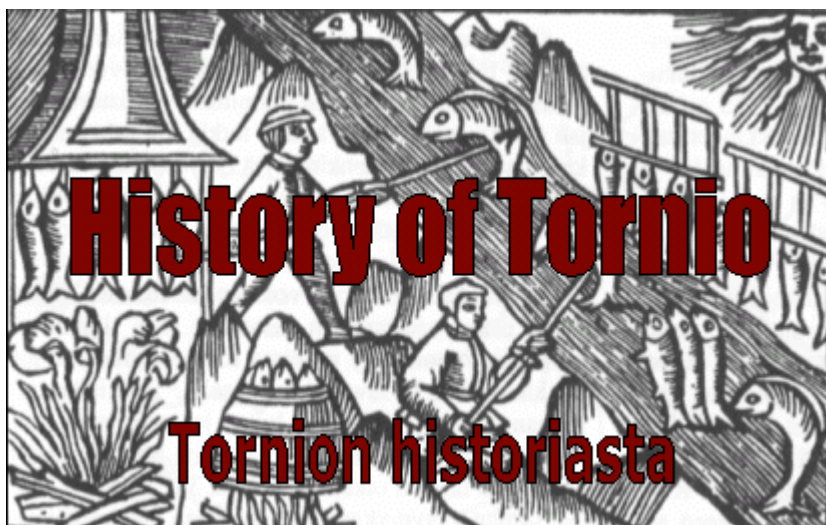


Tornio - gateway of the centuries to Lapland and the west



Both the historical and the modern image of Tornio are diverse and original. The 375 years of the city's history can only partly be squeezed into the general development phases of Finnish cities. The excellent location of the city at the mouth of a large river, that

dominates a large part of Lapland, is a major cause for the originality of the city's history. Also a major factor is that for the most part of its history Tornio has been the northernmost city and a gateway to Lapland, first as a part of the Swedish kingdom and then from 1809 as a part of Finland. In the last couple of centuries the central factor in the development of the city has been that it has become a gateway to the west as the only Finnish city on the border and as a meeting place for Finnish and Swedish language and culture.

A Bustling Marketplace Even in the Middle Ages

A condition for the birth of Tornio, as well as its source of life and wealth, was the surrounding vibrant river valley and, in part, all of Lapland. At the latest, settlements started forming in 1000 AD. The oldest settlements appear to have been Tavastian. At least the name of **Torniojoki** (Torne River) is originally a Tavastian name. It contains a word used in South-East Tavastia; **tornio**, 'a spear'. From a Norwegian point of view, Tornio Valley was heartland for ancient Kvenland, which was inhabited by the Kvens. Even before the city was founded in 1621, the mouth of Torne River had for centuries been a bustling place for commerce, through which most of the northern produce, above all salmon, pike and fur, would travel into the world carried by merchants from distant lands. The marketplace was already called Tornio, or Tornio of the North, and the parish, which was formed early in the 14th century, was also named Tornio.

History of Tornio

A fascinating, maybe even a slightly exaggerated, picture of the bustling nature of the trade in Tornio was given by **Olaus Magnus** in his History of the Northern People. He was a Swedish ecclesiastic and historian who visited Tornio in 1519. The abundance of large storehouses made him already speak of Tornio as a city. Magnus said that the trading place was situated on a "narrow piece of land" caught between two offshoots of the river.

In 1531 Gustav I declared Tornio a legal trading place acknowledged by the crown. Even at that time the trading place, which in 1554 was said to have had 60 storehouses, was most probably situated on the future site of the city of Tornio, Suensaari (Wolf Island). This was the only island at the mouth of the river that was long and narrow - which it would have been even more so 500 years ago than now, when you take into consideration the rising of the land.

