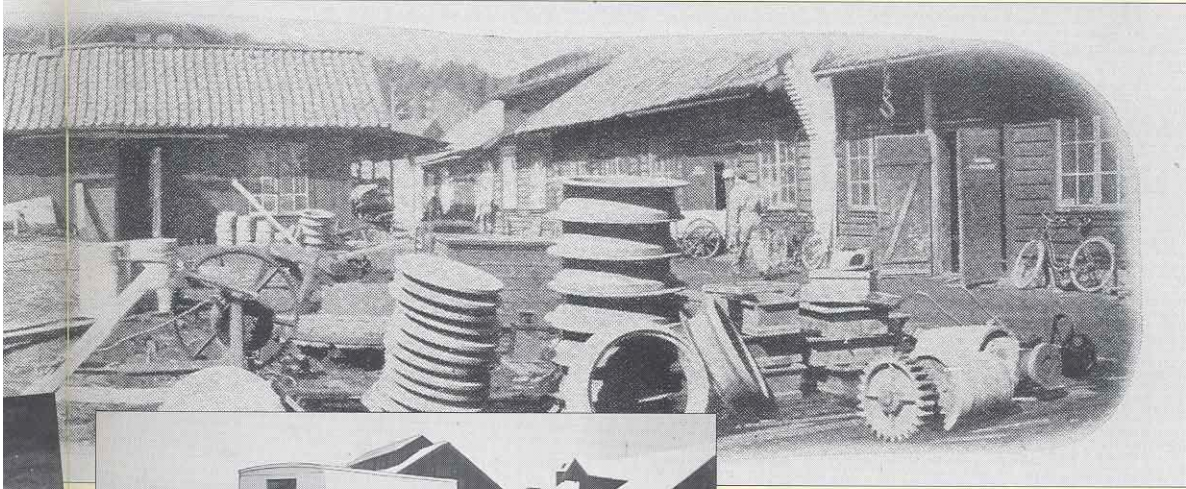
Wattholma bruk 1940–1950s



Products



from Wattholma bruk



GRANGARDE KYRKA

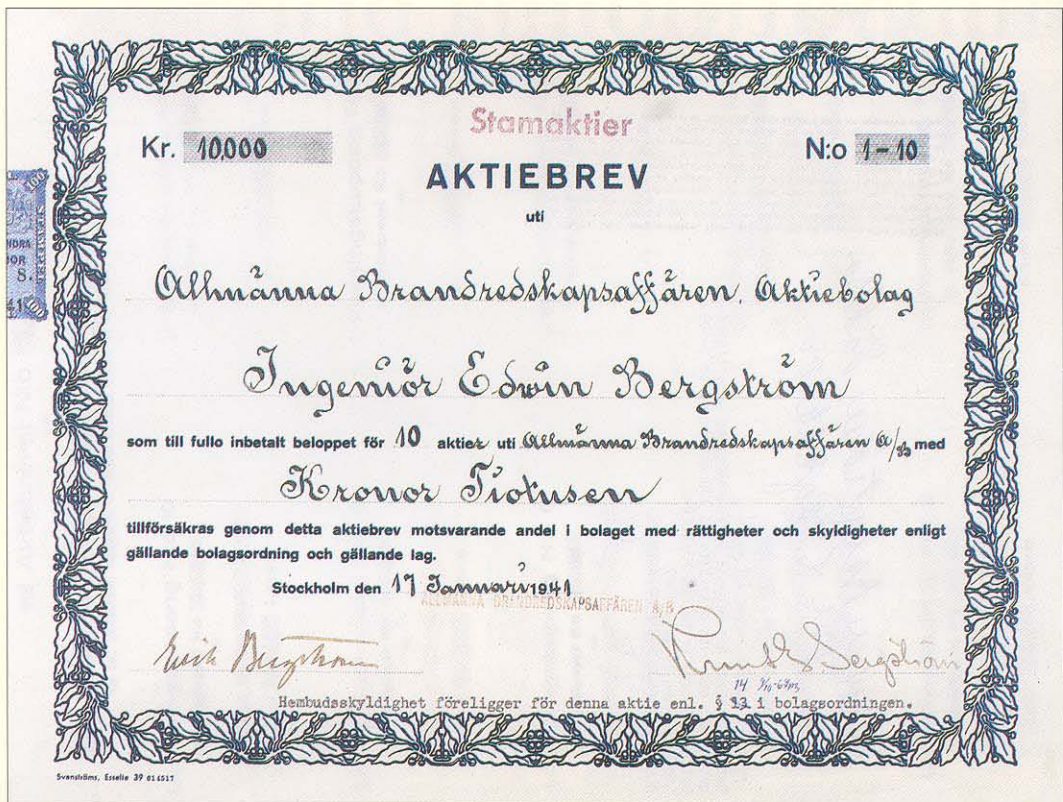
PÅ 1300-TALET
UPPFÖRDES SANNOLIKT
KYRKANS ÄLDSTA DELAR
UNDER 1000-1700 TALEN
VIDGADES OCH VÄLVDES DEN
TORNHUVEN BYGGDES 1883

