

# WATER RESERVOIR PARK AND SUNKEN LANES

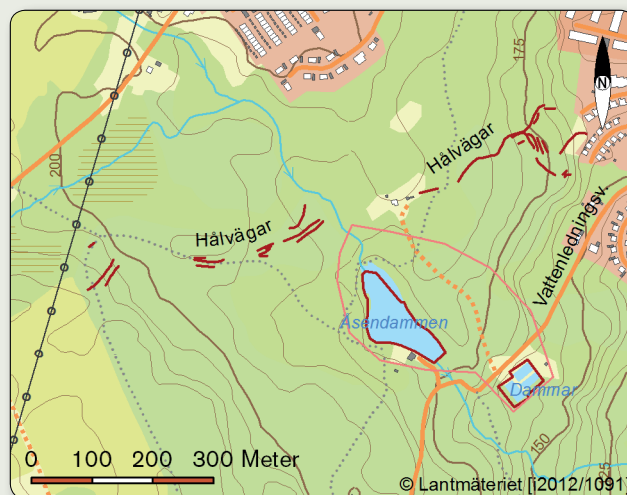
In the early 19th century, Western Europe was hit by several severe cholera epidemics, and in 1834, the first wave hit Sweden. One of the worst affected towns was Jönköping, where one in three citizens became sick and one in six died. The victims were mainly from the slum areas in Öster and Kålgården, where poverty and social deprivation were rife. Two decades later, the next epidemic wave swept over the country with just as devastating effects.

The cholera epidemics clearly demonstrated the need for e.g. a well-functioning water supply. In Jönköping, project planning started in the 1850s, but it proved too expensive, and the scheme fizzled out. In the 1860s, conditions were more favourable. In 1864, a water treatment plant with reservoir, filtration plant and ponds was constructed on land belonging to the Åsen farm, southwest of the town. The water was taken from the Junebäcken stream and then purified and led through water pipes to households and industries in the town. Fire and water hydrants also helped improve safety and sanitation in Jönköping. The new water works was in a scenic area and became a popular place for townspeople to visit.

If you follow the paths to the north from the waterworks, past the Åsen reservoir and into the forest, you find a more than 800 metre long system of sunken lanes. The lanes, also called holloways, are the remains of old roads and bridlepaths. They are best visible in sloping terrain where the ground was most disturbed. In such places, the sunken lanes look like deep ditches. In the Water Reservoir Park, the western and eastern parts of the holloway system are most visible, where the slopes are steeper. The sunken lanes are 10–200 metres long, 1–3 metres wide and 0.2–0.8 metres deep. Sometimes there is only one lane, but in some places there are several next to each other. The age of these lanes is unknown, but there is no doubt that people have travelled here since the Middle Ages. Perhaps trading between Jönköping and Halmstad via the Nissastigen route?



*The sunken lane appears like a ditch in the landscape. Photo: Jönköping County Museum.*



## HIDDEN GEM 66



### HOW TO GET HERE

From Jönköping: Drive on Åsensvägen towards south-west. Turn left onto Vattenledningsvägen and drive for approx. 250 m. Turn right and continue along Vattenledningsvägen for around 500 m. Clearly signposted.

Coordinates:

N 6403030 / E 448218  
(SWEREF 99 TM) // N 57°  
45' 58.84", E 14° 7' 46.61"  
(WGS84)



*The ponds in the Water Reservoir Park. 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.

