

# Lugnarohögen – A Bronze Age Burial Mound near Hasslöv

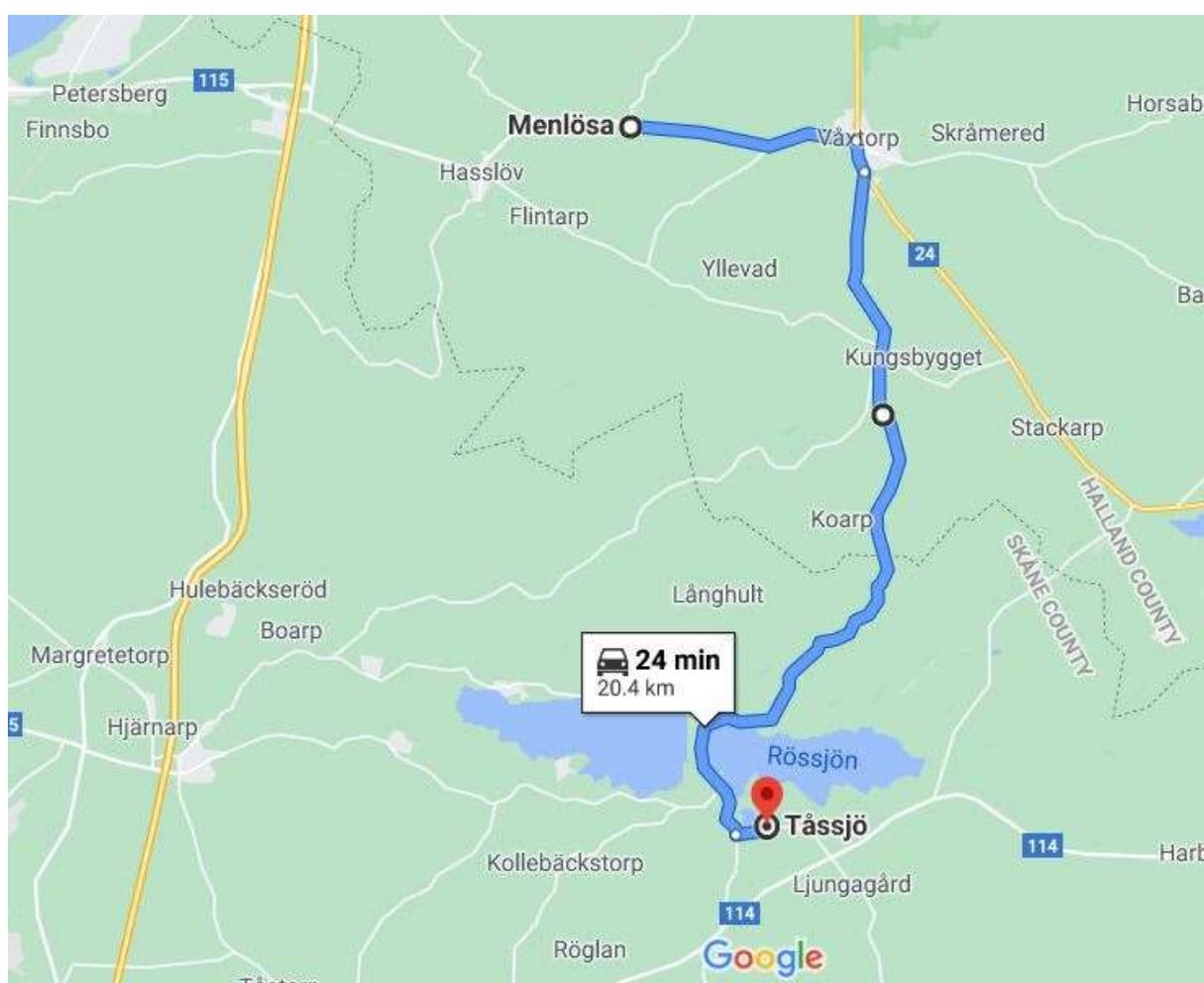
By Burks Oakley II  
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## ***Introduction***

One of my second-great grandfathers was Nils Wennström (1815-1914).



