# ‘Where the creaking of chains told the murderer’s lot’: the Harnham Hill gibbet and exemplary punishment in Georgian Wiltshire

**Steve Poole**

Eighteenth-century travellers making their way to Salisbury with the aid of Andrews and Dury’s map of the county may have noted an unusual landmark as they came over Harnham Hill. Close by the two mile stone, and just to the left of the road, the cartographers have helpfully indicated a small T shaped object and added in a neat hand beside it, ‘The Gibbet’. What was a weary traveller to think? Public execution was not a rare occurrence in Georgian Wiltshire; indeed hangings could be expected after every sitting of the county assize court. They were staged every year, for example, between 1766, when there were five, and 1773, the year the map was published, when there were three. But the usual place for public hangings was a patch of ground just beyond the turnpike gate at Fisherton Anger (the present St Paul’s roundabout), a site rather more accessible to the crowds who were expected to come and watch.

Andrews and Dury's gibbet pole was erected in 1768 for the execution of John Curtis, a Gosport sailor convicted of the murder of a poor Jewish pedlar named Wolf Myers. It was a brutal and senseless crime. In the late December snows of 1767, Myers had hiked south out of Salisbury after stopping in the city to sell a few inexpensive items from his trinket box. And somewhere up on Harnham Hill, he met his assailant. His body, dumped in a chalk pit close to the road, was soon covered by a fresh fall of snow and so it lay undiscovered until the thaw, several weeks later. In the investigation that followed, it was remembered that a sailor had come into the city shortly after Myers' departure, and that he had been admitted to the new Infirmary to have a wound treated. Seen leaving again the next day, and with a box on his back not unlike the one Myers had been carrying, the sailor was soon identified as the only suspect. He was traced to Gosport, his lodgings searched, and a wooden box retrieved containing 'wares such as the Jews normally carry'.[1] Though he repeatedly protested his innocence, and claimed that the box was his, Curtis was convicted at the Salisbury assize in March 1768 and sentenced to be hanged, not at Fisherton but close to the crime scene on Harnham Hill. If this was not a sufficiently exemplary punishment, the Sheriff ordered his body to be afterwards 'hung in chains' in the same place on a pole 25 feet high.

Under the terms of the 1752 Murder Act, and to ensure 'some further terror or peculiar mark of infamy be added to the punishment', the bodies of murderers were forbidden Christian burial and so had either to be sent to the surgeons for dissection and disposal, or treated to the same indignities as Curtis.[2] Hanging in chains was a euphemism for gibbeting; the encasing of the hanged body in a made-to-measure iron cage attached to a gallows of extraordinary height and planted in a prominent place as a deterrent to the lawless. There it would stay until it either rotted away or fell victim to the weather. This may seem rather a pointless exercise from a twenty-first century perspective, but eighteenth-century people were not yet too rational to believe in the capacity of post-execution punishments to torture and damage the soul, and there were very real terrors to be felt from a denial of Christian burial.[3]

Curtis was one of only seven eighteenth-century convicts to be gibbeted in Wiltshire and one of four in the southern half of the county. In 1741, Henry Wheeler was hung in chains beside the road between Salisbury and Blandford for the murder of a gamekeeper on Cranborne Chase, probably a poaching offence. Unlike Curtis however, Wheeler was hanged in the regular place at Fisherton.[4] Wheeler was followed in 1748 by Abraham Durrill for the murder of his lover, Ann Willmott, at Great Bedwyn. Durrill was tried at Salisbury, then

tied to a horse and taken to the scene of his crime to be hanged and then gibbetted on a gallows 22 feet high.[5] Like Curtis, the third was a sailor, William Jacques, and he too was hanged at the scene of his crime in Stanton St Quintin and afterwards gibbeted on the same pole. Jacques was convicted of the murder of an African seaman and went to his death unrepentant for 'on the way there he said he thought it no crime to kill a black'. He asked to be hanged in the manner of the British Navy, hauled to the top of the gallows by a pulley, and the request was apparently granted.[6] The last man hung in chains before Andrews and Dury's map was published was John Franklin, condemned for robbing the mail between Chippenham and Marlborough in 1770. Franklin was hanged at Fisherton and his body taken to a gibbet pole set up near the Beckhampton Inn at a vantage point close to the junction of the Chippenham to Marlborough road and the Old Bath Road.[7] Franklin was followed by William Amor, executed and gibbeted on Pewsey Down for the murder of a tailor, John Dyke, in 1773.[8] The county's last use of the gibbet came in 1783 when the body of William Peare, another mail robber and highwayman executed at Fisherton, was taken to Green Lane, close to the scene of the robbery and there hung in chains. Peare twice almost evaded his fate, first by escaping from Gloucester Castle by breaking onto the roof and then letting himself down on a rope and then trying to repeat his success in Fisherton gaol by administering a 'soporific

