

Nature reserve and rock carving area in

R Högsbyn, Tisselskog



Welcome to Högsbyn rock carving area

Tisselskog Nature Reserve is set in the beautiful cultural landscape in Högsbyn on a peninsula in Lake Råvarpen. The sloping species-rich hay meadow is located in a sunlit position on the Dalformation. The formation is the remains of a mountain chain that was formed on the bottom of a shallow sea more than one billion years ago. The calcareous rock consists of chlorite and shale and supports a rich flora. The area is easy to access both from land and water, since Råvarpen is part of the lake system of the Dalsland Canal.

Small scabious mining bee, *Andrena marginata*, on devil's bit scabious, *Succisa pratensis*.



Meadow flora

Especially in spring and early summer, there is a profusion of colourful flowers on the well-managed hay meadow. The pink-purple flowers of bitter-vetch and wood crane's-bill compete in beauty with the blue common milkwort and harebell and the yellow common bird's-foot-trefoil and lady's bedstraw. Red clover and perforate St John's-wort also thrive here together with a range of different grasses such as sheep's-fescue and quaking-grass. Meadow saxifrage on tall stems, herbaceous scented wild marjoram and wild liquorice, with zigzag stems spreading along the ground, grow in drier patches between the flat rocks. Small clumps of mountain everlasting can also be found here, and bloody crane's-bill grows near the shore.

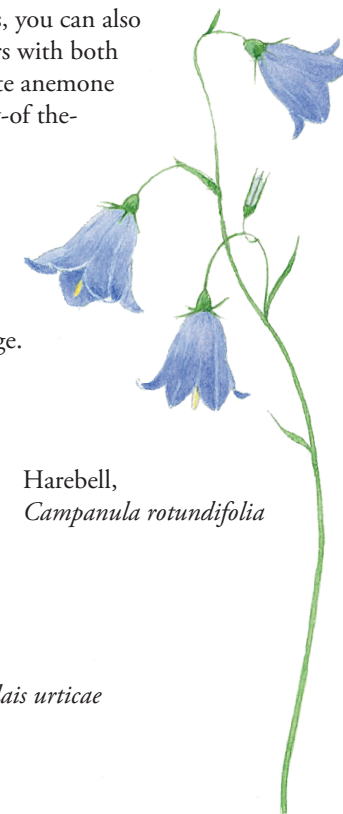
The flora of the hay meadow is adapted to a nutrient-poor environment. After flowering, the meadow is cut with a scythe or sickle bar mower and the grass is left to dry for a few days before being removed. This allows the flower seeds to fall to the ground and prevents a fertilisation effect, which could otherwise alter the composition of species.

Orchids

Heath spotted-orchid and a few other species of orchid are found in the reserve. Take the opportunity to study the graceful lesser butterfly-orchid with its yellow-white flowers, and inhale the scent used to attract moths and other nocturnal insects at dusk. Common twayblade, as the name suggests, only has one pair of oval leaves. The small yellow-green flowers are difficult to spot in the profusion of early summer greenery. Orchids, as well as other meadow and forest flowers, are pollinated by a great number of different insects.

Walking trail to burial sites

A relatively easy to walk 2 kilometre trail goes through the reserve, partly through mixed forest. Apart from beautiful views, you can also enjoy liverleaf which occurs with both azure and red flowers, white anemone and later in the season, lily-of-the-valley and May lily. On the outermost end of the peninsula are two burial sites; a burrow and a stone setting, from the same period as the rock carvings, i.e. the Bronze Age.



Harebell, *Campanula rotundifolia*

















Small tortoiseshell, *Aglais urticae*

Recreation

There is a simple jetty at Lake Råvarp in the Reserve, where one or two boats can moor up during the day. The beach, which in places is sandy and shallow, provides a good spot for swimming.



Lady's bedstraw, *Galium verum*

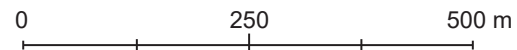
-  Reserve boundary
-  Road
-  Railway
-  Track
-  Footpath
-  Accessible footpath
-  Woodland
-  Open area
-  Water
-  Wetland
-  Archaeological feature
-  Car park
-  Accessible toilet
-  WC



You are welcome to walk in the lovely countryside, but please show consideration and do not leave your rubbish behind.

Within the Nature Reserve it is forbidden to:

- Pick flowers, dig up plants and break branches,
- Camp or park up a caravan,
- Light a fire,
- Bring a dog not on a lead,
- Park vehicles other than in the parking places designated for the public,
- Drive a motor vehicle other than on the road, which leads to the car park.





