

A journey 200 years back in time

The unpartitioned and uniquely preserved village was designated a historic environment in 1981. In 1996 the West Coast Foundation purchased the property with funding from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish National Heritage Board and the following year a large area surrounding the village was protected as a nature reserve. The area was made a culture reserve in 2004 as the historic cultural values are the most prominent.

The overall vision for the reserve is to preserve the unique cultural environment and to restore the fields so that they look as they did during the period preceding the great redistribution of land holdings ("Storskifte") in 1825. In addition, educational activities provide visitors with an overall experience of life in a farming village during the early 19th century.

Restoration and maintenance

The maintenance of Äskhult is controlled by a committee consisting of representatives from Kungsbacka Municipality, the County Administrative Board and the West Coast Foundation. A farmer is employed to tend the fields, a task which is undertaken in consultation with experts within different fields.

The overall approach that is taken regarding landscape, cultivation and buildings is unusual and Äskhult is a unique project. Recreating the traditional agricultural landscape will take many years and a great deal of work. On occasion it might therefore look a bit messy in the fields, however, at the same time it is exciting to follow how the work is proceeding.

Public activities

Äskhult is one of the major attractions in Halland and extensive public activities take place there. Themed walks, midsummer celebrations, children's days, harvest festivals, story telling cafés, Christmas markets and other events are part of the extensive programme of activities. There is a special programme for school classes with themes that vary from the village's history, development of the landscape and handicrafts to try out, to folklore including superstitions and myths. Daily guided tours are conducted during the period from March to October, at which time the café in the main building of Bengt's farmhouse ("Bengts manhus") is open.



The heather moor-land is a remainder of a fascinating, historic landscape and one of Europe's most endangered habitats.

The entire northern section of the reserve comprises outlying land. The outlying land was traditionally used as pastureland and as a source of firewood- and timber. When grazing ceased in the early 20th century the outlying land became overgrown or was planted with coniferous forest. During recent years a large part of the forest has been felled in order to provide space for an open heather moor-land. The heath is once again being grazed and in May 2006 the first heather burning of modern times was carried out in Äskhult. Burning is an old method that has traditionally been used to rejuvenate the heather and improve the grazing.

The outlying land – coniferous forest that has become open heather moorland

The hayfields have been restored through major clearance efforts and have resulted in grasslands with a sparse covering of trees. Several meadows are once again being mown by scythe in the traditional way during the latter part of the summer. Mowing with scythes is a time consuming task, and parts of the meadowlands are therefore maintained using grazing animals.

Äskhult culture reserve

Äskhult is a uniquely preserved village environment that offers a good idea of what many villages in West Sweden looked like 200 years ago. Äskhult and the surrounding fields have been protected as a culture reserve since 2004. An almost archaic and small-scale cultural landscape is being gradually recreated in the reserve, consisting of small fields, mounds of stones and hayfields. Large areas of planted spruce forest have been felled to provide space for an open, grazed landscape of heather moorland.

You are welcome to walk along the paths in Äskhult, but always show consideration to people, animals and the countryside. Bear in mind that special regulations apply in the reserve.



Northern Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe

You're welcome to Äskhult all year round!

The village is manned during the following hours:  
1 May–31 May, 11–17  
1 June–31 August, 11–18  
Weekends in September, 11–17

Entrance fee is charged when the village is manned.

Café  
Daily Midsummer–Mid-August  
Weekends May and September

Guided tours  
Sundays May–August, 13 and 15  
Daily Midsummer–Mid-August, 13 and 15  
Group booking May–September, please contact us.