ÅREN 1887-88
NÄR FINAR BILLING VAR
STIFTETS BISKOP OCH
E.K.BRANDT KYRKOHERDE
ÅTERSTÄLLES KYRKAN
TORNET BLEV BELAGT MED
KOPPAR. MURAR OCH VALV
OMPUTSADES. PÅ GOLVET
LADES TEGEL OCH MATTOR
DE GAMLA PORTARNA IN-
SATTES ÅTER. BÄNKARNA
GJORDES ÅNY OCH SLUTNA
ORGELN OCH TILLYGGDES
NY VÄRMELEDNING INFÖR-
DES. ÄLDRE INREDNING-
FÖREMÅL KONSERVERADES
AV JOHN ÖSTERLUND OCH
NYMALNING VERKSTÄLLES
AV MAURITZ E.KRÖLM
ARKITEKT VAR ERIK FANT

ÅREN 1901-03
DÅ ANDERS MAGNEVILLE
VAR SOCKNENS HERDE OCH
NILS LÖVGREN VAR BISKOP
BLEV EN OMFATTANDE
RENOVERING VERKSTÄLLD
GRUNDEN FÖRSTÄRKTD
TAKET BYGGDES OM OCH
BELADES MED SKIFFER
NYA FÖNSTER INSATTES
NY INREDNING UTFÖRDES
VÄRMELEDNING ANLADES
ARKITEKT VAR RELEKMAN



Photo: ABA:s archives



The first share

The founding of the company

On 1 December, 1940, Allmänna Brandredskapsaffären E. Bergström & Co was converted into a joint stock company named Allmänna Brandredskapsaffären AB.

AB Telesignal

AB Telesignal, established in 1946, was an electromechanical workshop situated at Ormbergsvägen 5 in Gröndal, Stockholm. The company manufactured electric clock units, automatic fire alarms, control units for fire-proof doors, fire-alarm boxes, internal telephone systems, staff location systems etc. ABA established itself as majority share holder during the accounting year of 1948–49, and in 1950 the

company became a subsidiary of ABA. Since Telesignal catered to the same clientele as ABA their products were incorporated into the sales organisation.

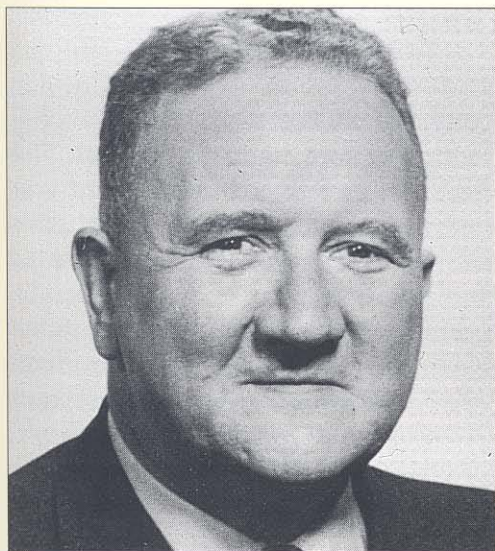
From this time onwards, Allmänna Brandredskapsaffären AB, Wattholma Bruk AB and AB Telesignal operated jointly under the name of the ABA Group.



The first carphone

1950–1980

After 1950 ABA began expanding into the word market. The man behind this internationalisation was Erik Bergström, the company's managing director and owner.



