



Radnor House, The former Fisherton Gaol

Fisherton Gaol

The county gaol in Fisherton was never more full of prisoners than at this instant; besides those who are to take their trials at the ensuing assizes, there are no less than 22 convicts sentenced for hard labour upon the Thames and transportation, most of whom have lain there nearly a twelvemonth since their sentences were passed; It is an heavy expence upon the county to maintain them so long after they ought to have been removed; but when it is considered that these poor wretches, whose crimes have driven them from society, and deprived them of every friend, are not only detained in cells, loaded with chains, for this long period, but that *their sentences do not commence until they are actually transported or on hoard the hulks*; humanity must recoil at the recital of so heavy an additional punishment, arising perhaps from the indolence of some servant to the state; nor is it thus with this prison alone, but generally so through the kingdom: Where is the patriotism, mercy, and philanthropy of our men in power, if they suffer such wanton cruelty as this to go unpunished ? And above all, what a reflection is it upon us as Englishmen, who boast of our liberty above all other gifts, that by our indifference we tacitly approve such enormity. To what purpose was the act passed last session of Parliament for the transportation of felons?"

Salisbury and Winchester Journal 28 February 1785