

# STONE CUTTING AT HERRGÅRDEN

an industrial monument  
and a cultural setting  
at Tjurkö in the  
archipelago of  
Karlskrona.



Photo: Blekinge museum.

A marked walking-path runs through the area passing several structures and monuments from the age of stone cutting. The whole trail is about 1.5 km and is marked with dots on the map. Bring the folder and take a walk round!  
Please note that the path is not suitable for disabled persons!

## STONE CUTTING AT HERRGÅRDEN ON THE ISLAND OF TJURKÖ

During the last few decades of the 19th century the island of Tjurkö became the centre of stone cutting in Blekinge. Small, privately owned quarries abounded all over the county but here at Herrgårdén the project was early carried out on an industrial scale. The initiator was a German, Franz Herman Wolff, a former fortifications engineer, who arrived in the eastern archipelago in 1862 in order to buy the quarrying rights in the rocks. Above all the production has aimed at the export of paving-stone and kerb-stone.

Before the age of stone cutting the population of Tjurkö consisted of fishermen and small farmers with scanty living-conditions. When the Wolff enterprise was established here, formerly useless land became economically valuable and through the development of stone cutting the landscape was totally transformed.

On this small island a completely new kind of society was created whose inhabitants were wage-earners and who had largely moved in from other places. In the peak years nearly 1000 workers were employed by Wolff, both on Tjurkö and on the neighbouring island of Sturkö. At Herrgårdén tenement houses were built for the workers, but later some of the families could build their own cottages. Several shops, eateries and beer-houses opened in the area, which for a couple of decades seethed with life and activities. Furthermore, the Crown's penal work corps had a department located here between 1872 and 1894. In all, about 5000 prisoners worked for Wolff during this period.

From the end of the 19th century Blekinge's stone cutting industry was largely concentrated to the western part of the county. In connection with the declining at Tjurkö and the neighbouring island of Sturkö, many stone cutters went to work in the quarries round Karlshamn. Others moved to Bohuslän. This county gradually came to dominate Swedish granite industry.

The stone cutters that stayed in the islands had to suffer long periods of unemployment and hardships. In the 1930s and 40s certain production was carried out with governmental support, but by the mid-1950s there was total silence in the rocks.

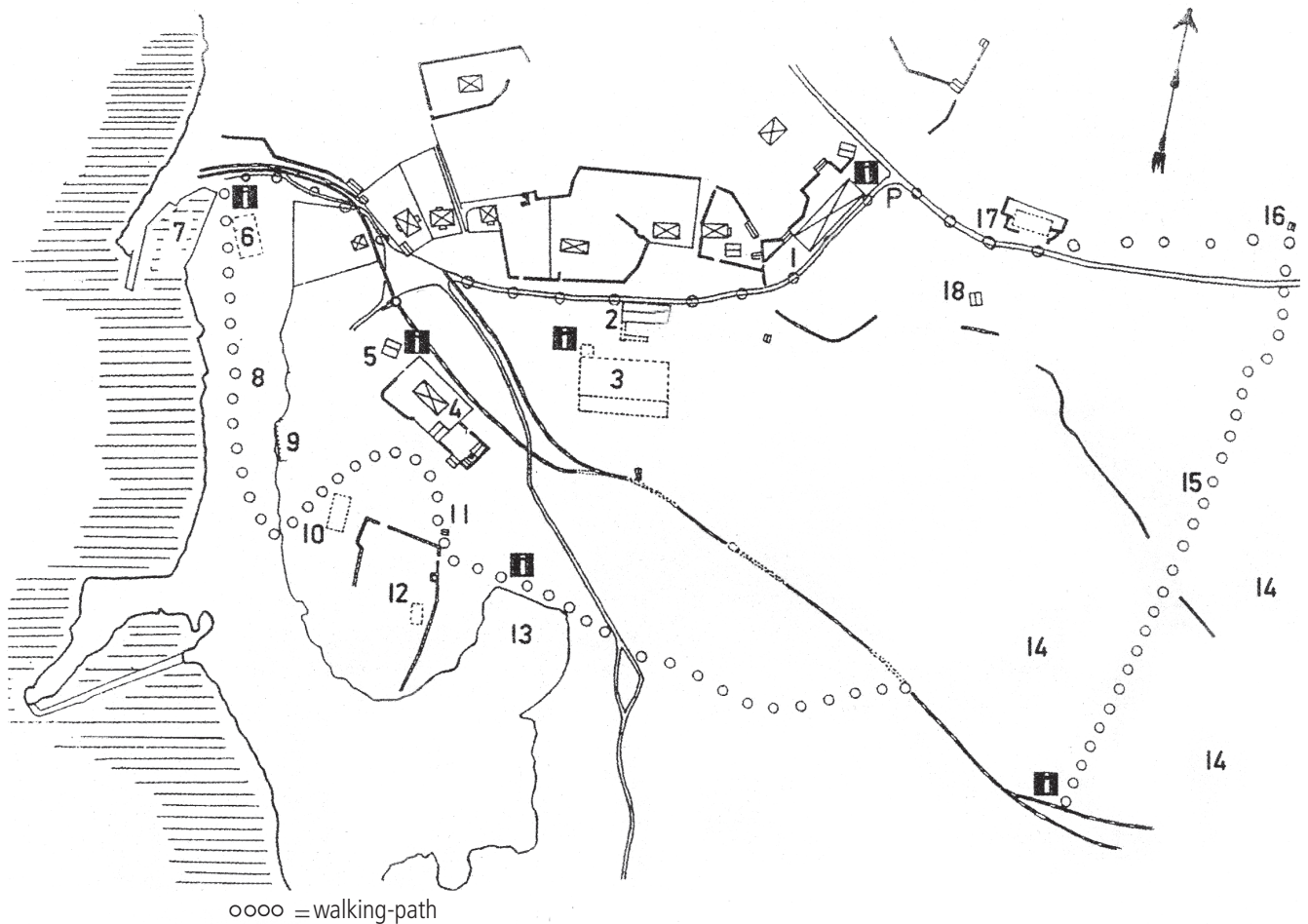
The easiest way to get to Tjurkö is by car. Turn off the E22 towards Sturkö, Tjurkö.  
When you have reached Tjurkö there are signs that show how to proceed.

