



## ***The Residence Floor***

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century considerable parts of the Castle was used for storing grain. During this period the walls in the residence section and the guest room section were removed. During 2008-2010 the original room partition was restored and the house was decorated with 17<sup>th</sup> century pieces of furniture. Copies of paintings and tapestry from the ancient Torpa were reconstructed. In the small room at the far end of the left side is a bed that according to the legend was used by King Gustav Vasa during his visits. ***Notice the unique ceiling in the day room / dining room with its turned knobs, and the beautifully carved window frame in the room to the right.***

In the residence floor also notice a copy of KARTA MARINA, a unique map drawn by Olaus Magnus in the year 1539.

## ***The Guest Room Floor***

The top floor consists of a number of rooms, formerly used as guest rooms.

***Notice the medieval stoves, the beautiful window niches and the old borders of gilded leather at the ceiling.*** At the guest room floor exhibitions on the subject of Torpa History are arranged during the summer season.

## ***The King's Hall***

After the 1550 extension, the King's Hall became the new Banqueting Rooms. The decoration reflects the Central European cultural influence that found its way to Sweden during this period. Grand festivities were arranged here even after the Stenbock family at around 1660 moved to a new, red timber dwelling located next to the Castle. This building doesn't exist today. ***Notice the beautiful paintings in the ceiling with motives from Roman mythology, and the well preserved coat of arms on the wall which was carved in stone around 1550.***

## ***The Attic***

From the guest floor a narrow stairway leads to the attic. There you will find remains of a firing passage with firing holes and some utility articles used at the estate. There's also an exhibition showing the renovation of the residence floor and guest rooms.

## ***Ghosts, Legends and Tales***

Lots of tales are flourishing. Our guides will tell you about the walled in girl, the gray lady and about Count Gustav Otto Stenbock who can make the house shake at dark nights, and other gruesome events.

# ***Welcome to TORPA STENHUS***



## ***One of Sweden's best preserved medieval Castles***

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### **Road description:**

Torpa Stenhus is located about 28 km southeast of Borås. Signs from Ulricehamn Dannike and Långhem. With GPS, enter the following code: N57 ° 39,104 'E13 ° 16,780' (WGS 84)

## ***Torpa Stenhus***

is beautifully situated at the southern shore of Lake Åsunden. With its unique architecture and handsome interior Torpa Stenhus counts among the best preserved medieval castles of the nation.

***Notice the two different parts of the building, one from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the other from the 16<sup>th</sup> century.***

## ***History***

The first part of castle was built around 1470 by the councilor Arvid Knutsson. The wealthy bourgeoisie of the time asserted economic interest in the trade along the prosperous shores of River Åtran and River Viskan. The end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century were unsettled times. Not only came the threats from Danish troops; local peasants revolted frequently.

When castle constructions like Torpa were equipped with moat, breastwork and other fortification, it was not for defense only; it also served as a way of stressing the owner's status. The first building was as much a defense and trade construction as a permanent residence for the Castle owner and his family. The original building was of late medieval structure and about half the size of today's building. It was equipped with stepped gables and firing aisles.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century the building was reconstructed and an extension was added. Initially, the stairway tower was constructed and later the southern part of the Castle was added. The extension was completed around 1550 and served as a dignified enough residence for Gustav Vasa's brother-in-law and father-in-law, Gustav Otto Stenbock. After the Roskilde peace treaty at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was no longer necessary to reside in the fortified, cold and uncomfortable Stenhuset. So a new and typical of the time manor of wood was built by the current owner, the Marshal of the Realm Gustav Otto Stenbock. The new building was completed in 1660.

## ***Arms***

To remind of troubled times some of the weapons belonging to the old armory are displayed. Among them an ancient catapult, parts of a knight's armor, halberds, partisans, pikes and bear spears. The weapons and armor parts are exhibited at the third floor.

## ***The Entrance and the Entrance Hall***

The first room you'll enter after passing the main door is the entrance hall. There you can read on a table the Torpa chronicle of proprietors from the 14<sup>th</sup> century until today. At the near section of the entrance hall sits a baptismal font of sandstone, dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It's probably made by the local stone cutter Master Andreas. On the left wall you will find a painting that derives its origin from the Stenbock Crypt at nearby Långhem. It shows the names of the people buried at the site as well as the locations of the coffins.

## ***The Chapel***

The far left of the entrance floor is the location of the Castle Chapel. The room might have been used as kitchen in the old days but a reconstruction was initiated by Christina Catharina de la Gardie. The opening ceremony of the new premises occurred on All Saints day 1699. The interior is pure baroque, which is unique in Sweden. The altar-piece shows the Christ interment and is probably a war trophy from the Thirty Years' War. The carved part of the baptismal font is a Dutch work in oak from about 1500. The pulpit and the gentlefolk's pew are decorated with excellent carving made by the German master Hans-Christian Datan. He came to Sweden after the Thirty Years' War and was in due course of time appointed magistrate in small town Bogesund, today's Ulricehamn. The Chapel is still in use. Services are conducted in the summer and during Advent. And it's frequently used for Wedding ceremonies and Christenings.

## ***The knight's daily room***

One step down to the right you enter the knights daily room with a traverse vaulted ceiling and cobbled floor. It's the best preserved room of the oldest building. The Castle Cottage Room was used as a day room by the Castle commanders during the period when the Stenbock family maintained an army of its own. A couple of the original windows were walled in when the house was extended in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## ***The Cellar and the Prison***

From the Castle Cottage Room a narrow stairway leads to the basement. The first room has a so-called barrel vaulted ceiling and was in use as the soldiers' room. In the cellar you will also find the old dungeon that was in use when criminals were sentenced according to Torpa Civil Court (e.g. the Torpa Hand and Neck Court). In the Cellar you will also find the old medieval main entrance, and then located in the middle of the part of the building that faced the seaside. Across the old entrance is the old main stairway that after a few steps proceeds into another narrow concrete stairway that leads up to the Knights' Hall.

## ***The Knights' Hall***

The Knights' Hall is one of the nation's best preserved rooms from the Vasa era. It was furnished in Renaissance Style in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The ceiling and the walls are decorated with magnificent paintings in blue and gray, showing people and animals, flowers and leaves etc. ***Notice the life size red deer's and the rich ornamentation with painted locks around the windows.*** Originally, columns and crests were painted around the door openings, but in the 17<sup>th</sup> century they were covered with beautiful carved door frames in accordance with the current fashion.

***Notice the floor, many hundred years old.***

In these lovely surroundings, it's easy to feel the pulse beats of history and to imagine medieval feasts and other activities.