Nils was born in Tåssjö, Sweden, in the very northern part of Skåne County, and he lived much of his adult life not very far away in Menlösa, Sweden, in the very southern part of Halland County. Here is a Google Map showing these two locations:



Here is my ancestral line going back to Nils Wennström:



This line runs through Nils Wennström’s daughter Bernhardine Wennström (1855-1932), who was born in Våxtorp, Sweden, and immigrated to America on her honeymoon in 1882. Våxtorp is shown on the map on the previous page, just to the east of Menlösa.

Between Tåssjö and Menlösa is a striking geographical feature named the Hallandsås – literally “Hallands Ridge”,<sup>1</sup> and I previously wrote about the Hallandsås:

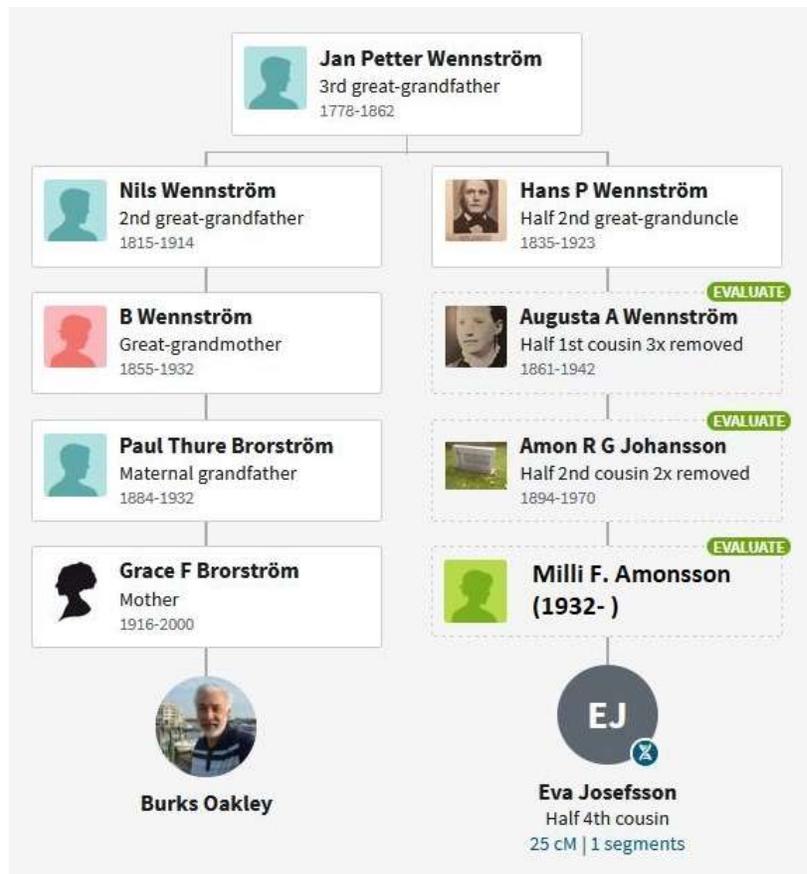
<http://www.burksoakley.com/SwedishGenealogy/Hallandsås.pdf>

Here is a photo of the Hallandsås, taken from Menlösa looking south:



<sup>1</sup> In Swedish, they often add an “s” to the end of location names. For example, “Stockholms-Tidningen” was the Stockholm Times newspaper, “Stockholms Konserthus” is the Stockholm Concert House, and “Stockholms Handelsbank” was the Stockholm Commerce Bank. So for whatever reason, there is an “s” at the end of Hallands, and this word is combined with “ås”, which is Swedish for “ridge”, to make the compound word “Hallandsås”.

