

BREDESTAD VALLEY

Marshy meadows at the bottom of the Bredestad Valley and the fertile slopes created the mosaic-like landscape, where fields interchange with pastures and groves. The meadows were drained a long time ago, but the location of the farms and infields is more or less the same as it was 200 years ago. Along the side of the valley are Bronze and Iron Age graves. A phallic stone, unique in Småland, keeps guard over the fertility of the valley. The stone is located along an old road that once stretched from the highlands at Aneby gård down to the valley.

The church village is situated on the Bona estate, at the bottom of the valley. A rune stone is found here, and further north is a grave field from the same era, the Late Iron Age. At Bona, archaeologists have also found a Viking Age longhouse. The grave field was the site of an important crossroads of two major routes: the eastern Holavedsvägen towards Eksjö and the western stretch between Jönköping and Kalmar.

Historical sources and old maps reveal the contours of a powerful medieval magnate farm in the valley, with scattered underlying farms. We know that from the 14th century, the court of Vedbo Northern Hundred was held in Bredestad. It is believed that the court met at an Iron Age stone circle, now gone, by the rocky outcrop Kuvehall.

The oldest map, from 1734, shows two brick kilns at the farm Bredestad gård. These were operated by the Bredestad farmers until the end of the 18th century, when the nobility took over the responsibility and income from the kilns. The clay for making the bricks was available locally. There must have been no shortage of suitable clays, because in the late 18th century and until the end of the 19th century, brick making was widespread in the areas around the Bredestad Valley. Still remaining is a kiln and a drying shed, probably from the late 18th century, at the farm Bredestad norr gård. The Hostelry at Bona is from around the same time.



Phallic stone standing along an old stretch of road. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM I



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)



Old drying shed (left) and kiln (right) at the old brickworks. 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

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.

