

PREHISTORIC WALK NEAR TOWN

# Flen

## Salsta – Stenhammar

—

AROUND 6 KM



## SITE 1

# Iron Age grave

On the crest of the hill northwest of the Slottsängen home for the elder is a single Iron Age grave, concealed in the undergrowth. Usually more graves lie near the ones that can be seen, hidden under the grass and shrubs. This particular grave could be from the earlier Iron Age, perhaps around the time of the birth of Christ some 2 000 years ago.

In those times it was common for the dead to be cremated before burial. Sometimes the burnt bones were cleaned from soot and coal before being laid in the grave. The dead were not usually accompanied by very many burial gifts, but special finds in graves from this period can include imported glass goblets from the Roman empire.



**Graves often look like this when archaeologists have carefully removed all the soil and grass that covered them over the years, before an excavation.**

PHOTO: JONAS WIKBORG, SOCIETAS ARCHAEOLOGICA UPSALIENSIS



**Iron Age grave northwest of the Slottsängen home for the elder.**

## SITE 2

# Norrtorp

The Norrtorp croft once belonged to the Salsta estate, but old documents indicate that it did not have to pay tribute to the main estate, which was otherwise common. Since the site of the croft is abandoned, and existed before 1850, Norrtorp is now a heritage site under statutory protection.



Norrtorp in Salsta forest, on a historical map from 1748.

MAP: LANTMÄTERISTYRELSENS ARKIV

## SITE 3

# Iron Age settlement

On the level ground at the edge of the woods was a settlement during the Iron Age. When archaeologists found this settlement they encountered remains of poles which may have been part of a house, and also the remains of a large oven. Different ovens may have been used for cooking and firing ceramic vessels as well as for smelting iron for tools etc. The settlement may have been inhabited by the same people who made the Iron Age grave by the Slottsängen home for the elder (Site 1).



The Iron Age settlement.

## SITES 4, 5 AND 7

# Stone Age settlements

Archaeologists have recently found three Stone Age settlements in the Stenhammar forest. The sea level was much higher during the Stone Age than it is today. Settlements were often situated near the coast or by a lake. The people, who were hunter-gatherers, led a nomadic existence, and fishing was common as well as gathering plants and hunting for food. The tools people used were made of wood, bone and stone.

In central Sweden farming was introduced around 5 500 years ago. This meant that people became more or less permanently settled at one place. The Stone Age people began making ceramic pots. These pots could be used for cooking food over an open fire, for fermenting various beverages and porridges, as well as for storing food. The oldest traces of farming identified by archaeologists are in the Middle East, where people cultivated plants as early as around 10 000 years ago.



Two hunter-gatherer settlements, around 7 000 years old, and the sea level at that time.



An early farming settlement, around 5 000 years old, and the sea level at that time.



Axes and worked quartz made by hunter-gatherers.



Funnel beaker vessel made by early farmers, Kristianstad in Skåne.

PHOTO: HISTORISKA MUSEET

## PLATS 6

# Solstugan

The Solstugan croft existed in this place from the 18th century until about 1970. The foundations of the dwelling house as well as the barn and parts of a cellar remain. The croft is listed as a heritage site under statutory protection.



The croft is on open ground and is a great place for a break when the sun is shining!



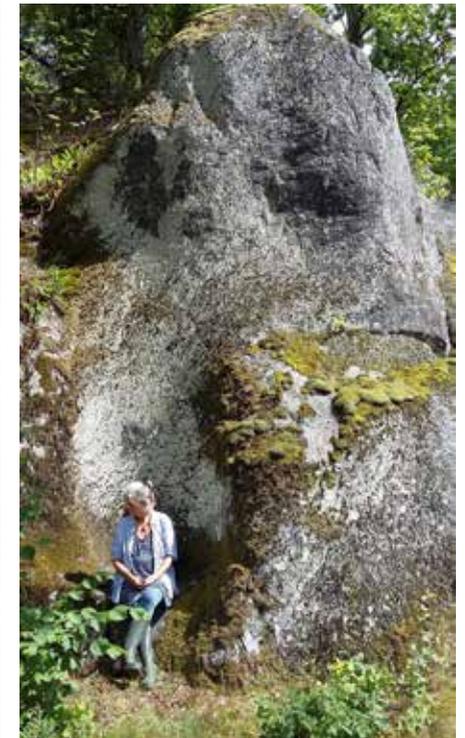
The Solstugan croft, county district map about 1900.

