



# IN THE WAKE OF EBBE SKAMMELSON



## A nice place for an outing

Piksborg is well worth a visit. The visitor is offered a chance to experience the remains of the medieval fortress built almost 650 years ago. The nature is beautiful and the view over Lake Bolmen is fantastic. The open areas with grass and flowers are ideal for a picnic. A good tip is to go past the old station building and just beyond it, on the right hand side, is an attractive opening among the trees. Take a rest for a while there.

## A long walk...

There are several walking routes around Lake Bolmen. The route "Bolmenmarschen" passes Piksborg and is aligned along the old railway line where steam engines once used to hoot. All in all, the route is 125 kilometres. There are maps indicating the route Bolmenmarschen, for example, at the information sign at Piksborg. If you do not intend to walk so far there is a much shorter walk to enjoy. Continue for about a hundred metres beyond the station building to reach the bridge across the narrow channel Fettjesund that connects the main part of Lake Bolmen with its southernmost extension known as Kafjorden. The old railway bridge is still intact and is a pleasant place to stand and feel the light breeze that is normally there.

## Curious about King Pigge's treasure?

Please remember that ancient relics like Piksborg are protected by law, so no digging!

## Other places nearby worth visiting

The churches of Angelstad and Annerstad as well as the village Skeen.

## Film

1067 Blekinge-Småland-Halland. VHS 65 minutes about the railway Bolmenbanan and a few other former railways in Sweden with 1067mm track width. LEG Video, Olofström.



GPS (RT 90 2.5 gon V)

**Piksborg:**  
1368400 E,  
6297700 N

## How to get there?

From road number 25 between Halmstad and Ljungby, 53km from Halmstad and 20km from Ljungby: branch off towards Angelstad, Bolmen and Skeen.

After about 3km: turn left towards Piksborg 2. Follow road sign "borgruin". Park the car in the car park near the old railway building. Alternatively, come by boat on Lake Bolmen or walk on the route



**Illustration on cover:** Angry farmers with dry brushwood approach the castle. The siege of Piksborg in 1434 may have started somewhat like this. Illustration by Olaus Magnus from "History of the Nordic People", 1555. **Inserted photo:** Piksborg. **Main sources of information:** The legend about King Pigge, sketch of Piksborg, etc. are from "Piksborg – ett medeltida riksfäste vid Bolmen" by Per-Olof Orrhede, published in "Finnveden för". Värnamo Hembygdsförening; Profile and other information from "Ebbe Pik, herr Abraham och Piksborg: Historia kring en senmedeltida fogdeborg" by Lars-Olof Larsson, published in "Annerstad – ur arkiv och minnen". Annerstad Hembygdsförening. **Research:** Malin Ekwall. **Text:** Karin Tengnäs. **Photo:** Karin Tengnäs. **Logo-type:** Lars Lidman. **Design:** Tecknargården/Willy Lindström. **Production:** Naturbruk AB/Bo Tengnäs. **Project coordination:** Bitte Rosén Nilsson, Hylte kommun. **Copyright:** Naturbruk AB. **Year:** 2006. The brochures "In the Wake of Ebbe Skammelson" are available on [www.unnaryd.com](http://www.unnaryd.com) and [www.hylte.se](http://www.hylte.se)



## The legend about King Pigge

According to a local legend King Pigge was the first ruler of the fortress Piksborg. He was very cruel and was hated. He sentenced many people to death by hanging on "Galgön" (The Gallows Isle). He finally died violently. During an attack by the enemy, King Pigge was forced to flee over Lake Bolmen in a large copper cauldron. When he reached land on the other side he met people who were busy with the harvest. They tortured him and killed him. But before King Pigge fled from Piksborg he packed all his gold in a golden coffin and buried it. Ever since that time, treasure-seekers have come to Piksborg in search of the treasure, but so far no one uncovered it. Many are said to have found it but in the very decisive moment something has made the attempt fail. For one of the treasure-seekers the treasure just trickled back into the soil in a careless moment. Another one suddenly met King Pigge's navy which approached Piksborg sailing with white sails. A third received a message that his house was on fire when he was just about to secure the treasure. So, the location of King Pigge's treasure is, and will remain, a mystery.





