



The fire in Lærdal

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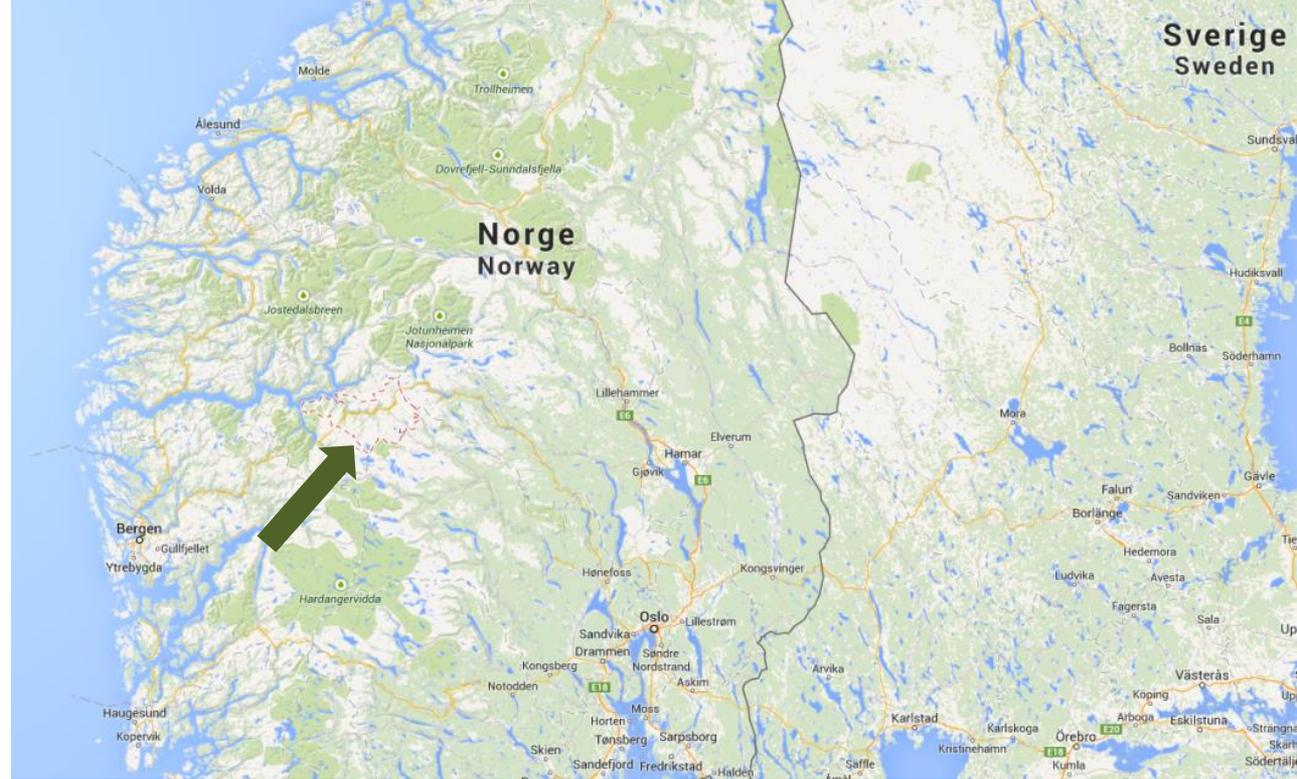
Lærdal

Is a small municipality located at the head of Sognefjorden, 260km from Oslo and 217km from Bergen, the two largest cities in Norway.

County: Sogn og Fjordane

Population: 2100

Size: 1 342 km²



The fire arose in Lærdalsøyri, a village with a population of 1147.



Sequence of events

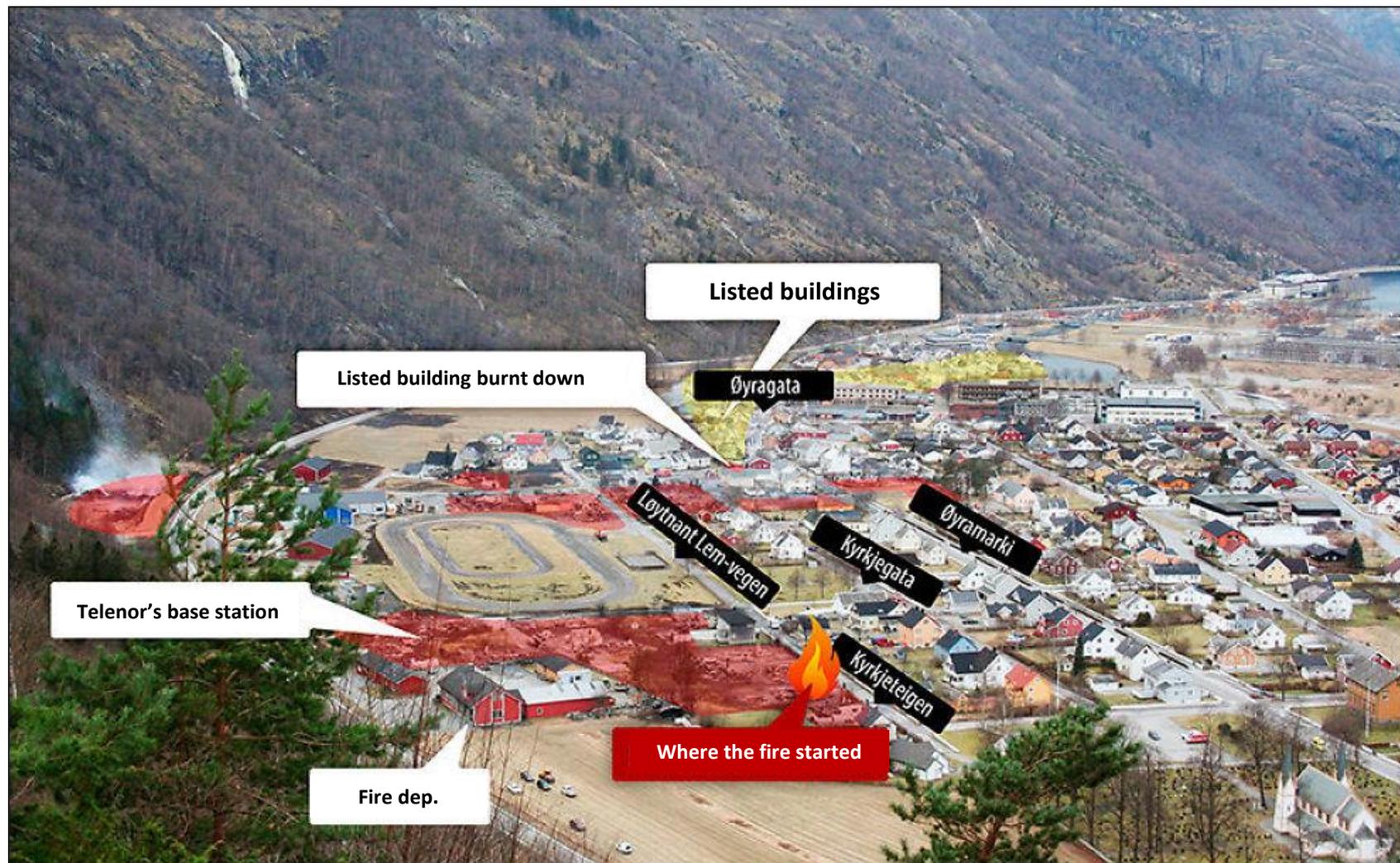
On the evening of 18th January 2014, a fire arose in a residential dwelling in Lærdalsøyri. Due to strong wind and a dry season with little snow, it spread rapidly.