drug' to the turnkey, slipping out of his fetters and trying to break through the wall, but he was discovered and more heavily secured. The gibbet site is popularly supposed to have been at the crossroads between Green Lane and the Chippenham to Marlborough road.[9]

Usually standing between twenty and thirty feet high, gibbet poles were taller than ordinary gallows for two reasons. Firstly, especially when set up on raised ground, extravagant height maximised visibility.[10] Secondly, raising the body a good distance above the ground prevented unsolicited interference, whether from the friends of the deceased, nearby residents who found it distasteful, or macabre souvenir hunters. The closely fitted iron cage helped keep the body intact and served as a second line of defence against interference, and iron plates and spikes might be added around the base of the pole to prevent it being ether scaled or sawn down.[11] We cannot be sure how long some of these gibbet poles remained physically in the landscape. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the two gibbets erected during the decade prior to the publication of Andrews and Dury's map (Jacques's and Franklin's) are both faithfully recorded and so must still have been physical landscape features. Of Wheeler's (1741) there is no sign, but the survival of Durrill's gibbet pole just south of Great Bedwin, twenty years after it was set up in 1748 is perhaps more remarkable. William Amor's gibbet pole, erected on Pewsey Down in

1773, narrowly missed being recorded by Andrews and Dury, but it was noted in 1817 by the cartographers of the first edition one-inch Ordnance Survey so we can safely assume it stood for at least 40 years. William Peare's gibbet at Green Lane is not marked on any maps but according to local tradition, it was pulled down by his friends as they made their way back from Chippenham Fayre just two months after it was set up.[12]

It is clear from their inclusion on contemporary maps that gibbet poles were intended to become landmarks no less familiar to travellers than milestones, windmills, direction posts and other landscape features. Indeed, gibbets may be found on several other early county maps and even on Ogilby's *Britannia* of 1675.[13] The intention, without doubt, was to embed in the soil for generations to come the memory of some quite extraordinary demonstrations of exemplary justice. There are other references to gibbets as place names in Andrews and Dury's map, and some of these may mark the sites of pre-eighteenth century punishments of which no physical record survives. Gibbet Knoll above Market Lavington is one, and Gibbet Tree just west of Shrewton is another. Ella Noyes believed it had once been the practice to hang and gibbet felons on prehistoric round barrows, 'where one stood on the crossing of tracks', and more recently the research of Nicola Whyte in Norfolk has added credence to the theory.[14]

Gibbeting was conducted at the discretion of the county sheriff, who was expected to pay for it from his own pocket, then claim the money back from the Exchequer in his annual cravings. It was not cheap, and the logistical considerations were considerable as illustrated by the decision to hang and gibbet William Jacques at Stanton St Quintin. The Sheriff's cravings are here worth quoting at length:

> For journey, horse hire and expenses to give directions in advance for erecting a gibbet for hanging in chains Wm Jacques… at Stanton upwards of 40 miles distant from Sarum pursuant to his sentence for murder, and also for the Under Sheriff's journey and all his bailiffs and for horse hire and expenses to guard and attend the execution of the said Jacques for fear the sailors should come from Bristol and rescue him, he being a sailor and Bristol not being far from Stanton. Paid the keeper of the county gaol for his expense in carrying and guarding the said Jacques, for a cart and horses to carry him to Stanton and executing him there and afterwards hanging him in chains pursuant to his sentence; paid for erecting a gibbet, nails and iron, workmanship and putting up; paid for making the chains and the smith that made them to go on purpose to put them on.

