

EDSHULT CASTLE RUINS

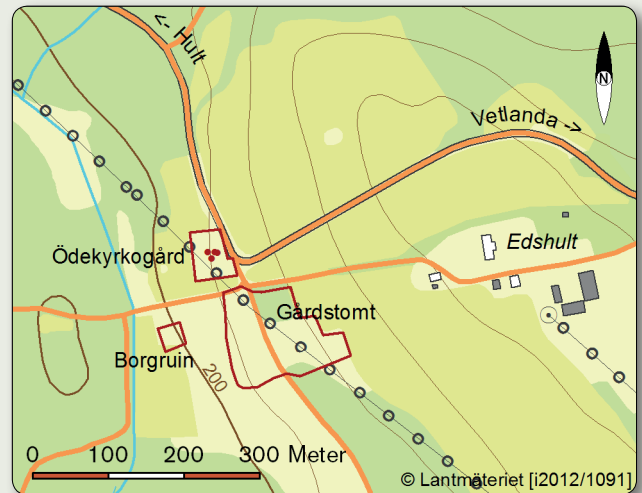
By an inlet of Lake Solgen, some 20 kilometres south of Eksjö, is Edshult seat farm with a magnificent Karolin manor house from the 1650s. Adjacent are the ruins of a church which belonged to the medieval seat farm of Edshult. The wooden church had a stone sacristy and chapel and was richly painted and decorated with sculptures. It was demolished in the 1830s and the building material was sold at auction. The church contained a 14th century Madonna sculpture, now kept at the Swedish History Museum. A model of the medieval church is found outside the parish hall at Edshult Church.

A number of other buildings belonged to the farm, and the building foundations south of the church ruins could be traces of these. In the 14th century, the farm was rebuilt as a fortified castle, and the old location was abandoned. A new castle with a moat was constructed approx. 100 metres further to the west, close to the then shore of Lake Solgen. The new location offered better defence, but was also beneficial from a communications point of view. A route from Eksjö to the south-west passed here, and the location by Lake Solgen and the river Solgenån provided good local waterways. Extensive lake lowering in the 19th and 20th centuries has changed the landscape.

We only have an idea of what the castle looked like thanks to an archaeological excavation in 1989. This showed that the northern moat was around 5 metres wide, 1 metre deep and surrounded by a dense barrier of stakes. Inside the moat, a square wooden tower was placed on a small mound. The tower was constructed on a base of grey stone with walls that were 1.5 metres thick and had several floors. To the east of the tower are traces of yet another building, and to the west of the tower was a smithy. The excavations also showed that the castle had burned and been rebuilt several times in the 14th and 15th centuries. This was probably not a strong fortress, but intended for local control and to demonstrate the status of the lord of the castle.



Archaeological investigation of the castle ruins in 1989.
Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 5



HOW TO GET HERE

From Eksjö, Road 40 eastwards. At junction in line with Hult, turn towards Edshult. At crossroads, drive towards Stallarp, parking along church ruin.

Coordinates:
N 6380853 / E 511186
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
34' 11.97", E 15° 11' 13.22"
(WGS84)



Aerial view of Edshult with the manor house (background), church ruins (left) and castle ruins (foreground). Photo: Leif Gustavsson/L.G.foto.

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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.