Through the ages it has been thought that the oldest trading place at the mouth of Torne River was located on the island of Pirkkiö. But there is no foundation for this premise. The name of the island has been presented as evidence of the location of the trading place: the name **Pirkkiö** could be derived from the Scandinavian word 'birk' which means 'trade' or 'trading license'. This, however, cannot be proved. Instead we can be sure that the name of the island was originally a Finnish name that is derived from the word **perkkiö**, 'a burn-beaten meadow or field'. From the Middle ages and the 16th century onwards the storehouses were probably situated on the south-eastern shore of Suensaari, in front of the harbour island and opposite to the church that was originally built on the island of Pirkkiö before the middle of the 14th century. This is further substantiated by the fact that in 1603 Duke Charles declared that the area of Tornio church would be the new trading place, an edict that, however, was never carried out.

Before the city was founded there were less than ten farms on Suensaari. The name of the island probably comes from one of the houses whose inhabitants, as well as possibly the house itself, were named **Susi** (Wolf). The name most probably originated in Karelia.

The city of Tornio was founded on Suensaari, which suggests that the old trading place was also situated on Suensaari.

Tornio is Founded on Suensaari Instead of Seittenkari

In 1585 John III was planning to found a new city on the mouth of Torne River but the opposition of land traders and especially the objections of the Pirkkalans brought down the endeavour. Later on Duke Charles wanted to move land trade in his realm into the cities and to mould Lapland Trade into the frames of national city politics. Orders aimed at restricting the Lappish trade of the Pirkkalans arrived one after the other. The Pirkkalans resisted and fought tooth and nail to defend their age-old rights to trade in Lapland but in the end the king proved to be even tougher than the Pirkkalans: in 1620 Charles' son, king Gustav II Adolf gave an order - in conjunction with the founding of Umeå, Piteå and Luleå - the city or Tornio would be founded on the island of Seitsenkari. The locals, however, considered the site unsuitable and the city was left unbuilt. In the opinion of the Northerners, if a city were to be built it should be founded on Suensaari.

This time northern obstinance prevailed: the town charter signed by Gustav II Adolf on 12.5.1621 decreed that the city of Tornio would be founded on Suensaari. One of the central points in the document was defining the commercial district of the city. This trading area, placed under the sole control of the merchants (Bourgeois) of Tornio was going to be huge, larger, in fact, than commercial districts in any other city in the Swedish realm. The area encompassed all of Kainuu and Torne River Valley as well as the Laplands of both Tornio and Kemi, in other words modern day Swedish and Finnish Lapland, and a large part of northern Norway.

Less vital was the edict in the charter's third paragraph concerning the city seal: it was to bear a tower motif as the city's name Tornio, Tornöö in Swedish, was thought to mean Tower City. Gustav II Adolf and his advisors obviously thought, like Olaus Magnus had suggested, that the name was derived from the Swedish word **torn** 'tower'. The seal motif set by the charter was later also adapted into the coat of arms of the city - it bears a red tower on a silver background. So, in principle, the coat of arms is based on an erroneous interpretation of the name of the city but it can also be historically justified with the edict in the town charter. Nowadays the grand tower like town hall that can be seen far and wide, even if it hasn't been painted red, further justifies the coat of arms.

History of Tornio

The newly founded city of Tornio was not created as its own parish; rather it was already a part of the old Tornio parish, the parish of Alatornio (Lower Tornio). Alatornio and Ylitornio (Higher Tornio) had been made into separate parishes in 1606. The city of Tornio got its own church in 1647. The first church burned down in 1682. In its place a new beautiful and architecturally unique wooden church, which is still in use today, was built.

The Rise of Trade in the 17th Century

The merchants who moved into the city started actively conducting trade in the large commercial area. The Lappish goods they traded for were relayed to the bay in Tornio where merchants from the south, especially from Stockholm, had come to trade. Because of the rising of land the bay was only usable as a harbour until around the middle of the 17th century. After that the larger ships had to be loaded and unloaded either at the firth on the western side of the city or at Seittenkari. Shallow-bottomed boats, however, could still reach the shores of Suensaari for a long time. As the city burned down in 1679 and the harbour was becoming unusable it was suggested that the city be moved to a different location entirely, mainly to Pirkkiö, but this was never done.

