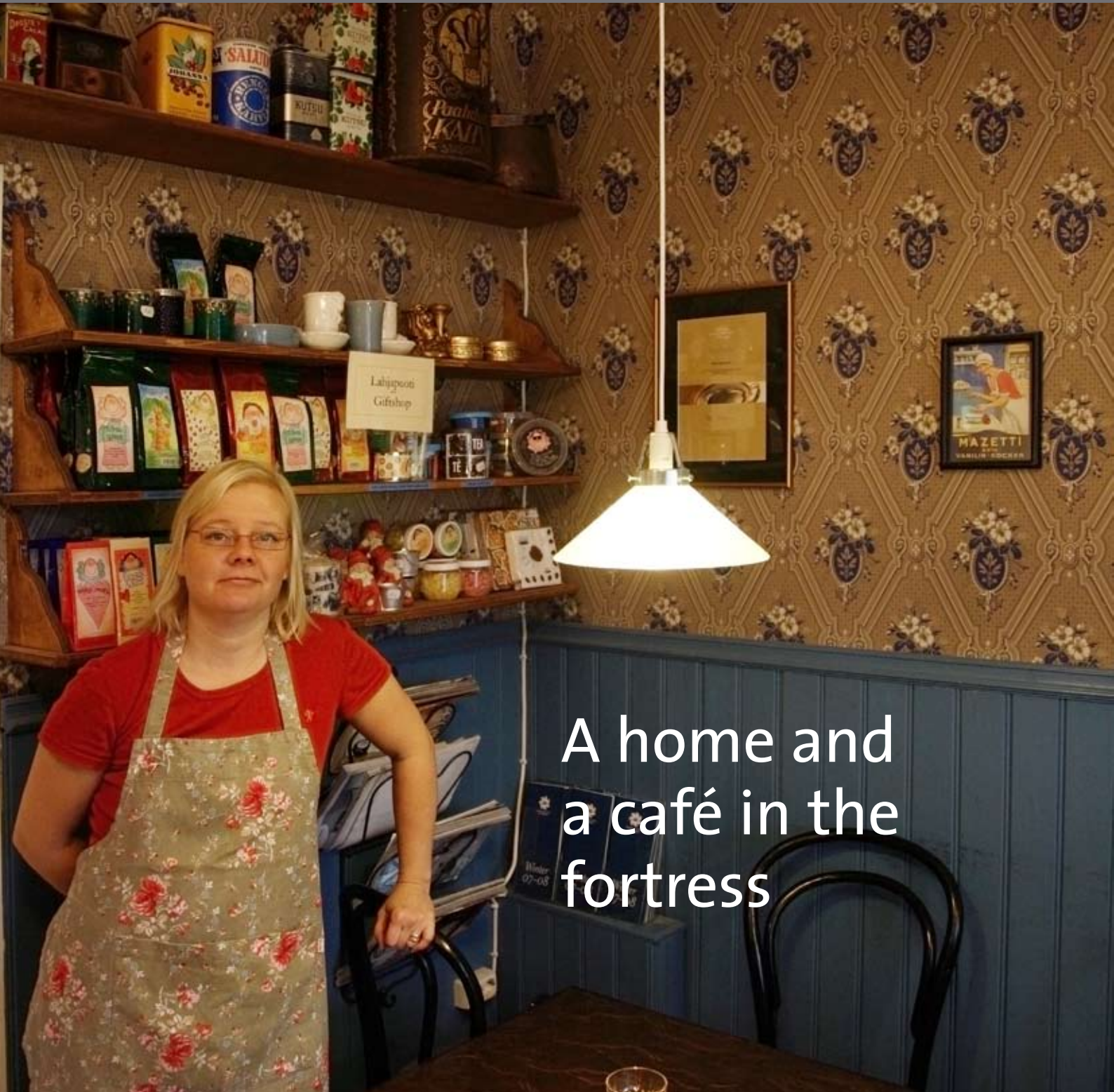




Suomenlinna

NEWSLETTER

SUOMENLINNA NEWSLETTER NRO 1 / 3 | 2008



A home and a café in the fortress

The surrender of Viapori in 1808

Meetings and parties under the vaults of Tenaille von Fersen

New information boards and guidebook for the independent tourist





leader

Jaakko Antti-Poika

DIRECTOR, GOVERNING BODY OF SUOMENLINNA

The Treaty of Tilsit of July 1807 involved the now famous secret agreement between Napoleon and Alexander I on the demarcation of their spheres of influence: "Take Finland, it is yours." Half a year later, in February 1808, Russian troops captured the southern part of Finland after a swift offensive. By early spring, Viapori was a mentally and physically isolated Swedish island off the coast of occupied Finland, held by the Russians as far north as Oulu. Finland's 700-year bond with Sweden had been broken.

