

SKÄRSTADDALEN VALLEY CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

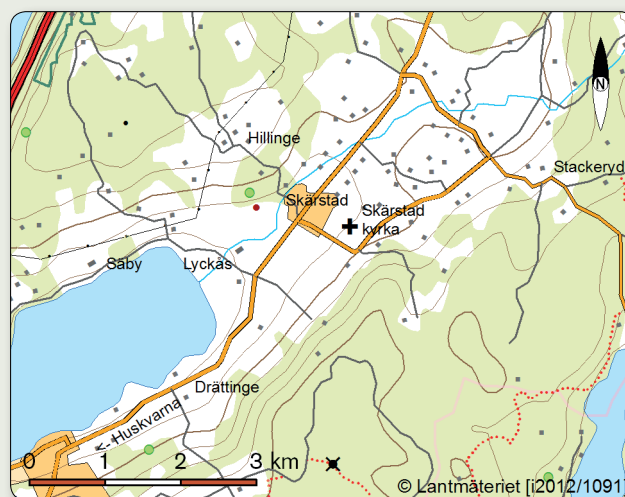
Some 20 kilometres north-east of Jönköping is the Skärstaddalen valley, one of the most fertile areas in the county. The rich soil and favourable climate have attracted people to the valley ever since pre-historic times. It is not surprising therefore, that many artifacts from the Stone Age have been turned up when ploughing the fields. One of the county's finest Bronze Age finds comes from Hillinge village, around 1 kilometer north-west of Skärstad Church. Not far from there, a couple of Viking magnates' graves from the Late Iron Age (500–1050 A.D.) have been excavated. The graves in the bottom of the valley are part of an area highly rich in ancient monuments, which apart from Skärstad also includes Gränna and Visingsö.

The first stone church was built in Skärstad in the 13th century, and in the 15th century it was replaced with a new church in the same location. This church was demolished around 1820 and replaced with a large church in neoclassical style. Around the church you find the rectory, school, teacher's residence, parish hall and a few residential houses. The old inn to the east of the church village also remains. The church village is surrounded by a traditionally managed agricultural landscape, with partly preserved meadows and pastures in the highlands.

You find several manors in the Skärstaddalen valley, e.g. Lyckås, Drättinge, Säby and Stackeryd. The manor house at Lyckås, built 1863, is particularly lavish. The exterior is an ornate plaster façade, and the interior has extensive decorative painting. The inhabited Karolin style manor house at Drättinge was built in 1926. Behind this building is a now disused old manor house, probably from the late 1780s. Farm buildings, crofts and tied cottages also belong to the manor environments. At Lyckås there is a former station house and a warehouse – both reminders of the narrow-gauge railway line that used to go between Jönköping and Vireda.



The altar piece in Skärstad Church is a mosaic made by the artist Bo Beskow in 1972. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 65



HOW TO GET HERE

Drive the old National Road 1 from Huskvarna through Gisebo and Kaxholmen to Skärstad, located approx. 25 km north of Huskvarna.

Coordinates:

Skärstad Church:
N 6415750 / E 462832
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
52' 55.36", E 14° 22' 23.69"
(WGS84)



Lyckås manor in a photograph taken before 1905, since the union flag is flying. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.

JÖNKÖPINGS LÄNS
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.