Before 1660 there were hardly any merchant ships owned by the citizens of Tornio. Soon, though, the bourgeois realised that the largest profit was made by the merchants of Stockholm who shipped Lappish goods to the South. If you wanted to get rich you had to gain control of the transport of trade goods by sea. This was accomplished. In 1660 the citizens already owned some ships and around 1670 the number of foreign ships in the harbour was less than those owned by the locals. The export of trade goods, most important of which were salmon, skins and butter, as well as the import of salt and other goods was under local control by the end of the 17th century. The art of shipbuilding was also mastered and all ships could be built by a master in your own municipality.

Thanks to this development the trade and the city of Tornio blossomed by the start of the 18th century. Merchant ships mainly headed to Stockholm but they also sailed to the Baltic ports. Throughout the 17th century Tornio was also visited by an abundance of traders from Karelia - this was the continuation of an old trading tradition dating back to the Middle

History of Tornio

ages. These visits delighted the citizens of Tornio as the Karelians were a source of cheap homespun fabric, which was important to the Lappish trade.

At the start of the 18th century the bourgeoisie of Tornio had become entirely urbanized. They were well versed in the commercial intricacies of the era. Farmers from the municipalities of Tornio and Kainuu confided in them more and more with their trading difficulties and the illegal trade of land decreased even if it didn't come to a complete halt. Trade with the Lappish people had its own problems caused by long distances but since it was a seller's market and the merchants of Tornio held the monopoly on trade it was well worth it. The merchants became richer though the wealth gaps were substantial. The richest merchants were able to make diverse investments as well as take part in the joys of wine and other vanities. This also pleased visiting foreigners who wrote about the vibrant social life of Tornio in their travel logs. The city was also home to some incredibly poor people. Nevertheless hardly anyone in Tornio suffered from famine even during the great famine of the 1690s.

The Strike of the Greater Wrath

In 1700 war broke out and the heavy taxes brought on by the war as well as the drafts and logistic difficulties started to eat away at the requirements of Tornio's commercial life. Closure of the eastern border brought an end to the important trade with the Karelians. Tornio had to give up the trade of Kemi's Lapland and also the trade relations between the farmers and the merchants suffered. Sea trade dwindled due to lack of crew and consignment of ships. Then in 1710 plague spread into the city.

By 1713, even before the Greater Wrath, Tornio had become a poor city of feuding merchants; the blossoming trade and commercial politics were deteriorating and the city's livelihoods were returning to the state they had been in 50 years before. The threat of hostile forces invading Finland was soon felt. Some merchants fled to Sweden and, even before the Russian arrived, the town was in flames in 1714. In 1715 after meeting some resistance the Russians invaded, sacked and torched the city. Martial law lasted until 1717. Afterwards, until the end of the war in 1721, Tornio was pretty much left in peace.

History of Tornio

A New Rise

After the destruction of the city and collapse of trade earning your daily bread in Tornio was hard. Agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing which had been practiced alongside commerce, were quicker to recover. Thanks to reconstruction work the new buildings were mainly finished by 1735. In the end commerce picked up surprisingly fast. From as early as 1720 the trade with Lapland and the farmers as well as the transport of trade goods to Stockholm was as busy as ever. The Karelian trade also continued in the 18th century. The harbour was in Purralahti, about 7 kilometres west of the city. The distribution of wealth as well as the property loss caused by the war was rectified by the middle of the 18th century.

In 1736 governor **G. Gyllengrip** attempted to limit the number of merchants conducting trade to 34 but the citizens of Tornio again proved headstrong and rejected any limitations on their trade. There were about 40-60 citizens who constantly exported goods, mainly to Stockholm. The worth of export stuck at about twice the value of import. Development led to small businesses being eliminated and the trade amassing in the hands of fewer and fewer people who, as a result, became wealthier and wealthier.

The citizens of Tornio took a beating in the Lapland Trade firstly because permanent shops were being established at old market places and secondly because in 1751 Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland divided the common lands of Lapland in the border agreement of Strömstad, which meant that, a large chunk of Tornio's old commercial region was given to Norway. The merchants of Tornio were allowed to and made trade journeys as far as the Arctic Ocean but they kept losing parts of their trade to the Norwegians. In 1757 the merchants of Tornio divided Lapland into commercial districts; the owners of each district had to provide permanent trade in that area.

