

Helnæs

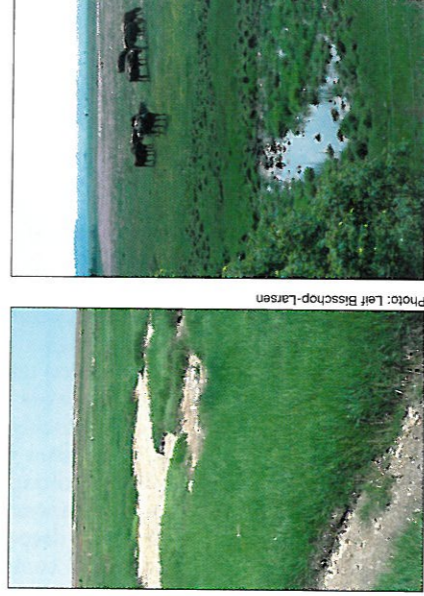
- ① The shallow lagoon with its many wading birds. During the breeding season (1st April - 15th July), please observe the birds only from the top of the esker - if they are disturbed during this season, their young may well die.
- ② Exceptionally well preserved esker with a common.
- ③ The Bobakkerne hills take their name from the Bogård Estate, which has always been outside the village community. In the sixteenth century, forest was cleared to make room for the manor house, and the royal forest warden on the island took up residence here. The memorial stone opposite the manor house was erected by the Bo family.
- ④ The Helnæs Mill Nature School. Sailing boats, rowing boats, canoes and kayaks for hire (but only with an instructor). Please book in advance on: 6477 1360. The mill is open to the public.
- ⑤ The dam and the pumps that regulate the water level of Helnæs Made. This was the out-flow point for the old lake, and is also called 'Mindet'.
- ⑥ The lake, which was re-established in 1997.
- ⑦ The heart of Helnæs Made, the starting point of the signposted trails.
- ⑧ Helnæs Lighthouse was built in 1901 and is 28 metres high. During the summer, it is possible to climb to the top of the tower.

- State-owned meadow common and grassland
- State-owned wood
- Private wood
- Signposted trail
- Access permitted for motorized vehicles
- Dyke
- Burial mound
- Viewpoint
- Beach

It is permitted to walk through public areas, on the beach, on roads and paths and on uncultivated areas that are not fenced in. It is permitted to walk through state-owned areas at all times. It is permitted to walk through privately-owned, uncultivated areas - which are not fenced - from 7 a.m. until sunset. It is, however, permitted to walk along beaches at all times. Motorized vehicles are not permitted to use field lanes. Dogs must be kept on a lead - although they may run free on the beaches from 1st October-31st March.

The Helnæs Made Nature Project

State Forest Fyn and Fyn County are working together on a major project to conserve and restore the natural treasures of Helnæs Made. In 1996, these two authorities reached an agreement with local farmers whereby the ownership of approximately 500 acres of this land was taken over by the Danish state.



At the moment, Helnæs Made dries up early in the spring - while it is better for the plants and animals if the meadow remains moist until well into the summer

The long-term aim is to return to Helnæs Made the appearance and natural riches it contained at around the turn of the century. This will be relatively a slow process, but an important step in the right direction is the raising of the water-table in two areas - 'Aledybet' and the stretch of littoral meadowland to the south-west.

Before draining operations effectively dried out Helnæs Made in the 1950s, the area was a paradise for the animals and plants of this coastal area. However, the birds, animals and plants that once lived here have disappeared in step with the increasing cultivation of the area. Over the past ten years, the numbers of wading birds have halved and the avocet, the black-tailed godwit and the dunlin have ceased to breed on Helnæs Made. It is hoped that these rare species will soon return to the area. The orchids that grow around the pools that line the borders of Helnæs Made have been threatened by the growth of tall herbs and bushes. Scrub and undergrowth are now being cleared and sheep and cattle will again be allowed to graze here, giving the plants the sunlight they need to grow.

Welcome to Bobakkerne and Helnæs Made

If you drive along the narrow causeway to the island of Helnæs, you cannot but be impressed by the breathtaking landscape.

The first sight you will see is 'Bobakkerne', an esker which, in summer, is covered with a wealth of colourful blooms. Ever since the area was bought by the Danish state, the general public has had unlimited access to these stretches of grassland.

Further to the south, you will find 'Maden', a wide expanse of meadow to the west of the town of Helnæs. There are almost 750 acres of field and meadow sheltered behind the sandy ridges that border the Little Belt. Much of this region has been bought by the Danish state, which, together with Fyn County, is currently involved in a major nature conservation project to restore the natural beauties of the area and to facilitate public access.

North of the town of Helnæs you will find the state-owned beach 'Feddet'.

