



THE WORLD HERITAGE DECORATED FARMHOUSES OF HÄLSINGLAND



Copyright: Gävleborg County Administrative Board
Design: Matador Kommunikation
Author: Lenita Jansson Herlitz
Source material: Ingela Broström
Photography: Jakob Dahlström, Lars Lööf,
Mq-k, feiyuwzhangjie, Dorota C, Jan Gerrit Siesling,
Jan Eng, Peter Segermark (Nordiska museet), Erik Nordin
Translation: Semantix Språkcentrum
Printing: Elanders, 2013

*Seven farmhouses in
Hälsingland have been
selected to represent
this globally unique
cultural heritage. All the
farmhouses are preserved
from the 1800s, when this
elaborate style of building
reached its peak.*

Hälsingland
SWEDEN

THE WORLD HERITAGE DECORATED FARMHOUSES OF HÄLSINGLAND

THE HÄLSINGLAND FARMHOUSES were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List under the name "Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland". The nomination focuses on what is truly unique about the farmhouses. Not only did the people of Hälsingland build more and larger festivities rooms than farmers did in the rest of the world. There are also more decorated domestic interiors preserved in Hälsingland than anywhere else in the world.

MANY FESTIVITIES ROOMS FROM AN EARLY DATE

The Hälsingland farmers began to build large, and decorate lavish rooms for festivities, as early as the 1600s. Over time, more and even larger houses were built, a trend that reached a peak in the 1800s. By then, a single farmhouse could have up to fifteen decorated rooms, though only a couple of them were in day-to-day use. The others were used only for really important occasions in people's lives, such as weddings.



RICH DECORATIONS

The festivities rooms are often richly decorated. The painting technique indicates the room's use and status, just like the materials chosen for the manor houses and urban buildings that inspired the farmers and painters. To reinforce the sense of high ceremony in the principal room, large landscapes, townscapes and beautiful floral decorations were often painted directly onto the walls.

*LINEN, THE FOREST AND TRADE
WERE VERY PROFITABLE*

The farmers' healthy finances were based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Many Hälsingland farmers were also able to supplement their income

with activities such as linen production, trade and the sale of forest land and timber rights. Furthermore, the farmers of Hälsingland were freeholders, and their incomes, lives and buildings were therefore in their own hands.





P O S 1821

Gästgivars

THE LARGE FESTIVITIES building at Gästgivars in Vallsta was decorated by the influential Swedish painter Jonas Wallström. Wallström's high proficiency enabled him to imitate Wedgwood's finest English porcelain, and he developed a way of stencilling that spread to other parts of Sweden.

The farmhouse takes its name from the inn, "Gästgiveri" in Swedish, that was run at the farm during the 1600s and 1700s.

Gästgivars has its origins as early as the Middle Ages. Today, traditional crafts are kept alive thanks to Arbrå Handicraft Society, which is active here. The farmhouse is open to visitors during the summer.



Hälsingland

! Information

www.alltomhemslojd.se/forening/arbraz-hemslojdsforening (in Swedish)
www.bollnas.se/turism

Kristofers

THE GUEST HOUSE at Kristofers in Järvsö is unique, with its many well-preserved rooms on two floors. The building therefore provides particularly good insights into how individual rooms and entire houses were originally used for festivities. The farm, with its well-preserved

guest house, is set a little apart on the outskirts of the village, and offers a good view over the fields and meadows of the river valley. It has occupied the same site since the early 1800s. Previously it had been located in the centre of the village since at least the Middle Ages. The farm

has been in the same family for at least fourteen generations, and is still active in agriculture and forestry today. The renowned folk art painter Anders Ädel decorated the interior with imaginative freehand floral paintings. Tours are only available by advance booking.



Hälsingland

! Information

email: kristofers@telia.com
www.kristofers.se
www.stenegard.se

Pallars

PALLARS, IN ALFTA parish, is among the largest farmhouses in the whole of Hälsingland. The farmhouse acquired its mansion-like appearance, with an unusual number of porches and carved doors, when the farm's eldest son married a wealthy farmer's daughter. It was then that the large new residential dwelling was built.

The farm was already large, with an unusual number of residential rooms. The noted painter Svärdes Hans Ersson, from the province of Dalarna, painted landscapes in the large residential dwelling. The singular paintings preserved in one wing are the work of "Blåmålar", the Blue Painter. He is noted for using a costly

ultramarine pigment found in many farmhouses in the area. Here, his paintings represent various named locations in Sweden, something rarely seen in other farmhouses in the Nordic region. The farm has been passed down in the same family since the 1600s. Tours of Pallars are available only by advance booking.



