

Löberöd

The first known owner of the Löberöd estate is thought to have been Christopher Huitfeldt. This is stated in an inscription on his gravestone at Norra Åsum Church. In 1540, he sold Löberöd to Eske Pedersen Bille, who later became one of Denmark's most powerful men. Through marriage into the Krummedige family, Eske Pedersen Bille became owner of several Scanian estates. At the end of the 1500s, Löberöd went to the Brahe family through marriage until 1635, when the estate was inherited by Henry Ramel of Bäckaskog. For Löberöd, this led to just over 140 years of ownership within the Ramel family and thereby got the estate involved in the process that would in three generations propel the Ramels to a position as one of Scania's biggest landowners of all time. During the period, Denmark lost Scania to Sweden through the Treaty of Roskilde in 1658. One of the consequences was that many of the previous Danish estate owners could not adapt to their new countrymen, and decided to leave Scania and live on their own, or acquired, estates in Denmark. Löberöd's owner at that time, Hans Ramel, did the opposite and swore allegiance to the Swedish king, which was rewarded with the family's introduction into the House of Nobility in 1664. In Hans Ramel's time, the foundations were laid for the family fortune and an empire of estates, but the next generation's Malte Ramel and his successor, Hans Ramel, contributed to bring an even higher level of success. The last-named, Hans Ramel, known as "Bygge-Hans", made his name through grand building projects on his estates.

On Hans Ramel's death in 1799, the estate went to daughter Elisabeth Sofia Amalia Ramel, who was married to Count Gustav Adolf Sparre of Kulla Gunnarstorp. They soon gave the estate to their only daughter, Christina, who was married to Count Jacob Gustav de la Gardie, well-known in his time as a book collector and patron of the arts.

After a further two generations, the De la Gardie family sold the estate in 1863 to Baron Otto Ramel of Övedskloster and thus Löberöd returned to the Ramel family until 1917. In that year the estate was sold again, but was to go back into the family's ownership a third time when Knut Ramel acquired Löberöd in the mid-1990s.

The oldest known main building at Löberöd dates from 1620 during Anne Brahe's period of ownership. This building survived until the late 1790s, when the dedicated builder, Hans Ramel, built a new one. He probably never got to see his work completed, as he died in 1799. During De la Gardie's time a number of changes were made in the 1820s. After a fire in 1982, when the roof was badly damaged, the castle was thoroughly renovated in the 1990s.

Löberöd Castle is located 15 km south-west of Hörby. The castle is surrounded by a newly revamped park with ponds and an orangery from the 1800s. The present owner is Baron Knut Ramel.

Rövarekulan

A few kilometres north-east of Löberöd Castle is a nature reserve called Rövarekulan, "Robbers' Den". The origins of the name are uncertain, but the wild countryside of the valley was once probably a refuge for local militia. In their time, they were known as robbers by the Swedes, who were subjected to their attacks, whereas their kinsmen considered them as freedom-fighters when they defended Scania against the occupiers from the north.

The Rövarekulan nature reserve offers an unusually varied nature experience in a comparatively small area, year-round. It stretches in the east from Högseröd in the Bråån valley westwards to Rolsberga and from there, north to the southern lakeshore of Ringsjön. The countryside is most dramatic in the southern part, where the stream, Bråån, flows through a deep ravine cut from the clay slate. The stream that flows through the valley is rich in fish and aquatic species in general, including the small conical hat snail, which sits fixed to small, loose pieces of slate. Staff from the county administrative board's environmental unit recently made an unusual find during a visit to Rövarekulan nature reserve. They discovered a few examples of the thick-shelled freshwater mussel,

a highly threatened species, in the Bråån. The mussels have previously been found in other stretches of the stream, but it is now confirmed that they also live in the nature reserve. This type of mussel can live to the age of 50 and when only fully-grown mussels are found there are worries over the coming generations. Their breeding is dependent on certain fish species for their larvae, but it is not fully clear which ones. The mussel finds food by filtering the running water it lives in. This species is threatened, not just by low breeding rates, but also by changes in the water quality and by the damaged and silted-up bottom of the stream. Mussels are, of course, a protected species.

The rest of the countryside shows great variation between common pasture and sheer precipices where the stream has cut its way through the clay slate.

In the less dramatic parts of the valley there is grazing land and flat meadows with constantly changing flora, which indicates that it was once used for livestock-rearing. The slopes are mostly covered with beautiful beech woods.

On one of the ravine's slopes there is evidence that Rövarekulan has been an attractive excursion for a long time. Oscar, the then crown prince and his consort, Crown Princess Josephine, visited the valley on 8 August 1836 and left a stone circle with an inscription. He later became King Oscar I, after his father Charles XVI Johan died in 1844.

At one place there is a beautiful stone bridge preserved from the 1870s as a reminder of the time when the main road went through the valley. At another spot there is a rune stone that was moved there in the 1850s, when the National Romantic relationship to Swedish history allowed such independent actions.