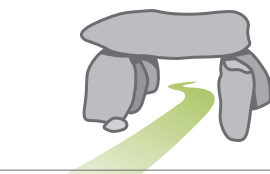




## Megalithic Routes A Culture Route of the Council of Europe







MEGALITHIC ROUTES



Passage grave Ekornavallen (SE)



Megalithic Routes is under the auspices of Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering



## Megalithic culture: A reminder of our common European cultural heritage

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The phenomenon of megalithic cultures can be found right across the European continent and in the majority of the 28 member states of the European Union. These cultural places, many more than 5.000 years old, reveal a common background and serve as a reminder of our common European cultural heritage. It is our responsibility as Europeans to guard these megalithic monuments and to teach the characteristics and purposes of these megalith-building cultures in order to frame this part of our history for future generations.

In order to raise awareness of megalithic cultures, the project “Megalithic Routes e.V.” was brought into being. The intention behind the initiative is to not only explore and protect the monuments, but also to rediscover the touristic value of the findings. This idea to develop a cultural path that runs through megalithic sites in several European countries is the only one of its kind, and is of immeasurable value. It is therefore for good reason that the Council of Europe rewarded this project by officially adding it to the “Cultural Routes of the European Council”.

This remarkable aim would have been unthinkable without the tireless efforts of volunteers and dedicated individuals. I am deeply honoured to be patron of “Megalithic Routes e.V.”, which can help us grow closer together as Europeans. I am convinced that only by knowing our common European past, we Europeans may know who we are and may decide where we want to go in the future.

With my best wishes,

Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering  
President of the European Parliament ret.  
Chairman of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung



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## Megalithic Europe

Big stones – literally mega-liths – were widely used by prehistoric communities to build monuments, burial places, and sanctuaries. Many survive as enduring and fascinating features in our modern landscapes.

The earliest known megalithic structure is at Göbekli Tepe (Turkey) where decorated T-shaped pillars up to 6m tall were erected c. 9000 BC within a walled sanctuary. By 5000 BC the tradition of raising great stone pillars was also practiced in Brittany (France) where they are locally known as menhirs: one at Er Grah near Carnac stood 21m tall, weighed 280 tonnes, and was decorated with the image of an axe. Similar pillars of greater or lesser size were set up in many parts of Europe over the succeeding millennia, some shaped to resemble human forms.

Megalithic tombs, mainly built between 5000 BC and 2000 BC, represent the oldest surviving indigenous architecture of northwest Europe. Round mounds are most common in the west, long mounds in the east, reflections of contemporary houses for the living whose forms were copied to provide ‘houses for the dead’. Many regional styles can be seen, but in all areas building materials were carefully chosen and attention was paid to the colour and texture of the stones used at significant places in the chamber and around the mound. Careful excavation shows that some monuments were periodically remodelled, as at Flintbek (Germany) where six phases of change occurred over just three centuries.

Dolmens with great heavy capstones, some decorated with cup-marks, covering closed chambers are widespread around the Baltic coastlands. Along the Atlantic seaboard the portal dolmens have capstones lifted high into the air like stones that float in the sky. Larger monuments with segmented chambers are common in both areas, the deposition of burials being structured by the form of the chambers which were probably opened at intervals on auspicious occasions.

Most widespread across northwest Europe are the passage graves (Ganggrab) with one or more centrally placed chamber that was easily accessible via a narrow stone-edged passage leading through the mound. Some, for example Gavrinis (France) and Newgrange (Ireland), are richly decorated with dazzling arrays of carved motifs. In the TRB cultures of the Netherlands, north Germany, and southern Scandinavia, passage graves usually contain rich deposits of flint axes, pottery, and personal ornaments associated, where they survive, with carefully deposited collections of human remains.

As well as tombs and menhirs, the megalithic tradition also includes alignments, circles, and rectangles such as can be seen in Brittany, Ireland, Wales, England, Scotland, and parts of southern Scandinavia. These date mainly to the period 4000 BC to 2000 BC, the most internationally famous being Stonehenge in southern England.

## Megalithic Routes: Pathways to Europe's earliest architecture



The goal of the Association Megalithic Routes is to link together the oldest monuments of Europe by cultural routes which not only lead to the megalithic monuments but also highlight the manifold features of the surrounding landscape. Obviously, there is a close link between the origin of megalithic monuments and the history of the cultural landscape: both begin at the same time and symbolise the early efforts of humans to make use of nature by extensive measures to shape the natural environment.

"Megalithic Routes" is a project in which the boundaries between the natural and cultural sciences no longer exist. For this reason, representatives of important European Geoparks and nature parks are members of Megalithic Routes, in addition to specialist archaeological and tourism institutions. Together with archaeologists they are active in creating and constructing attractive cultural

routes that aim to highlight the broad spectrum of attempts by prehistoric communities to demonstrate and assert, even thousands of years ago, the "summit of creation".

The project "Megalithic Routes" is committed to the principles of "low-impact tourism" and refrains from any irreversible measures affecting the natural environment when developing opportunities for tourism. Priority is given to the use of existing roads and routes as well as to the promotion of mobility in tune with nature and current social concepts such as hiking and cycling. Moreover, museums and educational institutions such as schools and extracurricular establishments are being encouraged to develop new possibilities for cross-border cooperation in the field of youth education and European exchange programmes for children and young people on the subject of 'Megalithic Roots'.





