



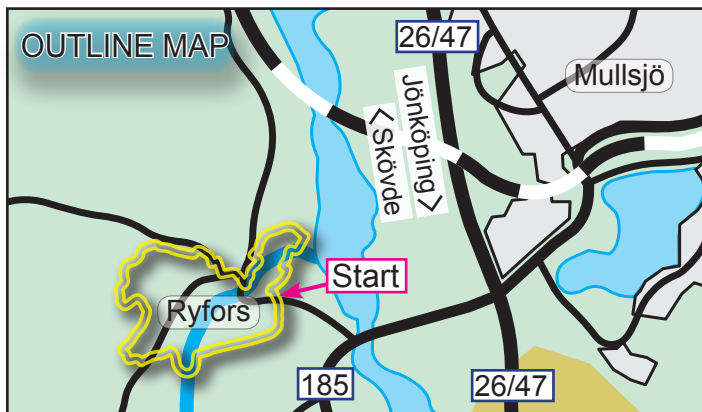
RYFORSLEDEN

A nature and culture hike - 6km

UK www.skaraborgsleder.se

15 May, 2019

Welcome to a great hike through the historical surroundings of Ryfors Bruk, a former ironworks. Apart from the industrial history, you will experience a varied natural environment with stunning views. One hundred years ago Ryfors' Park was considered one of the most beautiful English garden landscapes of Sweden and the nature reserve Ryfors Gammelskog still offers a bewitching primary forest. The hiking trail runs past the oldest golf course in the country and you get to witness a part of our sport history. The hike should take two hours at a normal pace.



THE HIKING TRAIL

The 6.2km long trail runs partly over the easy-hiking plateau at the nature reserve Ryfors Gammelskog and partly over a small mountain ridge with stunning views. We recommend the trail is walked clockwise to experience the best views. Ryforsleden has yellow markers and follows good paths and country roads. The trail passes through the golf course, so please be careful and show consideration.

Directions: From Mullsjö follow road no. 185. At Nybro Bridge, where the road crosses Lake Stråken follow the signs towards Ryfors. After ca. 700m you will arrive at a big carpark on the northern side of the street. An alternative starting point is at Engelska Villan (The English Villa). See starting points in the map.

RYFORS BRUK

The ironworks at Ryfors Bruk was founded by a group of investors in 1742. Authorisation was received to build, amongst other things, a tilt hammer. Iron from the furnace at Svenshult in the nearby municipality Habo, was used at Ryfors Bruk. In 1798 the furnace was moved to Ryfors due to irregular iron deliveries. In the same year, Ryfors Bruk was expanded by a manufacturing workshop for the production of various iron products.

In 1827 Ryfors Bruk was bought by Gudmund Magnus Sager (1801-1858). He shut down the furnace and expanded and modernised the iron works. Sager was a skilled businessman and invested in several companies with good financial results. When he died, his sons Robert and Edvard were eight and five years old. At the same time, the conditions for heavy industry changed and the competition got fiercer. This led to the complete shutdown of the ironworks in 1906. The brothers were heavily influenced by English ideals. This is noticeable in the English landscape garden, the golf course and buildings like Engelska Villan.

In 1919 came the inevitable division of Ryfors Bruk. Through a lottery draw Ryfors Bruk Övre (upper part) went to Edvard Sager, while Robert Sager received Ryfors Bruk Nedre (lower part). Engelska Villan and Magretholm

respectively became the manor house of each half of the estate. Ryfors Bruk Övre still remains in the hands of the Sager family.

Like other ironworks Ryfors Bruk showed an impressive ability to adapt its production to survival. The ironworks were replaced by forestry and the keeping of livestock. Nowadays various tenancies and production of electrical power provide the income.

RYFORS PARK

In 1880 Edvard and Robert Sager took the initiative to create an English landscape garden. For their support Edward Milner (1819-1884) was hired. He was one of the leading landscape architects of their time. The park ended up having an area of 375 hectares with twelve kilometres of footpaths. Ryfors Park soon became famous for its beauty and could be compared with the gardens of the castles Drottningholm and Haga as well as the park area of the Stockholm district Djurgården.