The overall development of trade was on the rise however especially because of the lucrative export business. During the Lesser Wrath in 1741 the enemy did not occupy Tornio. When the trade of the coastal cities of Ostrobothnia were suffering from the occupation Tornio's commerce skyrocketed.

History of Tornio

Tornio remained a small city due to its low population. Through the 17th century the population stayed under 600 and in the 18th century the 700 line was only crossed a few times. Even in the 19th century the population was below 700 for a long time and the 1000 line was not crossed until 1880. After this population growth increased and the 2000 occupant line was crossed by the beginning of the 1920s.

Plans to Move the City

The issue of Tornio harbour remained a difficult problem in the 18th century. Even Purralahti was becoming shallower and it was too far away. In 1751 an appeal was started to move the city down the coast to Nikkala, which had a good existing harbour. Dramatically, before a decision could be made, a large part of Tornio was destroyed in a fire in 1762. The fires fuelled the discussion on moving the city.

It was decided unanimously that the city should indeed be moved but there were many opinions as to the new location: some of the inhabitants supported Nikkala while others thought Pirkkiö would be better, some even suggested Veitsiluoto in Kemi. With the mediation of the governor it was finally decided that Röyttä was a good place for a harbour and Pirkkiö a suitable place for a city.

But, as the Chamber Council (Kammarkollegiet) was biding its time making an official decision, the citizens could no longer remain unanimous. The number of people attached to the original site on Suensaari started to grow and so in 1767 the Council consented to keeping Tornio where it was.

However the crucial factor was that a suitable harbour could be constructed on the island of Röyttä, which was easy to get to and not too far away. The harbour was completed in 1766.

The Prosperous End of the 18th Century

A new leaf was turned in the commerce of Tornio after 1766. This is when cities of the Gulf of Bothnia were given permission to conduct their own foreign trade outside of Sweden. The direct foreign sea trade of the Tornio merchants did not become hugely prominent but

History of Tornio

under the new commercial atmosphere domestic sea trade also picked up and Tornio merchants took part in that. Around 1800 Tornio harbour was busier than ever before.

The events outside the country were a major factor in creating a golden age of commerce: the large wars in Europe and America meant that, among other things, tar and lumber were in high demand. Even in Tornio they were starting to supersede fur, whereas fish and butter remained notable exports.

But above all else the Tornians became rich through the construction and selling of ships. At the start of the 10th century the bourgeois were having tens of ships built among which were some quite large ones. The ships were sold to domestic and international buyers. Many were sold to the English. Several foreign buyers sojourned in Tornio even during the winter period, which brought some new colour to urban life.

At the start of the 19th century the wealth of the bourgeois grew considerably. Considering wealth per resident Tornio ranked quite high among the cities of the realm. But only the few were very rich: in 1800 five of the richest people owned about 60% of the city's approximated wealth. The richest of them all was the merchant **Erik Bergman** who was estimated to own around 35.000 riksdaler. At that time there were only about 14 other people in any Finnish city to own more than 20 000 riksdaler.

The end of the 1700s was also a time of significant interest in education. Between the years of 1783 to 1800 16 young men left the local preparatory school to study in the University of Uppsala. Among them was **Jöns Svanberg** who later became a professor of mathematics at the same university as well as a renowned scientist.

Seperation from Sweden

Soon after the year 1800, as the economic situation abroad weakened, the commerce in Tornio started to decline. Ship building decreased gradually. The start of the war with Russia in 1808 interfered with trade immensely even though Tornio was not destroyed in the Finnish War. From March 1809 Tornio became an important Russian garrison town for over a decade, which changed the cityscape.