Some of my Wennström relatives still live in southern Halland County. One of the first I contacted was Eva Josefsson (née Gunnarsson), who lives in Halmstad, on the Kattegat coast. Eva and I have a DNA match, and we both are descended from Jan Petter Wennström (1778-1862):



I wrote about my DNA match with Eva previously:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/SwedishGenealogy/EvaJosefssonWennstromConnection.pdf>

Eva's mother is Milli Gunnarsson (née Amonsson). Milli and her husband had six children, and they are shown in the following photo from Facebook:



(L to R) Iréne, Marie, Lisen, Ingrid, Anders, and Eva

Eva's brother Anders Gunnarsson lives in Menlösa, just a short distance from the house Nils Wennström owned. He owns a sheep farm with a spectacular view of the Hallandsås:



Here is a photo that I took of Milli in May 2019 at Anders' home; she was showing me some family photos (and speaking rapidly in Swedish):



Milli's youngest child is Iréne, who lives in Hasslöv, just 3+ km down the road from where Anders lives. Iréne is a potter/ceramist, and her studio is on a road (Pehr Osbecks väg) that dead ends at the church where Nils Wennström and his wife are buried.

As an aside, "Pehr Osbecks väg" translates into English as Pehr Osbeck's Road – and Pehr Osbeck was a Swedish explorer and naturalist, and an apostle of Carl Linnaeus. He ended his career as the parish priest of Våxtorp and Hasslöv in

Halland, where he died in 1805. He is buried in the church graveyard in Hasslöv, not far from where Nils Wennström and his wife are buried.



Nils Wennström gravestone (L); Pehr Osbeck's gravestone (R)

But I digress.... I mentioned that Iréne works with ceramics. Her pottery is on Facebook, and she also has a website for her studio:

<https://www.facebook.com/Iréne-Jonsson-Keramik-489335451242586/>

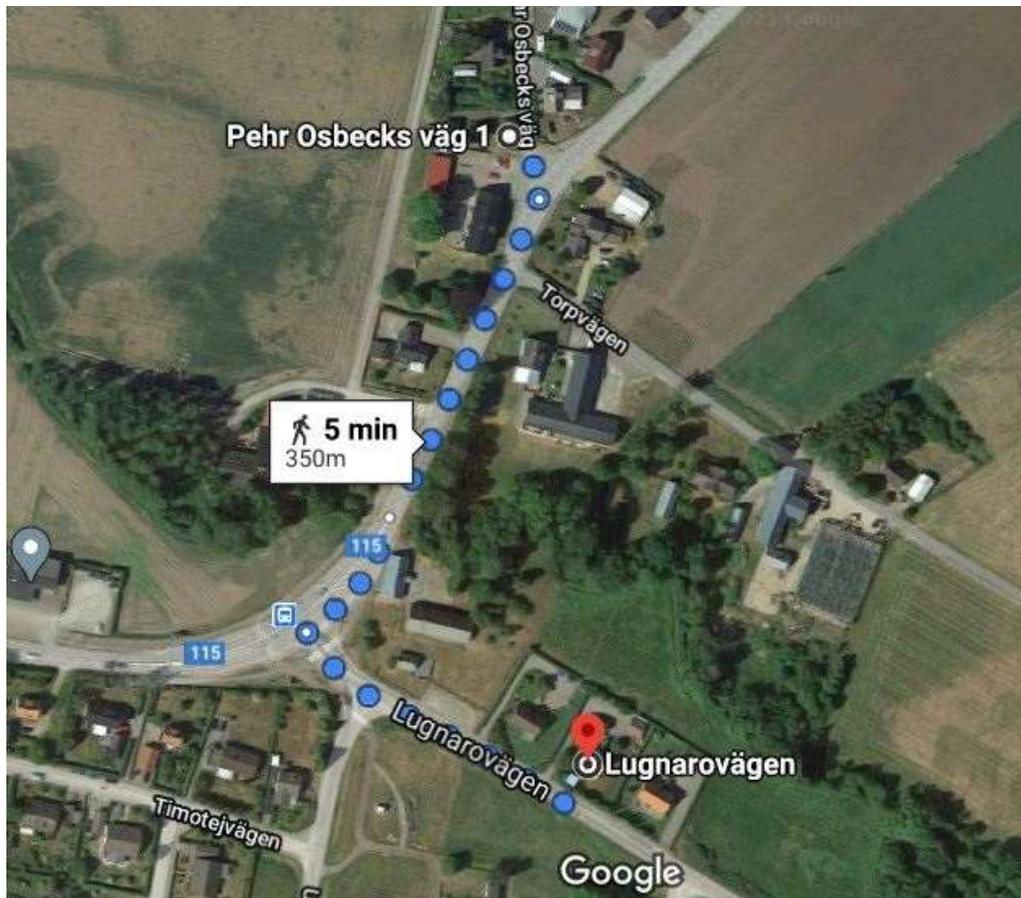
<https://irenejonssonkeramik.se/>

Here is an example of her beautiful work:

