

ERIKSGATULEDEN TRAIL

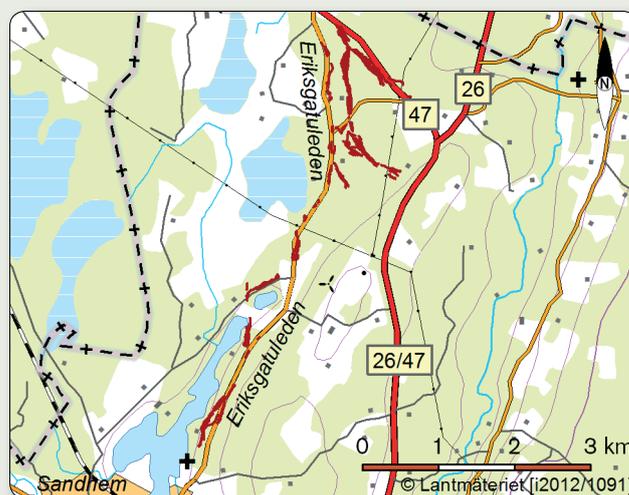
King Magnus Eriksson's country law from 1350 states: "Now he shall ride the Eriksgata and the lawmen shall follow him and give him hostages ... Now he shall ride sunwise through his country". The text tells us that every newly elected medieval king must ride a royal tour of the realm and at each province have the elections confirmed by local lawspeakers. In the Middle Ages, kings were elected at Mora Stones in Uppland, and participation was originally restricted to the people of Svealand. It was therefore important that the king travelled around the country to have his power and status approved. The king thus rode with his escort through the provinces of Uppland, Södermanland, Östergötland and northern Småland, following the eastern shores of Lake Vättern down to Jönköping. From there, the return journey went through Västergötland, Närke and Västmanland, before the king again reached Uppland as a "real king".

Today, we can trace the routes of kings and other travellers in the landscape, through the sunken lanes, or holloways, that reveal where footpaths and bridledways went. They are best visible in sloping terrain where the ground was most disturbed. In such places, the sunken lanes are up to three metres deep ditches. In flatter terrain, the lanes are more cup-shaped and only one or two decimetres deep. Sometimes there is only one lane, but in some places there are "multi-lane systems", with several lanes next to each other. A number of such sites are found in Sandhem parish in the municipality of Mullsjö.

Starting from Sandhem Church in the south, an extensive system of holloways runs north towards Kymbo on the other side of the county border. The system is approximately 12 kilometres long and in places follows current roads. This was part of the king's route and also the old road between Skara and Jönköping. Today, we can follow a part of the Eriksgata on a 7 kilometre long prepared walking trail, starting from Sandhem Church, alternatively from Slättäng along Road 47.



Marked holloway forming part of the Eriksgatuleden Trail.
Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 23



HOW TO GET HERE

Southern trail: Parking at Sandhem Church; the trail starts around 300 m north of here.

Northern trail: From Road 47 turn by sign for "Eriksgatuleden".

Coordinates:

Southern part of the trail
(RAÄ no: Sandhem 29:1):
N 6429318 / E 428495
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
59' 58.96" E 13° 47' 24.94"
(WGS84)



Sunken lanes that form part of the Eriksgatuleden Trail in Sandhem. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.

JÖNKÖPINGS LÄNS
MUSEUM

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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

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

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.

