Karsholm

The Karsholm estate was a manor farm in medieval times, when the prominent Galen family were the owners. This family died out in the first half of the 1500s, but ownership of Karsholm had ceased just over 100 years before. During the 1400s and most of the 1500s, the estate was owned by several generations of the Krognos family, but in the last decade of the 1500s the Podebusk family took over. It was the wealthy Claus Podebusk, who in the 1590s began to build the first castle at Karsholm. However, it was not completed until 1627, when Henry Gyldenstierne of Svaneholm had taken over ownership. The last of the Gyldenstierne family died in 1705 and the Karsholm estate was left in a will to Axel Julius Coyet. In 1723, Sofia Gyllenstierna bought Karsholm and remained the owner until 1730, when the son, Niels Sehested, inherited the estate. The Sehested family was from the Danish nobility and owned Karsholm for two generations, of which the second, Anders Sehested, is said to have been the last Danish noble with an hereditary estate in Scania. After a fire in 1770, in which a barn and probably part of the castle burned down, the estate’s buildings fell into disrepair and the estate was sold in 1781 to county governor, Count Frederick Ulrik von Rosen. He had the estate for just over 10 years, after which his son-in-law, Count Erik Ruuth took over. He in turn sold the estate in 1816 to his son-in-law, Count Carl Claes Piper, who at that time owned several estates in southern Scania. The buildings declined to a great extent under his ownership and after his death in 1855, Karsholm was sold to Rudolf Hodder Stjernswärd of Widtsköfle. Hodder Stjernswärd carried out an extensive restoration of the castle at Karsholm in the early 1860s. The building was given its present appearance and Christian IV’s Renaissance architectural style from the designs of the well-known Danish architect, C.F. Zwingmann. In 1869, 14 years after taking over, Stjärnswärd’s heirs sold the estate to the Norwegian factory owner, Michael Treschow, and Karsholm has been in the family’s ownership ever since. Under Treschow ownership over several generations, new farm buildings have been built and the interior and exterior of the castle have been restored. Karsholm is beautifully located on a point of land in the lake, Oppmannasjön, surrounded by a beautiful park and wooded lakeshores. The present owner is Peder Treschow.

The right of patronage

In addition to the extensive work on the Karsholm castle and estate, it is the new church in Österslöv that is a permanent reminder of the first owner with the Treschow name, Michael Treschow. He had taken over Karsholm in 1869 in connection with the distribution of the estate of the previous owner, Hodder Stiernswärd. In the second half of the 1800s, many Scanian parishes still had a small stone church built in the Romanesque period of the 1100s and 1200s. This was also the case in Österslöv parish, where Karsholm is located. As the population increased, it was feared that churches would lack space, and so many Romanesque churches were demolished or closed, to be replaced by new, more spacious buildings. In addition to the need for a new church building, Treschow was motivated to replace the old church because, through the acquisition of Karsholm, he had also acquired the old right of patronage, which owners of Karsholm had held since 1648. He thereby became, not only an estate owner, but also a patron and as such he engaged the well-known architect, Helgo Zettervall, who designed and planned the new church building at Österslöv, after the old one was pulled down. Zettervall was at the time very much involved with the controversial restoration and transformation of Lund Cathedral. He worked on the basis of the cathedral’s Romanesque origins and there are unquestionably neo-Romanesque points in common between the cathedral restoration in Lund and the new building at Österslöv. In 1878, Österslöv’s new church was ready for use and the patron, Michael Trescow, had financed the change. Witnesses recounted how the vicar, Benkt Olén, gazed
around him and said: "Our church with its rich architectural forms and well-thought out spaces is a real pearl in this talented architect’s production of sacred architecture.”

What did the right of patronage mean? It was very common in Sweden with origins going back to noble privileges of 1617. It was regulated in the 1686 Church Law, which decreed that individual people (patrons) had the "right to appoint, choose and call a vicar to a congregation.” The right of patronage was always held by a nobleman and regulated in specific patron letters. The vicar formally appointed by the patron was known as the patronella.

A right of patronage could be either actual or personal, depending on whether it belonged to the estate or a certain family. The actual right of patronage means, in addition to the honorary right to appoint a vicar, an obligation for the church upkeep and to build a new one if required. This presupposes that the patron owns the land the church is on. The actual right of patronage was also called the "lucrative right of patronage” because the patron had the right to collect church income in order to fulfil his commitments. The right was mainly applied in the former Danish provinces of Scania, Halland and Blekinge, as well as in Bohuslän, and dates back to the Reformation, when the Danish state allowed churches to keep their share of the tithes.

The personal right of patronage means the honorary right to appoint a vicar. It had arisen as an initiative by the dominant nobility as a way of appropriating as much power as possible over the souls in the congregation, i.e. the peasantry and other subjects. The right of patronage was abolished in 1921.