

# VALLSJÖ OLD CHURCH AND RUNE STONE

The Romanesque church in Vallsjö was built in the second half of the 12th century and is a so called Njudung church. The church had a narrow western tower from the start, but the top part was destroyed in 1568 when the church was burned by the Danish in the Nordic seven-year war. The church was restored after the fire, but the tower was never reconstructed. Instead, a separate bell tower was built.

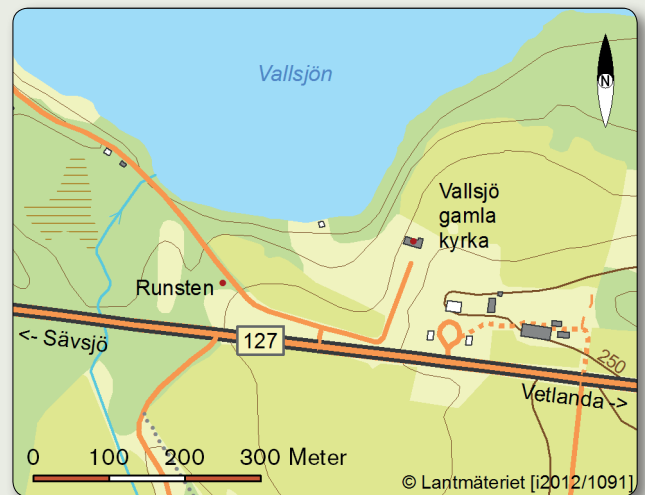
When the new church very close to Sävsjö was opened in 1892, the old church started to decay. The organ was moved to the new church, and the bell tower was demolished. But even if the old church was no longer in use, it was continuously maintained, and a new bell tower was constructed in 1929. Following extensive renovations, the church re-opened in 1951.

The church has two entrances. One is at the southern part of the chancel and has a sculptured tympanum over the door. The other one is through the porch on the west side of the church. Inside the church, the flat wooden ceiling has Late Baroque paintings from the first half of the 18th century. The paintings are done in tempera mixed with oil and were partly uncovered in the 1950s, having been painted over in the 19th century. The chancel arch paintwork was added during a renovation in 1822. Fixtures of interest include the Peasant Baroque pulpit from the end of the 17th century with sculptures depicting the apostles John, Peter and Paul. The pews date from around 1700, and the organ with five stops was made in 1868.

Around 250 metres south-west of the church is a rune stone (Sm 80) on a small mound just south of the old road. This is one of the around 10 known “bridge stones” in Jönköping County. It was previously located around 1.5 kilometres further south by the so called Runnkärret bog, where there was once a “corduroy road”. The stone was removed in the 1820s to be used as a stepping stone, but was erected in its present place in 1938.



“Väste (Visäte) and Ivar (or Joar) and Sylva, three brothers, built this bridge and erected this stone in memory of, their father”, is the inscription on the rune stone. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



## HIDDEN GEM 33



### HOW TO GET HERE

Vallsjö Old Church is situated along Road 127 (Sävsjö-Vetlanda), 5 km east of Sävsjö.

Coordinates:

N 6361185 / E 485676  
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°  
23' 35.63", E 14° 45' 42.06"  
(WGS84)



Vallsjö Old Church with its typical medieval exterior. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.

JÖNKÖPINGS LÄNS  
MUSEUM

036-30 18 00 ▪ [www.jkpglm.se](http://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.