Information

www.askhultsby.se  
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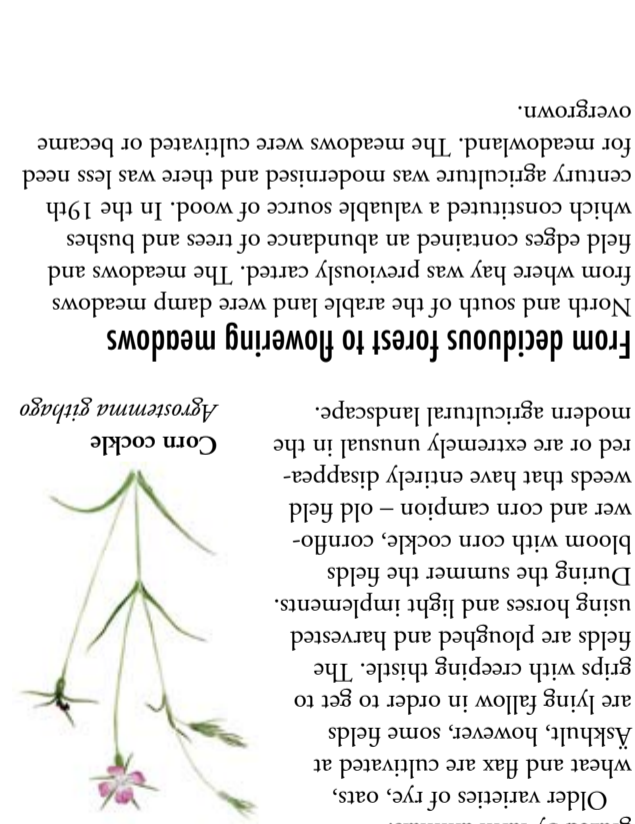


Leave the E6 at the Fjörås exit. Follow the signposted route to Äskhult via Gällinge, a total of approx. 14 kilometres.

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During the 18th century the arable land in Äskhult was partitioned into long, narrow, indented fields separated by stone walls, terraced edges and strips of meadow. Originally the fields contained numerous stones lodged in the ground as well as mounds of stones. Over the years the villagers took great pains to clear the earth of large quantities of boulders and pebbles. These stones are now being replaced! It might seem strange, but it is an element in the work of recreating the old fields consisting of stone field walls and mounds of stones. The fields have also been repartitioned into smaller units. The land around the village has been restored while the fields along the moraine ridge still give a contemporary impression and are grazed by farm animals. Older varieties of rye, oats, wheat and flax are cultivated at Äskhult, however, some fields are lying fallow in order to get to grips with creeping thistle. The fields are ploughed and harvested using horses and light implements. During the summer the fields bloom with corn campion – old field weeds that have entirely disappeared or are extremely unusual in the modern agricultural landscape.

In traditional farming communities the village's lands were divided into infield and outlying land. The infields, consisting of fields and meadows were located closest to the settlement and demarcated in relation to the outlying land by means of fences.

ÄSKHULT



Culture reserve in Halland county



County administrative board of Halland



Väst kuststiftelsen  
NATURVÄRD \* FRILUFTSLIV

The 19th century character of Äskhult village has been preserved, with tightly packed farm buildings collected around a village square. The village, which is located on the top of a beautifully rounded moraine ridge, today comprises four farms in their original position: Bengt's, Derräs, Jönäs and Göttås. The farms were inhabited right up to the 1960s. The farm grounds contain kitchen gardens and flowerbeds with beneficial herbs. A thorough restoration of the farm buildings commenced in 2003. The buildings which are leaning the most have been aligned with subsidence that has taken place. Poor and leaking thatched- and shingled roofs have been replaced and measures have been taken against decay. In the interior, the café in the main building of Bengt's farm has been given a face-lift. There are plans to decorate "Jönäs" farm, so that the interior matches the restored surrounding fields in terms of time period. Traditional native breeds such as Linderöd pigs and Äsbo chickens are bringing life back to the village.

Äskhult village and the four farms: 1. Derräs, 2. Jönäs, 3. Bengt's and 4. Göttås. Mounds of stones and stone walls have been recreated in the restored fields closest to the farms.



Take a walk through the cultural landscape!

"On route we learn more about the settlement and different types of land during the 18th and 19th centuries. Understanding how the landscape has been cultivated also gives us an insight into how people lived in this time."

From "Äskhults historiska stigar"  
(Äskhult's Historic Paths)

Four historic paths run through Äskhult, marked with red, yellow, blue and green. The white paths are short cuts that can be used if you wish to take a shorter walk. Numbered posts are situated along the paths at places of historic or biological value. All paths start and end at Äskhult's village and have a principle direction that is indicated by the numbers of the stations. The walk can also be started from other places, and it does not matter in which direction you walk.

Further information about Äskhult and the stations on the pathways is available in the pamphlet "Äskhults historiska stigar".

