

BRUADUNGEN GRAVE FIELD

On the crest of a small sand ridge in sparse pine forest you find one of the largest fields of stone circles in Jönköping County. It comprises around 40 stone circles which are also called judge circles, some standing stones, round and oval stone settings, four-sided stone settings and a large trident. All in all, 60 visible graves. Probably there are many more burial sites, since many of the graves have markings (boundaries and frames by way of small stones) that are no longer visible above ground.

Stone circles, often consisting of 7 or 9 stones, have a very prominent place among the ancient monuments in Jönköping County – more than a thousand have been registered, and there are probably more. Many have also been destroyed over the years. Stone circles occur across most of the county, with a particular concentration around the upper valleys of the rivers Nissan and Lagan, and around the river Svartån, which passes approximately 800 metres to the west of Bruadungen.

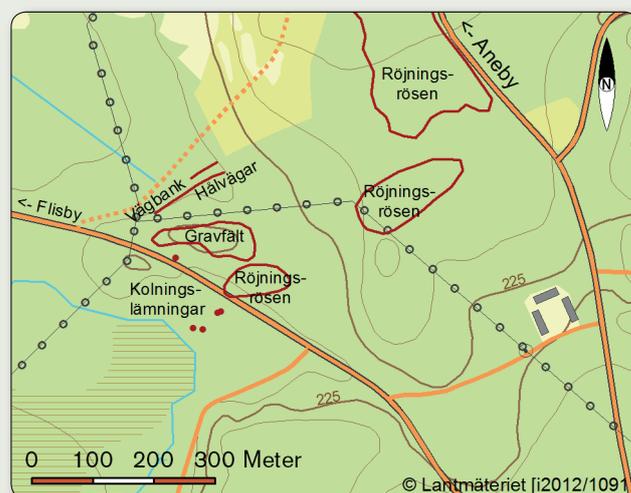
None of the stone circles in this grave field have been investigated, but archaeological excavations in other places show that they were erected to commemorate people who had been cremated. The underground burial pits contain burnt bones as well as objects: iron knives, clay pots, bone and horn combs, glass beads and bronze costume jewellery. Occasionally, there were also gaming counters. The stone circles are mainly dated to the Middle Iron Age, 200–600 B.C. Investigations in other parts of Sweden have shown that the graves can be older or younger.

Throughout the ages, people have been fascinated by stone circles. They have been interpreted as thingsteads (hence the Swedish name domarring (judge circle)), sites for sacrificial offerings to the gods, astronomical studies or gathering places for large feasts. Today we know that the vast majority are graves from the Iron Age, even if stone circles were occasionally erected for other purposes.

Not far from Bruadungen Grave Field are traces of iron production by way of charcoal pits and charcoal bottoms from charcoal piles. There are also old cultivated areas in the forest, as shown by the many clearance cairns, an old abandoned embankment, and a couple of sunken lanes, also called holloways. All these are the remains from human activities in the area over the years.



The grave field also includes a so called trident. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 69



HOW TO GET HERE

From Aneby: Drive south along the road that goes just east of Lake Anebysjön. Approx. 7.5 km south of Aneby, turn right towards Flisby village. Drive for around 1 km.

Coordinates:

N 6403506 / E 490097
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
46' 24.59", E 14° 50' 0.66"
(WGS84)



The stone circles stand close together in Bruadungen Grave Field. 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.

