

LOG FLUME IN THE RIVER VALÅN

A meandering forest road, up and down the hills, through Småland spruce forest, and after a feeling of being lost among all the trees, the road suddenly ends in a large turning area. After walking the path towards the sound of the rushing rapids, you will be richly rewarded by the sight of the impressive log flume in the river Valån; a respectable cultural monument from the log-driving era and a rare attraction, not only in Jönköping County, but in the whole of southern Sweden.

Although it is only 50 years since the operations ceased, few people are aware of the quite extensive timber-floating that took place in southern Sweden from the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century. The most important water-courses used for log-driving in Jönköping County were the rivers Nissan, Lagan and Emån. The public floatways in the Nissan water system comprised a network of 200 kilometres and was thus the most extensive in southern Sweden. Valån, a tributary of the river Nissan, was thus a tributary floatway. It was established as a public floatway with its own river drive association in 1919. At an early stage, pit props were floated for export to the English coal mines, but mainly the transport consisted of pulpwood for the paper mill Hyltebruk.

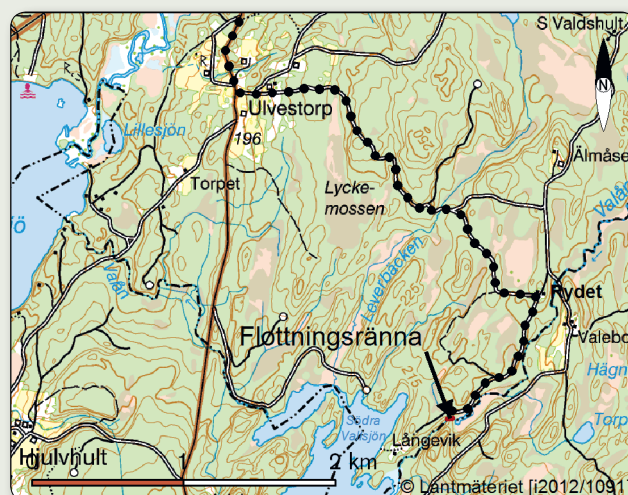
At the waterfall Valefallet there is a reconstructed 40 metre long log flume, which neatly follows the bends and gradients of the river along the 8 meter fall. Here, the dam structure and an eel hatch have also been restored.

In the past, the river Valån was widely used as a source of energy by small-scale industries, such as wiredrawing, mills and sawmills. The ruins of these can be seen in several places. Many mills were already set up in the 17th century, and extensive eel fishing also took place in the river.

On site, there is an information board where you can read about the log-driving history of the river. A fireplace has been prepared where you can eat your picnic and enjoy the beautiful countryside.



Dam upriver of the log flume. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM IO

HOW TO GET HERE

From Nissastigen (Road 26): North of Öreby, turn towards Valdshult. After the bridge across the river Nissan, turn right. Follow the road for 2.5 km to Ulvestorp. Turn left towards Älmåsen. Follow the road for 4 km; keep right where the road forks; keep right at Rydet until you reach a turning place.

Coordinates:
N 6369208 / E 422981
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
27' 32.38", E 13° 42' 58.56"
(WGS84)



Restored log flume in the river Valån. Photo: Jönköping County 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.

