The present Trolle-Ljungby estate has origins in the Middle Ages. It is known that Ljungby, which was the estate’s name up to the mid-1800s, was a manor farm for the Bille family during the 1300s and 1400s. In the mid-1400s, the manor was sold to Henry Brostrup, whose son in turn sold it in 1514 to one of Denmark’s most powerful men, Jens Holgersen Ulfstand, lord high admiral, feudal lord of Gotland and builder of Glimmingehus.

In the late 1500s, Ljungby was burned down by the Danes and the castle was rebuilt in the early 1600s by Knud Gyldenstierne and his wife, Øllegaard Hvitfeldt, whose initials can be found on several gables with the dates 1629, 1633 and 1636. Remains of the original foundations can be seen in the castle courtyard and are probably from the 1200s.

The Gyldenstierne family continued to own Ljungby for three generations until 1662, when the widow of the adventurous Kaj Lykke was forced to sell the estate to the ambassador, Peter Julius Coyet.

The Coyet family was to own Ljungby for seven generations until the early 1800s. Several men in the Coyet family were very successful as soldiers, diplomats and politicians. The second generation’s Wilhelm Julius Coyet instituted an entailed estate at the end of the 1600s and the last holder was Ulrika Sparre, daughter of Helena Juliana Coyet and county governor of Kristianstad, Baron Gabriel Sparre. She was married to the lord chief justice, Count Carl Axel Wachtmeister. Due to his mother’s holding of the Trolleberg entailed estate, he was obliged to use the name Trolle-Wachtmeister. He was Sweden’s last lord chief justice and the first prime minister. He died in 1810 and was succeeded by his son, Hans Gabriel Trolle-Wachtmeister, who in 1830 moved the entailed estate to Ljungby, which was thereafter called Trolle-Ljungby.

He had been very successful as a lawyer, was appointed chancellor of justice and gained the title, Excellency. However, he abandoned the legal world and spent the rest of his life developing the farming operations on his estates. He devised new and better farming methods that meant a more efficient use of acreage, and improved conditions for rearing livestock such as building new sheds for the animals. All this was pursued with the express intent of making farming more profitable. His Excellency Trolle-Wachtmeister died in 1871 and the estate has remained in the family. The present holder of the entailed estate is Count Hans Gabriel Trolle Wachtmeister, who is married to Alice, née Tornerhielm, mistress of the robes for the king and queen.

The surroundings

Trolle-Ljungby is located in varied agricultural countryside just over 10 km from Kristianstad. The estate is one of Scania’s largest with operations in both farming and forestry. The beautiful, well-preserved Renaissance castle is surrounded by a beautiful park, described by Linné as: “large and full of fruit trees with many currant bushes and a considerable clump of walnut trees.”

Close to the castle is the enormous “Maglestenen”, a huge erratic boulder, which is associated with the remarkable story of “the Ljungby horn and whistle”.

The Ljungby horn and whistle

The then owner of Ljungby, Wilhelm Julius Coyet, wrote in the journal ”An Account of Ljungby Manor and its Horn and Whistle” (1692) how the huge Maglestenen, an enormous erratic boulder a few km from Trolle-Ljungby, had been thrown there by a giant’s daughter to prevent the building of a church in Åhus.

On Christmas Eve, the trolls celebrated under the stone, which was raised up on a golden pillar for the evening. In the 1550s, Lady Sidsela Ulfstand persuaded one of her stable hands to ride to the stone one Christmas Eve to find out what really went on. When he got to the stone, he saw that it was lit up and that the trolls drank, danced and moved around under it. Two trolls came to meet
him, one with a horn and the other with a whistle. They gave him a challenge; to drink a toast to the mountain king and blow in both ends of the whistle. There was also a Christian girl there who had been spirited away by the trolls. She warned him with the words: ”Do not drink, ride way from here. Ride across the ploughed fields and not on the road”. The stable hand got scared and threw the drink over his shoulder. A few drops fell on the horse’s hindquarters, which burned from the strength of the drink. He fled at a full gallop as the girl had said, and rode right over the ploughed fields with the trolls after him. The escape succeeded, because the trolls did not have the power to jump over the furrows as it created the sign of a cross. They had to run in the furrows from end to end. Just as the stable hand got into the castle, with the trolls in pursuit, the drawbridge was pulled up and he found himself safe with the valuable items in his hands. The trolls put a curse on the manor, that it would not remain in Lady Sidsela’s family and that it would burn three times. Ill fortune would follow those who had taken the horn and the whistle.