Erik Bergström

During his many journeys abroad, Erik Bergström, managing director and owner, established an extensive network of business contacts. Already by the end of the 1950s ABA were represented in most European markets as well as in Hong Kong and Thailand. Japan was added to the list at the end of the 60s.

The internationalisation campaign entailed making countless journeys for the purpose of establishing ABA. Although there was no shortage of business contacts the Group had not as yet attained a dominant position in any of the markets. The main objective was to engage competent importers.

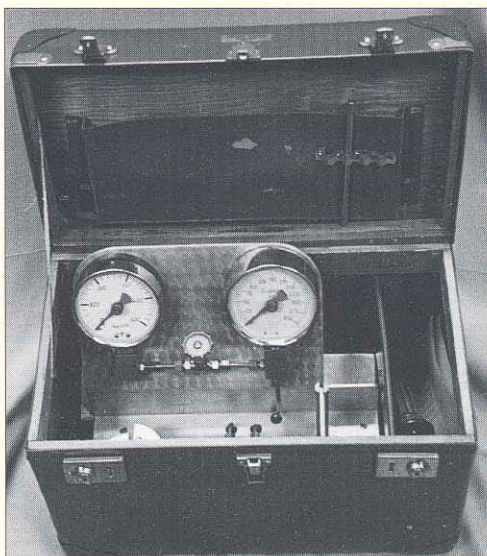
The company's representatives were very "aggressive" in their mar-

keting approach and were even prepared to jump into the grease pits to demonstrate, hands on, how excellent ABA clamps were.

Lars Andersson, Export Manager 1962–84, recounts how he always brought along a testing machine in his suitcase whenever he travelled abroad to establish the company on different markets

It allowed him to compare on site the quality of different hose clamps on the market, showing that the ABA clamp was the strongest one. ABA was the first company in the world to use this type of testing machine.

It took great skill to market the clamp – as a product it was very sen-



Test equipment used in most European countries during the 1960s

Photo: Eija-Maarit Karhu

sitive to market fluctuations. ABA succeeded, however using the slumps to establish new markets and importers.

Two factors contributed greatly to the product profile: the high quality of the clamp itself, and the epithet "the blue housing". Of these, quality was the most important. According to Lars Andersson "The product was of



Assembly of hose clamps at Wattholma Bruk 1967–68

such high technical quality that we had no hesitation in bringing it to the marketplace".

In 1963, the manufacture of hose clamps was moved from Scheelegatan to Wattholma Bruk. Stores and the sale of fire fighting equipment remained. About 2,5 million hose clamps had been manufactured annually at Scheelegatan. Every millionth clamp was celebrated with coffee and cakes. This is to be compared with the present output of 150 million hose clamps per year. After a few years in the red, the activities at AB Telesignal were discontinued and in 1965 the company's stock and assets were sold.

In 1961, ABA set up a sales office in Holland. In 1967, a new factory was

taken into operation at TER APEL for the sole purpose of assembling ABA clamps. It created an increased demand for material from Wattholma Bruk. During the 1980s the factory in Holland began own manufacture of semi-manufactures.

In 1965, the company was re-organised and streamlined. Not only was AB Telesignal discontinued, but the field organisation in Sweden, which consisted of five district sales representatives, was gradually cut back. The ABA fire equipment department was reduced dramatically and would have to make do with a staff of three to four persons.

In connection with the reorganisation, it was decided also to close down and sell off some of the manufacturing units at Wattholma Bruk. Having taken the decision to concentrate on developing the hose clamp ABA was in need of capital and space to increase manufacturing capacity.

In 1966, the manufacture of workmen's cabins was sold and in 1973 the foundry was shut down. New factory premises were erected at Wattholma during 1968 and 1969 in order to accommodate increased clamp production.



Celebration of Lucia at Scheelegatan, 1950s



Hose clamps with the blue housing

In 1974, a new sales company – ABA Germany – was established in Germany.

The mid 1970s was characterised by technological development including the introduction of semi-automatic assembly machines.

This work continued and during the first half of the 1980s the company's production of semi-manufactures was made much more efficient thus introducing a new phase in ABA's market development.