Bus service: Route 260 runs from Assens bus station to the Helnæs 'Brugsen' supermarket and back.



The view from Bobakkerne towards Agernes



Skov- og Naturstyrelsen
Fyns Statsskovdistrikt
Sollerup, Sollerupvej 22
DK-5600 Faaborg
Tel: +45 6265 1777

Fyns Amt
Natur- og Vandmiljø
Ørbækvej 100
DK-5220 Odense SØ
Tel: +45 6556 1000



GB

Helnæs



Helnæs Esker

Legend has it that there was once a servant young girl at Brydegård Manor whose boyfriend lived on Helnæs, and that whenever she went to visit him, she carried sand in her apron to form a path. It is said that the Langøre causeway was built of the sand she scattered on her way to her lover, and that the hills in the northern part of the island came from the remaining sand that she shook from her apron when she arrived.

Helnæs esker starts west of Galgebakke and continues like a giant comb to 'Halen'. It appears again as the hills on the east coast of Agernæs and continues on Fyn near Brunhuse.

The esker consists of sand and gravel – materials much sought after for building roads and houses. In the 1960s, when there was a risk that all the eskers in Denmark would be completely dug away, a 'Raw Materials Act' was passed to halt this process before it was too late. The large holes in the Helnæs esker bear witness to the excavation work that was started, but which was ended by the Nature Conservation Act.



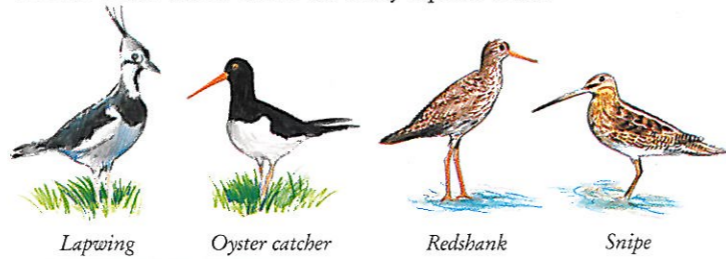
Aerial view of Helnæs esker on 'Halen'

Photo: Jom Munk Andersen

Better conditions for the wading birds of the region

Lapwings, oyster catchers, redshanks and snipes breed on Helnæs. The cries and flights of these birds often stand out as an enduring memory for many people who have taken a trip across the meadow.

One of the aims of the Helnæs Made Nature Conservation project is to replenish the wading birds' once well-stocked 'pantry'. The shallows and ponds are home to the worms, crabs and insects that make up the diet of the wading birds' chicks. Frogs and natterjacks also breed in the pools. It is hoped that many species of duck will soon breed in the area once again, and that Helnæs Made will also become a fine winter home for many aquatic birds.



Lapwing

Oyster catcher

Redshank

Snipe



Sea pinks blooming in the month of May

Photo: Leif Bischoep-Larsen

Helnæs Made, home to hundreds of May Orchids



Photo: Leif Bischoep-Larsen

As the name suggests, this species of orchid flowers primarily in May, although it also flowers in June. This orchid grows best in moist, fertile and grassy meadows.

In addition, the region is awash with sea pinks. These are hardy little plants that grow well in drier areas. Because the water and calcium content of the soil of Helnæs Made varies, the species of plants that grow on the dry top of the beach ridges are different to those found in the moist areas in between. The calcium in the soil comes from the shellfish that lived here when the region was still seabed.



Photo: Birgit Bjørne Laurssen



Photo: Michael Kavn

Avocets in the 'Cream Jug'

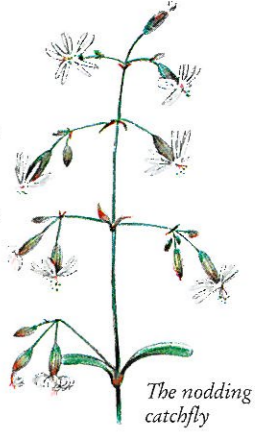
This beautiful and rare bird can be observed from a distance in the low-water areas of 'Halen'. Avocets use their curved beaks to 'sweep' tiny creatures up from the water. Please do not enter the area in spring, as this is the avocets' breeding season and the disturbance you cause may kill the chicks.



Bobakkerne's profusion of flowers

A multitude of different plants and flowers grow on the hills. Animals graze the area and the soil is dry – therefore the plants that grow here are those typically found on commons. The colour of the esker changes with the season, as different species of plants dominate the landscape.

The nodding catchfly blooms in June and July. It is a tall plant – 25–50 cm high – and is therefore easy to pick out from its smaller neighbours.



The nodding catchfly

The Common Blue

Although these beautiful butterflies flutter all over the region from May to September, the number of Common Blues on view is largest during the last week of July and the first fortnight of August.