Suomenlinna has its own Independence Day, 12 May. It was on that day in 1918 that the Finnish government took possession of the Russian garrison islands, which had previously been under the direct command of the Tsar himself. This date is at a rather more pleasant time of year than Finland's Independence Day on 6 December. The date of the fortress passing into the hands of the Russians is well documented: the decision by Commandant Cronstedt to surrender to the Russians was implemented on 3 May 1808, more than a year before the end of the war. Accordingly, anniversary celebrations on Viapori were held a year earlier than those for the Treaty of Hamina, which concluded the war.

It has often been observed that Suomenlinna is an excellent encapsulation of the entire political history of Finland. It was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as a well-preserved example of 18th-century European fortress architecture, but its background includes its military grey history under a succession of masters. Suomenlinna is a marvellous place for studying how soldiers and civilians have lived on the fortress for four centuries.

The special Cronstedt exhibition, which will be shown at the Suomenlinna Museum in the spring, will cast light on the background and motivations of the actions of the controversial Commandant. This exhibition will complement the exhibition on the Russo-Swedish War of 1808-09 that will open at the Finnish National Museum in the autumn; both exhibitions will provide lots to talk about. History buffs will yet again have a good excuse to spend a day on Suomenlinna.



Meetings and parties under the vaults of Tenaille von Fersen

The function room of tenaille von Fersen on Susisaari island is the largest room rented out by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna. It is a magnificent venue for a meeting, a conference, a function or a concert.

The tenaille used to house the fortress bakery, which catered for the Archipelago Fleet. The function room occupies what used to be the flour storeroom of the bakery, originally built in 1775. The room seats 80 to 170 people, depending on the configuration. It can accommodate 200 people for a sit-down dinner, and it is suitable for a party of 80 to 150 for a wedding reception or corporate function, with room to spare for a dance floor. The room has excellent acoustics and is known as the venue for the Viapori Jazz Festival concerts held every year in late summer. During the winter, the Viapori Winter

Blues concerts are held here.

Organizers can also make use of Myllysalu [Mill Room] at the west end of the building and of the corridors linking the two rooms. The six original ovens still line the bakery corridor. The corridors of the bakery and the biscuit-drying nook are suitable for interval refreshments or exhibitions connected with events organized in the main room or in Myllysalu. Tenaille von Fersen is about a 15-minute walk from the ferry quay, and in the summer guests can land even closer at the Visitor Centre quay, using the shuttle boat service or a private boat.

News

ONLINE MAP OF BUILDING HISTORY

There is an interactive map on the Suomenlinna website with information and photos on nearly 200 buildings on Suomenlinna, their previous uses and renovations. The building register is edited and updated by architect Reetta Amper. The bulk of the text is derived from Suomenlinnan rakennusten historia, a history of the buildings on Suomenlinna written by researchers Helena Rosén,

Liisa Eerikäinen and Seija Linnanmäki and jointly published by the Governing Body of Suomenlinna and the National Board of Antiquities. Click on a building number on the map to open a page about that building. The information will be added to as the usage of buildings changes and as restoration is undertaken.

Find the map is on www.suomenlinna.fi

The surrender of Viapori in 1808

The siege of Viapori and its surrender to the Russians during the Russo-Swedish War of 1808-09 ended the Swedish era at the fortress. In May 1808, when almost all of Finland had been occupied, the Commandant of the fortress, Vice Admiral C.O. Cronstedt surrendered the fortress and the Archipelago Fleet to General Jan Peter van Suchtelen after nearly two months of siege and trading shots. The surrender came as a great shock to his contemporaries.