## Astronomy and cosmology

Megalithic tombs and associated monumental structures are sometimes interpreted as observatories through which to chart the movement of celestial objects. Stonehenge was even interpreted as a computer for the prediction of solar and lunar eclipses. The reality is probably more straightforward. In some cases the architecture of specific monuments embodies a cosmological scheme such as the passage of the sun across the heavens reflecting the passage of life itself. In other cases alignments and orientations mark key moments in the ritual calendar. The chambers of the megalithic graves in northwest Germany are oriented mainly in an east-west direction and seem to be oriented towards the rising or setting points of the sun (or the moon, as proposed by some researchers) around the spring or autumn equinoxes. However, as the chambers were covered at least partially by earth mounds, the now free standing stones could not have served as sight lines.

One way and another it seems that most megalithic tombs in Europe are oriented towards the movements of the sun. The entrances of many tombs in Brittany (France) are oriented towards the southeast where the sun rises during the winter solstice. Most of the entrances to the dolmens in Mecklenburg and northwest Germany are aligned towards the south: the highest position of the sun in the sky. And in Ireland the passage of Newgrange is illuminated by the rising sun at the winter solstice.



Newgrange (IE)



## Tourism offers

Megalithic Routes places great emphasis on eco-friendly tourism in the form of hiking and cycling activities in the participant countries and considers the link between nature and culture to be especially important. Most of the offers are on a one-day basis. For more information see the websites of the individual regions and institutions as well as:  
[www.steinzeitreise.de](http://www.steinzeitreise.de) | [www.huenenweg.de](http://www.huenenweg.de)

### European Day of Megalithic Culture

From 2014 Megalithic Routes promotes an international Day of Megalithic Culture. On this day there will be events in our member regions, celebrating the topic of megalithic culture and their manifestations.

Detailed information will be available on [www.megalithicroutes.eu](http://www.megalithicroutes.eu) as well as on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, and on the websites of event organisers in the participant countries.



Hünengräberstraße des Hümlings (DE)



"Bruneforths Esch" (DE)



Pestruper Gräberfeld (DE)



"Visbeker Bräutigam" (DE)



## Hunebeds in Drenthe, The Netherlands



The Province of Drenthe is a unique part of the Netherlands. Nowhere else in the country have so many visible and invisible archaeological discoveries been made, and nowhere else are so many monumental remains preserved in the landscape.

The most remarkable monuments are the hunebeds. They are burial monuments made of enormous boulders that were built by the Funnel Beaker People who lived here between 3400 and 2850 BC. These people were so named by archaeologists because the pottery they made had the shape of a funnel. They lived in the northeast Netherlands, northern Germany, Denmark, and southern Sweden. Many hunebeds can be found in all these areas. In the northern Nether-

lands there are 54, of which 52 are in Drenthe. We know that there were once between 80 and 100 hunebeds here. Most lie in the eastern part of Drenthe, in the Hondsrug Geopark.

All 52 hunebeds in Drenthe can be freely visited and are easy to find by following the many walking and cycling paths. There are information panels at each hunebed and there is also a guide book. Millions of tourists and local residents visit the hunebeds every year.

[www.hunebeddeninfo.nl](http://www.hunebeddeninfo.nl)

## The Hunebedcentrum: Follow the tracks of the hunebed builders in the Netherlands

There are 52 hunebeds in Drenthe, 47 of which can be found close to the village of Borger. This village is also home to the Hunebedcentrum, which is located at the heart of the Hondsrug Geopark right next to the largest hunebed in the Netherlands. Here the life of the hunebed builders comes alive in surprising ways. In the exhibition and the changing displays you will discover many of the stories and mysteries which have grown around the hunebeds. You are cordially invited to visit the Hunebedcentrum on a journey of discovery to experience what life was like 5400 years ago. From the Hunebedcentrum you can take many walks and cycle tours to see hunebeds in the surrounding area.

There is much more to see in the Hunebedcentrum because here you will also find the Information Centre for the Hondsrug Geopark. This is where the story is told of 150,000 years of history in this region. From the Ice Ages and mammoths to Neanderthals, from boulders to pingo remnants. These can be discovered not only by visiting the exhibition but also by walking through the largest Boulder Garden in the Netherlands which lies in the grounds. A walking route has been laid out around the Hunebedcentrum where you can experience for yourself the story of 150,000 years of history in Drenthe.

[www.hunebedcentrum.nl](http://www.hunebedcentrum.nl)



Hunebed Loon (NL)



Hunebed Loon (NL)



Hunebed Borger (NL)



Hunebed builders (NL)



Reconstruction of a megalithic tomb (NL)



Activities with living history (NL)



Hunebedcentrum (NL)



## The Hondsrug Geopark: The Hondsrug region Ice Age landscape in the Netherlands



Gasteren (NL)



Gieten (NL)

The Hondsrug region was formed at the end of the penultimate Ice Age, about 150,000 years ago. Ridges, each about 70km long, are still visible in the landscape. They were scoured out by moving ice mass combined with large volumes of melt-water. The hunebed builders were very grateful for these higher areas in the landscape and made good use of them. They lived and worked there, built their burial monuments (the hunebeds) on them and laid out the first routes across them. The subsequent development of this region was based on these ancient routes that mark a history of 5500 years.

In September 2013 the Hondsrug region was officially recognised as part of the international network of Geoparks. There are 58 parks in Europe and 100 world-wide. The European network is known as the European Geopark Network and

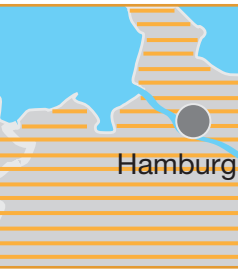
operates under the auspices of UNESCO. The Hondsrug region thus belongs to a network of unique regions across the world.