For all this, the Sheriff claimed £28, although, as was often the case, the Exchequer paid him a good deal less (£15), perhaps after checking the actual distance between Stanton and Bristol![15]

It may come as no surprise to learn that when the Sheriff claimed his cravings for hanging John Curtis on Harnham Hill in 1768, he estimated his trouble at £23, citing the distance from Fisherton gaol to the execution site as 25 miles![16] The Exchequer was having none of it and paid him £10. To put these expenses into perspective, the Sheriff was able to hang two men at Fisherton after the assize in 1773 for no more than £6. 6s.[17]

Gibbetings were usually carried out close to the scene of a convict's crime, but not all crime scene hangings ended with the gibbet. The manner and location of execution was at the Sheriff's discretion and except in cases of murder, he might still permit a criminal body to be returned to the family for burial. Crime scene hangings were almost exclusively ordered for people convicted either of murder or armed robbery however and if they did not conclude with a gibbeting, the body would usually be sent to the surgeons. In Wiltshire, the gibbet fell into disuse after 1783 but there were three more crime scene hangings still to come.[18] The first was in 1783 when two labourers, Matthew Gardener and John Wheeler were hanged for robbery on a patch of ground beside what is now the Warminster by-pass at Blackett's Copse on

Sutton Common. Their selection was prompted by the belief of local magistrates and landowners that violent property crimes like theirs remained rife in the area. 'It is to be hoped', declared a local paper, 'that this shocking spectacle, so unusual in this neighbourhood, will be a warning to the rest of the gang, who have continued to infest and terrify the inhabitants of Warminster ever since the arrest of their confederates.'[19] The bodies of Gardener and Wheeler were released to their families and there were no further crime scene executions ordered for thirty years. In 1813, it was the turn of another pair of labourers, George Ruddock and George Carpenter, carted from Salisbury to Arn Hill, overlooking Warminster, and there hanged for the savage and senseless murder and robbery of William Webb, a farmer on the Longleat Estate.[20] These two were handed over to the surgeons, as was Robert Watkins, another poor labourer, and the last man to be executed at the scene of his crime in Wiltshire. Watkins was condemned for shooting and robbing a coal merchant in the tiny hamlet of Purton Stoke near Swindon in 1819.[21]

The impact of hanging and gibbeting condemned felons at the scene of their crime can perhaps best be measured by the extraordinary size of the crowds who flocked to witness them, by the dramatic accounts published in the local press and by the strength and persistence of local memory. Crowd

numbers were certainly felt to have been greater at crime scene events than at hangings in the usual place, however notorious the crime. In 1766 for instance, Robert and Susan Schiffel were condemned to death for the murder of their nine year old apprentice, Ann Noyes, and hanged at Fisherton gallows. The *Salisbury Journal* noted the execution but was not moved to notice the crowd, and this was true of most reports from Fisherton.[22] Yet in reporting William Amor's execution and gibbeting, far from the nearest town, on Pewsey Down in 1773, the same paper found 'a most astonishing number of people… not less than 12 or 14 thousand'.[23] If contemporary estimates can be relied upon, there were 'many thousands of spectators' at Gardiner and Wheeler's execution on Sutton Common in 1783, and ten thousand at William Jacques's hanging and gibbeting at Stanton St Quintin in 1764.[24]

Crowds of this magnitude could be regarded not only as necessary witnesses to the spectacle but as participants in a drama designed to leave a deep wound in local memory. Carting John Curtis back onto Harnham Hill gave the Sheriff an opportunity to wheel him around the pit in which Myers' body was found and to ask him pointedly if he recognised it. He said he didn't.[25] Amor, on the other hand was ready to confess his guilt in public and so, 'in the course of his journey to the place of execution, he confessed himself to be very penitent', a gesture duly noted by the *Salisbury Journal*.[26] These processions

