



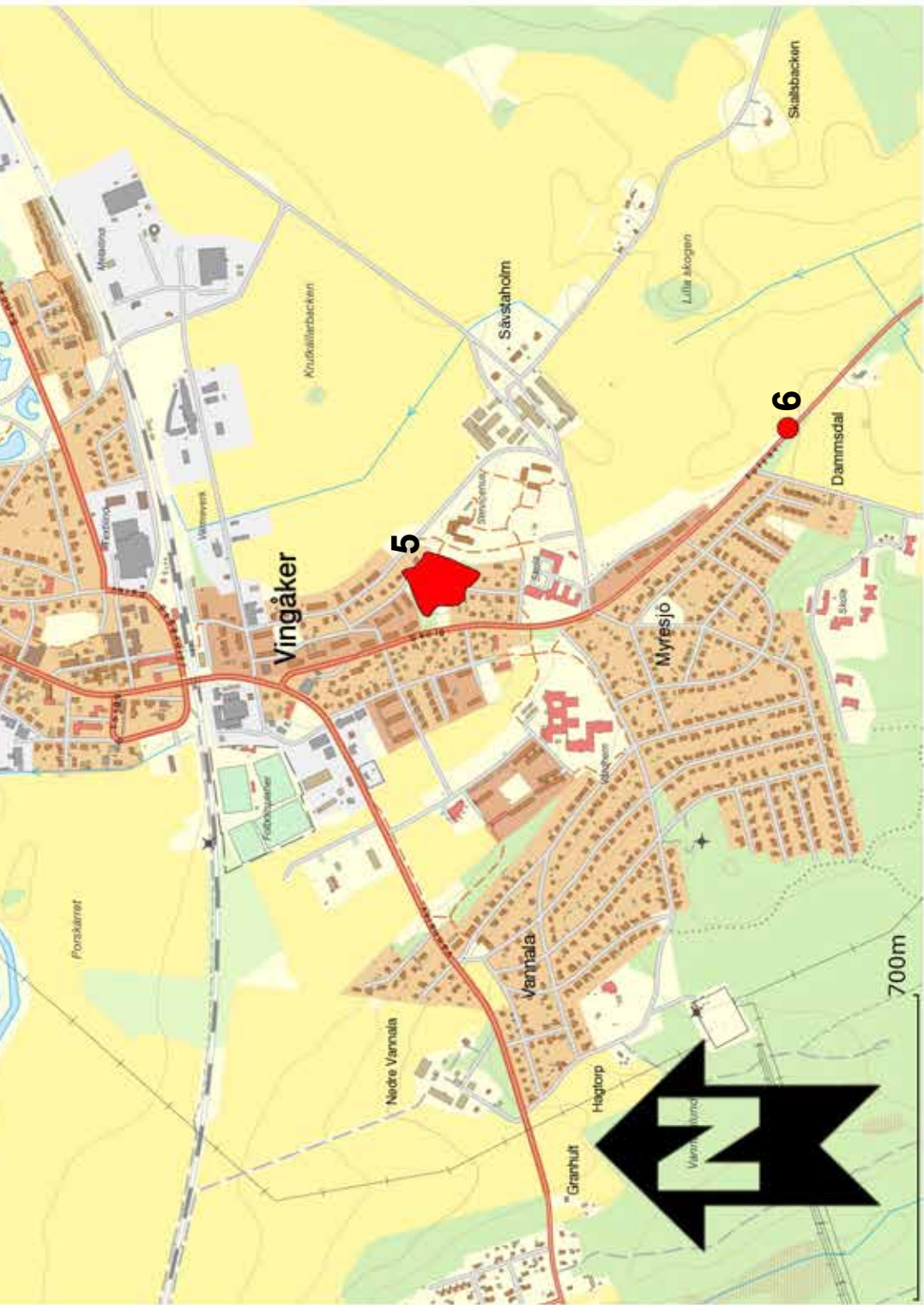
PREHISTORIC SITES IN TOWN

# Vingåker

# Sites 1 - 6, areas with prehistoric or historic remains







## SITES 1 AND 2

# Road maintenance stone and milestone

Since the middle ages, farmers had the responsibility of maintaining public roads crossing their land. It was important for the government to have passable roads for trade and in times of war. The farmstead that was responsible for a certain part of a road would mark its section with road maintenance stones. The Lunda farmstead, four kilometres westward, would maintain the road as far as this stone, which still is in the ditch.



The county map which is about 100 years old, shows the location of the milestone and road maintenance stone. The Lunda farmstead is seen to the left.



**Road maintenance stone in ditch**



Farmers also had the duty of transporting the king, the court and state employees wherever they needed to travel. During the 17th century carrier payments were introduced for the farmers. Compensation was based on the length of the journey and thus a uniform system of measurements was needed. Milestones were placed at accurately measured places along the public road network and marked a quarter mile, half mile or whole mile.