At various places in the Hondsrug region you can experience some of the local stories through exhibitions. In the Hunebedcentrum, for instance, you can see the story of the Ice Ages and prehistory; in the Veenpark in Barger Compascuum you can learn about peat; in the Stedelijk Museum in Coevorden you will find stories of war and conflict; and in the Van Gogh House in Nieuw Amsterdam there are stories about artists who were inspired by the landscape of the Hondsrug region.

[www.geoparkdehondsrug.nl](http://www.geoparkdehondsrug.nl)



## The “Straße der Megalithkultur” in northwest Germany



The origin of the Association for “Megalithic Routes” is the “Straße der Megalithkultur”, a tourist holiday route in northwest Germany. It was launched in 2006 by a group of tourism experts, archaeologists, astronomers, and historians with the aim of introducing the 5000 year-old “Hünengräber” (megalithic graves) as a new trademark of the regions Osnabrück Land, Emsland, and Wildeshausen Geest. In each of these regions there are centres with an accumulation of megalithic burials.

The monuments consist mostly of so-called passage graves. In terms of construction, they differ markedly from their namesakes in Denmark and southern Scandinavia, but they show great similarity to the “Hunebedden” in Drenthe province in the Netherlands.

In northwest Germany, numerous historical documents, stories and legends are evidence of the great significance that megalithic graves have had for the imaginative world and popular beliefs of the local population since the Middle Ages. Many burials have been given unusual names which are reminiscent of the devil, of creatures with supernatural powers, and legendary popular heroes.

The “Straße der Megalithkultur” connects the towns of Osnabrück, Meppen, and Oldenburg, is 330 km long, and combines the historically most interesting, most attractive, and most well-preserved megalithic graves. Since 27 April 2014, the Europe-wide “Day of Megalithic Culture”, a fully signposted cycle path complements the holiday route for road traffic which was opened in 2009. In addition, there is a supraregional hiking trail, the “Hünenweg”, which connects the regions

Osnabrück Land, Emsland, and Drenthe province in the Netherlands and was opened in 2005.

[www.strassedermegalithkultur.de](http://www.strassedermegalithkultur.de)

### The Osnabrücker Land region

The town of Osnabrück is located at the southern end of the “Straße der Megalithkultur”. This is where the North German plain merges into the Westphalian hill country and also where the distribution of the northwest German passage graves ends. In this area, many archaeological sites are associated with the names of famous military leaders from the time of the Saxon Wars (772–804 AD) such as one of the extremely rare megalithic graves made of local rock. It is known as Karlsteine. The legend goes that Karl, King of the Franks, smashed the giant capstone into three pieces with his riding crop. The wife of his adversary Widukind, the Saxon leader, is said to be buried nearby below the Gevasteine – also a Neolithic passage grave from the second half of the fourth millennium BC. There is a further unusual megalithic construction in Hekese, in the northern part of the Osnabrück Land. Two separate burial chambers are situated 53 m apart, although they obviously belong together because a row of closely set boulders has been placed between them.

[www.osnabrueck.de](http://www.osnabrueck.de)



Hünengrab Jeggen (DE)



## The Emsland region



The origin of the term “Hünengrab”, which is still common in northwest Germany today, probably lies in the Emsland region because this is the home of the famous Universalist Johan Picardt. In 1660 he published his theses of the “cruel and barbaric giants, Hünen or colossi” as the builders of the megalithic graves. But some courageous people who armed themselves with heavy wooden clubs had managed to put these tyrants to flight.

Most of the monuments formerly existing in the Emsland region are now destroyed because the sale of the boulders as building material to the neighbouring Netherlands became a lucrative business in the 18th and 19th centuries. But,

around the middle of the 19th century, the idea of the protection of historical monuments gained acceptance. As a result, more than 60 impressive relics of the megalithic culture have survived, including the grave in Thuine with an exceptionally elaborate enclosure consisting of a double stone row, and the accumulation of nine megalithic graves in the Hümmling hills (originally 22), which are arranged such that they can rightly be called the “Hünengräberstraße des Hümmling”.

[www.emsland.com](http://www.emsland.com)



## The Wildeshausen Geest region



To the south of Oldenburg lies the district capital of Wildeshausen – famous for its St. Alexander church built in the 9th century and containing the relics of Saint Alexander of Rome. Equally well known are the numerous remains of megalithic culture in the surrounding environment, namely the nature park Wildeshausen Geest. Here several so-called “Hünenbetten” are located, which are up to 104m long and were originally constructed of a maximum of 170 boulders per burial. These are considered to be the biggest surviving burials from the Funnel Beaker culture. But the Wildeshausen Geest region seems to have been an attractive settlement area in the Bronze Age too because numerous burial mounds were built in the immediate neighbourhood of the megalithic graves. Particularly famous is the “Pestrupe Gräberfeld”

which contains more than 500 burials and is considered to be the biggest surviving, above-ground prehistoric cemetery in Central Europe. For this reason the Wildeshausen Geest region is generally and rightly known as a “prehistoric centre”.

The “Straße der Megalithkultur” ends at the “Landesmuseum für Natur und Mensch” in the nearby town of Oldenburg. In a permanent exhibition of modern design, the museum shows the eventful history of the close relationship between humankind and nature spanning more than 6000 years.

