



*Decorated Farmhouses  
of Hälsingland World Heritage*

# JON-LARS



» *Another highlight is that the farm has only one dwelling house, built with two identical parts for two brothers.*



**Copyright:** Gävleborg County Administrative Board  
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Hälsingebilder, Hälsinglands museum  
**Translation:** Semantix Språkcentrum  
**Printing:** Elanders, 2013



**J**ON-LARS in Långhed boasts the largest building among the Hälsingland farm-houses. There is only one dwelling house on the farm. It was built in the mid-1800s with two identical parts for two brothers, following a fire that destroyed an earlier building. Even the many well-preserved outbuildings were constructed for two households. It was common for farms to be occupied by several generations,

but rarely by two brothers. The two dwellings, which shared a room for dancing and festivities, the "herrstuga", have completely different interior styles. The farmhouse is further distinguished by the large and elegant porch at the entrances to the two households, and by the exclusive turquoise paintings and French wallpapers. There is also a salt shed preserved since the 1600s. The farm is privately owned. Tours are available only by advance booking.







# FOR TWO BROTHERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

**CONSTRUCTION OF** the present farmhouse began in 1853, two years after the previous residential dwelling was destroyed by fire. The new house was built for two brothers, Olof and Anders Andersson, and their families. Though it was common for two generations to live on the same farm, it was very rare for two brothers to share. The two dwellings in the house are identical, but have completely different interior styles. The entrances are immediately adjacent, and share a very large and decorative porch dated 1857, the house's probable completion date.

## *VERY SIMILAR TO PALLARS, THE NEIGHBOURING FARM*

Externally, the house is very similar to Pallars, the neighbouring farm, whose present farmhouse was built at the same time. The similarities between the two buildings extend beyond the architecture in its entirety to detailing such as the eaves, window surrounds and porch. It is very likely that the two houses were built by the same master builder and his team of workers.

» *Between the two dwellings was a large shared room, the "herrstuga", for festivities. According to family tradition, it was used for dancing during major celebrations.*



## *SHARED FESTIVITIES ROOM*

On the ground floor, each dwelling consisted of a vestibule and three rooms. There was a room for day-to-day living, the "dagligstuga", a separate kitchen with an iron stove (a novelty in 1850s Hälsingland), and a smaller chamber. Between the two dwellings was a large shared festivities room, the "herrstuga". According to family tradition, dances were held there during major celebrations. The festivities room has been divided into living and dining rooms since 1947, when the then owner celebrated her 50th birthday.

## *ANDERS' SIDE, THE NORTH, HAS BEEN RENOVATED*

The initials painted over the door confirm that the dwelling on the north side belonged to Anders, the youngest brother. Because this part has been occupied continuously, it has been renovated on several occasions, most recently in the early 1990s.

## *OLAF'S SIDE, THE SOUTH, HAS BEEN PRESERVED*

The other dwelling, on the south side, belonged to the elder brother Olof. Unlike the north part, it is very well preserved. It was decorated in 1863 by Svärdes Hans Ersson, a renowned painter from the province of Dalarna. The walls in the vestibule are marbled in distemper, while those in the living room are decorated using oil paint in an intense shade of blue. The walls were divided into different panels, framed by painted ornamentation in yellow ochre and red to look like gold. The wood graining on the doors imitates light oak, which was then beginning to displace mahogany as the fashionable wood among the farmers in Hälsingland. The walls of the chamber are also divided into panels, but with ornamentation in green on an off-white ground. The accent colour coordinates with the light-green tiled stove.

## *The history of the farmhouses of Hälsingland*

### *Many rooms for festivities*

A Hälsingland farmhouse could have up to fifteen decorated rooms, but only a couple of them were in day-to-day use. The others were used only for really important occasions, such as weddings. These festivities rooms are often richly decorated, and the painting technique indicates the room's use and status.



### *Linen, the forest and trade*

The farmers' healthy finances were based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Many Hälsingland farmers were also able to supplement their income with activities such as linen production, trade and the sale of forest land and timber rights.



## *TWO GUEST ROOMS ON THE FIRST FLOOR*

On the first floor, there is a large hall separating two guest rooms. At first glance, the guest rooms might appear to have been decorated at different times. In fact, they represent two distinct interior styles, both of which were equally acceptable among the farmers in Hälsingland in the decades around the mid-1800s.

### *GUEST ROOM TO THE NORTH WITH EXQUISITE TURQUOISE DETAILING*

The guest room to the north was decorated in 1862. Its walls are decorated with landscape paintings, framed by columns entwined with the vines characteristic of the area. The room's dominant colour is an exquisite and intense turquoise, a shade used in several places in the house. The extensive use of this expensive blue pigment probably aimed to demonstrate wealth and status. Pink and limestone grey are also used in the room, and the doors have been painted to imitate mahogany.



### *GUEST ROOM TO THE SOUTH WITH FRENCH WALLPAPER*

The guest room to the south has marbled dado panels, a marbled fireplace and an exquisite wallpaper with an arabesque pattern in a range of amber colours. The wallpaper has a glossy white ground to simulate the expensive satin silk fabric. This so-called glazing was an expensive treatment reserved for wallpaper in the very grandest rooms in the farmhouses. The wallpaper probably comes originally from France. The Hälsingland farmers were able to buy it when they visited towns and at markets. A masonry chimney rising from the ground floor has been built into a cupboard decorated with graining dated 1858.

