



THE SOCIETY OF ADVOCATES IN ABERDEEN

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VISIT TO ABERDEEN'S TOLBOOTH

Aberdeen's Tolbooth Museum is housed inside the 17th century Wardhouse, or prison. Strictly speaking the term Tolbooth incorporates the Court Houses and the prison accommodation. However it is only the Wardhouse which survives in Aberdeen, but is known as the Tolbooth.

There has been a Tolbooth (court and prison) on this site since at least 1393 but the surviving version of the Wardhouse dates to 1616-1629. The Wardhouse tower was built between those years by a team led by master mason Thomas Watson of Old Rayne. Until it was decommissioned as a prison in the middle years of the 19th century it housed tens of thousands of prisoners. Although many were debtors all classes of criminal, civil, religious and political prisoners have been confined within its walls.

The Wardhouse began to fall into disuse when the Bridewell, Aberdeen's first modern prison was built in 1821 on what we would call Rose Street. When the new Townhouse was built in the early 1870s the Wardhouse was preserved behind a new granite façade. Between then and the mid 1990s the Wardhouse served as a storage area, with occasional visits from interested parties.

In the 1990s Aberdeen City Council voted to fit out the Wardhouse as a museum. Following some archaeological work, which uncovered elements of a cell under what is now the floor of the entrance hall (and probably the cell referred to historically as the Thieves Hole) the Wardhouse was converted into a museum of civic history which explored the dark history of the building.

The date for your diaries is **Wednesday 15th September 2010**. We will meet at 7.30pm at the Tolbooth itself on Union Street. The tour will last about 1.5 hours, and includes some spiral stairs so please wear comfortable footwear and don't bring anyone incapable of such!

The cost is **£7.50 per person**, which will cover the cost of the tour and provide the refreshments at the end of the tour. These will be available back in our own Library.

Please advise the Executive Secretary of the number attending, by completing and returning the attached booking slip with the appropriate remuneration, to the address above. Cheques should be made payable to: Society of Advocates in Aberdeen, BACS payments can be made to the usual details.

We look forward to seeing you on the night.

Please book ___ spaces for the Tolbooth visit on Wednesday the 15th September @ 7.30p.m.
I enclose £___ in payment.

Name (please print) _____

Contact details _____