Hälsingland



Information

Visitor Center in Ovanåker
www.ovanaker.se

Telephone: +46 (0)271-200 22



Jon-Lars

JON-LARS IN LÅNGHED boasts the largest building among the Hälsingland farmhouses. There is only one dwelling house on the farm. It was built in the mid-1800s with two identical parts for two brothers, following a fire that destroyed an earlier building. Even the many well-preserved outbuildings were constructed for two households.

It was common for farms to be occupied by several generations, but rarely by two brothers. Interestingly, the two dwellings, which shared a room for dancing and festivities, the "herrstuga", have completely different interior styles. The farmhouse is further distinguished by the large and elegant porch at the entrances to the two households, and by the exclusive turquoise paintings and French wallpapers. A salt shed from the 1600s has also been preserved. The farm is privately owned. Tours are available only by advance booking.



! Information

Visitor Center in Ovanåker
www.ovanakker.se
Telephone: +46 (0)271-200 22

Bortom Åa

BORTOM ÅA has a secluded location in Fågelsjö, a forest village in the borderlands between Dalarna and Hälsingland. The farm, one of the oldest in the village, was built when the Finns colonised the area in the 1600s. It is separated from the other houses in the village by a river, inspiring its name Bortom Åa, meaning beyond the river. It is also called Fågelsjö gammelgård.

Its history is unusually well documented, thanks in particular to the farmer Jonas Olsson, who documented most of what happened on the farm during the 1800s. Through the centuries, its owning family has been among the most affluent, due mainly to their many trips trading goods such as the firearms they had made in the farm's gunsmithy. A new dwelling house was built in 1910, after which the old one was left untouched, making it one of the best-preserved farmhouses from the 1800s in Sweden. The last owner Kristina, known as an eccentric who hoarded everything, bequeathed Bortom Åa to the municipality, and today tours are available throughout the year.



Hälsingland

! Information

Telephone: +46 (0)657-300 30
email: fagelsjo.hbf@telia.com
www.fagelsjo.nu (in Swedish)
www.stenegard.se



! Information

email: info@bommars.se
www.bommars.se (in Swedish)
www.stenegard.se



Bommars

BOMMARS OCCUPIES an elevated location on the outskirts of Letsbo, a village in a thickly forested part of the valley of the river Ljusnan. With its tall, weathered farmhouse, it is representative of how the wealthier farmers in Ljusdal built their farms in the 1800s. The interiors and decor include wallpaper inspired by that used in mansions combined with folk painting, a combination that was very unusual. Even the

room for storing clothes is decorated with Stockholm newspapers from the mid-1850s. Together, the various rooms at Bommars provide an unusually clear picture of the Hälsingland farmers' aesthetic appreciation and of the broad repertoires in the art of interior decoration at the command of the province's folk art painters. Today, Bommars is privately owned, but offers guided tours and events during the summer.

Erik-Anders

ERIK-ANDERS, in the village of Asta in Söderala parish, has a mansion-like architecture with interiors inspired by the higher social classes. On the first floor there is an impressive festivities room with elegant blue marbling. The farmhouse's restrained decorations

are the work of the Knutes, a family of painters much in demand. Erik-Anders was named after Erik Andersson, who had the farm built in the 1820s. In the mid-1800s, one of his sons accompanied Erik Jansson, the leader of the Janssonists (a Swedish pietist