across country, conducted in full ceremonial regalia, to a waiting gallows perhaps 20 or 40 miles distant, were an extended spectacle in their own right. To be conveyed to Warminster from Salisbury in 1813, Ruddock and Carpenter were put into an open coach at 4.15 in the morning with the 'usual escort' of archaically dressed Javelin Men, the Under Sheriff, the prison ordinary, a body of constables and a detachment of cavalry. 'The coach drove slowly through the villages on the road to Warminster', it was reported, 'that the inhabitants might have a view of the prisoners'. The *Hampshire Chronicle*'s estimation of 50,000 people waiting that morning in Warminster and along the road up to the gallows on Arn Hill may have been exaggerated but the crowd was clearly enormous. The open nature of the hilltop allowed as many as '10,000 persons to see it without pressure', noted the *Morning Post* approvingly, and the prisoners would be forced to look down from an 'almost perpendicular' height upon 'Warminster Church in which Mr Webb was buried and nearly in view of the house where the murderous deed was perpetrated.' Rituals as painstakingly organised as these were not for performing in a hurry, and in this they stood in stark contrast to the perfunctory process enacted twice yearly at Fisherton gallows. Stopping first for prayers on arrival in the town, it was 12.30 by the time Ruddock and Carpenter made it to the top of the hill. A further half hour of prayers ensued beneath the gallows before Carpenter was given a

handkerchief and invited to drop it when they were both ready. 'The poor wretch clung so close to life that he delayed dropping it for nearly half an hour, begging earnestly for a few minutes longer', observed the *Morning Post*. 'At length he dropped it but even then endeavoured to prevent his fall, whereby he suffered greatly in dying.'[27]

The execution of Robert Watkins at Purton Stoke in 1819 was a similarly drawn out affair. 'The number of persons in the road and neighbouring fields was immense', it was reported, and they played their part perfectly. 'A fearful and breathless anxiety, a solemn stillness, and a deep expression of melancholy thought' could be felt in the atmosphere, as Watkins's cart made its way through the throng. Then, 'Near to the fatal spot, the cart passed his wretched mother. He looked steadfastly at her for some moments and with a gentle inclination of head and great expression of feature, seemed to take an eternal farewell of her'.[28] The melancholy impact of dramas like these on the families and friends in the very fields they had all grown up in was palpable. The imposition of a gibbet only made it worse. William Amor, who would spend 45 terrified minutes, standing in silence with the cap drawn over his eyes before signalling for the cart to be pulled away, had been reunited with his family on arrival. His wife 'met him on Pewsey Down by his own desire, and their separation was, on her part, uncommonly affecting' admitted the *Journal*,

and a local correspondent, possibly the philanthropic rector, Joseph Townsend, could only pity 'his unhappy widow, whose distress exceeds all description, tortured with the reflection of her husband's execution, and of his being daily exposed to the public viewing of herself and her neighbours'.[29]

We have already considered the role of cartography in the manufacture of collective memory or in what has come to be known in twenty-first century heritage studies as 'place-making'. But the long shadow of the gibbet has been cast by other means as well. The Wiltshire-born antiquary and topographer John Britton, best known locally as the author of *Beauties of Wiltshire* (1801), never forgot the execution of William Jacques at Stanton because 'when a boy, I often passed the gibbet'. The story of Jacques' demise had been hammered into Britton's memory by his father who 'often repeated the tale' that 'he, with almost all the inhabitants of Kington and the neighbouring villages' went to watch it. 'As the culprit approached the place, a small black cloud was observed over the gibbet; it increased, and at the time of the execution had extended over a wide space. When the man was "turned off", there was a vivid flash of lightning with thunder and a violent storm arose and continued through the remainder of the day'. This story of divine displeasure 'made an indelible impression on my young mind', recalled Britton, 'and indeed

impressed me with the belief that lightning, thunder and storm always accompanied human executions'.[30]

Lasting associations too were left upon the village of Purton Stoke after the hanging of Robert Watkins in 1819. This was 'the occasion which gave to the place a somewhat unenviable notoriety in connection with its annals of cries and personal offences', or so it was suggested in 1878, when another suspicious death was recorded in the parish. In 1919 a local history of the village noted that the gallows site close to a bend in the road had come to be known as 'Watkins Corner', and the prayer book handed to Watkins to recite psalms from as he waited to die had been preserved and inscribed on the fly-leaf as an authenticated relic. 'It is strange to hold the little volume in one's hand open at the 108th Psalm', she writes, 'and to think of Watkins' feelings as he read, " Awake, thou lute, and harp: I myself will awake right early" with the noose already round his neck!' The prayer book is now looked after by Purton Museum. Rather more bizarrely, in 2007 the village staged a re-enactment 'hanging fayre' to which descendants of both Watkins and his victim were invited.[31] The gibbeting of John Franklin for robbing the mail near Beckhampton in 1770 was also remembered long after the disappearance of any physical remains. 'There may be some persons still alive who recollect the existence of a gibbet on the downs between Cherhill and Beckhampton,