The Common Blue can be seen everywhere in open and uncultivated areas where plants from the pea family grow, as these are the favourite food of the butterflies' larvae.

The making of Helnæs Made

In the Stone Age, the sea level was higher and Helnæs Made was a shallow cove. The currents from the south deposited mounds of stones and gravel in the shelter of Lindehoved.

These deposits became beach ridges, which built northwards upon each other until the cove became a lagoon. The beach ridges eventually collapsed in on themselves, but can still be discerned on the outer edges of Helnæs. In some places they have disappeared completely.

A 1769 map showing the enclosed lake and the division of land when Denmark changed from strip holdings to compact holdings.



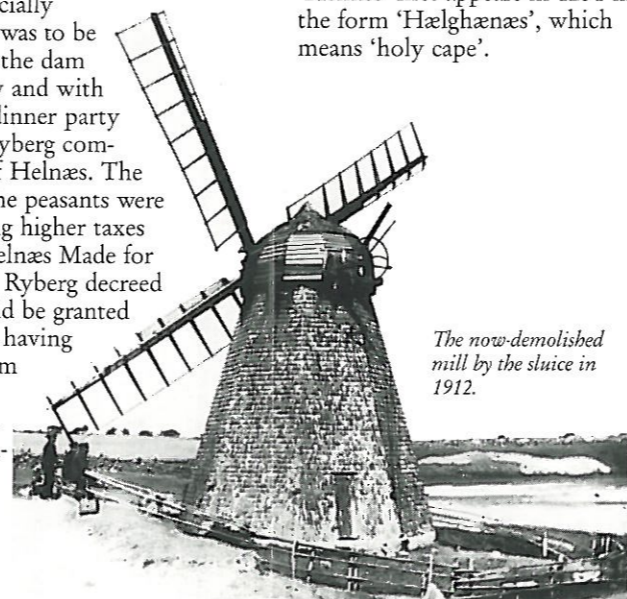
Man's exploitation of Helnæs Made

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, ships still docked at the town of Helnæs. The islets in the cove were used as pastures and the cove was well-stocked with eel.

As far back as anyone can remember, the farms on Helnæs belonged to the Hagenskov Estate. In 1783, Niels Ryberg, who owned Hagenskov, decided to reclaim Helnæs Made and use it for farming. The natural beach ridges were to be artificially extended, and a sluice was to be constructed. Work on the dam progressed only slowly and with much difficulty. At a dinner party at the manor house, Ryberg complained to the priest of Helnæs. The priest explained that the peasants were not interested in paying higher taxes and wanted to keep Helnæs Made for themselves. Therefore, Ryberg decreed that the peasants should be granted grazing rights without having to pay extra taxes. From then on, work progressed quickly, and in 1786 the dam was completed, although it proved impossible to drain the deepest pool – 'søen' – completely.

A good place to live

People have lived on Helnæs ever since the Stone Age. Five burial mounds can be clearly seen in the hilly landscape to the south of Helnæs Made. Many years ago, the Vikings erected an impressive two-metre-high rune stone here, and today the stone is on display in the National Museum of Denmark. The name 'Helnæs' first appears in 1231 in the form 'Hælghænæs', which means 'holy cape'.



The now-demolished mill by the sluice in 1912.

Photo courtesy of Assens Museum

The town of Helnæs

The town of Helnæs is a 'one-road town' in that the houses and farms line a curve in the road. The number of farms has remained constant at 18–20 for many years, and thanks to the good fishing waters around Helnæs there is a relatively large number of houses in the town. The village school was built in 1853, but closed in 1990; however, the buildings were later reopened as a folk high school. In 1617, the villagers were permitted to build a church on condition they pay the king 16 brace of oxen. In 1738, Helnæs received its own parish priest and parsonage.



Cows on Helnæs Made in 1914 with Helnæs Church and the engine shed in the background.

Photo courtesy of Assens Museum

As Hagenskov Water-mill lay some distance away, the villagers of Helnæs had the right to have their grain ground first when they reached the mill. In 1856, King Frederik VII gave the villagers permission to build their own mill after they had assembled at Hagenskov. Today, the mill is a nature school.

The old route from Helnæs to the church in Sønderby and to Hagenskov mill ran over 'Feddet' to 'Å'. The cobbled road, which was probably laid in the Middle Ages, can still be seen on 'Feddet'. The road was also used to transport corn from the mill to the Brunhuse docks.

From 1880–1920, Helnæs underwent the same development as the rest of the country, i.e. a cooperative dairy, village hall, telephone exchange, supermarket and cold store were built. The dairy and the telephone exchange have since been closed down, but the other institutions are still going strong.