

PREHISTORIC WALK NEAR TOWN

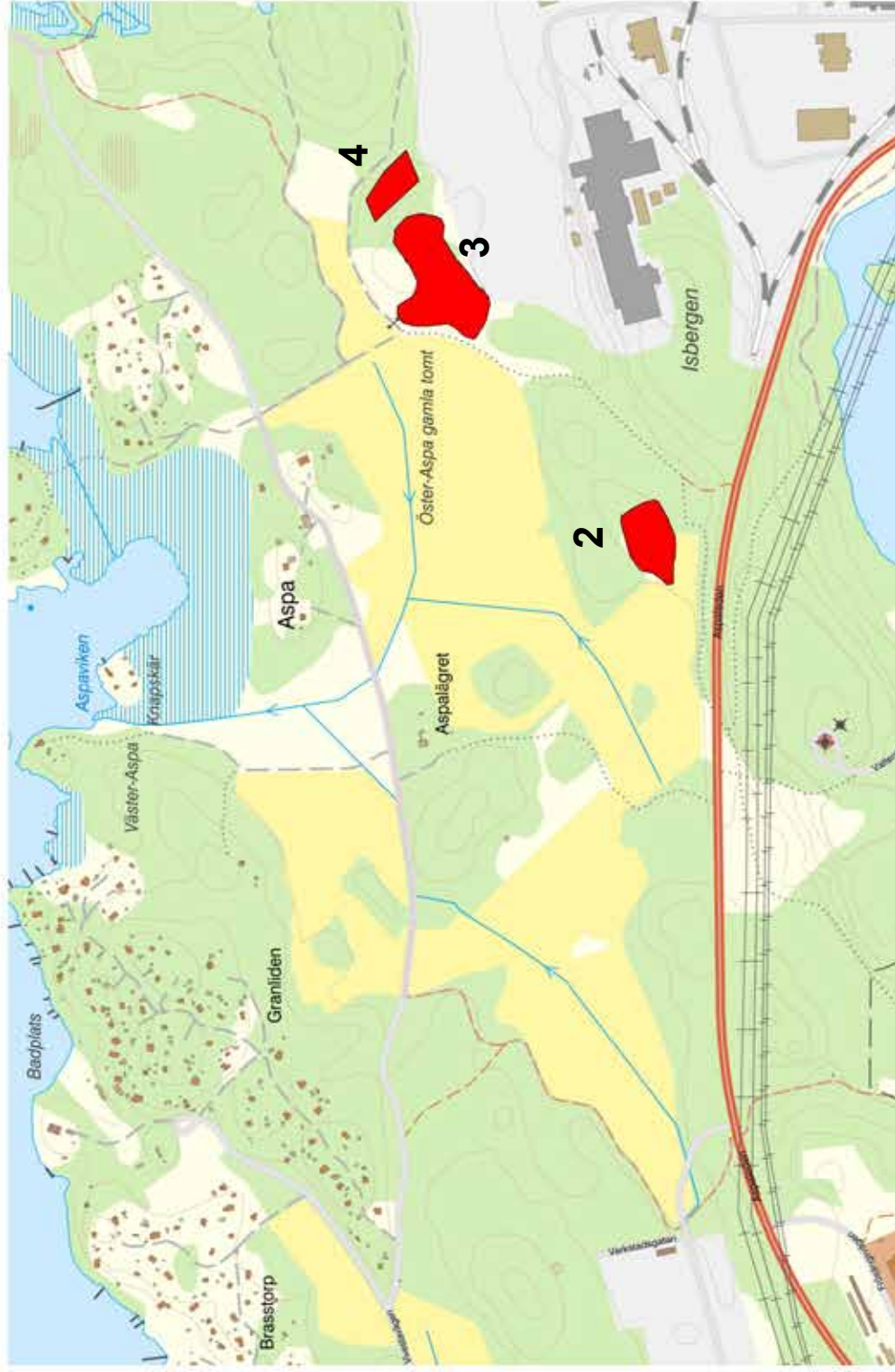
Oxelösund

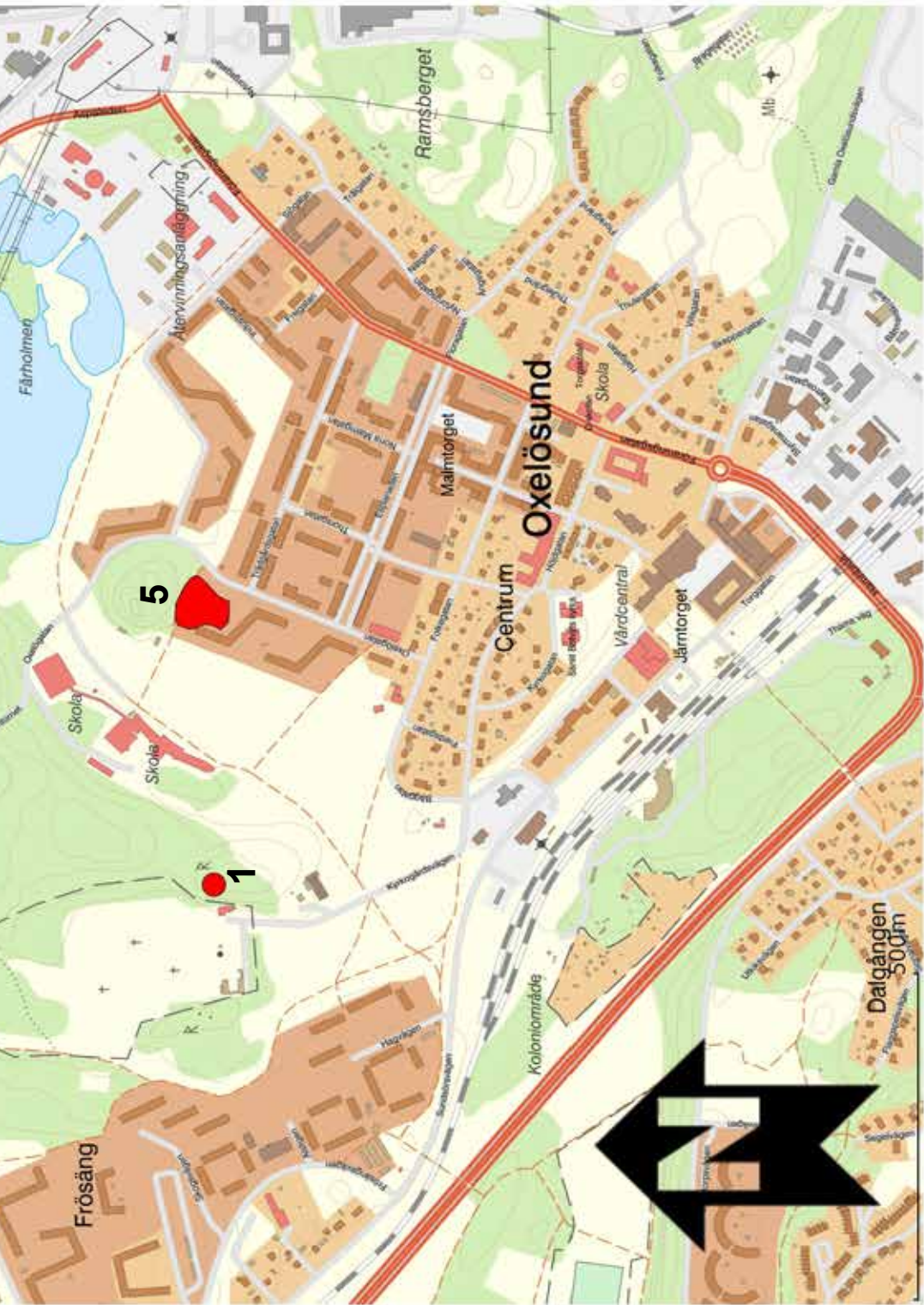
—

AROUND 5 KM



Sites 1 - 5, areas with prehistoric or historic remains

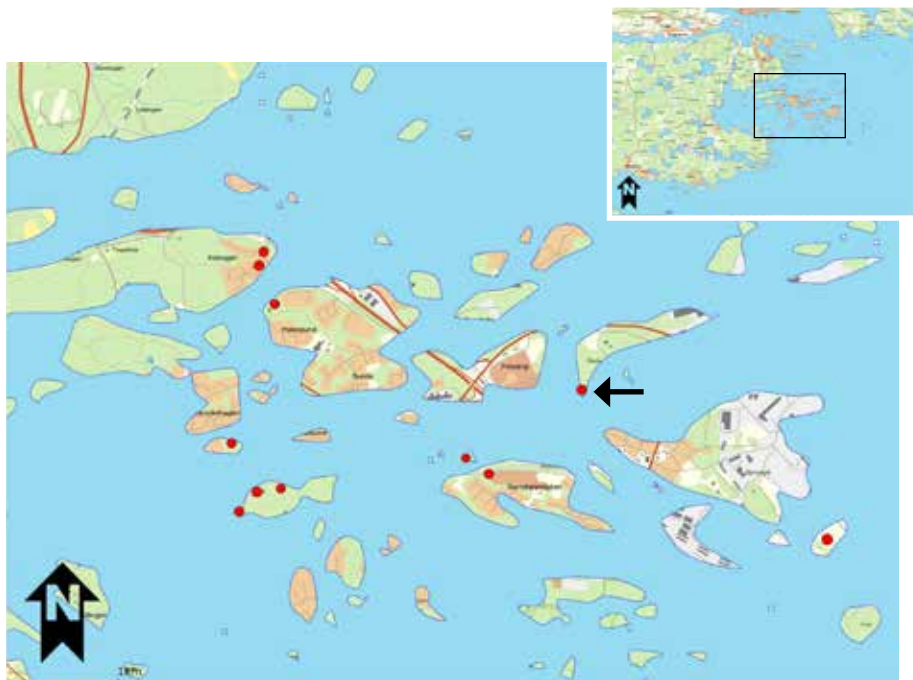




SITE 1

Iron Age grave

The oldest traces of inhabitants in Oxelösund are a dozen or so cairns and stone settings from the Bronze Age and the oldest Iron Age, between roughly 3,500 and 2,000 years ago. Further back in time the entire area was under water. This is because 15,000 years ago the whole of Sweden was covered with ice due to the Iceage. As the ice melted, the pressure on the ground decreased and the land surface rose from the masses of water. Initially it rose quickly, at a rate of several metres per year. The land has continued to rise ever since, but these days the rate is much slower; about 4 meters per 1,000 years in Södermanland.



Oxelösund during the early Iron Age (approximately 2,500 years ago). Red dots mark Prehistoric graves. The arrow points at the stone setting by Frösäng.



The Prehistoric grave at Frösäng.



The mound at Peterslund and its site on the map.

On the tip of what was a small island around 2,500 years ago, a group of Iron Age people made a grave for a relative or friend who had died. Today it lies on the crown of a hill close to the present Frösäng cemetery. There are only a few stones left from the grave. It was once larger, but stones were reportedly taken from the grave when a barn was built at Frösäng croft.