Bird life

In early spring you can hear the skylarks sing high above the ground. Lapwings and Canada geese are also among the birds that are first to return after the winter, and all summer a pair of faithful cranes can be seen gliding over the landscape on their wide wings or foraging on the fields.

Most of Sweden's common birds nest in the reserve or in the immediate surroundings, e.g. blue tit, great tit, goldcrest, white wagtail, and different warblers and thrushes, such as willow warbler and song thrush. Chaffinch, pied flycatcher, nuthatch and various ducks nest annually. Heron regularly visit the reserve. Raven, Dalsland's landscape bird, is often seen flying in search of food. In winter you may spot dipper.



House martin, *Delichon urbicum*



Välkommen till Högsbyns hällristningsområde

Sweden's rock carvings are thought to have originated during the Bronze Age, a thousand-year long era that ended 500 years BCE. They are often found in cultural landscapes that may well have been cultivated at that time. At Högsbyn there are not only carvings, but also graves that show that the area was inhabited during the Bronze Age.

In the old agricultural landscape at Högsbyn, there are 50 rocks with a total of over 2000 symbols, patterns and figures carved into the rock. The bedrock is calcareous shale. It is a soft bedrock, which is easy to work. But that is certainly not the reason why the Bronze Age people chose to leave their rich messages for posterity here. The place must have had a special significance for them.



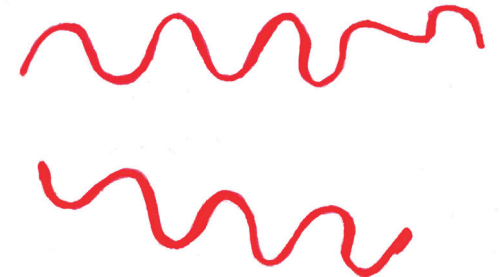
The symbols on the rocks at Högsbyn are largely the same as those found in carvings elsewhere in Sweden: people, ships, weapons, sun crosses and footprints. There are also simple hollows, lines, and many completely incomprehensible patterns and figures.

We will never know why Bronze Age people took such pains to carve their images into the rock. But most researchers agree that they are linked to their beliefs, which revered the



sun and its life-giving power. Perhaps the act itself - creating images and patterns in the rock - was a ritual to worship the sun and evoke good fertility for crops, animals, and people? An indication of this is that in many cases new images were carved seemingly haphazardly over older carvings. The rocks out on Ronarudden are largely covered with such Bronze Age graffiti.

The same is true of the 40-metre long Ormvindlingshällen (winding snake rock) down by the lake. Here you will find a jumble of sun wheels, crosses, footprints, bowl-shaped hollows, and labyrinths – but in particular the long, undulating wavy lines that have given this rock its name. This is something that does not appear on any other known rock carving. Is it meant to be water or giant mythological snakes?





On other rocks, the individual symbols are well defined and one can even get a sense of some kind of composition. Immediately to the south of the garden, there is a unique image of a sword-wielding figure doing a backflip on a ship. Beside the ship there are three other people, two of whom are holding spears. There is also another ship with two figures onboard. One interpretation is that one is blowing a horn, while the other is lifting something, perhaps a weapon, over his head. Is it a warrior's feat – perhaps an important victory over an enemy – that is being immortalised?

As stated, there are no certain answers. Use your imagination and let the ancient people talk to you as you wander through the Bronze Age hills of Högsbyn!

Be careful with the rock carvings!

Wear and tear is a great threat to the rock carvings in Högsbyn. The soft rocks wear easily. Remember that most of the rocks in the area contain carvings, even if they have not been painted.

Please don't walk on the flat rocks!



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How to get here

Tisselskog Nature Reserve and the Högsbyn rock carving area are located 10 kilometres north of Håverud and the aqueduct. Follow signs for "Hällristningar". When coming from the north on road E45, turn west at Tösse Church. After approximately 30 kilometres you'll see the sign "Hällristningar 2". Just north of Steneby Church on Road 172 between Uddevalla and Bengtsfors turn east towards Dals Långed. Approximately 5 kilometres after the population centre you'll see the sign "Hällristningar 2".



Väst kuststiftelsen
Naturvård & Friluftsliv



Länsstyrelsen

In cooperation with Region Västra Götaland.

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Published in 2002. Revised 2022.