

# INGATORP TITHE BARN

In a corner of Ingatorp graveyard, a stone's throw from the magnificent church, is an unpretentious timbered shed. This is one of the oldest preserved wooden buildings in Sweden! Analysis of the growth rings from a core sample revealed that the timber for the barn was felled sometime between 1219 and 1239. Only the timber church of Granhult (north of Lenhovda) from around 1217 is older.

The barn was constructed in pine timber, hewn to give sharp edges and smooth surfaces. If you look at the logs in a raking light, you can see that a hewing technique characteristic for Scandinavia in the Middle Ages, so called "sprättäljning", has been used. The timber is notched at the corners. The building has an almost church-like stature, with a steep gable roof. The exterior walls are clad in red-painted pine shingles of considerable age. The oldest date back to the 16th century, and the youngest are believed to be from the early 19th century. Originally, the barn had a shingle roof, but this was replaced in the 19th century by the handmade tiles we see today. One of the gables has a medieval panelled door with wrought iron details. Apart from a hatch above the door, the barn has no other openings.

The internal walls are bare, although there are traces of previous lime washing. The split, hewn floor boards and the roof trusses are believed to be original. Several lines and roman numbers are carved in the wall, and there is evidence of grain bin structures. Grain has also been found in cracks. This shows that the building was a tithe barn, subsequently used as a storehouse by the church.

Already in the 13th century, every parish was obliged to build a so called tithe barn. This was used to store the clergy's payment-in-kind, tithe, i.e. a tenth of the parishioners' annual production. In addition to cover the clergyman's subsistence, the tithe should cover church maintenance and almshouses. The bishop also had a share. Only a few tithe barns remain in Sweden.



The medieval door with wrought iron details. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



## HIDDEN GEM 6



### HOW TO GET HERE

The barn is located in the south-western corner of Ingatorp cemetery in Ingatorp, just north of Road 40, between Eksjö and Mariannelund.

Coordinates:

N 6388513 / E 524355  
(SWEREF 99 TM). N 57°  
38' 17.79", E 15° 24' 28.52"  
(WGS84)



The barn was built sometime between 1219 and 1239 to store the clergy's tithe. It is now the second oldest, dated, wooden building in Sweden. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.

JÖNKÖPINGS LÄNS  
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## HIDDEN GEMS

There are so many things to discover in the countryside! Here, Jönköping County Museum presents some of the cultural environment and heritage attractions in the county.

They include well-known cultural monuments such as Habo Church and the Smålandsstenar Stone Circles, but also lesser known gems such as log-driving remains in the river Valån and Stengårdshult Church. Around the county you can find evidence of how people lived and worked in the past, everything from castles and manors to abandoned embankments and clearance cairns in forest areas.

The idea with Hidden Gems is to tempt you to make excursions in the cultural landscape – here you find our history, revealed in different ways in the physical environment. This heritage is worth experiencing and protecting. Bit by bit, we will be adding more sights under the heading Hidden Gems, both for people living in the county and visitors from further away. The more people who discover these gems, the better chance that they will be preserved for the future.

### FACTS

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In Jönköping County there are more than 4 000 registered ancient remains, 87 cultural environments of national interest, close to 130 listed buildings, around 150 churches, some 100 rural community centres with old settlements, a large number of industrial heritage sites, and two cultural reserves. There are also a large number of cultural environments with buildings worthy of conservation. More information about the sites can be found on the websites of the County Administrative Board, the municipalities and the local heritage societies.

### GOOD TO KNOW

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Access to the Hidden Gems varies. Some sites are well signposted, with easy access and proper parking facilities, etc. Others are more challenging to reach. Visitors may have to walk some distance, sometimes through scrubby forest, only to be met by a broken sign (if there ever was one) when they reach the site. All the sites, however, have an exciting and interesting history.

Please note that many of the cultural heritage buildings are privately owned and can only be viewed from the outside. Also, please respect private land. Many churches are open in the summer. During other times of the year, the churchwarden may be able to open the church for you.