[www.wildegeest.de](http://www.wildegeest.de)





# The Stone Age Park Dithmarschen in Albersdorf, Germany



The county of Dithmarschen is a rural landscape in the western part of Schleswig-Holstein in the north of Germany with raised bogs, valleys, forests, and farm-

shaped and adapted to the changing world around them. Periods of expansion can be recognised in the early Neolithic and it was at this time that the famous

archaeologically and ecologically interesting area of about 80 acres. To realise this idea the project has taken two important steps. First, mostly through natural long-

have their scientific foundation in archaeological data from recent excavations. Visitors to the Park can participate in seminars and events, some aimed specially at



Stone Age Park (DE)



Long Barrow Horstenmoorweg (DE)



Museum (DE)



"Brutkamp" (DE)



Flintbek-House (DE)



Stone Age Park (DE)



Flint tools (DE)



Excavation Bredenhoop (DE)

land in the east and sand bars, bogs, and marine marshes in the west. The remoteness of the region means that many Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments have survived.

Interdisciplinary studies of the local environment, archaeological remains, and the form of the landscape have shed much new light on the way the communities

megalithic monument at Brutkamp was constructed. Based on this research the Stone Age Park Dithmarschen provides a reconstruction of the Neolithic landscape as it was about 5000 years ago.

Since 1997 the Archaeological-Ecological Centre Albersdorf at Dithmarschen, has been working towards re-establishing a Neolithic cultural landscape on an

term regeneration a landscape has been created that in its structure, proportion, and composition recalls a Neolithic environment. The leitmotif is a half-open wood-pasture such as would be formed by the kinds of domestic animals kept by the first farmers of the area, distant ancestors of today's English Park Cattle and Soay Sheep. Second, a Neolithic village has been reconstructed as an open air museum in the immediate vicinity of visible prehistoric burial monuments. These reconstructions

young people, and follow pathways that lead into the surrounding landscape. You can also visit the Museum for Archaeology and Ecology in Albersdorf ([www.museum-albersdorf.de](http://www.museum-albersdorf.de)) which exhibits original finds dating from the Ice Age down to medieval times.

[www.neues.aoeza.de](http://www.neues.aoeza.de)





Passage grave „Große Sloopsteene“, Lotte-Wersen (DE)

## Megaliths in Westphalia, Germany

Since its founding in 1897, the Commission for Westphalian Antiquities (Altertumskommission für Westfalen) has been researching, documenting and presenting archaeological remains in Westphalia. As it intends to communicate scientific knowledge to the public, several series are available; for example guides to archaeological monuments like ringforts from Neolithic to Medieval times, or to historic routes like the Westphalian Ways of St. James.

The most recent research project aims to re-investigate the late Neolithic megaliths of Westphalia. As a second step, these impressive prehistoric monuments will be presented to the public within the European Route of Megalithic Culture. Westphalia can be considered as a “megalithic stroke of luck”: two late Neolithic societies, the Funnel Beaker West Group and the Wartberg Culture, lived closely

in the same region. In the north and the west of Westphalia, the highly impressive passage graves of the Funnel Beaker West Group are found. They were made out of big boulders and surrounded by smaller stones which were used to form the border of the mound. Some of these megaliths are still visible in the landscape. In the southern and eastern parts of Westphalia, the gallery graves of the Wartberg Culture are common. These graves were sunken into the ground and barely visible, nearly hidden in the landscape. They were made out of large limestone or sandstone slabs and covered by a flat mound. This special case of two different building concepts in close vicinity to each other has high potential for archaeological research and also for tourist attractions.

[www.altertumskommission.lwl.org](http://www.altertumskommission.lwl.org)



Sloopsteene (DE)



Gallery grave, Warburg-Rimbeck (DE)





Bonnenstenen passage grave (DK)



Ristinge Dolmen (DK)



Sniphøj double passage grave (DK)

## Danish megaliths

Denmark has about 2500 extant megaliths preserved as listed monuments. An additional 4500 are known to have existed but are now lost. It is estimated that originally around 25000 megaliths were constructed over the course of only three or four centuries during the Neolithic period. In comparison to megaliths in other European countries the Danish examples are fairly small, but their distribution is characterized by large concentrations in certain areas.

The monuments are protected by The Danish Agency for Culture which is an agency under the aegis of the Danish Ministry of Culture. The Agency carries out the cultural policies of the Danish government for the visual and performing arts, music, literature, museums, historical and cultural heritage, broadcasting, libraries, and all types of printed and electronic media. The Agency works internationally in all fields, and increasing internationalisation of Danish arts and cultural life is a top priority.

A special task of The Danish Agency of Culture is to manage and enforce legislation concerning the protection of prehistoric monuments, including dolmens and passage graves. This task is undertaken by employees in the Office of Prehistoric Monuments. The Agency is surveying all protected monuments and oversees the work of maintaining and, if necessary, restoring sites in accordance with the rules and regulations. The Danish Agency of Culture is conveying knowledge and information about the monuments, both physically at the monuments and digitally on-line (eg. [www.1001stories.dk](http://www.1001stories.dk)). The Agency promotes the conservation of monuments, which, at the same time, are actively used and represent a valuable asset for society as a whole.

## Danish Megalith Center

Denmark does not have a center presenting and providing information about the many megaliths found in the country. Denmark has a central place with respect to the construction of these types of stone graves. They are common in most of Denmark, with the exception of Western Jutland.



