

NORRA SANDSJÖ PARISH CENTRE

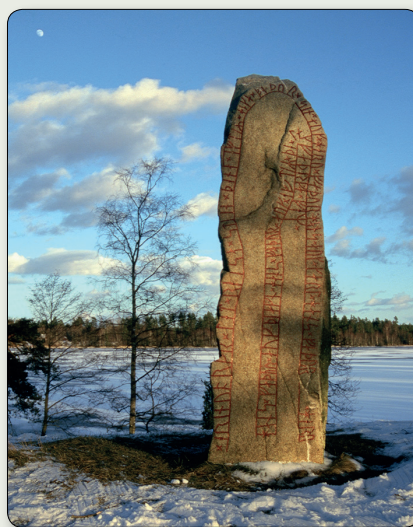
The church village Sandsjö developed at an important crossroads near Lake Sandsjön, which in turn is connected to the river and waterway Emån. The site is mentioned as early as 1304 as “Sanzsio” and has roots in the Iron Age. Once, there was a market here, and Sandsjö was regarded as a significant parish in the medieval independent “land” of Njudung.

The oldest parts of the church were constructed in the latter half of the 12th century, and the font is also from that time. The church tower collapsed in 1635 and was then replaced with a bell tower. During a reconstruction in 1696 to 1709, the church was widened considerably, and the interior was decorated in exuberant Baroque style. When renovating the church in the 1940s, charcoal was found under the floor, which was interpreted as traces of a former wooden church.

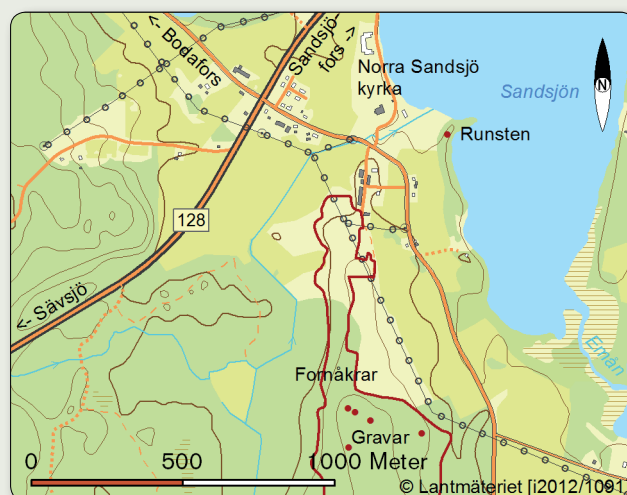
At the crossroads there was once an Iron Age grave field with “hundreds of family tombs”. They were removed, however, as the land was used for cultivation. Today, there are no visible graves mounds, although there is a magnificent prehistoric monument by way of a rune stone on the so called Runåsen ridge by the lake. The stone is from the 11th century and the inscription tells us that it was erected by Ärinvard. He lists five generations of his family. The inscription has been interpreted as Ärinvard’s intention to manifest himself as the legitimate owner of inherited land property; so called odal land that was passed down in the family.

“Ärinvard erected this stone in memory of Hägge, his father, and Hära, his father, and Karl, his father, (and) Hära, his father, and Tegn, his father, (and) in memory of these five forefathers.”

In the forest south of the village is a 30 hectares large area of fossil fields, which includes graves from the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. It is believed that the land was broken for cultivation in the Bronze Age and farmed until Late Iron Age. The remains of agriculture consist of ancient clearance cairns. In Late Iron Age, the cultivated land was divided into long, narrow fields or so called parcels of land.



Rune stone at Norra Sandsjön. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 28



HOW TO GET HERE

Norra Sandsjö is situated along Road 128 in line with the turning for Bodafors. The rune stone is located on a ridge south-east of the church.

Coordinates:

N: 6369353 / E: 485855
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
27' 59.935", E 14° 45'
51.337"
(WGS84)



Norra Sandsjö Church. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.

JÖNKÖPINGS LÄNS
MUSEUM

036-30 18 00 ▪ www.jkpglm.se



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.

