



Probable site of the Devizes Old Bridewell

### **Allegations of Ill-Treatment at Bridewell**

William Plank from the Devizes Bridewell, a young Fellow about 24 Years of Age, for stealing a Gelding, with Bridle and Saddle, out of the Stable of W. Parker at Maiden Head, is to be carried to Reading to take his Tryal at the next Assizes, but his Life being in Danger, through a Mortification in both his Legs occasioned by some great Barbarities he underwent in Bridewell ..... of, and employed Mr. John Tatum, Surgeon, as all other means were ineffectual, to take off both his Legs, which he readily consenting to, the Operation was performed on one of them Friday last, and when he is properly recovered, is to undergo the same on the other, which, together with the Cruelties he suffered in Bridewell, 'tis hoped, if he Lives to be tried; will be considered as Punishment very sufficient to atone for his Crime.

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal 21 March 1757**

### **Response to Allegations Made of Ill-Treatment at Devizes Bridewell**

To the PRINTER of the SALISBURY JOURNAL,

SIR,

On seeing a Paragraph in your Paper of the 14th Instant concerning William Plank, who was a Prisoner in Devizes Bridewell, and knowing the same to be a vile and scandalous Falsehood, (with Regard to his

being ill treated in that Prison) and intended only to do me an Injury, I take this public method of vindicating myself, in which Relation I fine myself to Truth and Matter of Fact.

The said William Plank had but one Bazzle on, which he found Means to saw-off, and then attempted to make his Escape through the Necessary-House, about the latter End of December, 1756; upon the Discovery of which, I thought it my Duty to load him with double Irons, by Way of Security (but did not confine him to any particular Place, as had been falsely reported). I then made it known to John Turner, Esq; one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for this County, who ordered his removal to Fisherton Goal, where I carried him on the 17th of January last, in perfect health, and with sound Limbs, as Mr. Holdaway the Keeper of the said Goal can and will testify; and during my Stay at Salisbury, which was four Days, I heard not the least Complaint from him or any other Person, and at the End of that Time I left the said William Plank in perfect health. The above Relation I declare to be true, as Witness my Hand this 17th of March, 1757.

JOHN PHILLIPS, Keeper of Devizes Bridewell.

P.S. If the Truth of the above should be still a Matter in dispute, I am ready to produce many substantial Witnesses to corroborate it. I am inform'd, and to verily believe, that a Fever which he had at Fisherton Gaol pitch'd in his Legs, and was the whole Cause of his Disorder.

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal Monday, April 4th, 1757**