

LJUNGHEMS BACKAR

Today, we often experience the landscape while driving along roads that once went through undeveloped forest and outfields. In the past, the landscape was also seen from the roads, but then they passed through villages and infields. This is worth remembering when you visit the area around Ljunghem. The road takes us on the outskirts, and we must make a detour to discover the Ljunghems Backar hills, which are located in a transitional landscape that leaves the forests of Småland for the plains of Falköping. Some of the main routes between Småland and Västergötland passed here, as shown by e.g. the sunken lanes in the area that go from north to south just east of the road. Sunken lanes, or holloways, are the remains of ancient footpaths and bridleways. They are best visible in sloping terrain and where the ground was most disturbed. In such places, the sunken lanes look like deep ditches.

The large number of prehistoric graves from the centuries before and around Christ's birth also shows that Ljunghem was a local centre of power. Up until the 16th century there was also a church in Mosseberg, around 1.5 kilometres north-west of Ljunghem.

Maps from the mid-17th and late 18th centuries show that there were meadows and pastures, and even small fields here. The maps reveal the varied use of the landscape; meadows could be changed to pastures and vice versa, and there was temporary cultivation by way of swiddens (slash-and-burn agriculture) as well as more permanent fields. But fields existed in the area that is now Ljunghems Backar even before the time of the maps. Many traces, such as clearance cairns and terraces, on the highlands at Skattegården bear witness to this.

Ljunghem has a rich flora with many species and habitats. There were many reasons why the Swedish daily newspaper Svenska Dagbladet named Ljunghems Backar one of Sweden's twenty-one most beautiful places in 2014.



Landscape view from one of the burial cairns – RAÅ no: Sandhem 11:1. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 68



HOW TO GET HERE

From Sandhem: Drive north past Sandhem Church. Approx. 5.3 km north of the church is a signpost pointing to the west: "Ljunghem". Drive along this road for around 500 m, and you will see elevations with terraces and stone settings, mainly on the right hand side.

Coordinates:
N 6433422 / E 429573
(SWEREF 99 YM) // N 58°
2' 12.241", E 13° 48' 26.190"
(WGS84)



View of the terrain north-east of Skattegården. 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.