Prehistoric graves as cairns and stone settings are typical of the Swedish coastal landscapes. They often occur alone, sometimes in pairs, on top of a hill. The graves may, apart from being burials, also have served as markers for the borders between different areas where people lived. There is a large cairn at Peterslund in the forest to the west of the residential area.



An Iron Age grave as it often looks under the soil and grass.

PHOTO: JONAS WIKBORG,
SOCIETAS ARCHAEOLOGICA UPSALIENSIS



A grave urn from the Bronze Age with burned bones and gifts of bronze.

PHOTO: MARTIN STOLTZE

During the Bronze Age and the Iron Age the dead were usually cremated before burial. Sometimes the burnt bones were cleaned from soot and coal before being laid into an urn. The dead person would be given grave gifts, as food in a clay pot or personal items such as tweezers, a razor, a neck ring or arm ring, a brooch or glass beads. The beads were imported from the Roman Empire and the Middle East.

SITE 2

Aspastugan

During the main part of the 17th century Sweden was at war. All the farmsteads in the countryside were divided into groups, each of which were to keep a soldier in readiness. The soldier was given a croft with a small piece of land on which he could grow crops. A boatswain, who was a soldier in the Swedish Navy, was given a Boatswain's croft.

Aspastugan was a boatswain's croft built in 1734. It was demolished at the beginning of the 20th century. Some stones remain from the foundations, some bricks from the stove and a collapsed earth cellar. Next to the cellar is a shallow pit, probably used for keeping potatoes. Until the end of the 19th century it was usual to store root crops in pits in the ground to keep them over the winter.

