

A bit of history...

Discover Tourcoing's history: its creation, its rapid rise based on the textile industries, its changes linked to the industrial crisis and how the town is now returning to its former urban dynamism and attractiveness as a major town in the region.

Tourcoing's history is closely linked to that of the textile industrial revolution in the 19th Century. Throughout the town, the former industrial buildings, the great vessels of the textile industry, are coming back to life and recovering their splendour.

Birth of the town

The first reference to Tourcoing goes back to 1080, a few years after that of Lille (1056). At the time, the population of Tourcoing was the third biggest in Flanders, after Lille and Douai.

1790 saw the official birth of Tourcoing Council (1st town council meeting). At this time, textiles (wool weaving) were already the major speciality among Tourcoing's workers.

Golden age

During the industrial revolution in the 19th Century, the town enjoyed a rapid rise in fortunes based on the textile industry. It specialised in drapery, then wool carding, combing and weaving. Tourcoing developed at a great pace around this flourishing activity: railway (1842), increase in the population (100,000 inhabitants in 1910), development of the textile industry (35,000 jobs in 1865), tramway (1877), urban development, international reputation (International Textile Industries Exhibition in 1906).

In 1960, Tourcoing still had 174 combing and spinning mills.

But 160 textile companies disappeared in Tourcoing with the textile crisis in the late 20th Century.

Large-scale urban renewal

Since then, major projects have been set in motion to restore the town's urban dynamism: the "Centre Mercure", the Bour-gogne district, the "Centre de Gaulle", the "Hôpital Dron" (1986) and Le Fresnoy (1996). More recently, the renovation of the town centre (2011), the restructuring of the Belencontre district as part of the PRU (Urban Renovation Project), the Imaginarium and the European Centre for Innovative Textiles (2012).

Phase 2 of the town centre renovation project will soon be underway with the "Swimming Pool Quadrilateral, the Administrative Centre and the conversion of the former swimming school, which is to become the new regional branch of the "Institut du Monde Arabe". The station district is also set for a facelift.

Further details of the history of Tourcoing

- See the Tourcoing time-line

Contact

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