

FAGERTOFTA GRAVE FIELD

Close to the road between Nässjö and Solberga, on the outskirts of Fagertofta, is a burial ground with a great variety of graves. Locally, the field is known as “Domsätet” (judge seat) on account of the many stone circles (24) which in Swedish are also called “domarring” (judge circle). Today we know that judge circles were not used as things-teads, but that they are prehistoric graves. They are characterised by large stones marking out a circle. In the southern part of the grave field is a different type of grave, marked by six propped up stone constructions consisting of three bottom stones with a fourth, a capstone, on top. This construction is archaeologically called an Iron Age dolmen, although it is sometimes known as “lying hen”.

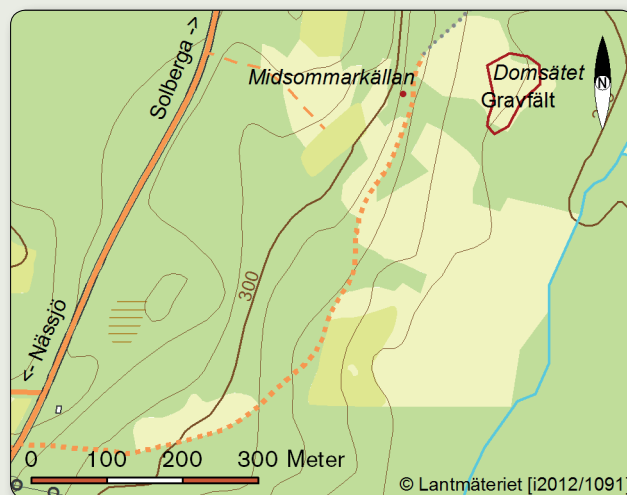
Fagertofta Grave Field contains 42 visible graves. In addition to stone circles, there are stone settings, a cairn and a trident. These types of graves are usually dated to the era from the Roman Iron Age to the Migration Period (0–550 A.D.). The cairn is probably older and believed to be from the Bronze Age (1800–500 B.C.). The cairn contains a rectangular stone cist, which was discovered when the grave field was restored in the early 1940s. Burned bones, coal and ashes were also found in the graves during the restoration, which shows that they were cremation graves. However, no other objects were found to help with a more precise dating of the graves.

At the time of the restoration, a so called wheel cross, which is still visible, was painted on the centre stone of the trident. This has been carried out on several ancient monuments in Jönköping County to mark their status. The markings were made on the initiative of Bror Kugelberg, who was heritage conservationist in the hundred until the 1940s.

At the parking area next to the grave field is a well called “Midsommarkällan” (midsummer well). To keep healthy, people drank the water or washed in it during the midsummer night. Do use the spring, but beware of “playing thing” among the stone circles. According to an old legend, this will make you ill.



Fagertofta Grave Field. In the foreground, a composition of Iron Age dolmens. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 27



HOW TO GET HERE

From Nässjö, take the road to Solberga. In line with Fagertofta you will see a blue directional road sign. Follow the small gravel road for approx. 1 km.

Coordinates:

N 6394227 / E 484870
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
41' 24.02", E 14° 44' 4638"
(WGS84)



Fagertofta Grave Field. In the foreground, a stone circle. 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.