On Southern Zealand and the island of Møn there is especially many megaliths of three different types: barrows, passage graves and dolmens. Therefore, we consider that a Danish Center for the presentation and explanation of the presence of these stone graves should lie in the municipality of Vordingborg. Denmark's Megalithic Center will present information about the first Neolithic agricultural society in Denmark and its relationship to the other northern European prehistoric cultures including cultural development in remainder of the world.

We are a little local group that is lucky to live in the middle of a municipality that has over 600 visible megaliths of the ca. 2200 existent in entire Denmark. In fact, our village has 10 within its boundaries of which 2 are among the oldest. The village, Ørslev, is centrally placed, only 5-10 min to the highway to continen-

tal Europe in one direction and to Scandinavia as a whole in the other. The aim of our group is to establish a Megalith Center in the middle of Vordingborg in our village, in order to present information about the first Neolithic agricultural society in Denmark (Funnel Beaker Society) and its relationship to the other northern European prehistoric cultures, including cultural development in the remain-

der of the world. Over a short period of time (3900-3500 BC), these first agricultural societies carried out an extensive production of the stone buildings we now know as Megaliths – the so-called barrows, passage graves and dolmens, in connection with their burial rituals.

As yet we are small but have support from the general population. Most Danes are vaguely aware of the megaliths in their midst but take them for granted and do not really know how and why they came to be there. Awareness of an important part of Danish and world history – the Neolithic, is just as necessary as learning the more recent parts of history.

## Museum Odsherred: A part of Museum West Zealand, Denmark

The Odsherred Museum of Cultural History is a museum for the entire family. Here you can visit the exhibition "The Land of the Sun" – an exhibition about prehistoric times in Odsherred, especially the Stone Age and the Bronze Age, where the sun was seen as a prerequisite for life and rebirth. This was illustrated by Bronze Age people through the wonderful Sun Chariot – a unique find made of bronze and gold.



Exhibition "The Land of the Sun" (DK)



Solens Land, Museum Odsherred (DK)

### Megaliths in Odsherred

We know of approximately 110 megalith tombs in Odsherred. There are 20 long dolmens, 8 round dolmens, 50 dolmen chambers, and 12 passage graves. Originally there were many more, probably between 400 and 450, but many have either been destroyed or have disappeared. There are many dolmens worth seeing in Odsherred, including King Øre's Tomb and Tingstedet (thingstead) in Kongsøre Skov (Forest), Hamlets Tomb in Grevinge Skov (Forest), the Plejerup dolmen, Dilhøj, Frederupgård dolmen near Herrestrup, Toftebjerg dolmen near Højby, and the Bjergesø dolmen. Two passage graves well worth a visit are the double passage grave near Stenstrup and Birkehøj near Nyrup.

[www.odsmus.dk](http://www.odsmus.dk)



Exhibition "The Land of the Sun" (DK)





Restored passage grave Guldehøj (DK)



Restored dolmen Vollerup (DK)



Sømarkedyssen (DK)

## Megaliths on the Island of Møn, Denmark

The Museum Sydøstdanmark is a large museum of cultural history. We have exhibitions in the cities of Stege, Vordingborg, Næstved, and Køge, covering every epoch since the end of the last Ice Age. Our administration is located in Vordingborg right next to our flagship site, The Danish Castle Center, which is a brand-new museum dedicated to exhibitions about the largest castle of the Danish Middle Ages, the Vordingborg castle ruin.

The museum manages the cultural heritage in the southern third of the island of Zealand. We have a permanent staff of archaeologists, historians, ethnologists, and art historians who perform the many different tasks required by a Danish museum. Apart from heritage management and exhibitions, we also specialise in the restoration of prehistoric monuments. We restore scheduled monuments in the whole of Denmark.

Eastern Denmark has one of the highest concentrations of megaliths in northern Europe; some of the best preserved and most impressive monuments lie on the island of Møn. The megaliths are both 'simple' dolmens without mounds and very complex passage graves. Each of them is worth a visit. They are accessible both by car and bicycle.

Through the last 30 years many of these megaliths have been restored to make them more secure and more suitable for public display. The two most impressive monuments, Klekkendehøj and Kong Asgers høj, have been restored on the basis of information from previous excavations. Inside one of the two chambers of Klekkendehøj there is an exhibition with a reconstructed burial scene.

[www.museerne.dk](http://www.museerne.dk)





## Megaliths in the region of Falbygden, Sweden

The region between the two lakes, Vänern and Vättern, in southern Sweden marks the northern border of the megalithic culture. Between the two lakes lies Falbygden, a varied landscape with many moors and unique table mountains. Few landscapes are as strongly characterised by the past as Falbygden; among other ancient remains three quarters of all of Sweden's passage tombs can be found here. In all, about 260 monuments have survived. This makes Falbygden home to one of the largest concentrations of megalithic tombs in northern Europe.

As the ground is quite chalky, skeletal remains more than 5000 years old have been found in the tombs and are extremely well preserved – a good precondition for ongoing research projects by the University of Gothenburg to establish the so-called genetic fingerprint and origin of the population at the time.

The Falbygden passage tombs dominate the landscape, but the opposite is also true as the landscape dominates the passage tombs. Falan is a hilly upland, surrounded by the flat-topped table mountains of Mösseberg, Ålleberg, Geumsberget, and Billingen, and there are hilltops of dolerite, limestone plateaux, sandstone, and so on. The relationship between the mountains and the passage graves is obvious. The shape, as well as the ordering of the building material is a copy of nature. The walls are of sedimentary rock whilst most of the capstones are of igneous dolerite. We find the same arrangement in the graves as in the mountains.