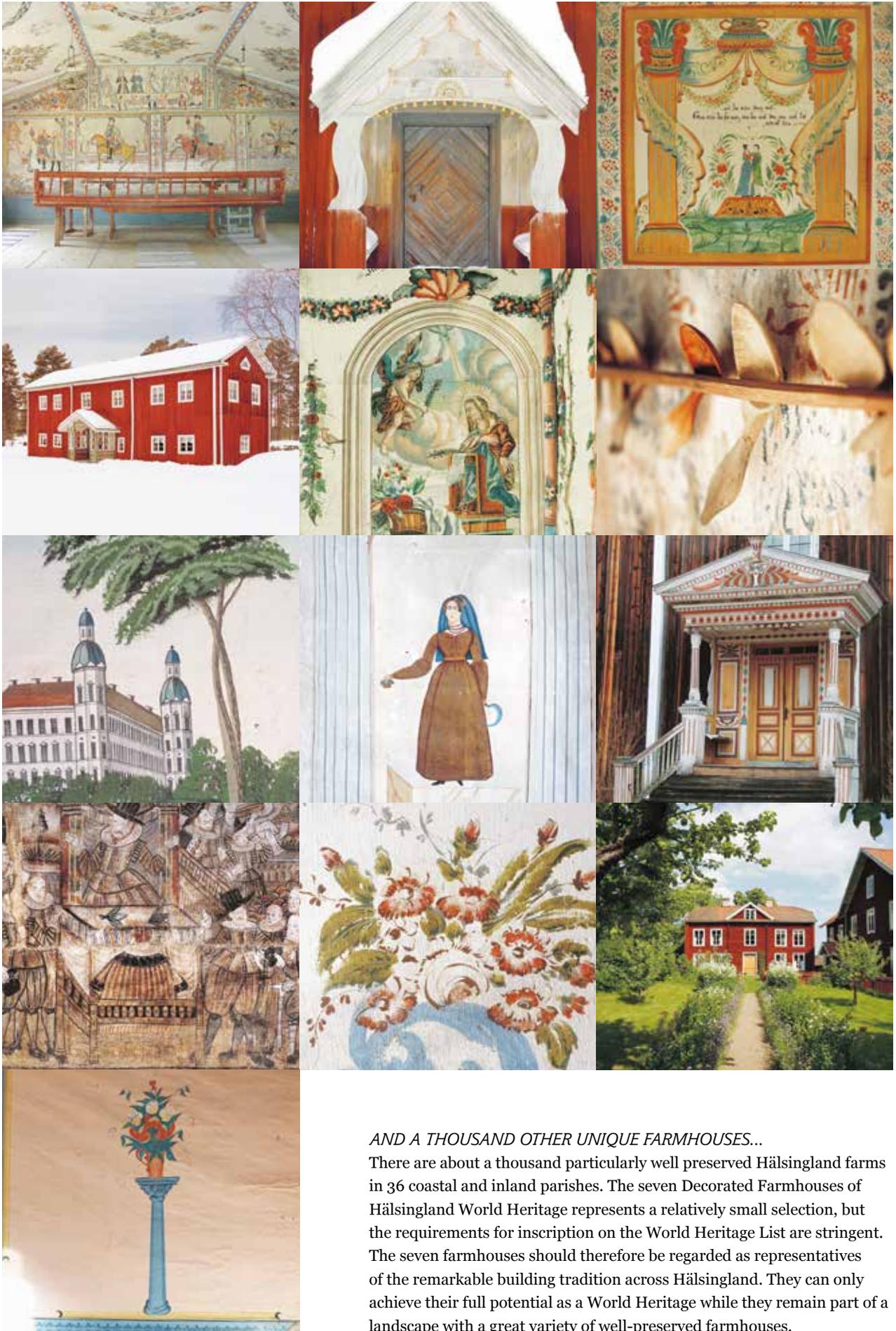
sect) to Bishop Hill in America. The farm is now privately owned, and is open to visitors during the summer. There is a Visitor Center, café, shop and furniture display, and a garden that has been restored to how it looked in 1920.



Hälsingland

! Information

email: info@erik-anders.se
www.erik-anders.se (in Swedish)



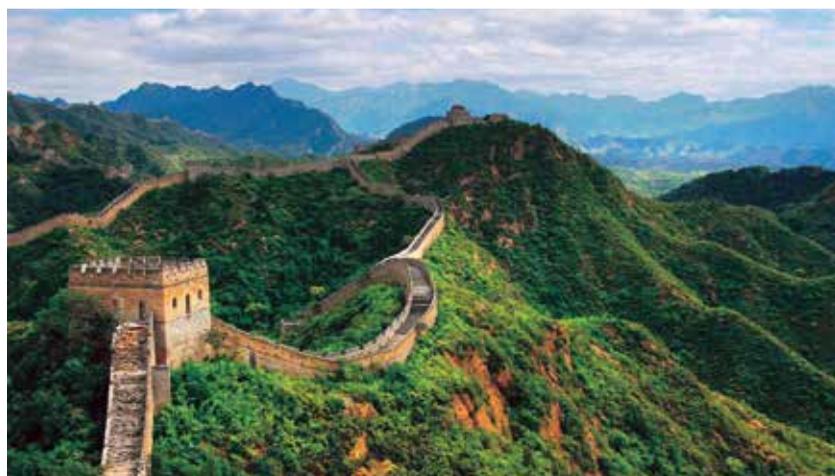
AND A THOUSAND OTHER UNIQUE FARMHOUSES...