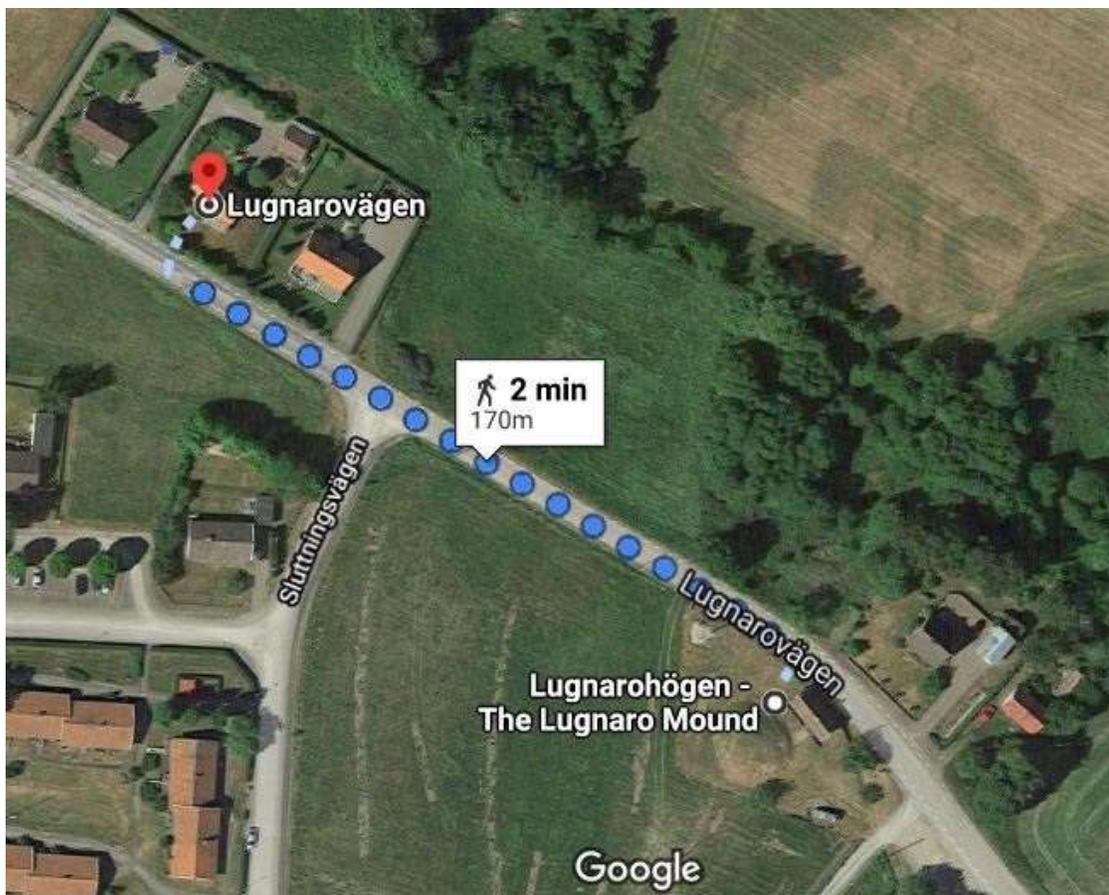


I am fortunate to have two of her small pieces in my home in Champaign, Illinois.

Iréne lives just a five-minute walk away from her studio – here is a Google Map:



Irene lives on Lugnarovägen, which translates into English as “The Lugnaro Road”.<sup>2</sup> Lugnaro is the name of a small croft<sup>3</sup> located just 170 m farther down this road, as shown in this satellite view:



Note that on the property of the Lugnaro croft is “Lugnarohögen” – the Lugnaro Mound. And that finally gets be to what I want to write about in this narrative – Lugnarohögen.

