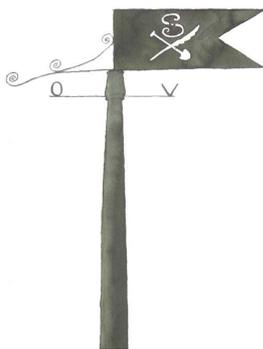


The trail "Svens altare"

The parking place at Morlanda is the start of a six-kilometre long trail called Sven's Altare. All sorts of people used to live there. There are the remains of some large crofts and a real manor, but also evidence of terrible poverty. After the sudden collapse of the herring fisheries in 1809 people were no longer able to make a living on the islands off the coast. They settled in every conceivable corner, broke stones, dug ditches to drain the land and cultivated what they could where they could. Many a large family was forced to live in miserable stone huts or hovels. This was then a stony waste, sparsely covered with heather and low bushes.

There are eleven boards describing these people and telling how they fared. The trail is indicated by yellow markers and passes through a nature reserve, intended to protect areas of broad-leaved woodland and the rich animal and plant life round the water of Håltä vatten.

The trail was laid out by Orust communal authority and made possible by kind permission of local landowners. The gravel track is private and traffic is restricted to local vehicles. We wish you a pleasant and instructive walk.



Morlanda estate, a historic property

Morlanda has probably been settled since prehistoric times, although we first read of it as belonging to Jon Reidarssön Darre in the late fourteenth century.

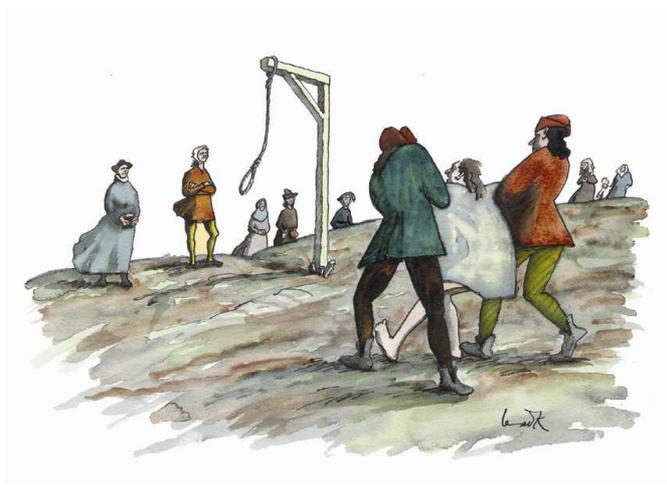
In 1519 the farm was burned down by the Swedes. In 1525 it was owned by another nobleman, Vincent Lunge, whose daughter Blanzeflor married a Bildt, the same family that can number Carl Bildt, a recent prime minister of Sweden, among its members.

Bildts were to own the estate until 1881. Blanzeflor's grandson Daniel Bildt enlarged the estate considerably and his son, Knut Bildt, had the present family residence built in the last decades of the 17th century. In 1975 Jon Thorburn took over the property, maintaining the link with the Bildts through his maternal grandmother.



Gallows Hill, a sinister place

In the rock face to the east of the road there is a deep hole some three metres above ground level. Legend has it that a gallows once stood there, where the nobles of Morlanda hanged crofters and peasants who had been condemned to death.



The body of the hanged man would have been left there at the mercy of the elements to serve as a warning, but any gallows would have been higher up the hill, out of reach of dogs and farm animals.

Bohuslän was once part of Norway and the Norwegian nobility could haul their vassals before the courts and execute those condemned.

Gallows Hill is part of a stronghold more fully described below.

Skogen, an unusually lagre croft

What is left of the croft of Skogen are the stone foundations. The house was built of rough-hewn boards and consisted of two rooms and the kitchen. The house was unusually large and so were the grounds: over three hectares of field and pasture, sufficient for four cows and a horse.



The stone wall of the enclosure still stands, with an unbroken outward surface designed to keep animals out of the cultivated patch within.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the need to renew the woods became apparent and from 1903 grazing of forest land was forbidden. From then on the stones of the walls were reversed, so as to keep animals enclosed and restrict the open grazing that was helping to reduce the former forest of Bohuslän. House and barn were sold about 1950, then dismantled and removed.