Snowberry bushes and lilac bushes are now growing where the croft was. Since the site of the croft is abandoned and existed before 1850, the Aspastugan is a protected Prehistoric monument.



A boatswain in 1824.

Image: Cecilia Nordstrand,
Statens Maritima och transport-
historiska museer



Earth cellar at Aspastugan.

SITES 3 AND 4

Öster Aspa

The remains of Öster Aspa farmstead, known since the 15th century, lie next to the modern SSAB steelworks.

A farmstead in those times was almost entirely self-sufficient. Work there included sowing, harvesting, threshing, slaughtering, picking berries, growing vegetables and fruits, fishing and hunting, felling trees, chopping wood, milking and curdling, attending to the farmstead's cows, horses, sheep and pigs, cutting hay, fetching water, making tools, maintaining farmstead buildings and implements, shearing wool, spinning, growing and preparing flax, weaving, sewing and so on.



County district map from 1897-1901 showing the abandoned Öster Aspa, Väster Aspa and boatswain's Aspastugan (BT), and the more recent Aspa farmstead from the 20th century.

IMAGE: LANTMÄTERIET



The Öster Aspa farmstead site.



Aspa farmstead and horses around 1930.

IMAGE: SVEN ZETTERSTRÖM OCH KALEVI PERSSON, OXELÖSUNDSARKIVET



Prehistoric field



Rock carving from the Bronze Age, about 3,500 years ago, showing a farmer.

