

Högestad

The building's origins are made very clear from the wrought-iron letters and numbers showing Palle Rosencrantz's initials and the year 1635 that occupy almost the whole façade, as well as an inscription over one of the entrances. The text here says: "In the year 1635, Lord Palle Rosencrantz of Krenkerup and his wife Lady Elizabeth Lunge of Eskier built this house. May the Lord protect its exits and entrances."

The estate has ancient origins. In the 1200s, and possibly earlier, Högestad belonged to the office of the archbishop in Lund, and documents from the 1400s identify the bishop, Hans Laxmand, as the estate owner. During the Reformation, the property was taken by the Danish Crown, and in 1539 it was given as a pledge to Gregers Jensen Ulfstand for a loan to the Crown of 1,000 gold pieces. The pledge was taken over in 1550 by Mogens Gyldenstjerne, after which the ownership line switched between the families Gyldenstjerne, Ulfstand, Hardenberg, Grubbe, Rosencrantz, Krabbe and Scheel-Due. When Scania became Swedish, Högestad was owned by Iver Krabbe. His son, Jörgen Iversen Krabbe of Krageholm, inherited the estate in 1666, but he was executed in 1678 after being charged with high treason during the Scanian War. It is said that his unhappy widow moved to Högestad, where she had all the windows that faced Krageholm bricked up as a sign of her grief. In 1706, Högestad was bought by Count Carl Piper, owner of Krageholm and active in important positions at Charles XII's court and later as a marshal at the headquarters during the war. This was the start of the Piper ownership of Högestad, which has continued to the present day. Count Piper was married to Christina Piper, née Törnflych, who was 26 years younger (see Krageholm, page 122). The pair lived apart during the war and met for the last time at the Swedish army encampment in Saxony in May 1707.

The war ended for the powerful marshal and count Carl Piper during the Battle of Poltava in 1709, when he was captured by the Russians and taken to the Nöteborg fortress in what is now St Petersburg. He remained there until his death in 1716.

In Carl Piper's absence, his young and gifted wife had been forced to act on her own initiative both in terms of running the existing properties and the gradual acquisition of new estates.

After her death, the estate has stayed in the Piper family, firstly in an older branch that ceased in 1899, and later, with Alfred Piper's takeover, through inheritance from father to son until today's owner, Count Carl Piper

The surroundings

Högestad Castle is beautifully situated on a high plateau 6 km NNE of Ystad. It is partly surrounded by a park from the 1800s. The property includes several areas of outstanding natural beauty such as the Fyleån and Verkeån river valleys, and the heaths of Brösarp and Ravlunda. The whole estate is managed according to a long-term development programme with a strong emphasis on working in harmony with nature.

The entailed estate

In 1747, Christina Piper established the entailed estate that would bind together Christinehof with Andrarum alum works, Högestad, Baldringe and Östra Torup for future ownership within the Piper family. This arrangement still applies today, even though the entailed estate as a form of legal ownership ceased to apply in 1963, when the law changed and a gradual phase out began. In specific cases, the application of the law is that the entailed estate remains as long as the holder when the law came into force is still alive. Today's Högestad and Christinehof entailed estate is Scania's largest single estate with just over 13,000 hectares of forest and farmland.

Another term for entailed estate is fideicommissum, derived from the Latin fides, which means fidelity, and committere, which means to be entrusted. Thus, fideicommissum means: "that which is

entrusted to someone's honesty". The holder of an entailed estate is therefore a person who has been entrusted, as a point of honour, to fulfil the deceased's last wishes. The practical consequence is that an estate shall forever be kept within a family in accordance with a certain succession order. This means that when the holder dies, the estate goes to a male heir according to primogeniture, i.e. to the oldest male heir.

The Swedish entailed estate, which as a rule consists of farm properties, began to be instituted in the late 1600s. Most were established in the 1700s with only a few in later centuries. The basis for the early entailed estates was the 1686 will and testament law, which contained specific rules on establishing entailed estates. The law was revised in 1734, and in this inheritance code it expressly states that "if someone, man or woman, making a will, has chosen to do this with or without conditions..." When the 1734 law was introduced, it sparked a dramatic increase in the establishing of entailed estates in Sweden. The right to institute entailed estates was initially exclusively for the nobility, as they had a monopoly on owning and occupying manors. Only with royal consent, which was rarely given, could commoners acquire a manor. It was forbidden until the late 1700s for country people to possess nobles' land.

At the end of the 1700s, attitudes changes towards land ownership, and commoners were also allowed to institute entailed estates.

When the law to phase out entailed estates came into force at the start of 1964, Sweden had 107 entailed estates, which all included land, property or other entailed estate capital, as well as personal property. In addition to these, there were also 109 entailed estates that had already been dissolved, were insignificant in size or only consisted of capital or personal property. Of the 107 active estates, 25 were in Scania, 23 in Sörmland and 16 in Uppland.

The entailed estate came into being to maintain fixed and personal property under lifelong stewardship that was entrusted to the holder of the entailed estate. This principle has not changed over the centuries, which means that the few entailed estates that remain have a very important position in the Swedish cultural legacy.

Nowadays, there are only a few entailed estates in Scania, and the trend is clearly towards a total phase out, unless individual interests or public opinion revive the issue.