1 February. Viapori is mobilized on the basis of a message received during the night.

21 February. Russian troops cross the border without a declaration of war.

2 March. Helsinki is occupied without resistance by a Russian force of 2,000 men. C.O. Cronstedt, Commandant of the fortress, sends a letter to the King explaining that it will be difficult to provide for defence and give help in the new situation, having to fight a war in winter. The fortress had 7,000 soldiers and 1,800 civilians, and 734 pieces of artillery.

19 March. The Russians fire the first shot at the fortress, and shots are traded off and on for four days. The Russians now number 6,500, and they have 59 field guns.

21 March. Cronstedt accepts the Russians' petition not to open fire on the houses in Helsinki.

22 March. The parties meet for the first negotiation on the frozen sea and in the fortress.

23 March. The parties meet for negotiations on the island of Lonna. Cronstedt's council of war rejects the call to surrender.

28 March to 1 April.

The Russians bombard Viapori with a total of 1,525 shells (425 bombs, 271 incendiary shells, 400 grenades and 469 cannonballs), leaving six soldiers dead and 31 wounded. The for-

ress fires a total of 2,477 shots at the besieging army. News is received that the King of Sweden has been deposed, which causes morale to sink in the fortress.

2 to 3 April. Cronstedt proposes in negotiations that a ceasefire be put into effect until 13 May. Cronstedt reckons that the gunpowder will only last for another 12 days at the most.

6 April. Under the terms of the ceasefire agreement dictated by the Russians, Viapori fortress is to be handed over lock, stock and barrel unless substantial reinforcements arrive from Sweden by 3 May. As a pledge for the agreement, Cronstedt immediately gives over the islands of Särkkä, Pikku Mustasaari and Länsi-Mustasaari to the Russians. A special clause in the agreement states that two messengers are allowed to depart for Stockholm to bring word of the ceasefire agreement and to request five ships of the line for assistance. Because the messengers have to pass through Russian-occupied territories, the agreement specifies that the Russians must "ease their journey as far as possible". What actually happens is that the messengers find themselves delayed every step of the way, and because of the alleged "ice conditions" around Åland they are instructed to travel by road around the entire Gulf of Bothnia. And, as we well know, the call for help never reached Stockholm in time.

3 May. The fortress surrenders. Cronstedt and the council of war are roundly cursed by soldiers and civilians alike. Adlercreutz's regi-

ment marches out of the fortress, and the Russians march in through the King's Gate from the adjacent Vallisaari along a plank bridge laid down over the weakened ice of Kustaanmiekka straits.

4 to 5 May. The Uusimaa Dragoons and Infantry, the Navy of the Army, the Hämeenlinna Infantry and Jägerhorn's regiment march out of the fortress.

6 May. The Life Guards Regiment musters for a parade. As Cronstedt salutes the troops, only muttering is heard from the ranks. Cronstedt and his wife and children leave Viapori.

7 May. Cronstedt's messengers arrive in Stockholm with the news of the ceasefire agreement that had been signed on 6 April — the deadline on which had expired on 3 May.

8 May. The Russian era of the fortress begins. A service of thanksgiving is held in the courtyard on Susisaari island, 123 gunshots are fired, and the Russian flag is raised over Kustaanmiekka.

Cronstedt was granted a pension by the Tsar of Russia and lived a secluded life at Herttoniemi Manor until his death in 1820.



The men who built the fortress

C.O. Cronstedt (1756 – 1820)

Carl Olof Cronstedt was born in Helsinki and became a Vice Admiral and a member of the Estates of Sweden. He achieved fame in the Battle of Svensksund and notoriety as the Commandant of Viapori who surrendered the fortress — and by extension the rest of Finland — to the Russians in the Russo-Swedish War of 1808-09. The surrender may have been motivated by considerations of Finland's future with Russia. The council of war on Viapori did not trust Sweden to be able to defend herself against the alliance of Russia and France. While the war was still going on, Cronstedt accepted a pension from Tsar Alexander I, and he spent the rest of his life in seclusion at Herttoniemi Manor.