<sup>2</sup> In Swedish, “a road” is “en väg”, and “the road” is “vägen”.

<sup>3</sup> A croft a small rented farm, comprising a plot of arable land attached to a house and with a right of pasturage held in common with other such farms.

## ***Lugnarohögen – A Bronze Age Burial Mound***

According to Google Translate, the Swedish words for “a mound” is “en hög”. The Swedish language doesn’t have masculine and feminine nouns, but it does have “en” words and “ett” words. So “the mound” is “högen” (the “en” moves to the end of the word in the definite form). And “Lugnarohögen” translates as “The Lugnarö Mound”.

Here is a photo of Lugnarohögen:



And another photo from the opposite direction:



One can see the Hallandsås in the distance.

OK, so what is Lugnarohögen?

Here is the Swedish Wikipedia entry:

<https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lugnarohögen>

[translated into English from the original Swedish]

Lugnarohögen is a burial mound from the Late Bronze Age located at Lugnarö, a croft in Hasslöv, 10 km south of Laholm, Halland. The mound was excavated in the years 1926-27, and under the middle of the mound, an 8-meter-long stone formation in the form of a ship was found. This was the first ship burial in a Bronze Age mound found in Sweden. Rock formations similar to the one in Lugnarohögen are called rock formations or ship formations when they are erected above ground.

Next to the ship, a stone coffin with burnt human and sheep bones was found, as well as three small bronze objects: an awl, tweezers and a dagger from around 900–800 BC. Two smaller burials, so-called secondary graves, were also found in the upper layer of the mound, which had probably been added later.

In connection with the excavation in the 1920's, the mound was prepared and an underground underpass from the adjacent croft was built to make it possible to see the grave from the inside. Lugnarohögen then became an excursion destination for schools as well as archaeologists and tourists interested in history. Lugnarohögen was closed to visitors in 2009 because the grave was in poor condition. Seven years later, Laholm Municipality bought the burial mound from the Swedish Property Agency. Following an extensive renovation, Lugnarohögen was reopened on 27 June 2020.