There are about a thousand particularly well preserved Hälsingland farms in 36 coastal and inland parishes. The seven Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage represents a relatively small selection, but the requirements for inscription on the World Heritage List are stringent. The seven farmhouses should therefore be regarded as representatives of the remarkable building tradition across Hälsingland. They can only achieve their full potential as a World Heritage while they remain part of a landscape with a great variety of well-preserved farmhouses.

WORLD HERITAGE IMPORTANT TO HUMANITY

A **WORLD HERITAGE SITE** is an environment considered globally unique and therefore important to all of humanity. The criteria that must be met to warrant designation as a World Heritage Site are governed by a 1972 convention adopted by the UN agency UNESCO. Member countries are free to nominate candidate sites for inclusion on the World Heritage List, which was created to protect the world's foremost natural and cultural heritage from destruction. This applied particularly at times of conflict, but it was also important as a peacetime project. Through international cooperation and by spreading knowledge, it aimed to help create an understanding between peoples and countries of each other's cultures.

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee decides whether a nomination is accepted, following consultations with experts to determine whether its object fulfils the requirements of the convention. Once something is added to the List, the member country is obliged to ensure that the World Heritage site is preserved for posterity.



FIFTEEN WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN SWEDEN

The World Heritage List includes nearly a thousand World Heritage sites, with about thirty being added each year. Italy accounts for most, while Sweden has fifteen. Since summer 2012, seven farmhouses in Hälsingland have been one of them. The other fourteen in Sweden are:

The Royal Domain of Drottningholm, Ekerö
Birka and Hovgården, Ekerö
Engelsberg Ironworks, Fagersta
Rock Carvings in Tanum
Skogskyrkogården, Stockholm
Hanseatic Town of Visby
Laponian Area, Lapland
Church Village of Gammelstad, Luleå
Naval Port of Karlskrona
Agricultural Landscape of Southern Öland

High Coast, Ångermanland
Mining Area of the Great Copper Mountain in Falun
Varberg Radio Station, Grimeton
Struve Geodetic Arc, Norrbotten

The decision to add the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland to the World Heritage List was taken in summer 2012 at the World Heritage Committee meeting in St. Petersburg, which was attended by representatives from the nominated farmhouses. UNESCO's World Heritage Committee considered unanimously that the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland have unique universal value. They filled a gap in the World Heritage List, because farmers' buildings have hitherto been under-represented among the World Heritage sites. This enables the whole world to enjoy Hälsingland's outstanding culture of buildings and interiors.