History of Tornio

The Treaty of Hamina (September 1809) had serious consequences on the commerce and life of Tornio. The Russians demanded the border to be set at Kainuujoki while the Swedes wanted the border at Kemijoki so a compromise was reached: emperor Alexander I personally drew the border at Torniojoki. The border was to run along the deepest part of the river. Even though Suensaari, where Tornio was situated, was already a cape on the western side of the river Alexander declared that it was a part of Finland. Evidently Alexander realised the financial and military importance of the border town. It could also be that the fame of Tornio - thanks to travellers and travel books it was probably the best-known city in Finland - made Alexander decide that he wanted the city in his realm.

The commerce of Tornio was disastrously influenced as the border was drawn since the city lost a large portion of the wealthiest and most densely populated part of the Lappish trade district. In addition the trade routes with Sweden were cut. Tornio's position as the "Gateway to Lapland" in a financial sense was becoming a thing of the past but as a border town it became Finland's gateway to the west. The centralization of assets in the hands of a few merchants led to wide spread poverty as many wealthy merchants moved to Sweden and took with them a large part of the capital that had amassed in Tornio. The citizens also lost lands, forests and also their place to build ships. For decades the once bustling city of shipbuilding and commerce became a small rural town.

The Good Years of the Crimean War (1854-56)

The business life in Tornio continued pretty much unchanged in the first half of the 19th century although the quantity and profitability had lessened. Trade was mainly directed at Stockholm but slowly trade relations were also being built with southern Finland and St. Petersburg. The import of grain to Tornio from St. Petersburg began: most of the grain required by northernmost Finland was brought in via Tornio. At the start of the 1840s commerce took a noticeable dive, as Haparanda became a fully licensed city in 1854. The economic situation caused by Russia's Oriental War, which started in 1854, and with the upkeep of Russia in the background, Tornio became an important place of business. First of all Tornio survived the war a lot better than Oulu and other cities on the coasts of the gulf of Bothnia who, at least, had their harbours destroyed. When the English navy arrived at Röyttä, the Tornio bourgeoisie moved their ships to Haparanda, which was

History of Tornio

neutral territory, removed all Russian military personnel from the city and wined and dined the English to soothe their belligerent minds.

The trade going through Tornio multiplied during the war years. Trade travelled mostly by land as the English and French war ships plagued the Gulf of Bothnia; nevertheless even sailing was on the increase. Goods were freighted from Tornio to St. Petersburg as much as possible and haulage rates were high. For the first time Tornio could benefit from its border town status.

After the Crimean War Tornio's trade was directed more permanently to southern Finland and Russia. The rest of Finland started becoming aware of the fact that Tornio was not some foreign Swedish city but an important city and a part of Finland.

Even after the war the trade in Tornio remained brisk. The building of lumber mills (Röyttä mill among others) and the export of lumber was and remained the corner stone of commerce. The import of goods to the north, among others the import of grain, started to focus solely on Ajos harbour in Kemi, especially after 1909 when the harbour was linked to Rovaniemi via the new railway tracks. The founding of the city of Kemi in 1869 had a detrimental effect on the position of Tornio as the commercial gateway of the north.

Especially from 1870 onwards trade in Tornio picked up and banks and businesses were established. In 1873 the brewery and soft drink factory Lapin Kulta (Lapland's Gold) was established and it remains the oldest business in the province of Lapland. The grand city hall, designed by the architect Luchow, was built in the years 1873-74.

In 1886-87 a 700 metre wooden bridge, named Handol's Bridge, was built between Tornio and Haparanda. In 1929 a new embankment bridge, that also better enabled car traffic, was completed. The railway arrived in Tornio in 1903 and the harbour track to Röyttä was completed in 1928.

War Brings Another Golden Age

During World War I in 1914-1916 Tornio saw an unprecedented period of bustling trade. As soon as the war started Russia's usual foreign trade routes, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, were closed off. As Russia's wartime economy was dependant on import, trade routes had to be changed to alternative and more troublesome paths.

Goods started to be transported via Sweden and Norway to Finland and onwards to Russia. Russian exports were partly also transported via the same route. As a large part of these goods passed through Tornio, since there was already a railway in place, the traffic conditions of the city were completely revolutionized. Tornio was not only important to the upkeep of Russia but in the war years it was a major transit point for Finnish foreign trade.