# The Falbygdens Museum and Megalithic Routes around Falköping, Sweden



In the surroundings of Falköping, the most important megalithic monuments are (or will be) presented along various tourist routes. A unique hiking route runs through the town, passing megalithic tombs and graves from other times that are still present in the central part of Falköping. Worth an extra trip are the passage tombs at Karleby, Vårkumla, Luttra, and – not to be forgotten – Ekornavallen which is a unique prehistoric site with graves and findings from the Stone to the Iron Age.

In the middle of the town of Falköping lies the archaeologically oriented Falbygdens Museum. Here visitors can find detailed information about Falbygdens rich

heritage. The two exhibitions “Ancient times in Falbygden” and “Another Thousand years” makes it possible to experience in words, sounds, and images the history of the area. The exhibition features unique ancient objects such as the skeleton of a 9000-year-old domesticated dog, a Stone Age flute, and a copy of the mighty gold collar from Älleberg. The “Raspberry Girl” is also exhibited here, a rare European example of a Neolithic body found in a bog. A new addition is the reconstruction of her face.

[www.falkoping.se/museet](http://www.falkoping.se/museet)



Falbygdens Museum (SE)



Exhibition Falbygdens Museum (SE)



Raspberry Girl (SE)

# Ekehagens Forntidsby: An archaeological open air museum in Sweden



Ekehagens prehistoric village lies in beautiful oak woodland along the river Ätran, 20km south of Falköping. Along a nature trail visitors will find reconstructed dwelling sites that reflect various aspects of life during the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages. At Ekehagen inquisitive visitors are most welcome. Adults and children are invited to travel back in time and learn more about the past by joining exciting activities involving experiences through all their senses. Questions such as How did our ancestors live? What did they wear? And what did their food taste like? are all discussed and demonstrated.

[www.ekehagen.se](http://www.ekehagen.se)



Nolgården (SE)



Reconstruction of a house in the Neolithic (SE)





## Megalithics in Scania, Sweden



**KÄVLINGE!**

The most significant megalithic treasures from the megalithic period are situated along the Öresund coast between Scania and Sealand, Denmark.

In the district around the Swedish cities of Landskrona and Kävlinge, where the rivers Saxån and Kävlingeån meet the sea, there are many traces from the megalithic period. A lot of the findings from there and other conspicuous archaeological sites are exhibit in the Landskrona Museum.



Örenäsgånggriften (SE)

One of the most prominent monuments are the Örenäsgånggriften (the passage graves from Örenäs), near the picturesque fishing village of Ålabodarna. This tomb has recently undergone a scientific restoration. It is situated on the brink of the sea, with a splendid view over the sound and the island of Ven. It was first explored by the famous natural scientist Sven Nilsson during the 1840s, and has been subject to several excavations. Remains of a gallery grave or a simple stone-cist is now visible outside of the entrance.

Take this opportunity to visit this grave and don't miss to get inside.



Hofterupsdösen (SE)

The best kept chamber grave of Kävlinge is Gillhög, one of the biggest which is not destroyed. With a diameter of 25 meter and a height of 2.5m it is still widely seen from far away. It has been a land sign for the sea farers for thousands of years. Its inner chamber measures 5.7x2.3m and its room is reached by the narrow tunnel over 5m long. It lies on the old geological wall which separated the old Litorina Sea – the predecessors of the Baltic Sea – from the Scandinavian Peninsula.



Gillhög (SE)

Close to Kävlinge you will find another restored monument. It's the chamber grave Ljunghög situated on the north bank of the river. The grave measures 17m in diameter with a height of 1,7m.

The Dolmen in Hofterup (Hofterupsdösen) is another unique sign of the people arriving in this part of Europe around 3,500 years B.C.



Örenäsgånggriften, Landskrona (SE)



# The Spanish Pyrenean Region „Comarca de Sobrarbe”



The Comarca de Sobrarbe (in the Spanish region of Aragón, „comarca” is a geographical, administrative, and culturally homogeneous region, combining various municipalities) lies at the heart of the Spanish Pyrenees and borders with France to the north. Its 2200 km<sup>2</sup> belong to the province of Huesca.

Here is where the Pyrenees are at their most spectacular and energetic. The summit of Monte Perdido (3.352 m) is the highest point of Sobrarbe and the third highest in the Pyrenees after Aneto (3.404 m) and Posets (3.371 m). A mountainous landscape carved out by peaks and valleys runs from north to south as it’s crossed by deep river gulleys. And thanks to its extraordinary geological values, the whole region forms the Geopark „Sobrarbe-Pirineos” and has become part of the global network of UNESCO Geoparks. Also included in Sobrarbe is the famous „Parque Nacional de Ordesa y Monte Perdido”, which is one of the oldest national parks in the world and the second oldest in Spain, being founded in

1918 and extended in 1982 to its actual size and shape. The same national park also makes up about two thirds of the bigger unit „Pyrénées – Mont Perdu” (together with the French part), which is declared a natural and cultural good on the World Heritage List of UNESCO.



# Megalithic Heritage in Sobrarbe

Even in such challenging terrain, evidence of early settlements as far back as the Paleolithic age (more than 30.000 years ago) have been found in archaeological artifacts and in an exceptional range of cave paintings listed by UNESCO world heritage. In fact more than 20 examples of cave art have been found, most of them in the „Río Vero Cultural Park”.