There is a café in an old wood house in the former Russian merchants' quarter near the ferry quay, advertising soup of the day and home baking. A long flight of wooden stairs lead to the veranda of Café Vanille directly from the main thoroughfare of the fortress. A glass-panelled door gives access to a small, nostalgic coffee shop, with a row of decades-old Paulig coffee tins on the opposite wall and the enticing smell of buns and gingerbread on the counter. The café owner, Päivi Siekkinen, waves a friendly hello from the kitchen and sits down on a bar-backed sofa for a quick chat. Across the road, the bells of Suomenlinna Church suddenly break out in a peal.

"That's the verger, Jouko Terävä. He enjoys tolling the bells when there's a wedding or a service in the church. I like the sound," says Päivi Siekkinen. She and her husband Timo were married in the church, and their home is also on the same island, Iso Mustasaari, known locally as the 'church island'. Suomenlinna is a highly popular venue for functions such as this; there may be as many as four weddings on any given Saturday. Wedding guests often pop into the café before going into the church.

"Come on, let's get a cider for mum!" Päivi Siekkinen imitates the wedding crowd.

Coming to work is like going abroad

When the weather is good in the summer, the café is full of the buzz of Finnish voices. In the winter, the café is only open at weekends and during festivals.

"In the winter, 80 per cent of our customers are foreign. If you close your eyes, you can pretend that you are in, say, Italy. Italians usually travel in big families, with the grandparents pampering the kids, and everyone



International voices at Café Vanille

shouts and waves their arms. The Spanish like to group together to have fun too. The Germans are calm and reserved, while the Japanese are really quiet and withdrawn. You can tell when a cruise liner has docked in Helsinki because cruise passengers typically know nothing about where they are, sometimes not even which country they are in. Many people ask me whether we take euros.

"Finns like to bring their foreign guests to Suomenlinna, and are pleased that the fortress is accessible in winter too. And then there are the outdoor enthusiasts, with cameras or fishing tackle — nature buffs."

Conference guests are interested in life now and life then

Päivi Siekkinen also caters for meeting venues and for functions organized elsewhere on

Suomenlinna. Companies organizing training seminars or recreation events usually order sandwiches, buns and cakes. Small groups may hold lunchtime meetings at Café Vanille over a salmon soup or a quiche. The most popular tables are those on the high open veranda of the old Russian house, which affords a nice view of the people walking along the main road below.

The Governing Body of Suomenlinna, the authority in charge of the fortress, only rents out spaces on Suomenlinna, not the services to go with them. Conference packages are sold by the Ehrensvärd Society, which in turn orders catering services from caterers or restaurants on Suomenlinna itself. Café Vanille is one of the caterers. Päivi Siekkinen enjoys working with the customers in the meeting function rooms, sometimes feeling like a Suomenlinna guide because of the histories

about the past and present of the fortress that she finds herself answering.

"Customers always see the fortress as a single entity, even though there are many different kinds of player here: government bodies, city services and private entrepreneurs," she says.

No regrets about career change

Päivi Siekkinen has a bachelor's degree in business administration. It was only three years ago that she started to run a café.

"I was on child care leave for a long time and thought long and hard about going back to my Monday-to-Friday office job. Then the previous owner of this café decided to give up the business, and I realized that this was a chance to change my life. My mother was an entrepreneur, and I used to have a summer

job at Ekberg Café on Bulevardi in Helsinki.

“Cakes were what originally drew me to this business, but I have now learned a lot of new things at school, such as making bread with a sourdough starter or kalakukko [a regional Finnish pie with fish baked into rye bread].” Päivi Siekkinen considers the picturesque Russian merchants’ quarter the ideal place for a café.

“There used to be a café, the Linnanportti [Castle Gate] café, in that house at the end of the row after the war. This used to be a grocery shop.”

Living and working on the same island

“The best thing about this is that I don’t have to drag the children out of bed at an early hour, and my journey to work only takes a few minutes.” Päivi Siekkinen explains that her family’s jobs, school, daycare centre, afternoon care and hobbies are all located on Iso Mustasaari island. Aku, 7, and Emma, 5, go to school and daycare on either side of the church. Päivi’s husband Timo works at the

“In the winter, 80 per cent of our customers are foreign. If you close your eyes, you can pretend that you are in, say, Italy.”

woodwork workshop of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, also on the same island. The workshop is just opposite Emma’s daycare, and she often shouts out “Daddy!”. Timo Siekkinen is a carpenter responsible for the repair team which undertakes maintenance in the homes on the islands, which means repairing the doors, windows, shelves and locks in nearly 400 homes and in outdoor



spaces. The entire fortress is a historically valuable protected monument, and any repairs undertaken here require know-how, which is hard to find these days. He contributes to the business of the café mainly by helping out with deliveries: it takes some planning to bring in the suppliers from the wholesalers on the mainland, since the ferry does not run all that often.