As of 1984 the department of fire

fighting equipment was gradually discontinued and in 1986 the remaining assets were sold off due to the market situation. ABA had been market leader in Sweden in the field of fire fighting equipment between 1896 and the mid 1970s. At its peak it had its own manufacturing facilities and approx. 20 agents world-wide.

Erik Bergström left as Managing Director in 1970 and was succeeded by Sten Kihlström who held the post between 1970 and 1981. Between 1981 and 1986 Engineer Sven Ribrant was Managing Director. During 1972 to 1986 the company was owned jointly by Erik Bergström's sons Tor, Jan, and Nils Bergström. After having acquired his brothers' shares in the company in 1986, Nils Bergström assumed the post of Managing Director representing the third generation of the Bergström family to head the company.

In 1987, ABA and their largest importers in Finland, KY K. Hartwall KB, jointly acquired the manufacturing rights for the ARIS hose clamp.



Photo: Löfholms Annonsbyrå AB

AWAB - Anderstorps Werkstads AB.

Anderstorp is a small town in western Småland, a province characterised by enterprise and initiative.

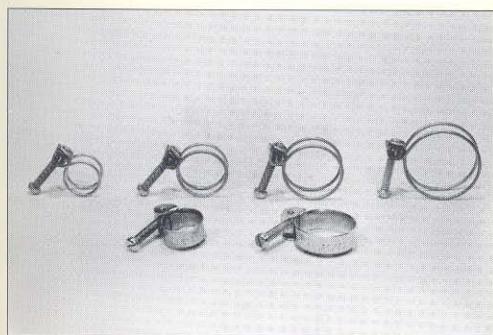
A positive climate for entrepreneurs, co-operation among the smaller companies, availability of skilled labour, and the early introduction of municipal vocational training were some of the key factors which contributed to the successful development of the area. AWAB's growth over fifty years is a good illustration of how far such conditions can favour development. The foundation was laid when Elof Svensson returned from USA and began manufacturing shoe clinchers, a product well in line with the area's long tradition of wire-working. On his demise in 1952 the premises and the

equipment were taken over by his nephew Gösta Carlsson an engineer who tried to keep the business going by adding new products. Gösta Carlsson, a technician, designed many of the machines that were needed. Among the new products were drive-belt clamps for Avanti harvesting machines, cooking ranges and other cast iron products for the armed forces, and reflectors made of red glass from Gullaskruf glass works. Car accessories such as tank filler caps and petrol cans also became important items. During the fifties, when wartime restrictions eased and wel-



Mr Svenningsson in the factory

fare rose, private car ownership boomed. The wholesale firm of Enterprise placed orders for various accessories and in 1954 Ingemar Svenningsson founded Bil Atlas AB for the purpose of selling automobile equipment. Their most important product category would in the long term prove to be hose clamps. After having inspected a wire clamp in his father's newly bought second hand Volvo Ingemar Svenningsson hit upon a much better design which could be marketed by his company. After having contacted Volvo the budding company was able to start up contract work using their own machines.



Wire clips

Anderstorps Werkstads AB

In 1954, Emil Svensson's old company was reconstituted into Anderstorps Werkstads AB. A hydraulic press for deep pressing was purchased and the company began doing contract manufacture for large companies like Electrolux and Monark. Not wanting to rely entirely on contract work the company designed and manufactured a number of own products. One such product was a combined ladder/chair (1956) which was later developed into several variants. Manufacturing started on a small scale in the base-

ment of the Anderstorp factory but grew rapidly until a total of 700 000 chairs had been made. The products were sold and distributed directly to iron mongers, furniture stores and the Co-Op as well as to other wholesalers. Another of the company's popular products at the end of the fifties was a combined reclining chair and spare bed called the Tri-Combi Chair.

The Urshult Factory

In 1958, Ingemar Andersson expanded the business by acquiring Swedima at Urshult, a company specialising in plastic products.

A hydraulic press was acquired also for Urshult where the emphasis was on bulkier products such as ice cream and hot-dog stands.

In Sweden it was a time of increasing leisure time and a rapidly rising standard of living. The demand for recreational products climbed steadily. Swedima manufactured about 70 different models of caravan, and collapsible camping furniture made of stainless tubing and plastic for easy transportation in a car. AWAB also made and sold in Scandinavia lawn mowers, camping tents, and parts for baracuda tents which were used as sports halls and storage facilities.



