

BOERYD GRAVE FIELD

In Scandinavia, stone circles are grave settings consisting of an odd number, often 7 or 9, standing stones in a sparse circle. Boeryd Grave Field, south-west of Jönköping, contains more than 20 visible graves, of which 17 are stone circles, 4 are standing stones, one is a round stone setting with a stone cist and two are tridents (three-sided stone settings). The stone circles are 4–10 metres in diameter, and the trident graves are 13–20 metres. To the north, a 200 metre long path leads to a smaller grave field with further stone circles.

The grave field was restored in the early 1930s. Before then, the stone circles were barely visible. In connection with the restorations, the stone cist was partly dug out from the round stone setting. No finds were made at the time.

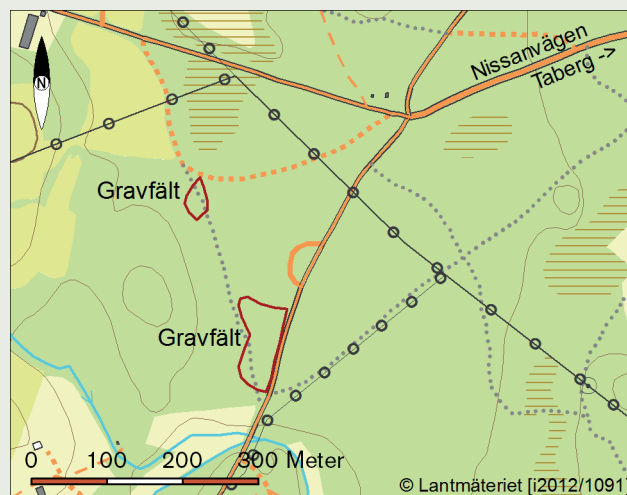
Throughout the ages, people have been fascinated by stone circles. Carl Linnaeus, for example, thought that they were thingsteads, while others believed that they were intended for healing illnesses, sacrificial offerings to the gods, ancestor worship, astronomical studies or gathering places for large feasts.

Archaeological excavations of stone circles show that they were erected to commemorate people who had been cremated. The underground burial pits contain the burnt bones as well as objects belonging to the dead person. The closest excavated stone circle at Porteshult, 3 kilometres south-east of Månsarp, revealed burnt bones from a 50-year-old man, a knife, comb and several bone and glass gaming counters. The grave was dated to the period 200–400 A.D.

Tridents occur in different places across Jönköping County. They can be dated to the Iron Age (500 B.C.–1050 A.D.). The special shape is often interpreted symbolically, e.g. that it represents the three roots of the Yggdrasil world tree. In the past, sites containing tridents were believed to be places of worship, and in legends they are called “giant’s graves”. In grave fields from the Late Iron Age, tridents have often been found to mark graves. But they also occur in isolated locations and in grave fields from the Early Iron Age, such as the one in Boeryd. They may then have had a different function.



Stone circles standing close together. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.



HIDDEN GEM 59



HOW TO GET HERE

From Taberg: Turn off from Bergslagsvägen and drive north-west along Nissanvägen for just less than 3 km until you reach a junction. Turn left and drive south around 300 m. The grave field is along the road and is signposted.

Coordinates:
N 6394035 / E 443399
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°
41' 5.91", E 14° 3' 2.63"
(WGS84)



The standing stones at Boeryd Grave Field are especially remarkable. 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.