Even though Tornio was merely a transit point, this traffic left money behind in many ways and as a byproduct Tornio's own commerce flourished. All major brokerages from southern Finnish cities moved to Tornio to control the transport of goods between Tornio and Haparanda. In Tornio a load of new brokerages were also established and there was an unlimited amount of work for them. The brokerages hired all available horses and freight costs were high. The largest brokerage, Karl Boström, quickly arranged a horse freight service via Kilpisjärvi to Lyngenfjord in Norway. This unending stream of produce saw its height in 1916 while in the year of the revolution in 1917 the trade to Russia dried up. Even so in the early spring of 1918 Tornio was still a commercial gateway to white Finland.

A railway between Tornio and Haparanda would have assisted greatly in the transportation of goods but it was not completed until 1919, although it would play an important role in the future. Export from Tornio to Sweden and via Scandinavia to the rest of the world would continuously be remarkably extensive and also the importing business started to take advantage of the railway. Röyttä harbour could not compete with Kemi's Ajos harbour, which at the start of the 1920s was even more important as an exporting harbour than Oulu.

The light infantry movement was also a part of the traffic of World War I. Tornio was one of the most important waypoints for the light infantry. Many refugees as well as prisoners of war, who had escaped from the German prison camps in Murmansk, also travelled

History of Tornio

through Tornio. Tornio was a place for the warring nations to exchange prisoners and the wounded.

Border Town of the 20th Century

Even though Tornio did not play a central role in Finland's international trade after World War I it was the busiest hub for traffic to and from the west. In the years between World War I and II new bridges were built. Among these was the Bridge of Hannula that connected Suensaari with mainland Finland. Since then land traffic routes have been constantly improved to meet the demands of the ever-expanding flow of cars. As the busiest border crossing between Finland and Sweden quite a lot of money is left in the city by the passing traffic although Tornio hasn't become an actual tourist centre.

The final stages of World War II grazed Tornio. For political reasons Finland had to rise against her old comrade in arms, Germany. The largest operation in this war was the landing of Finnish troops at Röyttä on 1.10.1944. No fighting of note actually reached Tornio itself while Alatornio saw the bloodiest and most intense battles of the war.

After the wars the development of Tornio has been strongly heading forwards as evidenced by the tripled population. At the start of 1973 Tornio was still a small town of 8000 residents but at the beginning of that year the municipalities of Alatornio (8700 residents) and Karunki (2200 residents) were merged with Tornio and the population neared 20 000. Population was also growing due to natural development and migration. Nowadays Tornio has around 23 500 residents.

From the 19th century onwards smuggling, or "joppaaminen", also made many rich and some even earned their fortunes. The rationing of the last wars meant a golden age for smugglers that lasted all the way to the start of the 1950s when the rationing of coffee finally ended.

Tornio has also profited from legal trade and the citizens have mostly benefited from their border town status. Tornio has often profited from the purchasing power of the Swedes, for example after the devaluation in 1967 the Swedes rushed over to shop in Tornio and

History of Tornio

revitalised the city. Border trade is closely linked with national price changes that, for example, during the 1970s were not very favourable for Tornio. During the 70s unfavourable price changes, increased taxes and the rising cost of living caused many to take up residence in Haparanda and commute to Tornio. In the last few decades this movement has evened out as people are moving both ways. The price changes in the 1980s were more favourable for Tornio but the devaluations at the start of 1990 again shifted the tides of commerce. Finland and Sweden joined the European Union at the start of 1995 and trading circles declared Haparanda - Tornio as the first Eurocity intending on marketing the benefits of the border region to businesses.

The changes in commerce have also affected Tornio significantly since the later half of 1980. Old and familiar department stores (Centrum, Sokos) have closed down and new ones, such as the trade and restaurant centre Greenline Welcome-Center, have opened in their stead near the border. The commercial development of Tornio has been greatly influenced by the shops of Haparanda and the business conducted there by the inhabitants of Tornio. The most recent signs of development in Tornio are the Green Zone Golf Center 1990 (Haparanda-Tornio) and the spa-style swimming hall completed in 1992.