Kalvhagen, quite a small croft

There are still remains of the the small hay barn and the stone cowshed of the small croft of Kalvhagen. The other walls presumably consisted of pairs of standing poles with juniper branches wedged between them. The roof may have been thatched with straw. A very primitive farmhouse with a turf roof probably lay beyond the barn.

The first crofter to move in was Olof Pettersson in 1798. In 1810 he was succeeded by an ironworking craftsman, Zakarias Konkel. The last person to live in the small house was Kajsa Andersdotter, who moved away when she was left a widow in 1870.

Some ten years later the next crofter built a house of one room and kitchen below the hill further along the trail. Its later date is evident from the fact it has a proper cellar. Older houses were built on a simple patch of cleared earth, with food and stores kept in a separate earthen cellar. The last to live in that house were the road-mender Olof Johansson, his wife Alma and their eight children. They lived here until 1939, after which the house was demolished.



Hålda, a manor house

The farm of Hålda is named in records from the sixteenth century. The name is an old-fashioned word for copse. Hålda was acquired in 1627 by the Morlanda estate, then owned by an aristocratic family, the Bildts. When Johanna Bildt married in 1802 she was given Hålda as her dowry by her father, and an imposing two-storey house was built close to the old highway.

Johanna's children sold the property to a farmer, one Karl F Olsson, whose son was called Frithjof. Karl died while moving in and his widow remarried. Johan did not get on well with his stepfather and on reaching his majority he expelled the rest of the family in 1866. He was an original character and you can find out more about him below.



The main building burned down in 1901. The 40-metre long barn was demolished in the middle of the last century. Bertil Thorburn, the owner of Morlanda, purchased Hålda in 1950.

Majlyckan, incredible poverty

When the crofter Sven Larsson died in 1841 his widow Britta was unable to maintain the lease. She and her children had to leave the croft and find somewhere else to live.

She may have settled here, but nobody knows for certain. This would have been an old sheepfold. Britta used logs to increase the height of the walls; the roof was probably covered with straw, reeds and turves.

The poverty was abysmal. The children sometimes had to remain in their straw beds all day to keep their hunger at bay. Potatoes were the staple food for long periods. At times there was herring on the table, more often a thin gruel of scraps scrounged from neighbouring households.



The winter cold was staved off as best they could, burning heather and peat. Only the rich could afford to burn wood for warmth.

Britta died in 1849. Her daughter Sofia was married to a seaman and they had three children. After her husband died of TB in 1856 Sofia remained here until her death in 1867. The children moved out, taking service with people in the area. Majlyckan was deserted and fell into ruin.

Lugneborg, a small tannery

To tan hides a lot of water is required. That is why you find the walls of the tannery of Lugneborg so near the lake. The full process could take over a year, the first step being to strip loose flesh and hair from the hides. The tanning was done in large wooden where layers of hides were interspersed with sheets of oak and spruce bark and covered in water. The traces of the vats can still be seen in the ground. There were several tanneries nearby. Lugneborg started in 1838 and work went on intermittently until the end of nineteenth century.



Attached to the tannery was a dwelling house with a small village shop. When the road between Svanesund and Ellös was re-routed the buildings were pulled down. The wood retrieved from them helped build the new savings bank in Ellös.

The eccentric master of Håлта

Land here belonged to the farm of Håлта and was used to set up a tannery to compete with the nearby one at Lugneborg.

The owner was that Frithiof who had quarrelled with his stepfather and turned his family out when he came of age in 1886. Now known as Hulthén (from the name Håлта) he farmed, hunted, kept bees and ran a smokery and bred poultry. Milk was churned for butter, and he kept on his mother's bakery. In bowler hat and armed with a pistol he was wont to supervise proceedings.

