

HULTABY CASTLE RUINS

On a promontory in Lake Norrasjön, by the mouth of the river Emån, are the remains of the medieval stronghold Hultaby Castle. The main building, the actual fort, must have been particularly striking. It consisted of a natural rocky outcrop, surrounded by powerful supporting walls, forming a square of around 30 x 28 metres built to a height of up to 5 metres. On top are the remains of the first floor stone foundation, which held a timbered building for entertainment. The brick cellar of a round tower remains in the northern corner.

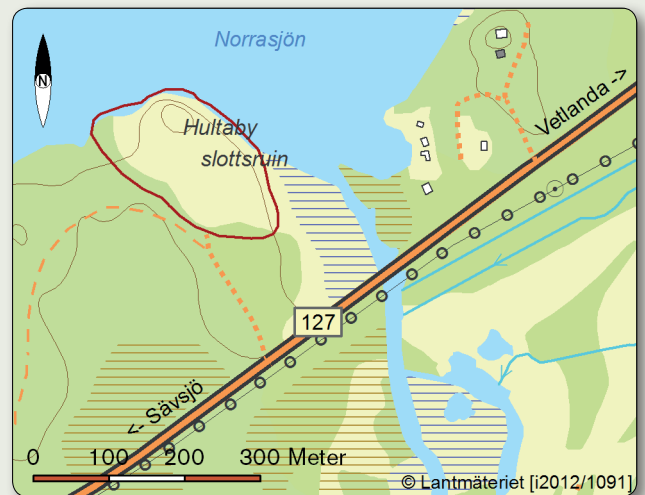
The entrance to the castle is a stately staircase, 10 metres long and 6 metres wide, with slate steps. The area south of the castle formed the courtyard. It was surrounded by eight timber buildings whose stone foundations are still visible. It was most likely that people lived and worked in these buildings, since no traces of fireplaces have been found in the castle. Here is also the essential well. Several building foundations showing a more irregular settlement are found east of the courtyard and have been interpreted as a type of curtain wall.

Archeological investigations in the 1930s established that the castle was built in the mid-13th century, but was destroyed in a fire a century later. The first time that Hultaby is mentioned in writing is in 1353, when it was inhabited by one of Sweden's most powerful men, the privy councillor and earl of the Orkney Islands, Erengrise Sunesson Bååt. He, together with other leading magnates, was in conflict with king Magnus Eriksson. In 1363, the king forced several of them into exile in Germany, where they offered the Swedish crown to duke Albrekt of Mecklenburg, who has Swedish descent. Perhaps it was in connection with the German invasion the same year that Hultaby was burned down.

The ruins of Hultaby Castle were preserved in the 1930s and 1940s, when they were given their present appearance. Since then, the site is popular for excursions and a good setting for medieval games and markets.



Extract from a geometric measuring 1693, also showing the castle grounds. Land Survey Board Archive: Akt E123-57:1.



HIDDEN GEM 4 I



HOW TO GET HERE

The castle ruins are located by Lake Norrasjön, approx. 1 km west of Vetlanda. Follow signposts for the ruins from Road 127 (Vetlanda–Sävsjö).

Coordinates:
N 6364249 / E 502132
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
25' 15.50", E 15° 2' 7.77"
(WGS84)



Hultaby Castle Ruins by Lake Norrasjön. 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.