A check was made of the milestones in the Oppunda district in 1836, to which the Västra Vingåker parish also belongs. This milestone was probably erected in connection with the check. Unfortunately, the text on the milestone is too worn to be legible.



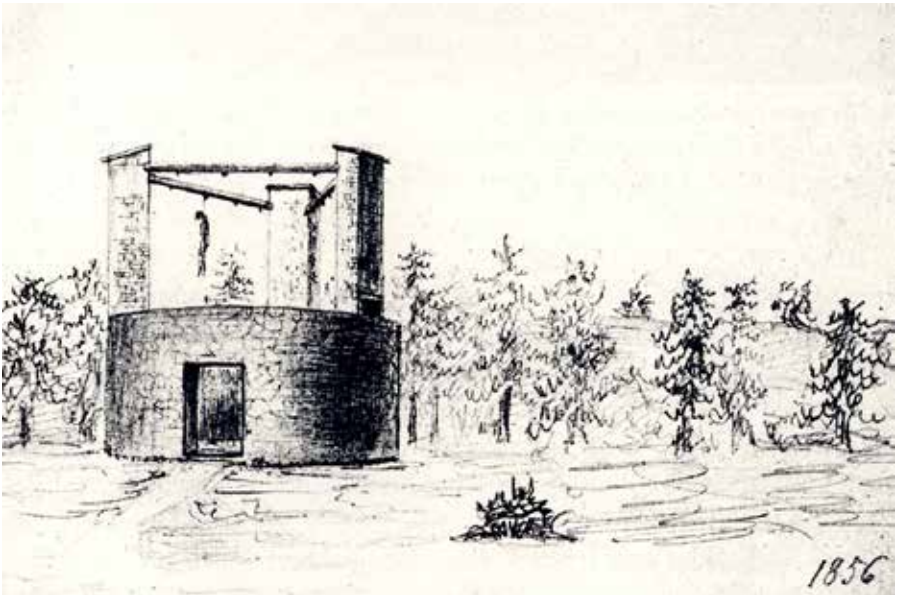
Milestone in garden by road.

## SITE 3

# Gallows hill

Some people believe that there was an old place of execution near the church in Vingåker. Others talk about a gallows hill east of Vingåker, at Stora Bene. Other information indicates a non-cultivated area about 700 metres to the north-west of the church. Written sources say that it was mostly repeat offenders who had committed serious crimes who were sentenced to death. However, theft was considered a serious crime in the past.

There are about 300 gallows hills known in Sweden. The real number was probably twice as large since these were places that people would rather forget. Over 500 people were executed in Sweden between 1800 and 1865. One of the last public execution took place in Malmköping in 1876. The death penalty was abolished in 1921.



**Sketch of gallows on Hammarbyhöjden outside Stockholm in 1856.**

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



**Human skull from an archaeological excavation at a gallows hill outside Vadstena.**

PHOTO: EMMA KARLSSON, ÖSTERGÖTLANDS LÄNSMUSEUM

Archaeologists have excavated an old gallows hill outside Vadstena where they found the remains of 25 executed people: 24 men and one woman. Eleven of them had been beheaded and the others had probably been hanged. The majority were under forty years old and three of them were teenagers.



## SITE 4

# Local history museum

There is a local history museum opposite the church in Vingåker consisting of two old buildings, one white and one red. The white building was a parish warehouse from 1758, which has been converted into a museum full of interesting history. Here you can admire old Vingåker costumes furniture, utensils and tools from the Stone Age to the present days. There are also bicycles, fire-fighting equipment, a watch-maker's workshop, a shoemaker's workshop and many other things. The red building was originally a granary from the Åsen farmstead, now providing storage space for wagons, sleighs, agricultural implements and a rope-maker's workshop. The building also houses a small school museum.

The Västra Vingåker local history association was founded in 1935. In addition to the museum, the association maintains an archive where they keep old photographs, court records and newspaper cuttings, a register of farms and cottages in Västra Vingåker parish and many other documents.



Vingåker local history museum, the White and Red Museum.



Objects in the Vingåker local history museum, the White Museum.

SITE 5

# Viking Age and Stone Age

In Vingåker municipality there are eleven grave-fields and around sixty single graves remaining from the Bronze Age and the Iron age. Situated in a lovely natural park near Sävstaholm is the largest of the Iron Age grave-fields, where there are 105 visible burial-mounds and stone settings. People buried their dead in the grave-field during the Vendel period and the Viking Age.



