



### **Inmate Blew Up Prison**

The following extraordinary event happened at Melksham on Sunday the 18th inst.

A man of the name of Southernwood being sworn to by a woman of that place, as the father of a child she had coming by him, the parish officers apprehended him the day above-mentioned, to conduct him to prison; but some dragoons being quartered at Melksham, they had placed their stores in it. The key was demanded of the Quarter-Master, who remonstrated on the impropriety of putting a man there whilst so much gun-powder (to the rare of 60 rounds per man made into cartridges, besides a considerable quantity in what they call a leathern jack) was lodged there, but the constable insisting on having the key, it was delivered up. The man confined there no sooner knew of the circumstance of the powder, than he formed the desperate resolution of blowing the house and himself up; which horrid purpose he put into execution that evening, and the whole now lays in a heap of ruins; not a stone (some of them near a ton weight) remaining in its former situation; but what is extremely fortunate, altho' it stands in the middle of the town, not a person received the least injury, except the wretch who perpetrated this execrable deed. The man, astonishing to tell, was taken out alive, but miserably burnt, and one of his legs was crushed in such a manner by the falling of the stones, as to require immediate amputation. He is still existing, altho' in a most terrible condition, and has confessed that the method he made use of to set the powder on fire was, by striking his knife against some flint stones which were there!

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal 26 August 1782**