Filler caps

AWAB-products



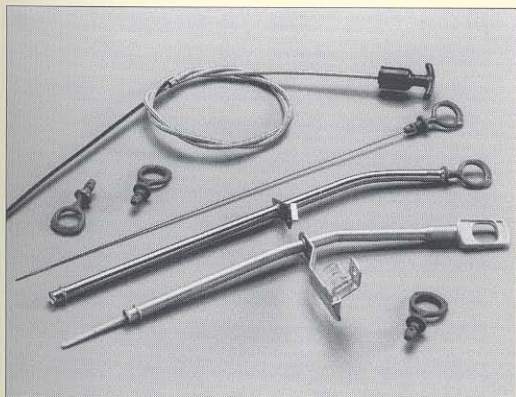


Photo: Roni Foto Jönköping and AWAB:s archives

Expansion in Anderstorp.

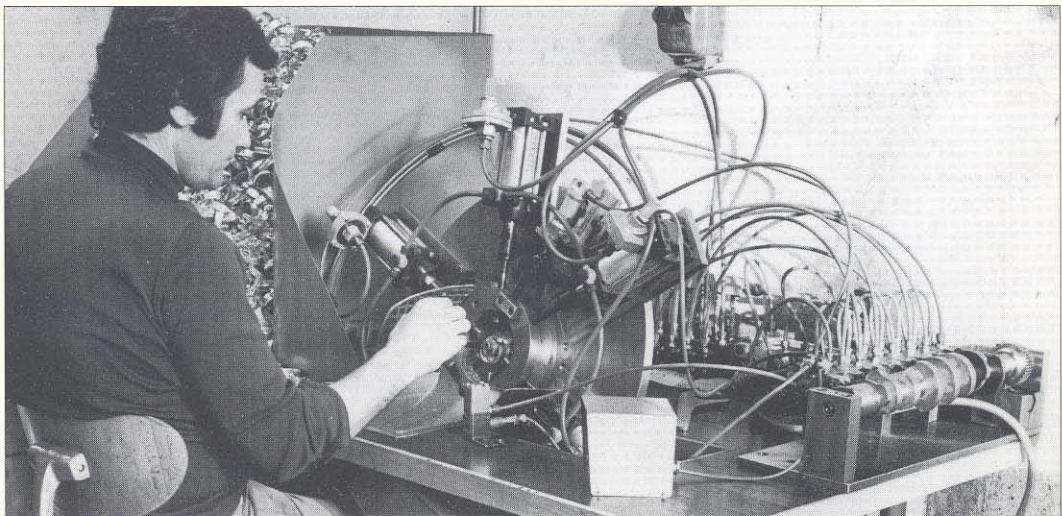
Despite the extension at Urshult the premises in Anderstorp soon became too small so new space was acquired jointly with Bil Atlas AB. The business was dominated by contract manufacture. Their main customers were, as before, Electrolux and Volvo. By acquiring a small factory in Jönköping it became possible also to produce galvanized products.

The manufacture of wire clamps continued but on an ever smaller scale. During the fifties the volume was about a million clamps per year at the end of the sixties annual production was down to a mere 20 000. Instead, the hose clamp range was developed and grew rapidly. First out was the band clamp which was dominant during the 60s. This was replaced at the end of the decade by the worm gear clamp. Own machines were designed and made for both pressing and rolling of the bands. A mini-clamp, the AWAB Mini, was added to the range. The clamps were galvanized as standard to give adequate corrosion

protection but were also available in stainless.

In the early 70s a new type of pipe clamp was designed together with two employees at Volvo. It was pressed in one piece and the rolled band edges ensured a substantial contact area with the pipe thus ensuring perfect sealing and avoiding damage to the pipe. The AWAB pipe clamp would remain securely locked in place even on vibrating components. Early versions of shower cabinets and car roof boxes were produced but being ten years ahead of their time they proved impossible to market effectively. Among the major products were various kinds of tool boxes, silencers for Partner motor saws, heat exchangers for Volvo and bank note cassettes for cash dispensers. Plastic products were still being produced at Urshult where flower boxes for outdoor use was a big item.