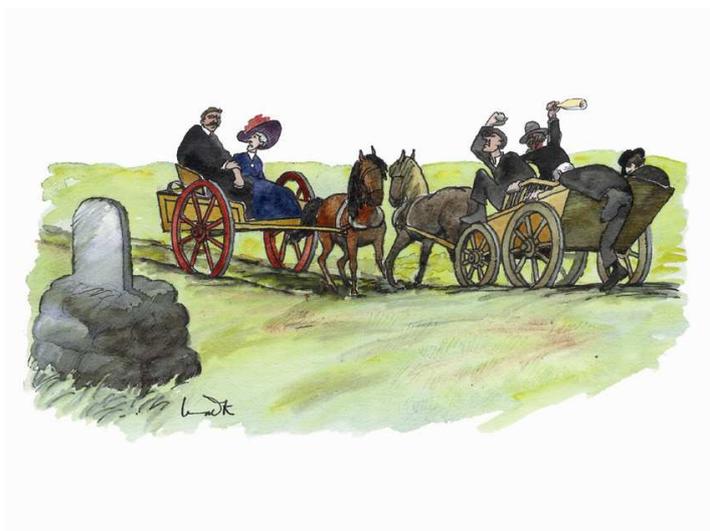
Even so his income can not have amounted to much and official suspicion was aroused when first the tannery and then the fine house on the other side of the lake burned down. Nevertheless he was able to get his hands on the insurance money.

Hulthén never married. His housekeeper Amanda Nilsson died in 1933 and he remained in a tenant farmhouse on the land with only cats for company until his death in 1947.

The Milestone

The old road from Svanesund to Ellös is part of the trail. It was narrow and hilly, so 1904 a new route was chosen that followed the beach below the hillside.

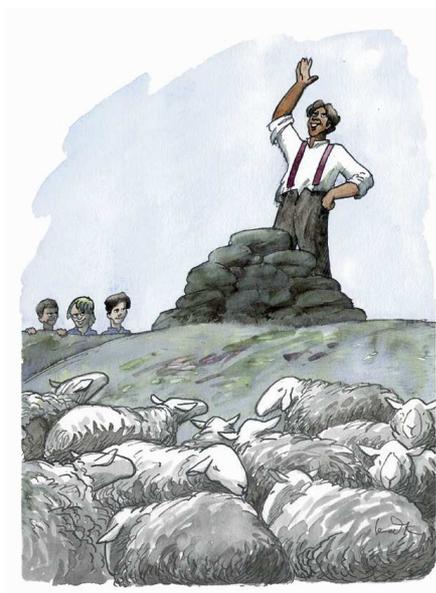
The quarter-mile stone remains, one of the few still standing on their original places in Orust. An old Swedish mile was 10.7 kilometres. Milestones began to appear in the seventeenth century. The hostelry rules for stage inns specified that roads were to be measured so that claims for official journeys could be verified. Distances in Bohuslän were measured from the Bohus fortress in Kungälv, until 1700 the seat of the provincial governor.



Orust first got paved roads when the new hostelry rules were laid down in 1734. Roads were made one carriage-width across. When vehicles met there were must have been frequent disputes as to which had the right of way.

Sven's Altar, a wayside pulpit

The heap of stones on the summit are what remains of the altar where Sven stood preaching to his flock of sheep. So local gossip says, anyway. It is true though that between 1804 and 1849 a crofter called Sven Jönsson lived nearby.



In his early years he probably let his flock graze here. Before the woods grew and blocked the view eleven churches could be seen from here, as well as Hållö lighthouse off Smögen, and Blåkulla at Solberga some thirty kilometres distant.

Gunnar Sanne, the owner of Morlanda, had the weather vane set up in 1948 in honor of God who kept the Swedes out of two world wars.

Slottsberget, a place of refuge

There were disturbances in Europe 1,500 years ago. Foreign tribes invaded their neighbours, taking lands, possessions and slaves. Peasants would flee to hilltop forts.

Along the trail you will find such a stronghold, called Slottsberget (Castle Hill). From the top of the hill there are wide views over land and sea. Whenever unknown ships approached the coast, fire and smoke on mountain peaks were used as alarm signals.

Slottsberget is unassailable from most approaches. Gaps and more accessible points were walled. Traces of walls and at least one gate can still be found. The wall was certainly reinforced with logs and sharp stakes. Wooden spears and stones were the weapons usually resorted to.

But a violent clash was not inevitable. Attacking forces would not willingly undertake a siege once the alarm was raised; they would fear an ambush in the rear by other local groups.

