



Torpa Stenhus

The Castle

In the late 14th and early 15th centuries many wealthy men built castles. One of these - Torpa - was to become the most magnificent. The original house, built in the Middle Ages, was less than half the size as we see it today. Separated from the road by deep moats, it was more or less impregnable until firearms came into general use. Several times rebuilt and added to over the years, it has not been used as a residence since the 1660's when Gustaf Otto Stenbock built a timber dwelling not far away.

The Frontier Fortress

Torpa played a key role in the defence of Sweden's mediaeval frontier against Denmark, which at that time was only a few miles to the south and could easily be passed over. Strong fortresses were therefore built at an early date to reinforce the kingdom's defence.

The Ground Floor and Cellar

The main entrance gate is decorated with sandstone ornaments and an inscribed coat of arms. In the porch room is a fine memorial of the prereformation period. The font antedates the castle itself, being from the 12th century and having allegedly been taken from a church nearby. Under the crossed vaulting of the guard-room, the commander of the castle probably spent a lot of time. The cellar beneath was used as quarters for the troops that were stationed here in time of war.

It also contains a room used as a dungeon along with several storerooms.





The wall openings in the stairs served to let in light and air but also for pouring boiling tar and water down on to the heads of an assaulting enemy.

The Chapel

To the far left on the ground floor stands the chapel. The construction began in the 1660's. Countess Kristina Katarina de la Gardie finally consecrated it in 1669. Still in use, its genuine baroque furnishing is unique for Sweden. The font at the far end to the left is a Dutch work and can be dated almost exactly to the year 1500.



The altar painting, showing the burial of the Christ is war booty from the Thirty Years' War. The German woodcarver Hans Christoffer Datan made the exquisite carvings that decorate the pulpit and pews, set aside for the nobility. Datan worked with several churches in the vicinity e.g. at Ulricehamn. He came to Sweden with Gustaf Otto Stenbock after the Thirty Years' War and settled down at Bogesund - renamed Ulricehamn - where he eventually became an alderman.

The Living Rooms

The Great Hall of Chivalry, with its 16th century Renaissance furnishings is one of the best preserved rooms from the "Vasa" period still left in the country. Ceiling and walls are decorated with blue-grey paintings, in which portraits and animal motifs can be clearly distinguished, e.g. the immense stags on the walls.

The window surrounds too, are richly ornamented. The door frames are early 17th century and the table is from the 16th century.

In 1552, the then 56 year old king of Sweden - Gustav Vasa - celebrated his engagement to the 16 year old Katarina Stenbock, whom he also married at Vadstena castle that same year.

In the antechamber between the Great Hall of Chivalry and the room to the left you can see some of the weapons in use during the Middle Ages; parts of set of knights armour, halberds, bardisans, pikes and spears for killing bears.

Next we enter a room, originally divided into four, where the family had their bedrooms.

The furthestmost and smallest was the nursery.



The bed is said to be the one Gustav Vasa slept in when he visited Torpa in 1552. the then 56 year old king of Sweden - Gustav Vasa - celebrated his engagement to the 16 year old Katarina Stenbock, whom he also married at Vadstena castle that same year.

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The bed is short and the king was a very tall man, by the standards of his own day, about 6'.

But in those days all the great men slept in a half sitting posture, with their weapons beside them, ready to defend themselves against intruders.

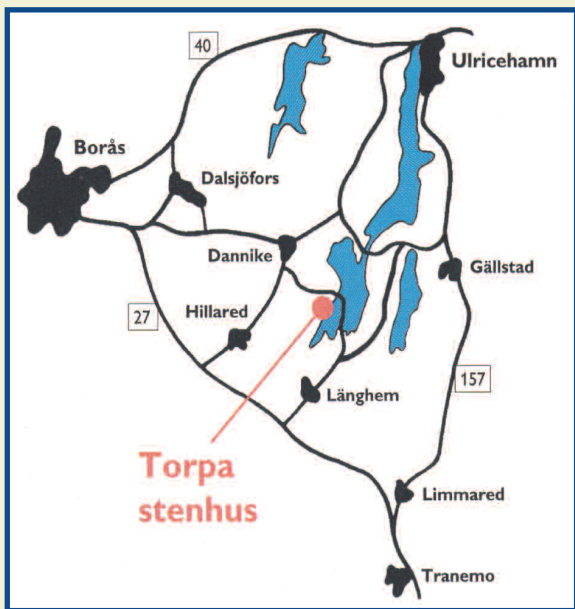
The Upper Storey

Here is another room, which once was four rooms, all for guests. At the far end is a mediaeval fireplace and in the wall a secret staircase from which the lord of the castle could overhear his guest's conversation.

The King's Hall, furnished in the 17th century, has always been used for great occasions. Throughout the five centuries - almost all of its history, Torpa Castle has been passed down by inheritance from one generation to the next. On the list of Torpa's owners the names Stenbock, Sparre, Sjöblad and Zethelius are found.



Find the way to Castle Torpa Stenhus



Opening hours

May: Saturday-Sunday 11am-5pm

June-August: Daily 11am-5pm

September: Saturday-Sunday 11am-5pm

Guided tours of the Castle in English:

Saturdays and Sundays at 11am

13/6-15/8 daily tours at 11am

For further information:

Phone: +46(0)33- 28 13 24

Welcome!

