

# BREDESTAD CHURCH

**B**redestad Church is located in the Bredestad Valley – an area of culture-historical interest with e.g. Iron Age graves, rune stone fragments, old cultivation remains, sunken lanes, and a brickworks, see Hidden Gems no 1 – Bredestad Valley.

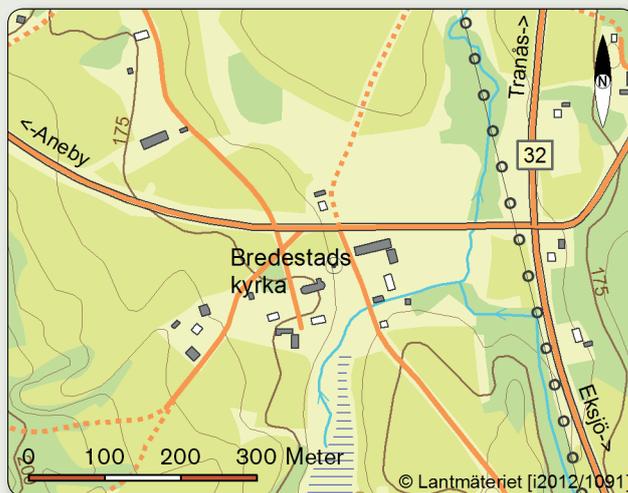
Surprisingly, Bredestad Church is not located in the village of Bredestad, but on land belonging to the Bona estate. The Romanesque stone church dates back to the late 12th century/early 13th century and is said to be built on an old sacrificial hill. The medieval church consists of a nave, a chancel, and a semi-circular apse to the east. In the 1690s, the nave was extended to the west, and at the same time the tower was built. The pulpit had been installed a few decades earlier, in 1648. The old, elaborate altarpiece now hangs on the northern wall of the nave. It was made in 1697, with a picture of the resurrection of Christ in the centre. Today, there is no traditional altarpiece behind the altar. Instead, a stained glass window depicting a crucifix was put in the apse in 1922.

In the early 1750s, a new organ with six stops was made by organ builder Jonas Wistenius. The façade and colour scheme were restored to their original condition. Some of the interior paintings, notably the ceiling decorations, were most likely carried out a few decades after the installation of the new organ. In the 1890s, a new floor made of brick tiles was laid in the nave, and it is tempting to believe that the tiles came from the nearby brickworks in Bredestad.

In 2009, archaeological investigations were conducted next to the church in connection with the laying of a new drainage system. The investigations revealed another piece of interesting church history: A 15 metre long stone foundation was discovered parallel with the northern nave wall. It is believed that this formed part of a previous wooden stave church, dating back to the 11th or 12th century.



Interior from Bredestad Church. On the balcony, the early 1750s organ and on the wall to the right, the old altarpiece. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



## HIDDEN GEM 48



### HOW TO GET HERE

3 km south-east of Aneby, near the junction of Road 132 and Road 32 (between Tranås and Eksjö).

Coordinates:  
Bredestad Church:  
N 6408317 / E 491336  
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°  
49' 0.096, E 14° 51' 15.163"  
(WGS84)



Bredestad Church from the north. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.

Stone foundation found along the northern nave wall, believed to be part of a stave church. 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

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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

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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.