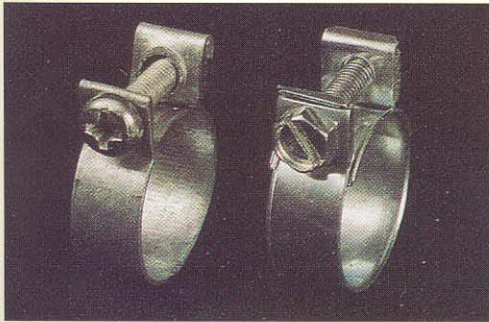
Peak employment was reached at the end of the seventies when AWAB had about 150 employees.



Manufacture of AWAB clamps

Establishment abroad

Of all the changes made during the seventies the most decisive one for the future, not counting the technological development of the clamp range itself, was probably the establishment of an international network. When Volvo moved part of its production to Ghent in Belgium at the beginning of the seventies, AWAB too, set up a company in Belgium. In 1972 an own hose clamp factory was built at Mouscron near the border with France primarily to supply Volvo's needs. An assembly plant partially manned by Swedish wor-



Mini G

kers was set up at Tourcoing on the other side of the border.

In the Swedish settlement of Rockford, Illinois, in the USA, a company was established in 1980 for the purpose of manufacturing of mini clamps. It was a joint venture together with Bill Johnson, whose forefathers hailed from Halland in Sweden.

The company became sole distributor of Mini G clamps to Chrysler.

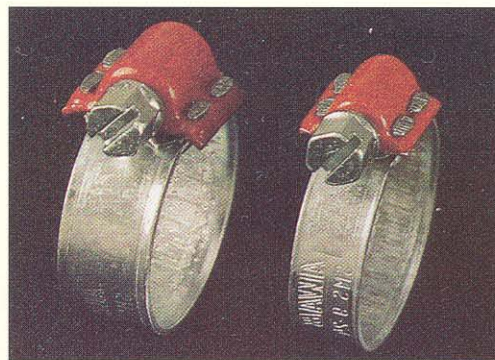
Shortly thereafter, Ingemar Svenningsson set up AWAB Ltd. in Hertford, Great Britain. Sales companies were established in Switzerland and Germany, the latter with an assembly plant for exhaust pipe clamps in Hannover. In Hungary, a

joint venture company which manufactured screws for the AWAB Group and assembled clamps for the domestic market was established during the early period of liberation from planned economy.

Consolidation in Sweden during the 1980s

In Sweden, the 1980s was a period of consolidation. The relatively new manufacture of bank note cassettes was transferred to an own company UTEW. HAWAB was created as a purchasing and market organisation for all companies where Ingemar Svenningsson was part owner. During the 80s almost all of AWAB's manufacturing activities were concentrated to Anderstorp with approx. 100 employees. The manufacture of clamps was concentrated and automated even further.

The premises were outgrown and, as the original property in Anderstorp didn't permit any further expansion AWAB purchased a large parcel of land in a newly established industrial estate. There they built a modern factory building with a floor area of 2000 square metres. First to move in was the pressing section followed by the other production units.



Hose clamps with red housing

1990s

On 1 October, 1990, ABA of Sweden AB merged with Anderstorps Werkstads AB.

The merger resulted in the creation of the ABA Group. The brand names ABA and AWAB were retained.

ABA thus became the world's largest manufacturer and supplier of products for hose tightening.



During the 1990s ABA has continued to grow on the world market. In 1992, ABA of America was created and in 1994 the company purchased the clamp manufacturing unit from UTILUX PTY Ltd. in Australia.

Through a cooperation agreement making UTILUX general importers, ABA is now market leader in Australia.

Together with the people responsible for ABA's success in Hong Kong, ABA Well Grow Ltd., Hong Kong, was created in 1995.

In 1994 ABA began actively to work up the markets in former Eastern

Europe and China. Contacts were already established in Hungary since the 1970s and these were further cultivated. Besides Hungary, ABA today has representatives in Poland, The Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Slovakia. In 1995 the first direct deliveries were made to Russia and China. All told, ABA exports to 60 different countries, the biggest market being Japan.

Since merging with AWAB in 1990, the company has undergone a period of restructuring. Today, in 1995, the ABA Group has a solid base for further expansion.

Production units



ABA of Sweden AB

Factory area: 6 260m²

Number of employees: 125 full-time

12 mm ABA Original, stainless,
acid proof

ABA of Holland B.V.