What exactly is an English landscape garden? The idea of the English landscape garden was developed in 18th century England. It is a romantic park that exploits nature's own forms. The ideal is a landscape with hilly topography, big, open bodies of water and wide views, all of which makes Ryfors an ideal place. By getting rid of bushes and trees, viewing aisles were created from selected points. It is important that the actual work of the landscape architect and the gardener are nearly unnoticeable. Paths or small roads run through the grounds, passing small buildings that are meant to encourage the visitor's fantasy. This can be a forest cabin, a pavilion, an antique temple or a temple ruin, a beautiful bridge, an exotic tree or something similar.

RYFORS GOLFBANA

Located within the English landscape garden lies the golf course which was built in 1888. It was the first golf course in Scandinavia and consisted of six holes with square greens. Several of them remained and are nowadays used for practice. The golf course was temporarily abandoned, but was reopened in 1988 with nine holes. The golf course that you can see today was expanded in 1998 to 18 holes and is still located within the English landscape garden.



The golf course of Ryfors (GL)

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- ♦ Kulturled Gyljeryd, 5km
- ♦ Blå Spåret (The Blue Track), 6km
- ♦ Eriksgatuleden, 7.2km (14.4km return)
- ♦ Knipesjöleden, 9km
- ♦ Stråkenleden, 9km (easy to combine with Ryforsleden)
- ♦ Röda Spåret (The Red Track), 10km
- ♦ Mullsjö Runt, 22km
- ♦ Södra Vätterleden, Hotel Mullsjö-Bottnaryd, 28km
- ♦ Västra Vätterleden, Fagerhult-Hotel Mullsjö, 31km

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- ♦ **Mullsjö City Hall**, tel. 0392-140 00
- ♦ **Directory inquiries**, tel. 118 118
- ♦ **Emergency**, tel. 112
- ♦ **Medical Aid**, tel. 010-242 47 00

DIRECTIONS

1. Ryfors Gammelskog is a nature reserve that has remained unaltered since the early 18th century. The coniferous trees that stand here are up to 300 years old, several of them are over 35 m tall. The untouched ecosystem contributes to a varied flora and fauna. The dense and stately coniferous forest provides a beautiful contrast to the more open landscape and the broadleaf forest along Tidan River. Located in the nature reserve are several information boards that tell the stories of the trees and historical places around you. Ryfors Gammelskog is located in a relatively flat area and is part of the English landscape garden that was created in 1880.

2. Pinnabron. The slim bridge is made of long, thin spruce trunks. In the middle stands a bench where you can sit and enjoy the nice view of Tidan River. The Swedish Post Office published a calendar with Sweden's most beautiful bridges, Pinnabron was one of them.

3. The river Tidan is 187km long, including headwaters. Tidan begins at Lake Strängseredsjön between Ulricehamn and Bottnaryd. Its course leads past the elongated Lake Stråken and finally merges into Lake Vänern at Mariestad. Tidan River is one of few Swedish rivers that run northwards. The river is nowadays a calm stretch of water with numerous dams. In the middle ages the water power was used to drive mills. Later, the waterfalls were also used to operate saws and industries like Ryfors Bruk. In the present day the hydroelectric power stations along Tidan River contribute to a great energy surplus. With the help of the two power stations at Ryfors and the planned wind park at Ryfors Bruk Nedre, the municipality of Mullsjö will soon be energy-self-sufficient.

4. Ryfors English landscape garden dominates this hiking trail. The guidelines for the 375 hectare landscape garden were set in 1880 by Edward Milner who was one of the leading landscape architects at the time. This was most probably one of his last assignments as he died in 1884. Even Milner's son, Henry Ernest Milner, contributed to the construction of the park. Sadly there is little information about the achievements of these two talented landscape architects.

Most interesting is the point in time at which the landscape garden was created. When the project was started by Edvard and Robert Sager, the era of ironworks was nearly over. The landscape garden was instead funded by other investments their father, Gudmund Magnus Sager, had carried out throughout the good years of the ironworks.

On a map from 1911 ca. 20 viewpoints are marked from where aisles cut through the landscape. These aisles were created to optimise the views. Some of the aisles, as well as parts of the twelve kilometres of footpaths, remain intact. Several of the smaller buildings that were located along them, have however, vanished. The buildings were meant to make the walks in the park more interesting. The park is open to the public, apart from the manor house Corps de logi which is in private hands.

