Viderup

The oldest buildings at Hvidarp, which was the name of the estate until the early 1800s, are thought to be from the early 1500s. The first known owner, privy councillor Verner Tönnesen Parsberg, was granted Hvidarp and several other farms in the district during the 1560s.

After another generation in the Parsberg family, the estate was sold in 1604 to the privy councillor, Steen Maltesen Schested. He was married to Anne Henriksdatter Brahe of Löberöd, later known as one of the many enterprising women in Scania in the 1600s.

Steen Maltesen Schested almost certainly handed over the running of the estate to his wife, as he must have devoted most of his time to his duties as privy councillor, county sheriff of the Bohus and Varberg fortresses, lord high constable and general in the many wars against Sweden. He died in 1611, during the initial phase of what would later be called the Kalmar War.

The energetic widow, Anne Henriksdatter Brahe, showed soon after her husband’s death that she had a lot of drive, and spent her remaining years leaving her mark on both the estate and the surrounding district in a number of ways (see next page).

After her death in 1635, both Hvidarp and Löberöd estates were inherited by the nephew, Henry Ramel of Bäckaskog. This began a line of unbroken ownership within the Ramel family from 1635 until the present day. This is despite the fact that the estate has never been an entailed estate, which points to a strong feeling for the property within the family.

Henry Ramel was just as involved in various duties as his predecessor. He was, among other things, a district judge in Scania and privy councillor, and therefore he is not considered to have been greatly involved in running Hvidarp. He was succeeded by his son, Hans Ramel of Maltesholm, who during his ownership experienced the Swedish takeover of Scania in 1658. In the initial Swedicisation process, the Scanian nobles were requested to sign an oath of loyalty and fidelity to Sweden. Hans Ramel was among those who did, and thus secured the continued ownership of his estates.

In the first half of the 1700s, Hvidarp was owned by the wealthy Malte Ramel, who developed the Ramel estate empire into one of Scania’s largest. He left the estate to one of the family’s more renowned personalities, ”Bygge-Hans” Ramel, who devoted most of his life to rebuilding and new construction at his estates. For example, he carried out thorough rebuilding work on all the buildings at Hvidarp. Carl Hårleman was engaged for the main building’s restoration. He changed the castle’s Renaissance character to that of an 18th century building, in which symmetry became the predominant idiom. The park architect, Adolf Frederick Barnekow, designed an 18th century park, and avenues were planted along the drives.

In J.C. Barfod’s book on idiosyncrasies of the Scanian nobility, ”Märkvärdigheter rörande skånska adeln”, he relates how the cautious and thrifty father reacted when he considered the rebuilding of Hvidarp by his son to be too grand. Barfod writes, ”the father went to see these great works, but like anything new, they were not to his liking” and he also describes the father’s reaction when he went to the stone barns and was, ”surprised to see them transformed into Holstein-style half-timbered buildings.”

In 1805, the then owner, Otto Ramel, added a third storey to the main building. The Holstein-style barns from the time of ”Bygge-Hans” were demolished and replaced with an imposing two-storey stable. The main building was destroyed by fire in 1925, when the added third storey was damaged so badly that it was not rebuilt in the subsequent restoration. Thus, Hviderup regained its two-storey, 18th century character.

Hviderup is located 7 km south of Eslöv. Gårdstånga Church, with a unique interior from the late Renaissance, is 3 km south-east of the castle.

The present owner is Familjen Ramel, Godsförvaltning AB.
Anne Brahe

The Kalmar War had just broken out when the owner of the then Hvidarp estate, the Danish lord high constable and field marshal Steen Maltesen Schested, died in 1611. For those left at home, the repeated wars and many death notifications became a constant trauma, where no-one was safe because of their military rank or status. Generals and privates were killed on the same battlefield or taken prisoner, indiscriminately. The land-owning nobility went to war in the knowledge that their wives, many of whom were young, would have to take over ownership and running of the estates if they did not return.

Anne Brahe, wife of Steen Maltesen Schested, was just a young woman, but she had the strength required to take over the continued running of Hvidarp and Löberöd.

Soon after her husband’s death, she started to plan the construction of new elegant main buildings at the estates of Hvidarp and Löberöd. An inscription on one of the houses at Hvidarp tells us that the main building dates from 1617, and the west wing from 1623. The building was not designed in the style of the 1500s with combined living quarters and defensive stronghold, but instead has the three-wing open quadrangle character that became popular in Scania in the 1600s. However, a moat was seen as important for security and at Hvidarp the nearby stream was dammed to surround the castle islet.

Anne Brahe also had to manage more than her own house and home. One of her projects was to initiate and fund a splendid Renaissance interior in the medieval parish church at Gårdstånga. She engaged the well-known woodcarver from Lund, Jacob Kremberg, to make an altar, a pulpit with doorway, a baptismal font with canopy and a chapel railing in carved wood. The work was done in the years 1612-1622.

In connection with the church restoration she also had a sepulchre built for her and her husband on the north side of the church, separated from the chancel by a railing made by the master carver, Kremberg. This chapel rail is considered to be Kremberg’s most distinctive work in Gårdstånga Church. Such a railing is not to be found anywhere else in Sweden or abroad. The church interior is regarded as one of the most beautiful in Scania and has been preserved in close to its original condition.

She also contributed to the care of the elderly, sick and poor, with projects such as the building of Hvidarp Hospital. The building is still there, and an inscription relates how it was built in 1619 “for the comfort and maintenance of the poor”. Every Christmas Eve, she provided food for several hundred of the parish poor.

Anne Brahe died childless in 1635 and lies together with her husband in the sepulchre she had personally arranged in Gårdstånga Church.