swinging with the remains of a highwayman who had been hanged in chains for a robbery committed upon the subsequent site of his punishment', claimed the Rev W. C Plenderleath in 1889. Franklin's gibbet was still remembered in 1933 as a relic of 'the last public execution in this part of the country', augmented by the fictionalised tale of a last minute reprieve that narrowly failed to arrive and an assurance that 'the folk of Beckhampton, Marlborough, West Kennet and for miles round made it a public holiday'. Franklin's execution is an interesting example of the process by which memory may be transferred from one object to another to preserve a physical presence. The gibbet may have disappeared, the article continues, but 'the tragedy… is still commemorated by a stone known as the Robber's Stone'.[32] This very ancient stone was presumably thought to have stood close to the original gibbet site and has given the narrative a new lease of life. The archaeologist Aubrey Burl, for instance, noted it in his *Prehistoric Avebury* and faithfully reproduced the melodramatic last minute reprieve, but named the hanged man Walter Leader and transposed the execution to 1837, a mistake that can be attributed to a very jumbled account of the case published in the *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* in 1952. If it serves any useful purpose at all, it at least underlines the malleable flexibility of gibbet mythology.[33]

William Peare's gibbet at Green Lane may have stood for no longer than two months, but by the time he had been Romanticised as a gallant highwayman in nineteenth century panegyrics, it had become a site of mourning for his bereaved sweetheart, Mary Waite. According to verses purportedly written in 1783 and included in *Highwaymen of Wiltshire* in 1856, Waite shed tears at the gibbet site very day:

Alas that e'er these eyes should see

That much loved form so straight and fair

Swing lifeless on the fatal tree

Sport of the sun and blasting air

How oft those iron-mantled arms

Around my throbbing waist have clung;

How proud I've views those manly charms

And drunk sweet poison from his tongue…[34]

It is time we returned to Harnham Hill, where commemorative activities commenced even before Curtis's execution had taken place, thanks to the solidarity of the region's Jewish community. One man who worked hard to secure Curtis's conviction was Abraham Wolf, a prominent member of the

Jewish community at Portsmouth. Convinced of the sailor's guilt, Wolf assisted in his examination a Gosport, and then travelled to Salisbury when the trial opened to offer himself as an expert witness. He was never called but once Curtis had been convicted, he commissioned a Jewish silversmith in the city, Isaac Levy, to produce a series of commemorative medals or pocket pieces as gifts for those 'Gentlemen who had exerted themselves in the apprehending of the murderer, in remembrance of the bloody fact'.[35] At least twelve of these pocket pieces have survived, each one uniquely engraved by hand and depicting either a crude image of Curtis hanging in his gibbet irons alongside the date and nature of the case, or a rough sketch map of the gibbet's location, close to the junction of the Blandford and Shaftesbury roads. At least twelve of these coins have survived, most of them now in private collections although two may be seen in Salisbury Museum and another two in the Wiltshire Museum, Devizes. Given that Andrews and Dury's map of 1773 was the first to be based on an original survey since the work of John Speed 1611, Wolf's experimental cartography may be judged of some significance.[36] Although the Harnham Hill gibbet was almost certainly long gone by the mid nineteenth century, it was clearly not forgotten for it reappeared in doggerel form in Miss Child's *The Spinster at Home* in 1844. Child's narrative traces the key elements of the case, including the attempt to obtain a confession from Curtis by taking

him to the pit in which Myers' body was found, and adding a fanciful suggestion of her own that the murder site was discovered by foxhounds , and adds a line drawing of one of the two pocket pieces in Salisbury Museum. 'It is traditionary', she says, 'that these memorials were executed for the purposes of traffick by the smitten Jew's relations, probably right willing, by such records to perpetuate the history and shameful end of their kinsman's destroyer'. It is equally traditionary for gibbet sites to inspire ghost stories and Child does not disappoint. Indeed, the place is so bewitched that the birds are too repulsed to peck at Curtis's eyes and bones,