Towards the end of the sixth millennium BC, as a new wave of Neolithic farmers and herdsman spread out over the Iberian Peninsula, several cave dwelling settlements appeared in Sobrarbe. These cave dwellers expressed their beliefs and culture on the walls of their shelters through cave paintings, as much in a Levantine style as in a more abstract and symbolic schematic way.

From the end of the Neolithic age up to the Bronze Age, settlers built most of the Megalithic monuments known and studied today in this part of the Pyrenees.

There are several Dolmens and Stone circles in Sobrarbe. One of the best known is the Dolmen at Tella, at over 1000mts altitude just next to the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park. In the Pre-Pyrenean mountain ranges there is a group of three Dolmens: Las Balanzas, La Capilleta y Pueyoril. There are generally more stone circles and they can be found in the following areas: High up the Ara valley, Góriz, the Puértolas valley, the Cinqueta valley, Labasar, the Salcorz and Yermos del Cementerio valley.

Today, research and archaeological excavations continue to provide us with the crucial information we need to understand the development and expansion of the Megalithic age in our area of the Pyrenees.

[www.turismosobrarbe.com/patrimoniomundial/](http://www.turismosobrarbe.com/patrimoniomundial/)





# Seró Transmitter Space, Spain



Seró Transmitter Space is a center that preserves and exhibits the archaeological remains of the megalithic monument of Els Reguers de Seró (Artesa de Segre, Noguera).

The monument was found fortuitously during the construction of the Segarra-Garrigues pipe in 2007. The documented remains can be told in three chapters. Initially, there was a megalithic monument of unknown shape, formed by at least

racters, ancestors or gods, the third is smaller and presents a different decorative technique.

In a second phase, the initial monument was destroyed. The Statues-menhirs were fragmented in a pre-conceived order, with the intention to build a megalithic tomb. This tomb was of a Pyrenean dolmen type, consisting of a cist (stone slabs box) with a rectangular „window" in the entrance area, a mound of stones and soil, and an outer ring of nailed

Finally, around 2000 BC the grave was sacked, the remains were still scattered and the chamber sealed with stones and soil never to be used again. The remains have become an exceptional contribution to the megalithic statues world in the Iberian Peninsula and Europe.

The museum is a special building with an interesting and awarded architectural design thought to exhibit the remains. There are two exhibition spaces and a mul-

storytelling, nocturne visits with torches and universe observation, activities with kids, product tasting, historical recreation, lectures and special events.

In addition to that, in the surroundings of Seró there are other outdoor megalithic monuments that can be visited. These hiking activities are a perfect complement to the visit of our museum and allow the visitor to get to know the fantastic landscape where the monuments were erected.



General view of the museum Seró Transmitter Space (ES)

three anthropomorphic statues-menhirs, dated probably in the late Neolithic. Two are carved by all sides with motifs representing attire and ornaments of the cha-

stones (Cromlech). The tomb contained the remains of at least two people, accompanied by a complete trousseau and offerings, dated around 2750 BC. and 2000 BC.



Exhibition room for the introduction of the remains and the Pyrenean dolmen artefacts (ES)

tipurpose room, which allows making all kind of activities to approach the exhibition to the public from different perspectives like regular guided tours,



Statues-menhirs exhibition room (ES)

[www.museucn.com/ca/centres-dinterpretacio/seroespai-transmissor.html](http://www.museucn.com/ca/centres-dinterpretacio/seroespai-transmissor.html)



## Portugal: Highlights from a special place of Earth



Naturtejo Geopark is located in the centre inland of Portugal, near the border with Spain, and covers an area of 4617 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located 200 km from Lisbon and 350 km from Madrid, right in the middle of Iberian Peninsula. The application to join European Geoparks Network started in 2003 and the decision occurred in September 2006.

Naturtejo territory is rich in Geological Heritage, starting some 600 million years ago, with shales from the deep seas, until nowadays' plains. The Geopark has also a strong historical, cultural and human legacy linked with nature, pr

Geopark's territory is characterized by very ancient landscapes, such as the 70 million years old Meseta Meridional peneplain from where residual mountains grow gigantic into the sky. Examples are the Appalachian-type quartzite crests which represent the former Ordovician ocean, cradle of paleobiological diversification and innovation where Trilobite mood ruled; Variscan-type granites cropping out as inselberge archipelago and as horst mountains with wonderful fractal landforms.

The outstanding geomorphological, paleontological, tectonic and mining heritages are composed by geosites with national and international relevance, such as

Geoconservation is one of the main aims of the Geopark. It is important to preserve Geological Heritage to present and future generations. Naturtejo has several areas protected by local and national laws, providing promotion to sensitize people for the importance of the Geoconservation inside Nature Conservation. Ichneological Park of Penha Garcia, Granite morphologies of Gardunha and Conhal do Arneiro are protected with municipal laws and Portas do Rodão Natural Monument integrates the National Network of Protected Areas.

Several Educational Programs adapted to the school curricula are available, in-

possible to develop practical approaches in many different subjects of Geosciences and integrate them with Nature understanding. The Educational Programs are targeted by specialized guides in geosciences and run in different places of the Geopark depending on the Program's aims, enabling the students to meet the geosites and nature protected areas and to understand that they are the key to the past, present and future history of our planet.

Naturtejo offers a trekking network with more than 500 km of both short and long trails that invite tourists to discover the Geopark's nature and culture while they walk across the territory. Boat trips and geokayaking in Tagus and Zêzere rivers may also be enjoyed. Geocircuits in the geomonuments and historical sites, by minibus or own car, are available for those less adventurous.