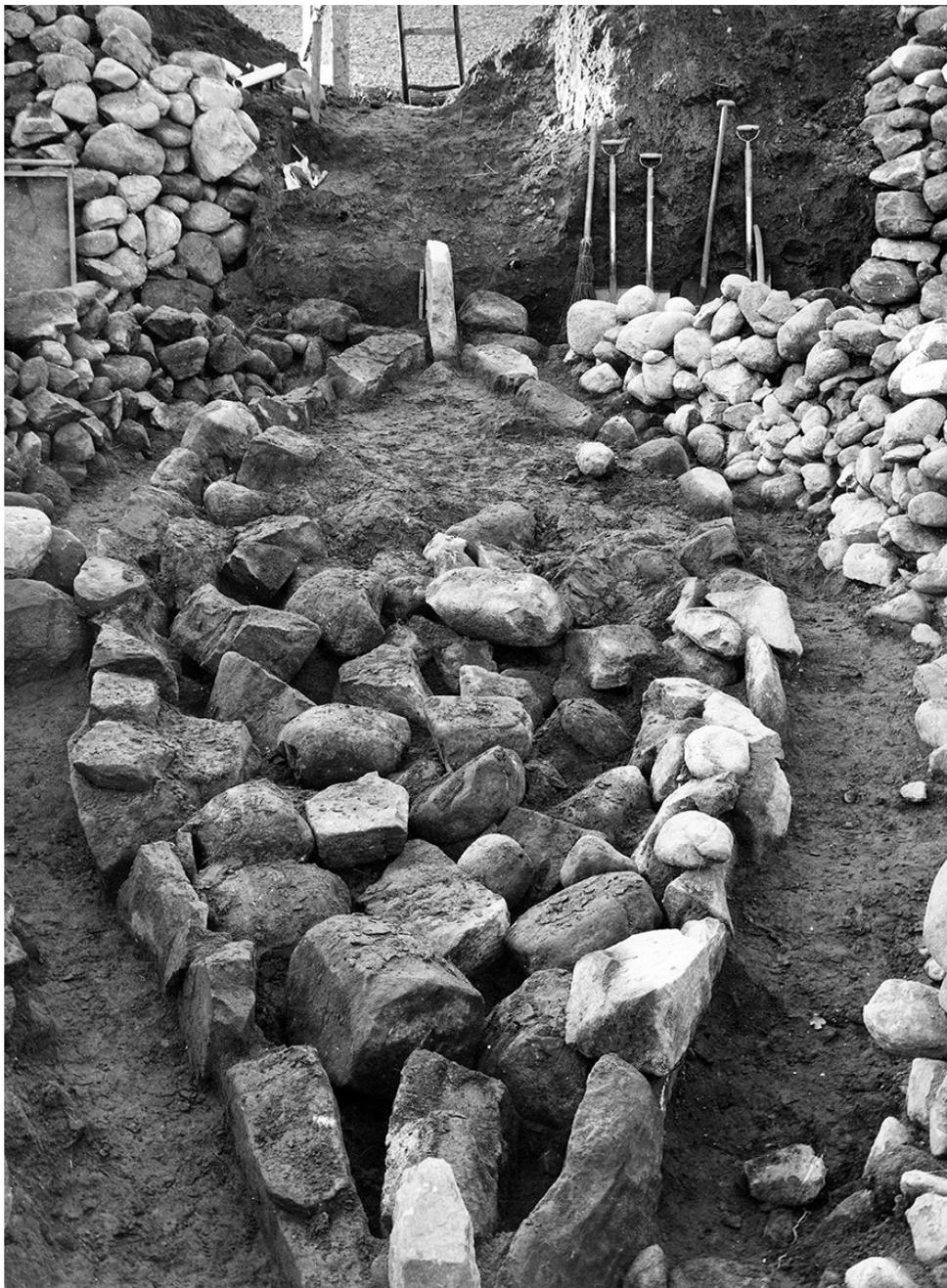
Here is yet another photo with the Hallandsås in the background:



It seems that they excavated the mound in the years 1926-27, and found some artifacts going back to the Bronze Age. Here is one important find – the bronze dagger:



Of course, another important find was the stones in the shape of a ship – 8 meters in length:

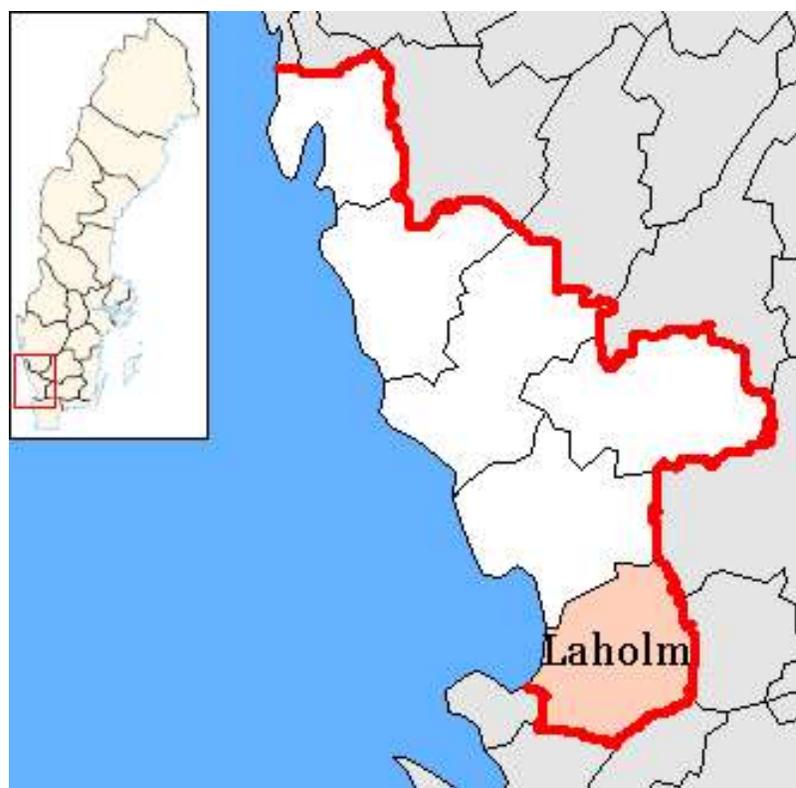


It appears that all of this was buried under a mound of dirt, which had to be excavated to get down to the level of the stone ship. And as they moved away the earth from the mound, they found several additional graves in the layers above the stone ship.