### *FOUR ATTIC ROOMS WITH DESCRIPTIVE NAMES*

On the attic floor, there are four undecorated storerooms whose names describe their contents: "klädkammaren" (for clothes), "fällkammaren" (for covers made of animal skins), "ullkammaren" (for wool) and "potatismjölskammaren" (for potato flour).

» *The wallpaper probably comes originally from France, and could be bought on visits to towns and at markets.*



*Plan of Jon-Lars*



*First floor*



*Ground floor*







*Guest room to the north*



### *TWO SETS OF OUTBUILDINGS*

Jon-Lars comprises eleven buildings, most from the mid-1800s, and has the largest residential dwelling among the Hälsingland farmhouses. Near the residential building is an unusually well preserved group of outbuildings, also constructed to service two households. There were some alterations during the 1900s, when agriculture on the farm was at its peak and rationalisation became necessary. Nevertheless, the configuration of the farm buildings has been preserved to an unusually high degree since the 1850s. Many of the farm buildings have mansard roofs, a detail characteristic of construction in the area during the 1850s. It demonstrates the farmers' concern for the aesthetics of all the farm's buildings. The largest



*»» Near the residential building is an unusually well preserved group of outbuildings, also constructed to service two households.*



of these buildings is the cowshed. Next to it stands a woodshed and a "härbre", a raised log storehouse from the same period.

The farm's oldest building is a low salt shed, probably from 1649. Like so many other Hälsingland farms, Jon-Lars has been passed down in the same family since the 1600s. At that time it was owned by the farmer Jon Larsson, who also gave the farm its name.





*Guest room to the south*



### *A LITTLE ABOUT WORLD HERITAGE SITES*

A World Heritage site is an environment considered globally unique and therefore important to all of humanity. The criteria that must be met to warrant designation as a World Heritage Site are governed by a 1972 convention adopted by the UN agency UNESCO. Once something is entered on the World Heritage List, the country where it is located is obliged to ensure that it is preserved for posterity.

### *THE DECORATED FARMHOUSES OF HÄLSINGLAND ARE ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST*

The World Heritage List has nearly a thousand sites, with about thirty being added each year. Italy accounts for most, while Sweden has fifteen. Since summer 2012, seven farmhouses in Hälsingland have become a World Heritage site, Jon-Lars being one of them.

The Hälsingland farmhouses were inscribed on the World Heritage List under the name “Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland”.

The focus is on what is truly unique about the farmhouses, the vernacular architecture and the interiors. It is unusual for ordinary farmers to have built such large houses with so many large rooms exclusively for festivities. There are also more decorated domestic interiors preserved in Hälsingland than anywhere else in the world. Most of these farmhouses were built in the 1800s when construction reached its peak.



*Gästgivars*



*Kristofers*



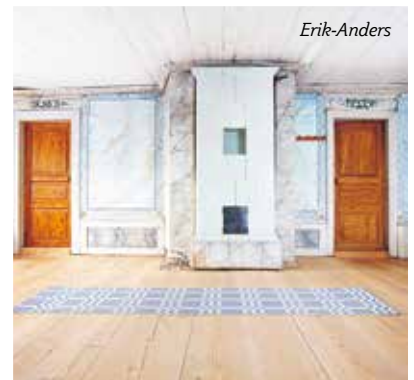
*Pallars*



*Bortom Åa*



*Bommars*



*Erik-Anders*

*Photo: Agnes Andersson  
(Alfta hembyggsförening)*



*Långhed during the early 1900s.*

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## THE SEVEN WORLD HERITAGE DECORATED FARMHOUSES

**Gästgivars** in Vallsta, Arbrå

**Kristofers** in Stene, Järvsö

**Jon-Lars** in Långhed, Alfta

**Bortom Åa** in Fågelsjö, Loos

**Bommars** in Letsbo, Ljusdal

**Erik-Anders** in Asta, Söderala

**Pallars** in Långhed, Alfta



### TOURS AND OPENING HOURS

Jon-Lars is a privately owned residence. This means the farm is not open to the public. Tours for groups can be arranged. Please contact the Decorated Farmhouses of Hälsingland World Heritage Visitor Center in Ovanåker Municipality ([www.ovanaker.se](http://www.ovanaker.se), Tel. +46 (0)271-200 22) for more information. Please respect the private nature of the site, and do not enter the farm without first having booked a tour.

### GET TO KNOW YOUR HERITAGE – BUT NOT WITH YOUR HANDS!

It is important to remember that our common heritage must continue to be protected. Do not smoke in the area, and do not touch the painted surfaces, wood and fabrics.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visitor Center/Tourist office  
in Ovanåker Municipality:  
[www.ovanaker.se](http://www.ovanaker.se)

Farmhouses of Hälsingland's own website:  
[www.halsingegardar.se](http://www.halsingegardar.se)

Gävle County Administrative Board  
[www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/gavleborg)

*We reserve the right to make changes.*

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first having booked a tour.

