

ECTN INTERREG III C Project

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Template for case studies

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Summary of Case study	This case presents a mediate and research project. The aim is to increase historical knowledge and make this process public. The main activity is the excavation of a medieval church ruin including a surrounding churchyard, an late Iron Age/early Middle Age farm and a medieval building in connection with the Varnhem Cistercian monastery.
Organisations concerned	Västergötlands museum, Varnhem parish, Skara municipal, Västra Götaland Region, Sparbanksstiftelsen
Case study detail	<p>Early Medieval Västergötland – Varnhem before the monks arrived</p> <p>In the central parts of Västergötland, there are a few places where history is more present than elsewhere. Varnhem is such a place. The still existing monastery church, the ruins of the Cistercian monastery, founded in the middle of the 12th century and all the pre-Christian Bronze Age and Iron Age graves in the landscape. The historical sources tell us about a wealthy woman called Sigrid who gave away her large estate to the monks about 1150. The archaeological remains of this farm are still there, as well as the ruin of the private family church believed to have been built in the early 11th century.</p> <p>The aim of this archaeological research project is to increase knowledge about the period in Swedish</p>

	<p>history when the old pagan society transformed into a Christian kingdom in line with the development in the other parts of Western Europe. The excavation is open to visitors and the results are mediated continually to the audience as the work proceeds. Large groups of tourists are visiting Varnhem today and this means a good opportunity for the project to add a new interesting dimension to the place and make it even more attractive to visit.</p>
<p>Outputs</p>	<p>Increased knowledge about the process of Christianity in Västergötland and about Iron Age and Middle Age activities in Varnhem. Mediate knowledge to a broad audience, and attract new groups of visitors to a historical monument. The outputs can be summarised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about 15.000 visitors • cooperation with 10 schools on different levels • two major scientific excavations reports • one publication written for a broader audience • website where the project activities are presented • one open seminar on early Medieval Västergötland and the process of Christianity • Exhibition on Västergötlands museum and on the cloister museum in Varnhem