There is also the museum network that provides to the visitor the discover of hundreds of thousands of years of human presence, Rock Art, Roman cities and such ancient culture. Schist shops are available in the Schist Villages, places where schist and local products prevail as in old times. New ways to find old tastes are a joy for the senses in geo-restaurants and geo-shops. There are also Historical Villages, where the time has stopped, but life goes on. At the end of the day a very special offer of local lodging provides the right accommodation in the Earth, Rock & You spirit of Naturtejo Geopark.



moting the integrated development of tourism. The Geopark is a stronger partnership of municipalities and local entrepreneurs fostering innovative synergies in local economy and sustainable development.

the Ichneological Park of Penha Garcia, Portas do Ródão and Vale Mourão gorges, the Roman gold mine of Conhal do Arneiro and the granite morphologies from Serra da Gardunha and Monsanto, among many others.



Dolmen of S. Gens (PT)



Dolmen of Moitas (PT)



Dolmen of S. Gens (PT)



Standing Rock or Menhir of Patalou (PT)

cluding one-year school projects, where students and teachers together can apply what they are learning in the classroom with real examples. The first aim is to sensitize and educate young people to respect, value and conserve Nature. It is





## Long barrows and stone circles in southern England

Megalithic monuments in Britain are mainly concentrated in western and northern areas where sources of suitable stone were widely available. In the south and east of the country comparable monuments were mainly built of wood. Many different styles exist, some reflecting local traditions while others illustrate changing preferences over time. Strong connections can be seen in the design of the monuments with structures south-westwards along the Atlantic seaways in Ireland, France, Spain, and Portugal, and eastwards towards southern Scandinavia, northern Germany, and the Netherlands.

Southwest England contains a range of easily accessible and impressive megalithic monuments that can be visited through two connected trails, both starting within the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site, Wiltshire.

The first illustrates a selection of long barrows built in the Cotswold-Severn tradition between about 3800 BC and 3300 BC. Rectangular mounds of earth and stone up to 100m long contain chambers variously set at the end of the mound or along the sides. Excavations have revealed disarticulated human remains representing men, women and children of all ages on the floors of the chambers, the result of complicated mortuary rituals. Starting at West Kennet long barrow immediately south of Avebury this circular route takes in Stoney Littleton (Somer-

set), Hetty Pegler's Tump (Gloucestershire), Nympsfield (Gloucestershire), Rodmarton (Gloucestershire), Belas Knap (Gloucestershire), Notgrove (Gloucestershire) and Wayland's Smithy (Oxfordshire) before returning to the archaeologically rich landscape of Avebury.

The second part of the route focuses on the great stone circles and henges of southwest England, structures built relatively late in the overall sequence of European megaliths between 3000 BC and 2000 BC. Avebury itself contains the largest stone circle in Britain, 98 pillars in a ring 332m across. From Avebury the route goes south to Stonehenge, Wiltshire, unique in having a central horseshoe setting of five great sarsen trilithons surrounded by a ring of 30 sarsen uprights linked at the top by carefully shaped stone lintels. Within this structure are the remains of around 80 smaller so-called 'bluestones' that were brought to the site from the Preseli Mountains of southwest Wales, a distance of more than 220km as the crow flies. Continuing westwards are a selection of circles in impressive landscape settings: a cluster of three at Stanton Drew (Somerset), single rings at Withypool (Devon), Grey Wethers (Devon) and Merrivale (Devon), a group of four circles at the Hurlers (Cornwall), and a single picturesque ring at Merry Maidens (Cornwall) not far from Land's End and the westernmost tip of England.





Belas Knap, Gloucestershire (UK)





Publisher	Megalithic Routes e.V. Lotter Straße 2, D-49078 Osnabrück info@megalithicroutes.eu   www.megalithicroutes.eu
	Kindly supported by: Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, Hannover/Germany
Photographs	Olaf Blume (p. 14), Timothy Darvil (p. 46-48), Emsland Touristik GmbH (p. 14), Pelle Estborn (p. 39), Falbygdens Museum/Ekehagens Forntidsby (p. 34, 36, 37), Andreas Hänel (p. 12), Daniela Stefanie Hauf (p. 2, 10, 21, 22, 23), Hunebedcentrum and Geopark de Hondsrug (p. 16-18), Hans-Göran Johnson (p. 37), Leo Klinke (p. 26), Museum Odsherred/Museum West Zealand (p. 10, 32, 31), Museum Sydøstdanmark, Michael Nath (p. 15), Ignacio Pardinilla (p. 40, 41), Kerstin Schierhold (p. 27), Steinzeitpark Dithmarschen/Albersdorf (p. 24, 25), Jørgen Westphal (p. 28), Bodo Zehm (p. 30)
Texts	Arne Hedegaard Andersen (p. 31), Asger Diness Andersen (p. 30), Cristina Belmonte (p. 42), Elinor Carlsson (p. 34-37), Carlos Carvalho (p. 44), Timothy Darvill (p. 8, 46), Andreas Hänel (p. 12), Daniela Stefanie Hauf (p. 14), Thorsten Karlén (p. 38), Rüdiger Kelm (p. 24), Hein Klompmaker (p. 16,17), Björn Nilsson (p. 38), Kristoffer Buck Pedersen (p. 32), Mats Rosén (p. 38), Kerstin Schierhold (p. 27), Jørgen Westphal (p. 28), Harrie Wolters (p. 18), Bodo Zehm (p. 10, 20)
Translation	Adelheid Baker, Timothy Darvill
Design	Michael Bolmer, Osnabrück
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