

## *Norby* in Uppsala

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### Summary

*Norby* is the name of a suburb of Uppsala, and also of the hamlet which originally bore the name, and which is still geographically distinct from the suburb. The hamlet is situated on the edge of a north–south running valley at least 4 kilometres long, through which the small river Hågaån flows. On the present site of the hamlet there are two outcrops of rock with runic inscriptions. A wooded slope 700 metres to the south is the site of a prehistoric cemetery.

The name *Norby*, first recorded in the first half of the 14th century with the same spelling as today, contains *nor* neut. ‘narrow stream joining two open areas of water’, also ‘outflow stream’ etc.; and *by* m. ‘farm’, ‘hamlet, cluster of farms’. Two scholars have studied this name in greater depth in recent years. One of them, in this and certain other cases, has ascribed a special meaning to *nor*, referring here to an assumed widening of what is now the Hågaån by the building of a harbour near the burial site. The other, proceeding from the normal sense of the word, has understood the *nor* in this case to be the course of the Hågaån between one such widening and another further to the south.

Neither available contour information nor a personal inspection of the site, however, provides any evidence of a widening of the river near the cemetery. My own interpretation is that *Nor-* referred, rather, to the course of the Hågaån between an area at the northern end of the valley subject to flooding in prehistoric times and an arm of Lake Ekoln which, 2,000 years ago, extended into the valley from the south as far as the present site of *Norby* hamlet. The name *Norby* may have been coined at a later date when, as a result of postglacial land rise, the arm of the lake had retreated somewhat to the south and the Hågaån, at the time still spoken of as a *nor*, had become correspondingly longer. *Norby* is thus interpreted as ‘the farm by the *nor*, the farm by the river that is called \**Nor*’.

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