

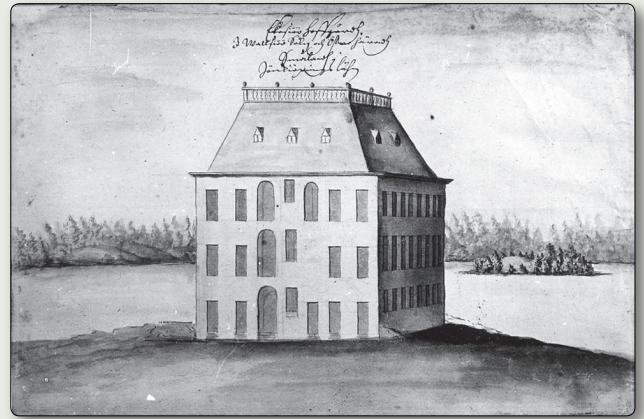
EKSJÖHOVGÅRD CASTLE RUINS

With a romantic location on an island outside Sävsjö lie the ruins of Eksjöhovgård Castle. The small island formed a centre for one of Småland's largest property complexes, which at the end of the Middle Ages comprised 43 estates in 13 parishes. The castle was at that time held by the influential Sture family. The estate buildings then very likely consisted only of wooden houses.

The ruins of the stone building we see today, remind us of the higher nobility's building projects during the Swedish Empire: lavish investments that failed due to the reality of scant resources. It was one of the field marshals from the Thirty Years' War, subsequently privy councillor Karl Mauritz Lewenhaupt, who, shortly before his death, in 1666 started the building of a square three-storey stone house with a balcony at the top. The first floor was going to be purely for entertaining. The original plans came from Stockholm, and the idea was to create a symmetrical building. But reality caught up when in the 1680s Lewenhaupt's descendants lost large parts of the estate in the Great Reduction. The remains were sold in 1700. The house had only just got its steep roof and balcony. There were no furnishings, windows or exterior decor. The symmetry of the façades was also faltering.

The castle stood empty until the 1730s, when the new owner, Magnus Julius De la Gardie demolished the top floor and changed the division of space, as well as moving the kitchen from one of the wings to the main building. A number of rooms were furnished, but it is unclear whether the castle was ever lived in before De la Gardie's death in 1741. After this, the castle started to fall into decay, and after the copper roof was taken down in 1812 the process was quick. When the ruins were preserved in the 1930s, they were in a very poor state and the entire south façade had collapsed. Since then, the ruins have been subject to regular maintenance measures, the latest in 2009.

As a hundred year old building project Eksjöhovgård was a failure. But the atmospheric ruins are well worth a visit, and the castle is a strong symbol for the locality.



Erik Dahlberg's drawing of the castle around 1680 – a building project that was never completely finished.



HIDDEN GEM 30

HOW TO GET HERE

The castle ruins are located by Lake Eksjöhovgårdssjön, just less than 1 km east of Sävsjö along Road 127 towards Vetlanda.

Coordinates:

N 6361060 / E 481183
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
23' 31.01", E 14° 41' 13.00"
(WGS84)



The ruins of the 17th century Eksjöhovgård Castle are located on an island outside Sävsjö. Photo: Leif Gustavsson/L.G.foto.

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.