## PLATS 8

# Jättestolen

Jättestolen, or the Giant's chair, at Stenhammar was formed during the Ice Age by flowing water that made stones and gravel swirl around in a crevice in the rock – over a very, very long period of time. Eventually this created a smooth hollow in the rock. These types of formations are usually called Giants' kettles. There are several similar ones close to one of the Stone Age settlement sites (Site 4).

In the old days it was said that this formation in the rocky outcrop at Stenhammar was a chair where giants had been sitting.



The Giant's chair at Stenhammar.

## SITE 9

# Salsta småskola

Schooling became compulsory for all children in Sweden in 1842. This is the site where Salsta småskola ("junior school") stood. As the school was built in 1878, i.e. after 1850, it does not have statutory protection as a heritage site. It was demolished in the 1970s.



**Photo of Salsta småskola in 1899.**

PHOTO: FLENS HEMBYGDSFÖRENING'S ARKIV

## SITE 10

# Iron Age graves

In the Flen municipality there are around 2 000 known prehistoric graves and burial sites from the Iron Age. Next to the old arable land west of Salsta is a small burial site with five visible graves from the Iron Age. It is about 1 000 years old, from the period we call the Viking Age. Northwest of the burial site is an additional grave mound. The burial site and the mound were probably part of a larger site which has been broken up by centuries of cultivation and other activities.

Common finds in male Viking Age graves include neck rings of iron with Thor's hammer pendants. Women might be buried with glass beads of different colours. The beads were often imported from the Middle East.



**The burial site to the west and the site of Salsta farm to the east.**



**A Thor's hammer neck ring from the Viking Age.**

PHOTO: HISTORISKA MUSEET



**Beads from the Viking Age.**

PHOTO: LINDA WAHLANDER

## SITE 11

# Salsta

In the middle of the Salsta residential area remains a hill with a ramp built out of rocks. Here Salsta farm was situated during Medieval times. Salsta is known by records from the 1380s. It was one of five farms in the area that existed before the town of Flen was established.

The preserved stone ramp led to the barn, which was demolished in the 1960s. It was used to transport hay up to the barn for drying. The hay was then used as winter feed for the farm animals.

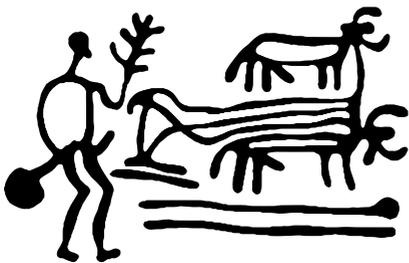
Since the Bronze Age, some 4 000 years ago, farmers in Sweden used ards, a type of light plough, to loosen the soil before sowing. During the Viking Age farmers began using a heavier plough that also turned the soil, but this type of plough spread very slowly in the country. It was only towards the end of the 19th century that it became a common tool in Swedish agriculture.



The stone ramp in Salsta.



This is perhaps what it looked like in use.



Rock carving of a farmer with an ard from the Bronze Age.

IMAGE: VÄRLDENS BILDER



A farmer in Egypt around 3 200 BP.

IMAGE: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO





**All ancient remains and heritage sites in Sweden  
are protected under the Heritage Conservation Act.**

This means that it is illegal to alter or ruin an ancient remain or a heritage site, for example by digging on it. The reason why ancient remains and heritage sites are protected is so that everyone will have access to the story that each one of them tells, now and in the future.



LÄNSSTYRELSEN  
Södermanlands län

The following applies for all maps (unless otherwise specified):  
© Södermanland County Administrative Board, primary information  
© Lantmäteriet – GSD Property map, base map  
Photo: County Administrative Board (unless otherwise specified)

Translation: Space 360 AB  
Design & production: Kream  
2019