**Part of the grave-field.**

PHOTO: ARKEOLOGIKONSULT





**An Iron Age grave the way it usually looks after archaeologists have carefully dug away all the earth and grass that has grown over them with time.**

PHOTO: JONAS WIKBORG,  
SOCIETAS ARCHAEOLOGICA UPSALIENSIS

Twenty-two graves have been excavated, some during previous research studies and some when parts of the grave-field were damaged in 2015. Archaeologists had to excavate the most damaged graves but were able to repair others.

Most of the dead people had been cremated, which was common throughout the Iron age. The burned bones were then put into a clay pot or birch bark vessel sealed with resin.



**Damaged grave examined by archaeologists in 2015.**

PHOTO: ARKEOLOGIKONSULT



**Findings from Vingåker. Potsherds, a red glass bead and human teeth.**

PHOTO: ARKEOLOGIKONSULT

During the Iron Age the dead were commonly accompanied in the graves by burial gifts. In the grave field in Vingåker different types of bronze adornments, that would have been parts of the clothing, beautiful glass beads possibly imported from the Middle East, combs and game pieces of bone or antler, have been found. Burned bones from pig, bird and dog have also been identified.



**Water level in Vingåker 6,500 years ago. The water level was approximately 40 metres higher than today.**

The remains of a 6,500-year-old Stone Age settlement were also found during the 2015 excavation. The settlement was there before the Iron Age graves were made. At that time Vingåker was on the bay in the Baltic Sea.

The findings were mainly stone tools along with an interesting find, consisting of the cremated bones of a complete pig. Perhaps these Stone Age people, who were hunter-gatherers, had sacrificed the pig.



## SITE 6

# Stone Age grave

During road construction in the 1930s along Forsavägen, an attentive person noticed an ancient-looking pendant of slate, whereupon the archaeologists were notified. They carried out an excavation at the site and found a Stone Age grave from the so-called Battle-axe culture. Residues from a funeral pyre was found just over half a metre below the surface of the ground. Beneath this the archaeologists found a finely decorated, spherical clay pot, ten more or less fragmented amber beads, a whetstone of quartzite, a flintstone scraper, a flake of flintstone and a fairy stone. All these finds can be seen at Historiska Museet in Stockholm.



**Fragments of this finely decorated pot were found in the grave. The pot, almost 20 cm tall, is carefully repaired.**

PHOTO: HISTORISKA MUSEET



**A pendant of slate and a fairy stone.**

PHOTO: HISTORISKA MUSEET



**Amber beads.**

PHOTO: HISTORISKA MUSEET

Modern DNA-research shows that there is a commonality among the Swedish Battle-axe culture and the Yamna culture from the area north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Yamna people were shepherds, and scientists believe that large groups of people with their roots in the Yamna culture migrated through Europe. Some 4,800 years ago they reached Sweden. Among other things these shepherds passed on to us, is the use of the wheel, the power of oxen and the knowledge of how to use the sheep's wool to weave fabric for clothes.

# Questions

1. How did people travel in different ages?
2. What does the place you live in, your home district, 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 Middle East in Viking Age graves?
7. What was the result of groups of people leaving their homes about 5,000 years ago and migrating to new settling grounds?

## **Where can I find ancient remains?**

You can find information about all known registered ancient remains 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](http://www.fornsok.se)



# Glossary

<b>Ancient remains</b>	Traces of human activities in the past
<b>Battle-axe culture</b>	Stone Age people that lived in Sweden around 4,800 to 4,300 years ago
<b>Bronze Age</b>	Period between 3,800 and 2,500 years ago
<b>Croft</b>	Now refers to a small house; was originally a form of lease
<b>Fairy stone</b>	A stone of calcium carbonate formed naturally on the seabed
<b>Funeral pyre</b>	A large fire on which the dead body of a person was cremated
<b>Gallows</b>	Device for hanging those condemned to death
<b>Gallows hill</b>	Place where criminals who had been condemned to death were hanged or executed in other ways
<b>Grave field</b>	A collection of graves
<b>Home district</b>	Area surrounding a home, where someone has grown up
<b>Iron Age</b>	Time period from about 2,500 to 1,000 years ago
<b>Medieval times</b>	Time from 1050 to 1550 A.D.
<b>Milestone</b>	Road marker indicating whole, half and quarter miles
<b>Parish</b>	The smallest administrative unit of the church, a geographical area
<b>Resin</b>	Different types of sap that flow from trees
<b>Settlement</b>	A place where people have lived or live
<b>Stone setting</b>	A grave marked by a formation of stones on the ground
<b>Stone Age</b>	Time period up to 3,800 years ago
<b>Vendel period</b>	Time period from around 1,400 to 1,200 years ago, prior to the Viking Age
<b>Viking</b>	Person who lived around 1,200 to 1,000 years ago
<b>Viking Age</b>	From about 1,200 to 1,000 years ago; the last part of the Iron Age



**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