> But each animal, frighted, avoided the spot
>
> Where the creaking of chains told the murderer's lot
>
> If thus ghastly by day –oh! how looked he by night?
>
> In the star's quiv'ring beam or the moon's dubious light?
>
> Did the traveller turn pale at the sound and the sight?
>
> Did he not wend his way in the utmost affright?[37]

This essay has attempted to locate the Harnham Hill gibbet in a wider Hanoverian landscape of memory and retributory justice. Both gibbeting and the practice of executing the most notorious convicts at the scene of their

crime were practices based upon the principle of exemplary punishment and for that reason were always conducted as an exception rather than the rule. Since the majority of crimes occurred close to the place where victims and perpetrators lived, these were also punishments in which impact was dependent on the familiarity of place and community. In the case of gibbeting at least, they were punishments in which a stark physical record of the event was designed to remain perpetually planted in the soil; daily in view, materially at first, and then recalled through associative memory, folk tales, verse and legend. John Curtis's gibbet is anomalous to some degree for neither he nor the murder victim were natives of Salisbury nor even of Wiltshire, but the brutal nature of the crime, together with the pressure applied by Abraham Wolf to bring the case to a conclusion seem to have been enough to guide the Sheriff's hand. Localised retribution played an important part in these processes but these were also punishments whose intention was to reiterate the power of the central State and the criminal law in geographically peripheral communities. Their decline ran in tandem with the gradual repeal of England's capital statutes in the 1820s and 30s by reformers keen to explore the potential of new penitentiary prison systems to combat the criminal mind. The last scene of crime execution in England was staged at Kenn in Somerset in 1830 and the last gibbeting in Leicestershire in 1832 but both practices had

been in steady decline since the turn of the century. The enlightened and rational men who brought about the gibbet's end were, of course, the same enlightened and rational men who remained sufficiently fascinated by its mysteries to collect fragmentary relics, catalogue and preserve them in local museums and delight in the retelling and perpetuating of the anecdotes and ghost-stories with which they were associated. The gibbet continued to horrify and compel the imagination of the English long after it ceased to exist in law.

[1] *Oxford Journal* 6 February 1768
[2] 25 Geo II c.37.*An Act for Better Preventing the Horrid Crime of Murder*
[3] On gibbeting see Tarlow, Sarah, 2017, *The Golden and Ghoulish Age of the Gibbet in Britain*, Palgrave
[4] *London Evening Post*, 22 December 1739; *Derby Mercury*, 10 April 1740
[5] *London Evening Post*, 5 April 1748
[6] *St James's Chronicle* 11 Aug 1764; *Lloyd's Evening Post* 20 Aug 1764

[7] *Oxford Journal* 28 April, 1770
[8] *London Evening Post* 13 March 1773; *Morning Chronicle*, 23 March 1773
[9] *Kentish Gazette* 27 August 1783. Peare was feted in later years as one of Wiltshire's most notorious dandy highwaymen. See the imaginative reconstruction of his life and death in 'Old Stories Retold: The Cricklade Highwayman', *Wiltshire Times and Trowbridge Advertiser*, 20 September 1902, and account in *Highwaymen of Wiltshire or a Narrative of the Adventurous Career and Untimely End of Divers Freebooters and Smugglers in this and the Adjoining Counties*, 1856, 70-79.
[10] For a detailed study of the geography of siting gibbet poles, see Dyndor, Zoe, 2015, 'The Gibbet in the Landscape: Locating the Criminal Corpse in Mid-Eighteenth Century England', in Ward, R (ed), *A Global History of Execution and the Criminal Corpse,* Palgrave, 102-126.
[11] Tarlow, *Golden and Ghoulish Age*, 46

