The History of Trondheim by Sean Burke

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Trondheim was founded as a city in 997 by a Viking Warrior named Olaf Tryggvason. The city was ideally located for sea exploration and raiding, being located on a fjord that formed an excellent natural harbour. Much of Trondheimâ€™s early history stems from its use as a base for raiding parties who went to England, Scotland, Ireland, and perhaps even further afield. Its value meant that it became the seat of the Norwegian king, and therefore the Norwegian capital, a title it held until 1217. Trondheim was also the seat of the Archbishopric of Nidaros, one of the most senior Catholic figures in Norway. After the coming of Lutheranism, the archbishop fled the country, and the importance of the town began to diminish.

Trondheim, like many European cities, suffered from fires. The fact that it was built from wood, and the buildings were tightly packed together meant that a small fire would quickly become a large one, and this did much to shape the way that the city has developed. The fire in 1651 destroyed around 90% of the buildings in the city, and after a further fire in 1681 the city was redesigned, with greater spaces between buildings, and fewer buildings made of stone. Trondheim still retains much of the same architecture from this period, and much like in London, the major rebuilding marked the beginning of Trondheim as a modern city.

During the Second World War, the city was under the control of the Germans, who used the harbour as a base for their U-boats, in much the same way as the Vikings had nearly a century before. In addition, the Germans planned to build a major naval base just outside the city that would have served as one of the key centres of the German navy. The war ended before construction could be completed, although visitors can still tour round some of the foundations of the giant naval base.

If you are travelling to Trondheim and want to experience some of the long and interesting history, then there are a number of tours you can take, many of which are in English. Alternatively, if you want to explore the city on your own, most hotel Trondheim will be able to offer you a map of the city, as well as tips on where to visit. However, the city is so full of history that whichever direction you head in, you will be sure to see something that is centuries old.

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