Factory area: 3 450m²

Number of employees: 80 full-time

9 mm, ABA Nova, ABA Mini,
screws for the group



ABA of Belgium S.A.

Factory area: 3 770m²

Number of employees: 65 full-time

Manufacture of AWAB clamps,
exhaust clamps, special products,
Mini G



ABA of America Inc.

Factory area: 1 000m²

Number of employees: 8 full-time

Manufacture of bands and assembly
of AWAB clamps, Mini G



ABA Polska Sp. zo.o.

Assembly of AWAB clamps

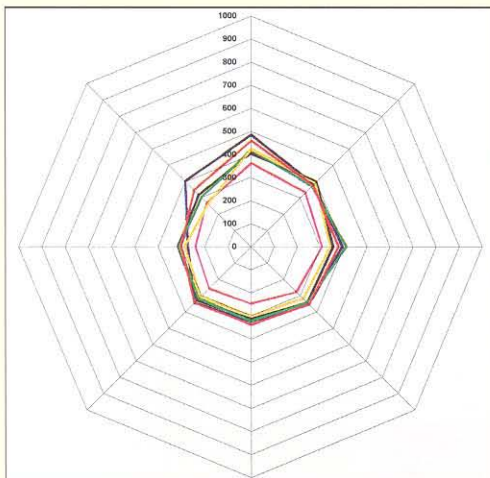


Every year ABA participates in approx. 10–12 trade fairs all over the world. Exhibition manager is Inger Skali

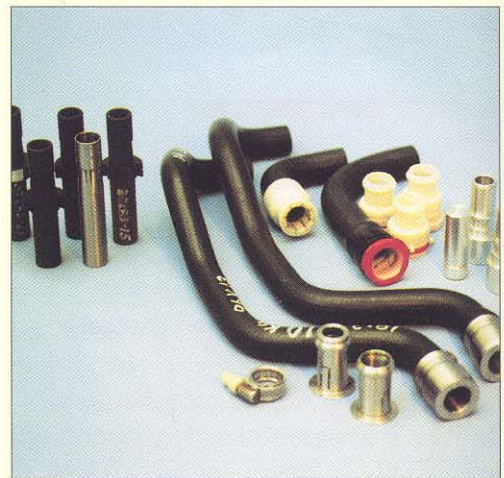
In terms of technical development, the aim is to create a fully automatic production process. An integral part of this plan is, however, to continue to rely on local contracts for assembly. ABA is determined to become "best in the world" in components, leaving assembly in the hands of different local units adapted to the conditions of the different countries or regions.

ABA is currently engaged in widening their range of products for hose

tightening, pipe fastening and clamping. To this end the company has a two pronged strategy: growth through the acquisition of new companies, and in-house research and development. The board at ABA has allocated substantial sums of money for R & D. Couplings, one the earliest cornerstones of Allmänna Brandredskapsaffären will again appear in the Company's range of products. Development has come full circle.



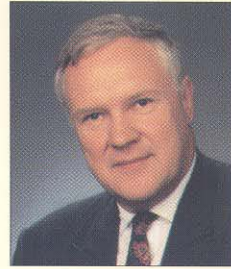
Clamping force diagram from modern test equipment developed in-house



A selection of prototypes from the ABA R&D department.

ABA is a modern company with a high IT competence and ISO 9001/9002 certified production units. Integrated product/production development, acquisition of companies within our domain and continuous investments in marketing are central to our company policy. Our activities into the 21st century are determined by our customers Worldwide!

*Nils Bergström
Managing Director and principal owner*



The merger between ABA/AWAB was right in time. A strong market organisation, an up-to-date, highly developed product range, and a sound economy are achievements we have every reason to be proud of. I think we will surge ahead like a rocket in the future.

*Ingemar Svenningsson
Part-owner*



Comprehensive concentration on product development, market penetration, production structures and mergers and acquisitions have positioned ABA/AWAB as a dominating actor on the global market as regards hose clamps and fasteners.

Our overall objective is to continue this process. Our financial strength, our technical know-how and our market position will serve us well as we enlarge our cooperation with the automotive industry as well as other industries.

John Dahlfors. Chairman of the Board. Part-owner



ABA 100 YEARS

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