

MADA GRAVE FIELD

Already in 1690, the vicar Ericus Styrenius in Säby parish wrote about the Mada graves: “At Mada in the field are two large stone burial cairns; one is triangular, the other one round ...”. In other words, some of the graves have been known for a long time and are also mentioned in other historical literature.

The grave field consists of 14 ancient monuments: one square cairn, one round stone setting, tridents, stone circles and judge circles as well as one erected stone. The largest trident has more than 20 metre long concave sides and also includes end stones and a central stone.

These types of graves are usually dated to the era from the Roman Iron Age to the Migration Period (0–550 A.D.).

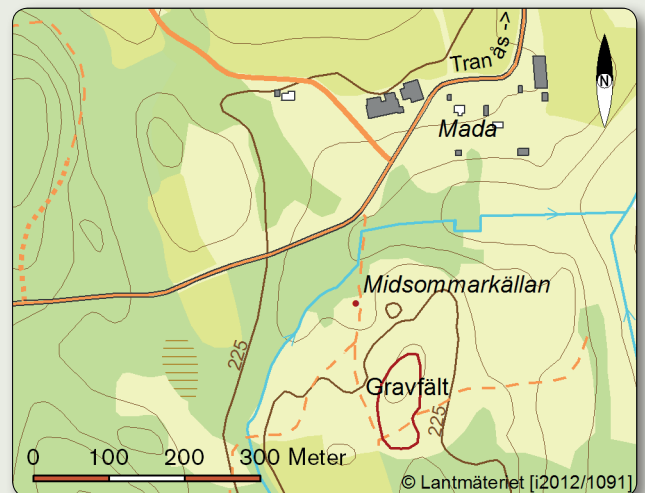
Next to the grave field are a number of boulders that also probably belong to graves. The county custodian of antiquities Egil Lönnberg wrote in the 1940s about these stones, which he believed had belonged to a type of grave that is today known as Iron Age dolmens consisting of three bottom stones with a fourth, a capstone, on top. This grave construction is sometimes known as propped stones or “lying hen”.

Lönnberg was also present when the grave field at Mada was restored in the early 1940s. When working on one of the stone circles, a fire layer was discovered with a cracked clay urn full of ashes and burned bones. In this layer was also a small single-edged iron knife. Knives are common finds when investigating graves from this period.

Around 100 metres north of the grave field was a well called “Midsommarkällan” (midsummer well). It was once stone-lined, but has been destroyed over the years. It has been told that in the mid-19th century, people gathered at the well on the first Sunday after Midsummer. According to an old tradition, the well was decorated with flowers and leaves, and dancing took place on the road nearby. We don't know how old this tradition is. But it is interesting that next to another grave field in Fagertofta, north of Nässjö, there is also a well known as Midsommarkällan.



Mada Grave Field is beautifully located on the crest of a ridge. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 36



HOW TO GET HERE

The grave field is located approx. 4 km south of Tranås, between the lakes Säbysjön and Sommen. Signposted from Road 1053. The grave field lies around 200 m south of the road.

Coordinates:
N 6426965 / E 500201
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
59' 3.56", E 15° 0' 12.26"
(WGS84)



Mada Grave Field. In the foreground is a square burial cairn marked by a kerb of large stones. 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.