THE SEVEN WORLD HERITAGE DECORATED FARMHOUSES

Gästgivars in Vallsta, Arbrå

Kristofers in Stene, Järvsö

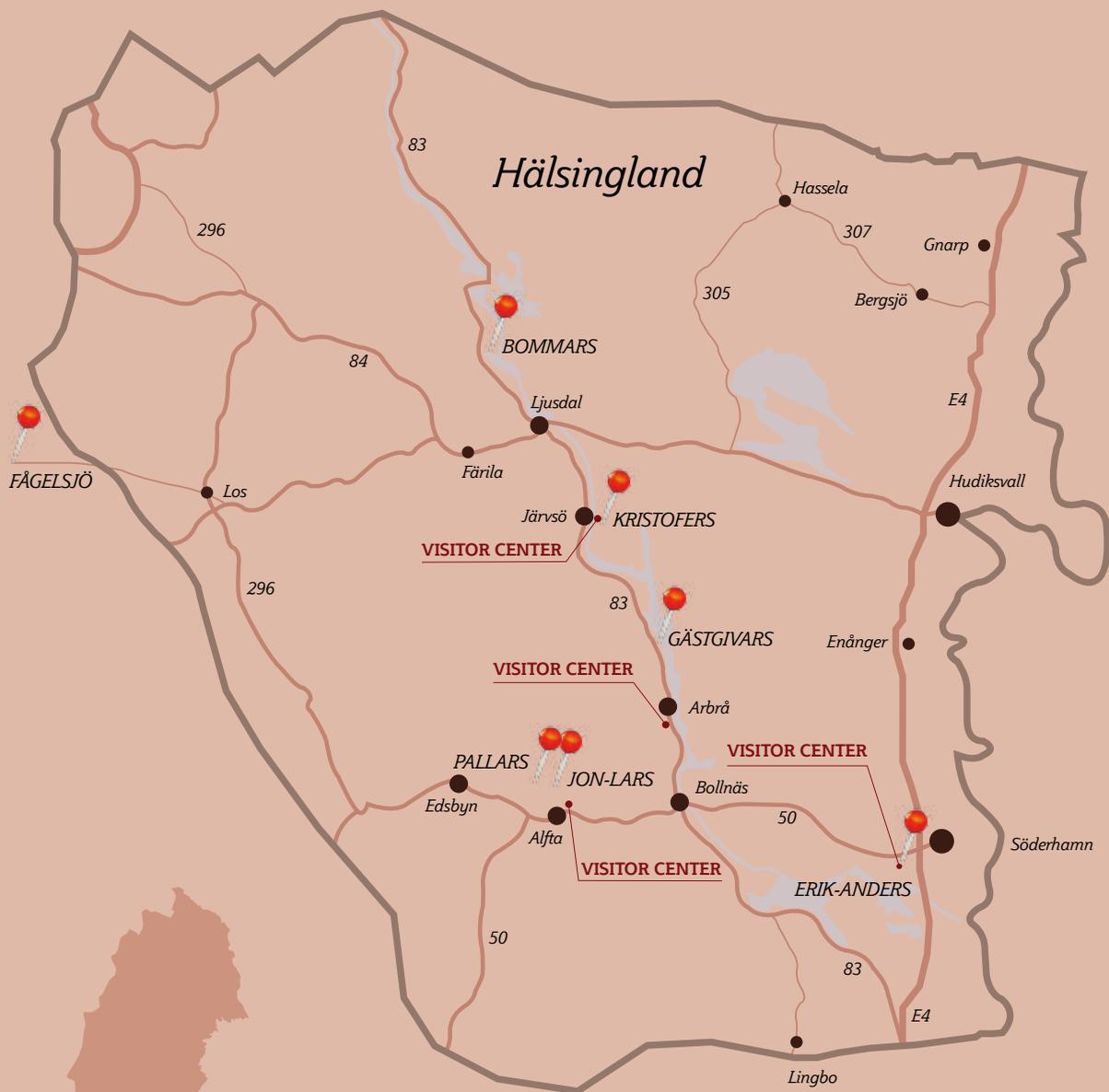
Jon-Lars in Långhed, Alfta

Bortom Åa in Fågelsjö, Loos

Bommars in Letsbo, Ljusdal

Erik-Anders in Asta, Söderala

Pallars in Långhed, Alfta



TOURS AND OPENING HOURS

Most of the houses are privately owned and occupied. This means some of the farms are only open to the public during certain limited periods. Other farms are never open. However, tours for groups can be arranged. Contact the local tourist offices in Hälsingland or the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage Visitor Center in the municipality concerned for further information about current arrangements at each farm.

If the World Heritage Decorated Farmhouses are closed, several other Hälsingland farms with beautiful paintings and old buildings are well worth visiting. Contact the tourist offices in Hälsingland or visit www.halsingegardar.se.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

The World Heritage Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland consist of seven farmhouses. They are only open to the public at certain times. Several of them require a guided tour to be booked before the visit.

There are four Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage Visitor Centers where you can get more information about the farmhouses, tours, opening hours, etc.

www.stenegard.se,

www.erik-anders.se,

www.ovanaker.se,

www.bollnas.se/turism

Several of the farmhouses also have their own websites, where you can get more information (in Swedish):

www.fagelsjo.nu,

www.kristofers.se,

www.bommars.se,

www.erik-anders.se,

www.alltomhemslojd.se/forening/arbra-hemslojdsforening

If the World Heritage Decorated Farmhouses are closed, several other Hälsingland farms with beautiful paintings and old buildings are well worth visiting. Contact the tourist offices in Hälsingland or visit www.halsingegardar.se (the Farmhouses of Hälsingland's own website).

Visit www.halsingland.se for other information about accommodation and destinations in Hälsingland. The province of Hälsingland is situated centrally in Sweden, and is only 2-3 hours by train from Stockholm. For further information on regional and local public transport options, visit www.sj.se and www.x-trafik.se