Timo Siekkinen was born and bred on Suomenlinna and knows practically everyone who lives there. Päivi, who moved there from the mainland, was initially surprised at the way people would ask one another where they were coming from or where they were going. For Timo, caring about other people much like in a rural village is a fact of life.

“Nowadays I am as eager to chat as the next person, and for me it is a positive community safety thing. For example, parents may look after one another’s children when they are sledding, and there are collective efforts to build ice hockey rinks and skateboarding ramps.” She still visits Aku’s school

as the DJ, a job which she has managed ever since her eldest twin sons, now grown up, began first grade. Aku plays the piano, and his teacher visits several homes on the island a couple of times a week. Only little Emma has a hobby on the mainland, the ballet school, but even that is on Kasarmitori, near the ferry terminal. Many little girls from Suomenlinna go there every Thursday. The family home commands a view of the sea to the east; it is a two-storey building originally built as a barracks during the Russian era. In its day, it has housed the Fortress Artillery Headquarters, and also the artillery brewery and porridge kitchen on the ground floor. In the 1970s, it was renovated into flats.

“Whenever I have time to stop and look at the landscape around me, I feel that I never ever want to move away from here.” The ferries to Sweden passing through the Kustaanmiekka straits always turn heads at home. “In the dark in particular, it looks fabulous when a huge glittering ship passes so close by.”

Lonna, the island of negotiations

The island of Lonna, just off the Suomenlinna ferry quay, was the location for negotiations on the surrender of Viapori during the Russo-Swedish War of 1808-09. At that time, the island was inhabited by a widow who had a house, a windmill and a tiny garden with a gazebo. She donated her home to the negotiating parties. When the fortress was given over to the Russians, they gave Lonna the name Peregovorny island — the island of negotiations. The widow’s house was later demolished to make way for gunpowder magazines.

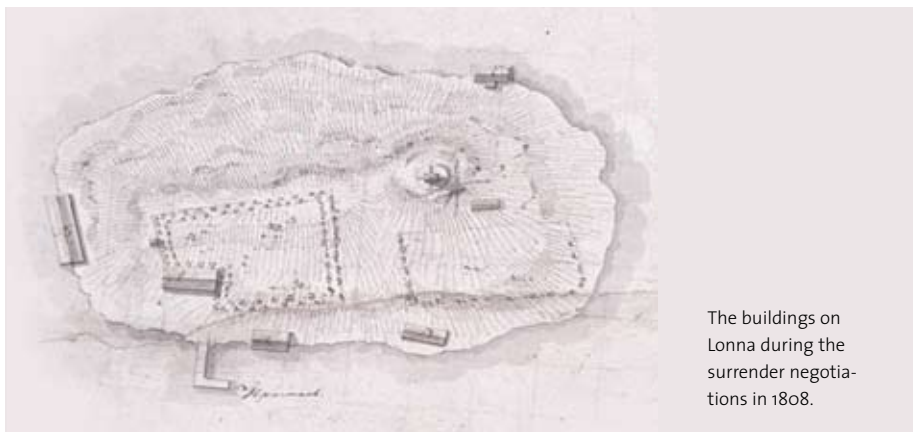
Later, as military technology progressed, the Russians built a mine laboratory, a guard house and a track along which mines were transported to storage. After Finland became independent, Lonna continued to be used for ammunition storage, and after the Second World War it was a minesweeping centre where ships were demagnetized to prevent them setting off mines.

Today, the rocks of Lonna are covered with

soil, and the island is green. The island is a work site for the prison labour colony, with its buildings being renovated for new uses. Heikki Lahdenmäki, Head of the Planning Unit at the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, says that the purpose of the renovation is to create a venue

that can be rented out for meetings.

