

BRANDSTORP CHURCH

On the Hökensås plateau with wide views across Lake Vättern and Visingsö island is Brandstorp Church. The first thing that meets the visitor is the red, timbered enclosure around the churchyard. Tree-ring dating shows that the oldest timber in the construction was felled during the winter 1697/1698. Such wooden enclosures were not uncommon in the past, but today the one in Brandstorp is one of only two remaining in Sweden.

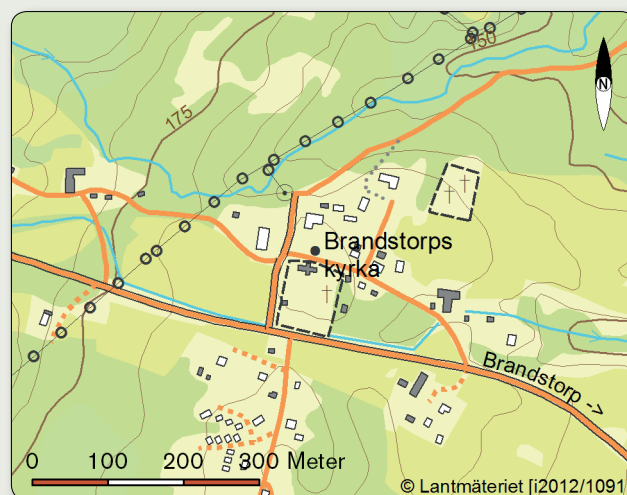
The red wooden church is built like a Greek cross, with four arms of equal length and a tower in the middle. The church was constructed in the 1690s by the master builder Anders Bengtsson from Jönköping. It replaced a wooden medieval chapel which had been moved here in 1626 from Häldeholm village, south of Brandstorp. Behind the move was the count of Visingsborg Magnus Brahe whose county included Brandstorp and Häldeholm.

The chapel may have been moved here as a result of a new church being built at Södra Fågelås, making the chapel in Häldeholm redundant. But it may also have been because the chief crown forester Carl Hård from the adjacent Skämningsfors estate wanted a church closer to his seat farm. In 1697, his descendant, the head forester Adolf Hård, arranged for the old chapel to be demolished, and a new timbered Greek-cross plan church was built. At the same time, a crypt for the Hård family was constructed under the floor of the chancel. Today, many of the family's funeral escutcheons are displayed in the church.

In the 18th century, the bell tower was built and the porch and sacristy were added to the church. Walls and ceiling were painted in 1748 by the Jönköping master painter Johan Kinnerus, who also worked on Habo Church. The resurrection scene in the northern cross-arm is of particular interest. With the church in the background, the dead rise from their graves. The painting also shows how the shingle-clad facades of the church and roof were decorated in a diamond pattern. This was recreated in 2013, when the shingle roof was re-laid.



The resurrection scene in the northern cross-arm by Johan Kinnerus. The 18th century painting shows the church with its red-tarred sloping roof and diamond-shaped shingle decorations on the facades. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 58



HOW TO GET HERE

Brandstorp village is located along Road 195, approx. 20 km north of Habo. Turn in line with Brandstorp village and drive westwards for approx. 1.3 km.

Coordinates:
N 6440317 / E 452008
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 58° 6'
5.9", E 14° 11' 8.6"



Brandstorp Church. Note the diamond shaped roof shingles laid in a pattern. 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.