The red path

Length: 6000 metres  
The path is moderately difficult to walk as it goes through hilly terrain; substantial shoes or walking boots are recommended.

- Red station 1: "Svinalyckan". Crops were grown here.
- Red station 2: View from the "Ulvaklipporna" – "the rocks of the wolves". The name originates from the time when wolves were common here.
- Red station 3: The path follows the "Husakulls gata", a road with boulders and rocks containing augen gneiss.
- Red station 4: Small marsh with hare's-tail cottongrass and hair moss.
- Red station 5: Branch road (white markings) to the caves. To the north-west you see the "Lygner-skogen" forest where the people of Äskhult took their animals to graze and collected wood.
- Station G: The caves by the foot of "Stora Björnås".
- Red station 6: Views towards lake "Lygnern", the county of Västergötland and the old border between Sweden and Denmark.
- Red station 7: The "Äskhults kvarnfall" falls and the "Kvarnmossen" moss. This was the site of a brook mill for grinding cereals.
- Red station 8: "Varpagatan" is an old path with a roadside offering place, a likely reminder of a murder committed a long time ago.
- Red station 9: The "Mörkakärrens ås" is a ridge with erratic boulders brought here by the inland ice.
- Red station 10: White-marked short cut to the right, over the footbridge. The red path continues diagonally to the left.
- Red station 11: "Krösekulle" – "the lingonberry hill", abundant with lingonberries in the past.
- Red station 12: "Mösagatan" is an old hollowed lane.

The blue path

Length: 850 metres  
The path is easy to walk along and accessible with light pushchairs.

- Blue station 1: "Mösagatan" is the road that leads to the bog.
- Blue station 2: The white trail (short cut).
- Blue station 3: "Mösagatan" and the field edges are mown by scythe.
- Blue station 4-7: See Green stations 4–7.



The rare solitary bee  
Andrena hattorfiana.

Grazing animals

Note that the paths run partially through enclosed pastures with grazing animals. The animals are used to people moving around the fields, but show consideration. Move calmly in their fields, be discreet and do not feed the animals. Dogs and other pets must be kept on a leash.



Meadow brown  
Maniola jurtina



Snipe  
Gallinago gallinago



Viper's-grass  
Scorzonera humilis



Black grouse  
Tetrao tetrix

The yellow path

Length: 1400 metres  
The path is for the most part easy to walk along, but it does include some moderately difficult sections.

- Yellow station 1: "Bastulyckan" is surrounded by a stone wall. This was the site of a small field and a fireplace used for flax dressing.
- Yellow station 2: The cultivation at "Getabackarna" is from the 18th century.
- Yellow station 3: The stone wall prevented the animals from getting into the infields before corn and hay were carted away.
- Yellow station 4: "Kneplehallen" is a flat rock on which flax seed cases were dried.
- Yellow station 5: The 19th century wall follows the straight boundary lines that the land surveyor drew up by the last great redistribution of land holdings.
- Yellow station 6: The pigs were released into "Kalvhagen" to eat the acorns.
- Yellow station 7: "Swenslyckan" used to be a field.



Green tiger beetle  
Cicindela campestris

The green path

Length: 1500 metres  
The path is for the most part easy to walk along, but it does include some moderately difficult sections.

- Green station 1: "Brunnslyckan", the village's source of water.
- Green station 2: Foundation stones from an outhouse with a fireplace that was used for flax dressing (so-called "linbasta").
- Green station 3: "Bokängen" is a restored meadowland that is now grazed.
- Green station 4: Beyond the gate used to be Förlanda parish's common pastureland.

- Green station 5: Visible in the terrain are mounds of stones (so-called "hackerör"), remains of prehistoric agriculture.
- Green station 6: "Djupakärret" is a hayfield that is mown by scythe.
- Green station 7: "Svinagatan" is a road that leads to the lake "Svinsjön".
- Green station 8: "Hönsåsakärr" meadow previously contained two small fields, "Kärråker" and "Hagåker".
- Green station 9: "Slätten" is a farm in the west previously called "Lilla Äskhult" (Little Äskhult).
- Green station 10: At the slope "Blekebacken" the newly woven cloth made from flax was laid to bleach.