[12] *Highwaymen of Wiltshire*, 76
[13] Tarlow, *Golden and Ghoulish Age*, 67
[14] Noyes, Ella, 1913 *Salisbury Plain: Its Stones, Cathedral, City, Villages and Folk*, 3; Whyte, Nicola, 2009, *Inhabiting the Landscape: Place, Custom and Memory, 1500-1800*, Oxbow, 155-62
[15] TNA T90/155, Wiltshire Cravings 1764.
[16] TNA T90/157, Wiltshire Cravings 1768
[17] TNA T90/159, Wiltshire Cravings 1773
[18] For broader studies of crime scene execution, see Poole, Steve, 2008, 'A lasting and salutary warning: Incendiarism, rural order and England's last scene of crime execution', *Rural History*, 19, 2, and Poole, Steve, 2015, 'For the Benefit of Example: Crime Scene Executions in England, 1720-1830' in Ward, R (ed), *A Global History of Execution and the Criminal Corpse,* Palgrave, 71-101
[19] *Bath Chronicle* 14 August 1783
[20] *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, (hereafter *SJ*) 25 March 1813
[21] *SJ* 2 August 1819
[22] *SJ* 17 March 1766
[23] *SJ* 22 March 1773
[24] *Bath Chronicle* 14 August 1783, *St James's Chronicle* 11 August 1764
[25] *Westminster Journal* 9 March 1768
[26] *SJ* 22 March 1773
[27] *Hampshire Chronicle*, 13 March 1813; *Morning Post* 16, 20 March 1813; *Cheltenham Chronicle* 18 March 1813

[28] *SJ* 2 August 1819
[29] *SJ* 22 March 1773. Townsend was not only rector of Pewsey at the time Amor was hanged, but an eminent doctor and geologist with an interest in social reform. For the suggestion that he was the author of the letter, see Underhill, Cheryl, 2008, 'Joseph Townsend, 1739-1816: a well-respected polymath', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine,* (hereafter *WANHM*) 101, 234.
[30] Britton, John, 1850, *Autobiography*, 1, 36-7.
[31] Richardson, Ethel M, 1919, *The Story of Purton: A Collection of Notes and Hearsay*, Arrowsmith, 83-5; *Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle*, 10 August 1878
[32] Plenderleath, W C, 1889, 'Cherhill Gleanings', *WANHM*, 24; *North Wits Herald*, 27 October 1933. See also Marsh, A E W, 1903, *A History of the Borough and Town of Calne and Some Account of the Villages*. I am grateful to Pete Glastonbury for bringing this volume to my attention.
[33] Burl, Aubrey, 2002, *Prehistoric Avebury*, Yale, second edition, 57-5; 'The Grave on the Devizes-Beckhampton Road', *WANHM* 54, 1952, 438-9. My thanks to Brian Edwards for both of these references. It is possible that the Robber's Stone or Grave, and a stone marking the site of the gibbet are, in fact, separate entities. To be clear, nobody named Leader was hanged anywhere in England and Wales at any time between 1800 and 1868 and nobody hanged for Robbery in Wiltshire after 1824.
[34] *Highwayman of Wiltshire*, 77
[35] *SJ* 21 March, 2 May 1768. For more on Abraham Wolf see Miesels, I S, 1910, 'The Jewish congregation of Portsmouth (1766-1842)', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 6, 111-127; Roth, Cecil, 1935, 'The Portsmouth Community and its Historical Background', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 13, 170-176; Newman, Eugene, 1952, 'Some new facts about the Portsmouth Jewish community', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 17, 258. See also Kushner, Tony, 2013, 'A Tale of Two Port Jewish Communities: Southampton and Portsmouth Compared' in Cesarani David, (ed), *Port Jews: Jewish Communities in Cosmopolitan Maritime Trading Centres, 1550-1950,* Routledge, second edition, 87-111.
[36] Two medals are noted in Whiting, J R S, 1972, *Commemorative Medals: A Medallic History of Britain from Tudor Times to the Present Day*, 141. For a more detailed discussion see Poole, Steve, 'In remembrance of the bloody fact: coins, public execution and the gibbet in Hanoverian England' in Lloyd, Sarah (ed), *Tales of Life and Love; Tokens of Disrespect, 1700-1850*, Holburton, forthcoming 2021
[37] Miss Child, 1844, *The Spinster at Home in the Close of Salisbury. No Fable. Together with Tales and Ballads,* 195-204. Thanks to John Chandler for drawing my attention to this book.