Remnants of Píksborg's outer embankment

### There were once four islands

The water level of Lake Bolmen stood much higher before the lowering of the lake by the middle of the 19th century. Earlier the Píksborg area consisted of four separate islands: Borgholmen (The Fortress Island), Stallholmen (The Stable's Island), Yttervallsholmen (The Outer Embankment Island) and Galgholmen (The Gallows Isle). The medieval fortress establishment included structures on all four islands. Now the moats that used to separate the islands are drained and the four former islands have become a single peninsula. The bridges that used to connect the islands are long since gone. But some remnants of rock-lined moats, entrances on the western and north-western sides and of a smithy outside the eastern embankment are still visible.

### A colourful history

Píksborg is a unique relic that illustrates the fascinating history of this area. A travel back to the 1360s is required to get a glimpse of how it all started. There are different ideas about the establishment of the fortress. One theory is that the Danes constructed the fortress under the guidance of the Danish King Valdemar Atterdag. However, some evidence suggests that Píksborg was built during an extended period of time, possibly as a joint project between Valdemar Atterdag and the two Swedish kings Magnus Eriksson and Håkan Magnusson as part of their joint fight against the German Prince Albrekt of Mecklenburg.

### Finnveden

The south-western part of the province of Småland was by then known as Finnveden. From medieval time to around 1650, Finnveden constituted the south-western edge of the Swedish kingdom. The area bordered Denmark on the western as well as on the southern side. For a long time Píksborg was a powerful centre with two particular tasks. The first task was to defend Sweden against Danish aggression. The second task was to collect levies and taxes. The latter may have been the most important task. Píksborg's location at the southern tip of Lake Bolmen was very strategic and enabled the fortress to control the significant trade-route that Lake Bolmen constituted.

