

VIDALEN GRAVE FIELD

In 1815, the parson Jonas Johan Lagergren wrote in an account of the ancient monuments in the Tofteryd district “In the so called Widedalen, ..., by the left hand side of the road, when travelling from Tofteryd to Skillingaryd, are 7 slightly raised stones, erected in the way that is common at the old ‘domareplatserna.’”

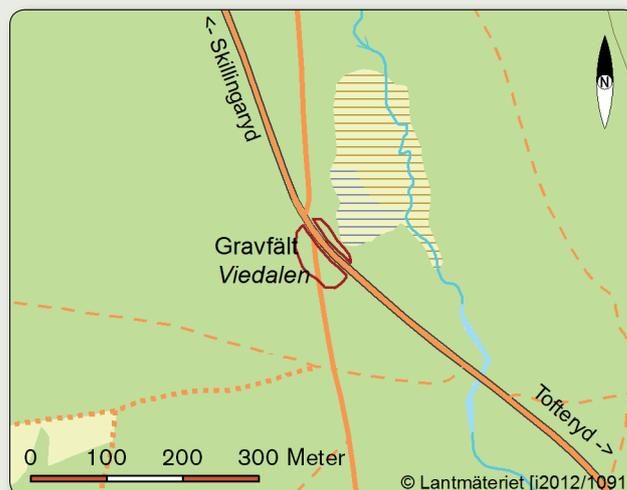
The name domareplats (thingstead), which had already been in use for a long time, reflects what people at the time believed that these constructions represented, i.e. a place where in the past Things were held and disputes settled. Even today, ancient monuments of this type are called “judge circles”, although we now know that they actually mark graves from the Iron Age.

The grave field comprises some 30 visible graves: four stone circles, 25 standing stones and one turf-covered stone setting. The large standing stone north of the road is called “Store sten” (Large stone). The type of graves found here is normally dated to the period from the Late Roman Iron Age to the Migration Period (200–600 A.D.). The standing stones could very well have been part of stone circles that have been destroyed. We know that the grave field has been subject to vandalism as records show that stones from here were used for, among other things, a bridge construction. We also know that grave fields from this era often contain significantly more graves than those you see above ground. Grave markings by way of circular or square formations of small stones, which have become overgrown and hidden by vegetation, are more the rule than the exception in connection with stone circles and standing stones. It is more than likely that an archaeological investigation would enable a reconstruction of large parts of the grave field, offering an idea of what it looked like originally.

In the 1920s, some restoration measures were carried out, e.g. erecting some fallen stones and replacing stones that were known to have disappeared.



The captain Bror Kugelberg poses on horseback by “Store sten” (Large stone) at Viedalen. Photo: Algot Friberg 1923, Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 39

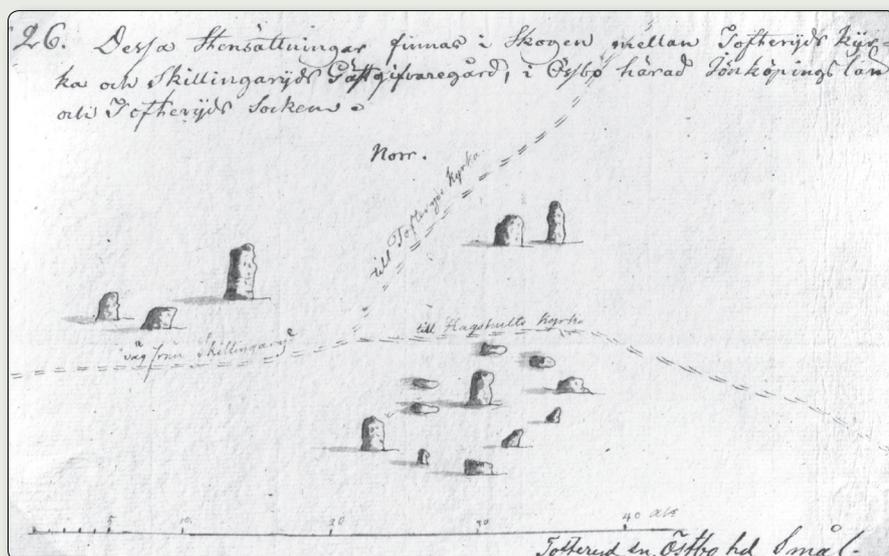


HOW TO GET HERE

From Skillingaryd, take the southern E4 motorway approach. Drive towards Tofteryd for approx. 2 km. The road goes through the grave field.

Coordinates:

N 6363369 / E 447198
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
24' 36.02", E 14° 7' 15.98"
(WGS84)



Drawing of the ancient monuments at Viedalen, probably by the major B. A. Ennes in the 1810s. Antiquarian Topographical Archives, National Historical Museums in Sweden.

JÖNKÖPINGS LÄNS
MUSEUM

036-30 18 00 • www.jkpglm.se



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.