Border town status with its benefits and trade alone have not been enough of a foundation for the city's development, it has also required intensive industrialisation in the last few decades. Also of note is the fact, that after the unification of municipalities agriculture became an important livelihood for Tornio: slightly less than 10% of the population earn their living through agriculture and the lumber industry, about 40% earn their living from industry and 50% from service trade.

Thanks to post war regional politics Tornio gained a considerable amount of textile industry in the 1950s. Next to arrive was the metal industry. The ferrochrome factory of Outokumpu began operations in Royttä in 1968 and in 1976 a stainless steel mill was completed in the same area. The steel industry of Outokumpu has employed an estimated 1200 workers, which makes it the second largest employer in the area after the city itself. In addition to this heavy metallurgical industry there are also several engineering workshops in Tornio.

History of Tornio

Lapin Kulta (est. 1873), nowadays owned by Oy Hartwall AB, has been the oldest industry in town since Røyttä Mill closed its doors in the middle of 1980. The textile industry has also gone through some tough times and the number of jobs has fallen from over 1000 to about 200. Industry is most strongly represented by Pohjoismaiden Sukkatehdas OY (The Scandinavian Sock Factory) in Pirkkiö.

The development of Tornio influenced by the strong co-operation with Haparanda in just about all fields of trade, administration and culture. In 1987 Provincia Bothniensis, a joint committee between the two municipalities was instituted. In 1993 the Torne Valley Council, Tornedalsrådet, was reestablished.

Tornio has always had high educational standards with its preparatory school (from 1630) to its senior secondary schools and academy (1921 - 1970). The Peräpohjola Institute was founded in 1901. These days Tornio has two senior secondary schools (Suensaari and Pudas). Other teaching facilities in the city are the Tornio Business and Computing Institute, Länsi-Lapin ammattiopilaitos (the trade school of West Lapland), Länsi-Lapin ammatillinen aikuiskoulutuskeskus (centre for vocational training for adults) and Tornio Adult Education Centre.

Tornio has also gained fame as a cultural city. The most notable achievement is the Art Museum of Aine with its rich and varied collections, exhibitions and other activities.

"The Gateway to Lapland"

Tornio's position as the "Gateway to Lapland" was mainly founded on the fact that for centuries the trade from Lapland was directed there and passed through the city into the wide world. Internationally, even through the 19th century, the renown as the "Gateway to Lapland" was based on Tornio's position as the northernmost city of Sweden and then later Finland. This position Tornio has lost to Rovaniemi.

But Tornio's reputation is the oldest and the strongest.

In the minds of refined foreigners Tornio was synonymous with the exotic images of Lapland and the Lappish people from the 16th to the 19th centuries - Tornio,

History of Tornio

thought to be only slightly "corrupted" by western civilization, stood between the rest of the world and the mystical land of reindeer and witches that was Lapland.

Curious foreigners travelled to Tornio and then carried on up Torne River to Lapland. Boating on Torne River is invigorating. When many travellers wrote a travel book about their trip, Tornio was often mentioned centrally. These tales of travels were particularly lively in their depictions of the changes in the character of the people, the ways of life, appearance, language, livelihoods and other things that would be seen when moving from the Swedish speaking areas to Tornio and its surrounding areas. On the other hand, the urban culture of Tornio was compared with much interest to cities in Sweden and Western Europe.

Travel wise, in addition to the romance of Lapland, Tornio had another ace up its sleeve that kept up its reputation in Europe: the Midnight Sun and the long bright days of summer. People came from far and wide to view the spectacle and it was vividly portrayed in travel logs from late 17th century onwards when king Charles XI had made the Midnight Sun famous after a trip of his own to the north.

Torne River is still a free running river in its natural state. It is the oldest and still usable passageway into Lapland. Perhaps Tornio should start recalling their history and bring it alive again for modern day Europe.