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5. The golf course was created in 1888 within the English landscape garden. It was the first golf course in Scandinavia. The greens were square and had six short holes. It was common at the time that one green had several holes. Some of these square greens remain today and are used for practice. The golf course was temporarily abandoned, but reopened in 1988 with nine holes. The golf course that you can see today was expanded in 1998 to 18 holes and is still located within the English landscape garden. Further information can be found on the website www.ryforsgk.se.

6. Stråkenloppet is a classic ski race stemming from the 1940s. It is nowa-

days one of the biggest qualification races for the famous Vasaloppet (Vasa-race). The race starts southwards from the golf club's club house. Near the start was once a tennis field from 1879 that is said to have been the first in Sweden.

7. Ryfors Bruk was founded in 1742. The factory, based on ironworking, closed down in 1906 when the competition got too fierce. The estate Ryfors Bruk is a relatively large area with many buildings. From the car park at Engelska Villan you can make a side trip and follow the road westwards. **Engelska Villan** was constructed in 1886 following the draft of Edward Milner. It is also called Cottagevillan and was thought to be an addition to the new manor house which was never built. Further ahead stands **the clubhouse of Ryfors' Golf Club**. The building was once a dairy.

If you follow the road/track eastwards you pass the manor house **Corps de logi**. The building is known as Ryfors' black (Ryfors svarta) and was originally the manor house of Ryfors. The house was moved here from another location. Two stories exist about its origins: One source claims that a house from Gunillaberg near Bottnaryd was moved here, the other names Falla as the place of origin. Corps de logi was later expanded in several stages.

Further to the East you reach the Tidan River. Here you can make another side trip and follow a path upstream the river to **Hammarbron** (The Hammer Bridge). The path has orange markers. You have a nice view of Corps de logi from the bridge. The tall white house was the laundry. It was also used as a bathing house and sauna. Next to it lies **the power station of Ryfors Bruk Övre** from the year 1910 as well as **the manufacturing forge, the joiner's workshop and the tilt hammer**.

A bit further downstream, near **the power station of Ryfors Bruk Nedre**, lie a saw-mill, a nice warehouse, a former shop, the old dairy, various machine sheds and apartments. Most buildings remain, but they may have a different function to that in former times. Directly underneath the lower power station once stood the furnace that was moved here from Svenshult in 1798.

If you are walking downstream after the lower power station you can see two small towers to your left. They are part of the first septic tank system that was installed in Sweden. This and other novelties in Ryfors came from England as it was the centre of industrial development around 1900 with its great empire.

8. Maltes bro: Malte Gräns was foreman of a work team that constructed the bridge in the 1980s.

9. Once a railway track led from the sawmill at Ryfors to Lake Stråken. The carts were pulled by horses. The sawn timber was shipped by boat across the lake to a place ca. 150 m south of Stråkensbro Bridge. From there a railroad side-track joined the Southern Main Railroad. Due to the steep incline, the carts were pulled up by a winch. The first winch was steam-powered and later replaced by an electrical model. This shows how complicated the logistics could be up until the 20th century when the industry became independent of water to run machines.