IMAGE: VÄRLDENS BILDER



Farmer from Egypt, about 3,200 years ago.

IMAGE: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

To the north-east of Öster Aspa farmstead is a level area between two ridges, that has been cleared of stones. Ditches have been dug along the ridges. This is an Prehistoric field that was farmed until the beginning of the 20th century. In the 19th century the population expanded, and farmers needed to use all small areas available to grow crops on.

The patch of field at Öster Aspa was probably cultivated with a plough. Farmers in Sweden started using ploughs during the Viking Age, but it was not a common implement until the middle of the 19th century. Before the plough there were more primitive ards and in Stone Age agriculture they used picks and sticks.

SITE 5

Oxelö

Oxelö was also an agricultural farmstead. Between 1683 and 1878 Oxelö farm provided a homestead for ship's pilots. In the middle of the eighteenth century the settlement at Oxelö consisted of three farmsteads.

As the municipality Oxelösund grew in the 1950s, the arable land around Oxelö started to be used for residential buildings. In 1961 the farmstead was demolished to provide space for the current Oxelö pre-school. A large pear tree from the farmstead is still standing in front of the pre-school and the remains of an earth cellar can be seen on a hill to the north.



Oxelö village and surrounding arable land in 1821.

IMAGE: LANTMÄTERIETS ARKIV



Site of Oxelö farmstead before the construction of Oxelö pre-school in 1967.

PHOTO: OLOF JÄNNEBRING, OXELÖSUNDSARKIVET



Pear tree on the former site of Oxelö farmstead.



Pilot boat outside Oxelösund around 1915.

PHOTO: SÖRMLANDS MUSEUM

Farmers in the archipelago, with their knowledge of fairways and shallow passages in their waters, have traditionally had a second occupation as ship pilots. Pilots were mentioned in legal texts as far back as the 14th century and they were responsible for navigating ships through difficult passages.

Piloting work was organised during Gustav Vasa's reign in the 16th century. It was agreed that archipelago farmers along the coasts would keep and pay special "styrmän" for the Crown's ships, in return for certain tax exemptions. The pilots lived in their homesteads usually owned by the Crown. The piloting profession was often handed down from father to son.

The Swedish Maritime Administration is now responsible for piloting in Swedish waters.

Questions

1. How did people travel during different times through history?
2. What does your native place mean to you?
3. Who is buried? And who is not buried?
4. Why do people put gifts with a dead person in their grave?
5. Why are some people buried with valuable gifts while other graves have no gifts at all?
6. What is the significance of archaeologists finding glass beads from the Roman Empire and the Middle East in Iron Age graves?

Where can I find prehistoric remains?

You can find information about all known registered prehistoric sites and other cultural and historical remains in Sweden, both on land and in water, by using the Swedish National Heritage Board's search engine "Fornsök, The register is updated regularly, www.fornsok.se

Glossary

Ard	Old implement for making furrows in the earth, cutting into the earth, also called scratch ploughs
Bronze Age	Period between 3,800 and 2,500 years ago
Boatswain	Soldier in the Swedish Navy (no longer a military post)
Cairn	A grave covered by a large pile of stones
Croft	Formerly a small leased building (now refers to a small house)
Crown	An old title of the Swedish state
Fairway	A route across a lake or sea; the best route to travel
Grave field	A collection of graves
Homestead	Agricultural property
Ice age	Period in the history of the earth when large areas of land at times were covered with ice.
Iron Age	Time period from about 2,500 to 1,000 years ago
Navigate	The art of safely steering a vessel on water
Pilot	A guide taken on board when boats must pass through difficult passages
Plough	Implement used to cut and turn soil
Potato pit	A pit in the ground where potatoes and other roots were stored during wintertime
Prehistoric field	Permanently abandoned arable land, shaped by past agricultural practice; also called “fossil arable land”
Prehistoric remains	Traces of human activities in the past
Rock carving	Images or symbols carved into outcrops of rock
Stone Age	Period up to 3,800 years ago
Stone setting	A grave covered by a flat collection of stones
Stove bricks	Stones and bricks from a stove
Styrmän	Older Swedish word for pilot (now refers to the person who steers a vessel).
Urn	Clay pot for a dead person’s ashes

All Prehistoric remains and heritage sites in Sweden are protected through the Heritage Conservation Act. It is forbidden to alter, damage or destroy Prehistoric remains, for example by digging into them. The reason why Prehistoric remains are protected is for everyone to have access to the history that Prehistoric remains describe, both now and in the future.



LÄNSSTYRELSEN
Södermanlands län

The following applies to all maps (unless otherwise stated):
County Administrative Board in Södermanland: primary information
Lantmäteriet – GSD Real Estate Map, Basic Map
Photo: County Administrative Board (unless otherwise stated)
Form & production: You Are Here

2020