To make all this accessible, while preserving the mound, they constructed a concrete dome over the stone ship, and then built a dirt mound over the dome. They added some stairs going from the adjacent house down to the level of the stone ship. So today, visitors can walk down the stairs and view the stone ship:



Laholm Municipality comprises the southern-most part of Halland County:



Lugnarohögen is featured on the [visitlaholm.se](http://visitlaholm.se) website. Here is an excerpt:

<https://visitlaholm.se/en/poi/lugnarohogen/>

## A unique Bronze Age burial site in Hasslöv

The Lugnaro barrow in Hasslöv is a burial site from the late Bronze Age, approximately 2,800 years old. During the excavation in the 1920s, a ship setting was unearthed (a formation of stones arranged to form the outline of a ship) – this became sensational news as a ship setting inside a barrow was previously unheard of in this part of Europe. [Note that a “barrow” is an ancient burial place covered with a large mound of earth.]

Inside the grave they also found a stone chest. The chest had a clay vessel inside, containing small pieces of cremated human bones. Along with the bones, three small bronze objects were found: a dagger, a pair of tweezers, and an awl. During the Bronze Age, such objects were desirable and could only be afforded by the leading strands of society. This suggests that the person who was buried here was an important part of the community.

What makes the Lugnaro barrow even more special is that it is, apart from the King’s grave in Kivik, the only Bronze Age burial site in Sweden that you can enter. In 1926, it was decided that the barrow would be preserved and made accessible to the public. A concrete vault was constructed over the stone ship and an underground passage was built from the adjacent cottage. This allows you to view the ship setting from inside the barrow.

Thanks to drone photography, there is a great panorama of Lugnarohögen at:

<https://visitlaholm.se/panorama/lugnarohogen/>

There also is an outstanding panorama of Hasslöv:

<https://visitlaholm.se/panorama/hasslov/>

Irène’s studio is visible in this panorama, and the Hallandsås is featured prominently in the background. And since this is a 360° panorama, the Hasslöv church is visible when looking in the opposite direction of the original view. And if you know where to look in the front-right corner of the cemetery, you can zoom in and view Nils Wennström’s gravestone! And if you look off to the east, you can view the land where Nils Wennström lived, as well as Anders’ sheep farm.

There is a PDF brochure with information about Lugnarohögen on the [visitlaholm.se](https://visitlaholm.se) website. The cover includes:



I now know just enough Swedish to translate the second line “Bronsåldersgraven i Hasslöv” into English as “Bronze Age Grave in Hasslöv” (grave or tomb).

Finally, it is pretty cool that my cousin Iréne lives so close to Lugnarohögen. Living near ancient burial mounds must be a feature of the Wennström family. In May 2019, I visited my cousin Hans-Fredrik Wennström, who lives in Gävle (175 km north of Stockholm). Hans-Fredrik took me to see Vendel (previously Wendel), which is where the Wennström family lived when they first took this family name. And of course, there is an ancient burial mound nearby.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vendel>

At Husby near Vendel there is a large mound which local tradition calls Ottarshögen, from Ottar (also known as Ohthere) and hög, meaning mound or barrow. Ohthere is associated with the person of that same name in the epic *Beowulf*. An excavation in 1917 revealed the remains of a powerful man who was buried at the beginning of the 6th century, the time of Ohthere.

Here is a photo of Hans-Fredrik standing by Ottar’s Mound:



At any rate, it is interesting to see these glimpses into Swedish history – and the very remote connection to my Wennström family.