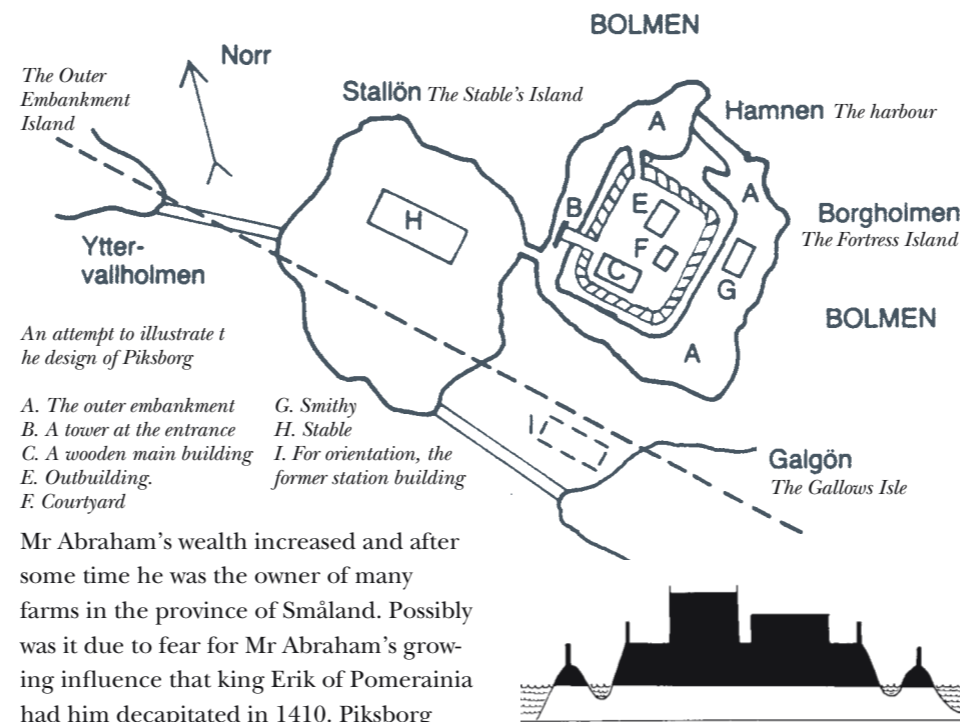
### Píksborg and Ebbe Pik

It is tempting to make connections between the name Píksborg and a person called Ebbe Pik. Most likely Ebbe Pik originated from northern Halland where he owned a lot of land. He is said to have been the first lord of the fortress Píksborg. He was influential and actively engaged in politics. It is likely that he invested in the construction of the fortress and it is quite possible that the fortress was named after him.

### A new lord

After the death of Ebbe Pik, his widow Margareta Dudde remarried in 1382. Her new husband was Abraham Broderson, later called Mr Abraham. Within a short time, he took control of Margareta's property, including Píksborg. Gradually

# Píksborg, a medieval fortress



An attempt to illustrate the design of Píksborg

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| A. The outer embankment    | G. Smithy                                       |
| B. A tower at the entrance | H. Stable                                       |
| C. A wooden main building  | I. For orientation, the former station building |
| E. Outbuilding.            |   |
| F. Courtyard               |   |

Mr Abraham's wealth increased and after some time he was the owner of many farms in the province of Småland. Possibly was it due to fear for Mr Abraham's growing influence that king Erik of Pomerania had him decapitated in 1410. Píksborg was nationalised after the execution of Mr Abraham but remained state property only for a few years.

### Píksborg on fire

Píksborg's role in collection of levies and taxes led eventually to the downfall of the fortress. Herman Berman was a person who, under the revolutionary leader Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson, locally led the farmer revolt against King Erik of Pomerania. The revolt was not only against the king but also against his lords on the nation's fortresses. The conflict was induced by the rough methods used in collection of taxes. Olof Ragvaldsson was now the Lord of Píksborg. While Olof negotiated with Herman and a group of farmers on one side of the fortress, another group of farmers set fire to the other side. Soon Píksborg was on fire. It burnt to the ground and very few belongings could be saved. This event was in early 1434.

### The design and construction

One of the reasons for Píksborg to be built on precisely this site was that there were several high islands. Píksborg was built on a hill which was made higher and shaped by people. This type of fortress, a so-called motte and bailey castle, originated in France.



A profile.

Moats were initially excavated at the edges of the moraine hill on which Píksborg was constructed. The earth from there was placed on top of the hill to increase its height. The top of the hill was made flat to facilitate the construction of a large wooden building on the hilltop. The excavation made the sides steeper and at the same time an outer embankment was also made. The outer embankment was made more difficult to pass by adding a line of erected and sharpened wooden poles on its top. The moats were filled with water. Another line of erected and sharpened wooden poles were placed along the edges



The station building.

of the flattened hilltop. The wooden structures were constructed inside this second "fence" and so safely located. As the main buildings were made of wood it explains why so few items could be saved when the structures were set on fire.

### Archaeological investigations

Archaeological investigations were carried out in 1908. More than 2,000 items were found, for example, many crossbow-arrows, knives, scissors, hinges, locks, keys, jew's harps and coins. The fact that so many valuable items were found indicates that people had to leave the fortress in a hurry. The items that were found are now kept at Småland's Museum in Växjö.

### The railway between Bolmen and Halmstad

After the downfall of Píksborg in 1434 the place remained quite idle and peaceful for the next 450 years. By the end of the 1880s the silence was interrupted. The railway between Bolmen and Halmstad was built and a station was placed at Píksborg, but



View of Píksborg from the ex-railway bridge.

no major settlement was established in spite of the station and the scenic spot. The old station building still remains with its name sign and its platform. The railway embankment is now a combined walking and bicycle route. Peace is again restored to Píksborg.

The route "Bolmenmarschen" at Píksborg.