“It looks like Lonna is becoming the ‘island of negotiations’ again!” he jokes. The water and sewage connections are just being installed, and the works office is to be completed first.



The buildings on Lonna during the surrender negotiations in 1808.

Events on Suomenlinna

Suomenlinna is open all year around. Interesting things happen in winter too. Details can be found in the calendar of events at the website.

Viapori Winter Blues 29 February to 1 March

Organized now for the third time, Viapori Winter Blues is a two-day event with intense moods and relaxed music in the wonderful setting of Suomenlinna. Performers will include Honey B & T-bones and Marjo Leinonen and Viranomaiset. Tickets from Lippupiste, tel. +358 600 900 900. www.viapori.fi/winterblues

Annikki, Veikko and the war, 4 to 13 March

A play performed by the SuLaKe theatre company, showing the home front during the Winter War and Continuation War in Finland from a child's point of view. Security and insecurity are the principal themes.

Performed at the Ballast Room, the play is intended for schoolchildren in grades 6 to 8.

The performers are Susanna Anteroinen, Meri Nenonen and Jarkko Nyman.

Tickets: EUR 6, school groups EUR 2 per person. Group bookings and inquiries: sulake@viapori.fi

Loitsu [Spell] performance at the Suomenlinna Officers' Club, 4, 8 and 11 March

Love spells, the influence of the moon on everyday chores, the music of sweet dreams: all this and more are included in the Loitsu [Spell] performance to be premiered on the church island in March.

The kitchen of the Suomenlinna Officers' Club will provide a magical theatre dinner, and a group of spellbinding actors and musicians will perform

modern spells written by Paula Havaste. The grey everyday is just as magic as you want it to be! The actors are Tarja Matilainen, Meri Nenonen and Susanna Anteroinen, supported by the Helsinki Brass Quintet.

Tickets: EUR 35, including a two-course meal and the performance. Bookings: Suomenlinna Officers' Club, tel. +358 40 560 1831.

Concert series Seitsemän [Seven] 10 February & 20 April

Adapter, a German-Icelandic contemporary music ensemble, is hosting a series of four concerts at tenaille von Fersen over the winter.

In addition to contemporary classics, the ensemble is featuring works by young Finnish, Icelandic and German composers.

Public lectures on the history of Suomenlinna, 27 March to 24 April

Every Thursday during the spring, there will be a lecture on the history and present day of Suomenlinna at the Suomenlinna Museum. Topics include the Russo-Swedish War of 200 years ago and the surrender of Viapori. The lecture series is organized by the Suomenlinna Museum, the Ehrensvärd Society and the Governing Body of Suomenlinna.

The lectures are held in the auditorium of the Suomenlinna Museum on Thursdays at 17.15. The ferry departing Kauppatori [Market Square] at 16.40 will bring you to the island in good time. Entrance is free. For details on the lecture topics, see the calendar of events at www.suomenlinna.fi

Events

12.1. to 31.5.	Guided tours in English at weekends
10.2.	Concert series Seitsemän [Seven]: Reykjavik.de, tenaille von Fersen
3.2.	Shrovetide in the fortress
29.2. to 1.3.	Viapori Winter Blues, tenaille von Fersen
22.3. to 24.3.	Easter on Suomenlinna
3.3. to 16.3.	Annikki, Veikko and the war; stage play, Ballast Room
3.3. to 16.3.	Loitsu [Spell] performance, Suomenlinna Officers' Club
27.3. to 24.4.	Public lectures, Suomenlinna Museum
20.4.	Concert series Seitsemän [Seven]: Sequenza, tenaille von Fersen

Exhibitions

to 2.3.08	Open the gates! Vessels from the Suomenlinna Dock, Suomenlinna Museum
to 2.3.08	Baltic Harbours — Gateway to the Future, Suomenlinna Museum
to 10.2.08	Exhibition of new members of Ars-Häme ry., Jetty Barracks Gallery
to 9.3.08	Wreckers, Jetty Barracks Gallery
to 6.4.08	Sixth Dimension, Jetty Barracks Gallery
11.4.08 to 4.5.08	Seven Sisters, Jetty Barracks Gallery
7.5.08	Opening of special two-year exhibition: C.O. Cronstedt and the surrender of Viapori in 1808, Suomenlinna Museum
9.5.08 to 1.6.08	Free Art School, Jetty Barracks Gallery



New information boards and guidebook for the independent tourist

The best way to get acquainted with the fortress and its history is to take a guided walking tour.