## The Catering-house is open in summer-time.

Here is an exhibition about stone cutting and also exhibitions and sale of local handicraft and art.  
You can also buy ice-cream and coffee.  
The Catering-house is run by the art and handicraft society of Skärgårdskraft.

### Further information:

[www.blekingemuseum.se](http://www.blekingemuseum.se) • [www.skargardskraft.se](http://www.skargardskraft.se)



oooo = walking-path

**1. The catering building.** The catering building was built in 1878 in order to meet the daily needs in the growing stone cutting society. The building contained a bakery, a brewery, a canteen and a shop. There were also rooms for a physician and a priest. In the attic the temperance league was housed.

**2. Stone shed.** One of the few remaining structures left standing from the time of the prison labor camp is the stone shed. A floor plan from 1883 labels the building as Labor camp provisions storage and dining area for the constables.

**3. The Crown's penal work station.** Only the foundations remain.

**4. The new office.** Nowadays a privately owned summer-house.

**5. The old office**

**6. The prisoners' smithy.** The Crown's penal corps had its smithy at this place. Only the prisoners' tools were forged and sharpened here, but in addition all kinds of forging was carried out. Originally the water-line went as high as the smithy.

**7. The harbour.** From this place stone products were exported from Tjurkö and neighbouring quarries, above all to Germany.

**8. The tipping place** Crushed macadam was tipped down onto the concrete platform by the wharf and from there it was loaded on cargo vessels. Paving-stone cutters also worked on the platform and had blocks delivered here from the company's big quarry.

**9. The stone crusher** The foundation of the big stone crusher used from 1909.

**10. The stable** Here was a stable including a shed for carriages and rooms for the coachman.

**11. The wash-house.** The wash-house was built in the 1940s close to an abandoned and water-filled quarry in which the laundry could be rinsed. Earlier it was customary for the women in the stone-cutters' families to earn extra money by taking in laundry from the fortress of Kungsholmen and from households in Karlskrona.

**12. Klockare-Johan's stone cottage.** The stone-cutters' families could build their own simple cottages from stone that was left over from the quarry. Here is what remains from a wall of a cottage that was inhabited in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**13. The big quarry of Vrålebo.**

**14. The quarries** The vegetation again covers the ground that used to be totally bare, but traces from the stone-cutters' work in the small quarries can still be seen. Among the sharp splinters one can also find material for paving-stones that they failed with and wedged stones that were not worth working with further.

**15. The cutters' shed** In the cutters' shed two or three men could work simultaneously cutting paving-stones on workbenches covered with stone chips. The blocks were lifted in through a hatch in the gable of the shed. In the shed the stone-cutters were protected from wind and weather and in the evenings they could work by lamp-light. This shed was built in 1987 as a reconstruction of a model from Sturkö.

**16. The powder shed.** From the counter of the shed black powder was administered for the loading of bore holes in the rocks. The highly explosive merchandise was carried from here to the place of blasting on special powder-stretchers. The considerable explosive power of the powder turned the stone to gravel and was used to get rid of unusable rock.

**17. The barracks of Högarör.** This was the site of the barracks of Högarör, which was one of the residential barracks erected for temporary hands. To begin with unmarried men had to share the eight rooms of the barracks. Later on the rooms served to house a whole family. The building was pulled down in 1984.

**18. The morgue shed.** In this shed dead bodies were kept until the funeral. Minor and major casualties often happened during work in the quarries. Fatal accidents usually happened in connection with blasting or falls.

