

KYRKESTADEN

Kyrkesten is one of the more mythical ancient monuments in the county, and no one has yet been able to determine its function or age. The monument comprises a 62 x 27 metre area enclosed by a stone wall that is 5 metres wide and 0.5 metre high. There is an opening in the western short side.

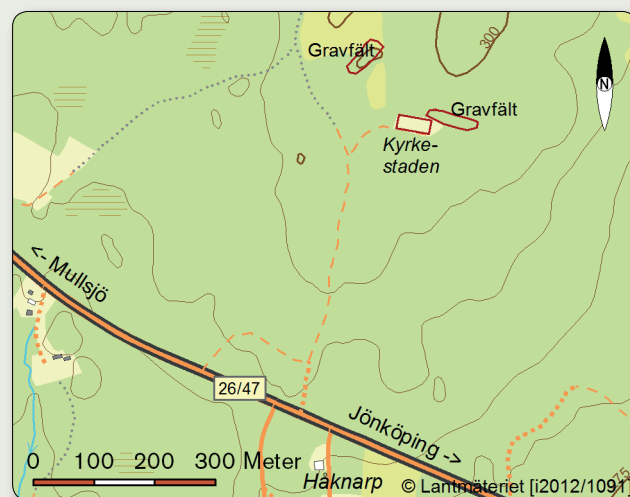
The enclosure is situated in a pine forest on a flat plateau. The ground surface is covered in heather, which is a sign of overgrazing. The location is in the borderland between the regions of Västergötland and Småland, and strangely enough, the area also forms the boundary of the main catchment areas of the Göta älv and Motala ström rivers.

The name Kyrkesten is based on a legend. Habo Church was going to be built here, but everything that was constructed during the day was torn down at night by trolls, and therefore work had to be abandoned. Close to Kyrkesten are two grave fields. One is found along the eastern edge and contains five graves. Less than one hundred metres further north is a larger field containing eleven graves. Based on the types of graves, e.g. stone circles, one trident (three-sided) setting, round and square stone settings, the graves can be dated to the Middle Iron Age, i.e. 1–500 A.D.

Some of the theories around Kyrkesten are linked to the grave fields; the belief that the enclosure is an ancient burial site or place of worship. The area has also been likened to an Early Migration hillfort, in which case it would have served as a refuge fort in times of danger. Other theories are that it served as some kind of political meeting arena, or a place for cattle trade. To find out more about Kyrkesten, excavations were carried out in 1993, but no further clues were found. The puzzle surrounding Kyrkesten thus remains unsolved, but hopefully more investigations will be carried out in the future. The answers will probably be found, but in the meantime the myth lives on ...



This stone setting is found in the grave field north of Kyrkesten. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 16



HOW TO GET HERE

Road 26/47 between Jönköping and Mullsjö. Turn northwards in line with Håknarp. Small blue road sign "ancient monument" points to forest road. Park here. Follow the forest road for approx. 500 m.

Coordinates:
N 6415662 / E 436843
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
52' 42.01", E 13° 56' 6.39"
(WGS84)



View over Kyrkesten from north-east. Photo: Leif Gustavsson/L.G.foto.

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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.