SERVICE

A. Ryfors Gammelskog. Resting place with picnic table.

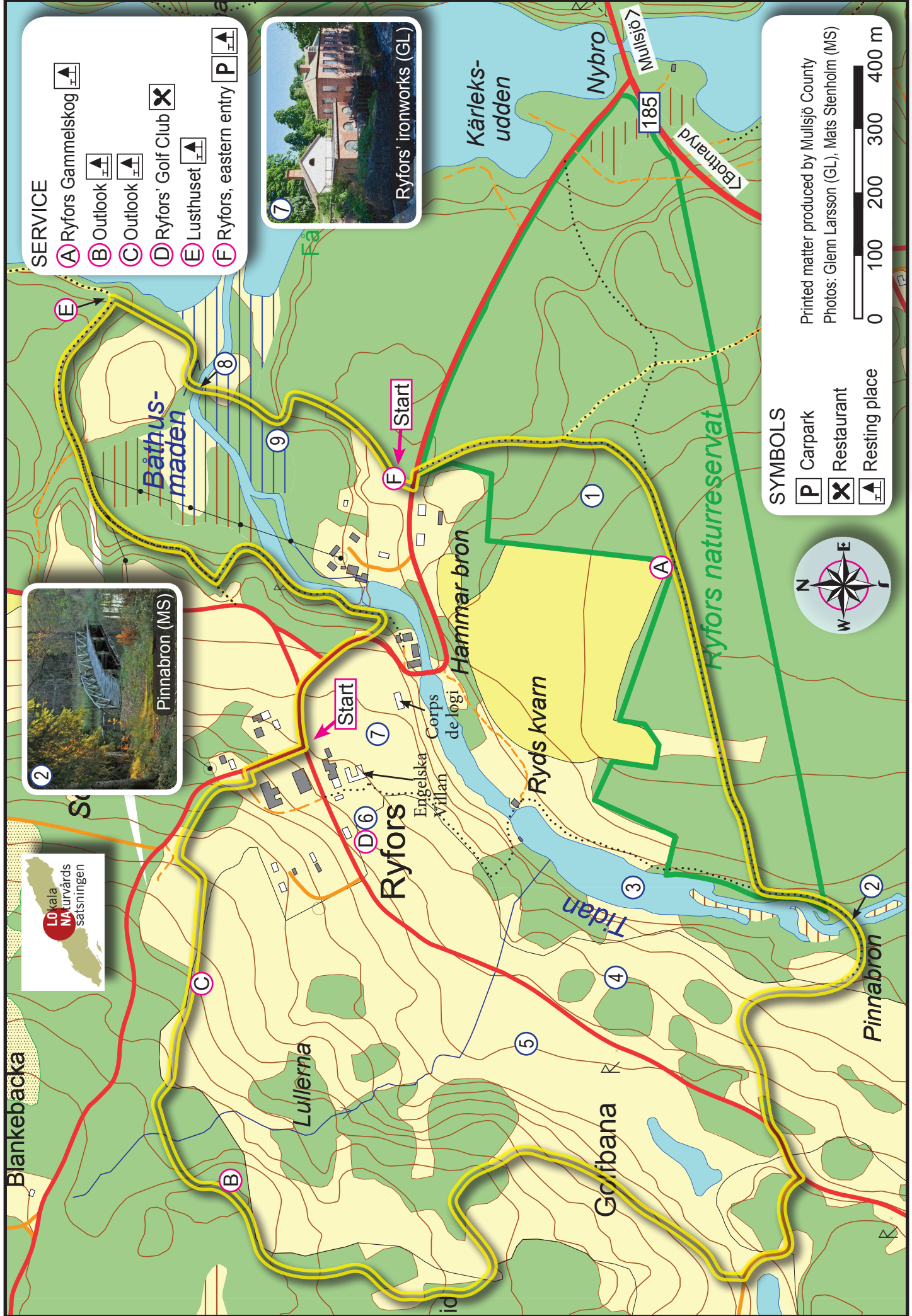
B. Resting place with picnic table and a nice view.

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D. Clubhouse of Ryfors' Golf Club. The café is open during golfing season, golf-shop (www.ryforsgk.se, tel. 0392-128 84).

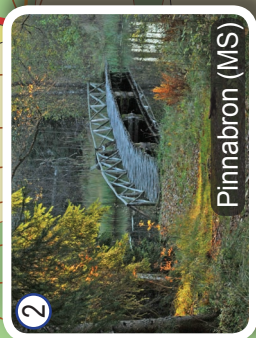
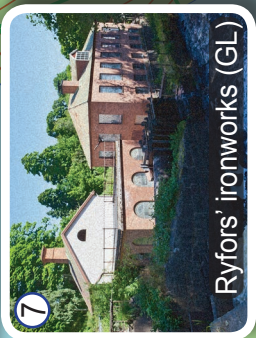
E. Lusthuset. Pavilion with benches.

F. Ryfors, eastern entry. Starting point of the track, carpark, information boards, picnic table and earth toilet.



SERVICE

- A Ryfors Gammelskog
- B Outlook
- C Outlook
- D Ryfors' Golf Club
- E Lusthuset
- F Ryfors, eastern entry



SYMBOLS

- P Carpark
- X Restaurant
- Resting place



Printed matter produced by Mullsjö County
 Photos: Glenn Larsson (GL), Mats Stenholm (MS)

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