Torup

Torup Castle is considered to be one of the Nordic countries’ best-preserved Renaissance castles. The remains of an older stronghold can be found north of the present farm buildings. The identity of the earliest owner is unknown, but in 1445 the manor is ascribed to Jep Ulfstand. His grandson Truid’s Swedish-born wife, Görvel Faddersdotter Sparre, laid the foundations of the present castle. She was one of the Nordic Countries’ richest women, in part because on her mother’s side she had inherited almost 600 estates in Norway. Around 1540, building work began on a new manor farm “paid for in ready money”. It was a grand defensive complex with two diagonal corner towers. Marshland had been dammed to create a lake that would protect the castle with a moat. In the 1500s Torup passed, through marriage, to the Grubbe family and between 1602 and 1632 Sievert Grubbe carried out extensive restoration work, which the exterior bears witness to even today.

Corfitz Ulfeldt and his wife, Leonora Christina, daughter of Christian IV, bought the manor in 1647. Ulfeldt was accused of embezzling Danish state funds and of helping the Swedes before and during the war of 1657 and in connection with the Treaty of Roskilde, which was true. The couple lost their Scanian estates. Torup fell into disrepair, but was returned in 1735 to the grandson, Jochum Beck. His daughter, who married Hack Stiernblad, was responsible for bringing flourishing times back to Torup.

In the 1790s, parts of the surrounding lake were drained to create meadows. Gustav Julius Coyet, who bought the estate in 1812, dug channels, carried out terracing work, introduced orchards and planted trees from southern countries. He laid the foundation for the rolling, romantic park we see today. Coyet opened up the surrounding beech woods as a recreation area for the people of Malmö and laid an open-air dance floor of compacted earth. Later, a stylish restaurant was built along with further open-air dance venues.

Around 1900, Henriette and Gösta Coyet made Torup a meeting point for the cultural and scientific elite of the period. This activity continued long after the husband’s death in 1924. In 1970, several years after the grandson Ernst-Gustav von Leitner’s death, Torup was sold to Malmö City Council. His descendants today lease the estate from the council.

Torup is located 15 km east of Malmö.

A tragic day at Torup

On Sunday 27 May 1775 a tragic accident happened at Torup that cost the lives of four young people. The principal character in the drama was the young heir to Trollenäs and Fulltofta, Frederick Trolle, who had just been commissioned at the rank of cornet in the Southern Scanian regiment. As 27 May was a Sunday, he had attended morning service at Hyby Church with his mother and two younger sisters. After the service he had planned to travel back to his unit, which was stationed in Öved, but he was persuaded to travel with his mother and sisters to Torup, as Baron Stiernblad had invited them to dinner.

After the meal, the young guests went out in the garden to take in the lovely scents of the surrounding greenery and spring flowers. The splendour was intensified by a small lake, sited close to the castle.

Frederick Trolle suddenly got an idea to take out a small boat on the lake. This immediately interested his sister, Brita Sofia, and aunt, Margareta Fredericka Harmens. The younger sister Sofia hesitated, but her brother carried her to the rickety boat, and with the ladies at the stern and the officer at the prow, they cast off. After travelling about 30 metres in the overloaded boat, the stern began to sink and the ladies immediately began screaming for help. Frederick Trolle then left the prow to deal with the emergency, which made the boat even more back-heavy and it sank stern-first. All four of them ended up in the muddy water. Many of the guests who were in the garden rushed to the scene when they heard the heart-rending cries for help, but they were all so frightened by what
was happening that no-one took the initiative to save them. Two farmhands from the estate dived into the water, but were soon taken up on land again to avoid the same fate as the four in difficulties. After a while, about 100 people had assembled on the shore and tried to help with various implements. But it was all for nothing and all four drowned in the lake that was considered by contemporary witnesses to be so shallow that one “could hardly cover oneself in it”.

The tragic event at Torup became known throughout the country, and on 8 August the dead were buried at Hyby Church with many of Sweden’s noblemen and Trolle’s officer comrades from the Southern Scanian regiment present at the funeral service.