The fire department received the first call at 22:53, and arrived at the dwelling at 22:59. By then, the whole house was on fire. 20 minutes later, three additional dwellings had caught fire. During the next hour, more dwellings started burning.

Several of the preserved buildings (old wooden buildings close together) in the old town also caught fire, but due to the effort of volunteers most of the area was saved.



Overview of the affected area







Scope

The fire in Lærdal is the most extensive in Norway since the second world war:

- 0 casualties, 270 people were admitted to Lærdal hospital
- 71 people lost their homes and everything they owned
- 41 buildings were destroyed in total: 17 dwellings, 24 other buildings (including 4 protected in the old town) such as garages, outhouses, commercial buildings
- 393 dwellings (681 people) were evacuated
- The affected area is approx. 500x200 meters in the residential area



Electricity and ICT infrastructure

- Due to the fire in Telenor's telecom building in Lærdal, 22 of Telenor's base stations, and 16 TeliaSonera stations were out of service.
- All ICT services were down the night between the 18th – 19th of January. During the 20th of January, Telenor managed to restore 2G and 3G coverage by using mobile base stations. Temporary solutions for ICT infrastructure were restored after approx. 40 hours.
- Lack of ecom services made it more difficult to organise the fire extinguishing and rescue work.
- The main power supply in Lærdal municipality was destroyed in the fire. For several days after, Lærdal had to use emergency generators. Stabilising the electricity supply was critical, as the temperature dropped to below -5C°.
- During the 20th of January, most households regained electricity supply from emergency diesel aggregates, but were urged to use as little as possible.
- The electricity and ICT infrastructure breakdowns also lead to problems in the near by institutions, tunnels and industry such as food stores.

Investigation

- KRIPOS, the National Criminal Investigation Service arrived in Lærdal on the evening of 19th January.
- There was no evidence of any criminal acts, the fire was not deliberate.
- KRIPOS conducted both technical investigations and questioning of witnesses.
- Several insurance companies also arrived in Lærdal in the days after the fire. The cost of rebuilding Lærdalsøyri was then estimated to 100-150 million NOK (€12-18 million). Later, it was adjusted to 200 million NOK.



The householders in Lærdal

- 71 people lost their homes in the fire, and an additional 40-50 people have inhabitable homes due to fire- and water damage.
- Many of the inhabitants (over 100) in Lærdalsøyri participated as volunteers in extinguishing the fire. In the days after, many participated in helping the victims.
- The national media coverage of the fire included many interviews with householders either as eye witnesses or victims.
- Householders thus dealt with information from the fire and rescue services, Lærdal municipality, as well as communicating with national and international media.

Mistet minnene etter faren i Lærdal-brannen



Sverre (77) måtte flykte:
Overnattet i naboens bil



Flyktet med Barzic (6)



- Uansett hvor vi
snudde oss, så var det
noe som sto i brann

Rebuilding Lærdal

- A month after the fire, Lærdal municipality established a project entitled “Reconstruction and Development of Lærdal”. The project has three main goals:
 1. Rapid return to daily life
 2. Decreasing future vulnerability
 3. A possibility for further development of effectiveness, value and attractiveness of Lærdal
- Much of the debate has revolved around finding financial support.
- It will take 2-5 years to rebuild Lærdalsøyri.



The Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg (H) and Minister of Justice and Public Security Anders Anundsen (FrP) visits Lærdal after the fire.

The National Budget

- In the revised National Budget for 2014, an extra 10 million NOK is set aside for prevention measures in old wooden buildings and churches in Norway.
 - The Directorate for Cultural Heritage is responsible for distributing the extra funding.
 - Lærdal received 2 million NOK, by far the largest share.
- In the National Budget for 2015, another extra 20 million NOK is set aside for prevention measures. Lærdal may apply for further funding.