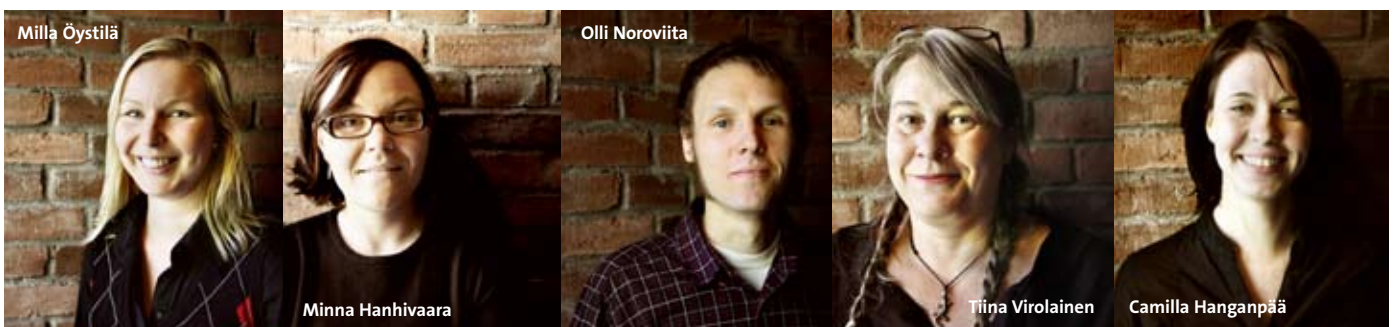
Tours are held in English every day in summer and at weekends in winter.

Now you can study the history of Suomenlinna even when there is no tour available: five information boards have been erected along the main tour route. These feature the principal attractions: the Russian merchant' quarter, the church park, the Great Courtyard, Piper park and the fortifications of Kustaanmiekka. The boards are in three languages and were designed by architect Reetta Amper. They were put up to respond to demands particularly from foreign visitors for information

on the history of the fortress.

In addition to the information boards, the 'Walking in Helsinki' brochure published by the Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau is a great help.

Suomenlinna is the focus of one of the walking routes outlined in the brochure, allowing independent exploration of the fortress. The route begins and ends at the main Suomenlinna ferry quay. The brochure is available in Finnish, Swedish and English at Helsinki City Tourist Information and at the Suomenlinna Visitor Centre. Price: EUR 2.



Focus: Tourism operators on Suomenlinna

The tourist information personnel and the meeting and function room sales service of the Governing Body of Suomenlinna are now housed under one roof at the Visitor Centre.

Overall responsibility for coordinating tourism on Suomenlinna rests with the Governing Body of Suomenlinna, which manages this World Heritage Site.

The fortress has almost 700,000 visitors every year. Many of them make use of the Visitor Centre, which logged some 235,000 visitors in 2007. The

team is led by tourist coordinator **Milla Öystilä**, who is responsible for tourism development and coordination. She has written the Suomenlinna tourism strategy and is responsible for updating it. Since 1997, tourism secretary **Tiina Virolainen** has been in charge of tourist information on Suomenlinna. She is also in charge of permits involving outdoor areas.

Marketing coordinator **Camilla Hanganpää** is responsible for marketing Suomenlinna as a tourist destination and a location for meetings and functions, and she also organizes visits for the

media and for tour operators. In 2007, more than 600 events were held in premises on Suomenlinna, and demand is growing. The sales service consists of sales secretary **Minna Hanhivaara** and caretaker **Olli Noroviita**, who show customers around the meeting and function rooms and rent the rooms out. Further information on the rooms available for rent, with photos, can be found on the website, www.suomenlinna.fi.



SUOMENLINNA CENTRE

Suomenlinna Centre, open October 1 to April 30, 10-16 (closed April 6)

Suomenlinna Centre, Governing Body of Suomenlinna, Suomenlinna C74, 00190 Helsinki, +358 (0)9 684 1880, matkailu@suomenlinna.fi, www.suomenlinna.fi

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