

I must first apologise for the delay in answering your letter of May 20, re private prosecution societies. This is because I have been away on holiday.

The only help, if it is help, that I can give you is a reference in Jackson's Oxford Journal. Jackson's Oxford Journal was one of the early provincial newspapers and started before 1750- I came across this reference while doing some work on local hostelries and inns, and found that Charles Wakelin, landlord of the King and Queen, Wheatley, from 1754-57, was one of the signatories to the following: Jackson's Oxford Journal, Saturday April 24 1756.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Whereas the Subscription is now open for the Prosecution of all Murderers, Thieves, and Robbers within the County of Oxford: all Persons intending to partake of the Benefit thereof are desired to pay their Subscriptions to the Persons whose Names are underwritten, or to any other Gentlemen, who will act so friendly a Part as to collect for the Office in the City of Oxford, who will transmit the same with the Names and Occupations of each Subscriber, together with the places of their Abode to Mr. Stewart, at the Registrar's Office in Magdalen Parish, Oxford.

N.B. Payments may be made to:

Mr. John Sadler, Mercer, in Watlington.
Mr. Potter, at the King's Arms in Bicester.
Mr. Cross, at the Bear Inn in Woodstock.
Mr. Wrainsford, in Charlbury.
Mr. William Heynes, At the White Hart, Chipping Morton.
Mr. Henry Clarion, in Banbury.
Mr. Wey, in Thame.
Mr. Thompson, at the Old George, Dorchester.
Mr. Appletree, in Deddington.
Mr. Councer, in Bloxham.
Mr. Townsend, at Staple Hall in Witney.
Mr. Jordan, Schoolmaster, in Burford.
Mr. Joseph Fowler, at Hampton.
Mr. Burdett, at the Bell in Henley.
Mr. Wakelin, at the King and Queen in Wheatley.
Mr. Hobdy, at the Swan in Tetsworth.

hr. Kemp, at the Red Lion in Bensington.

Proposals may be had, Price toe Penny each, at the Printing Office in the High Street, Oxford, or of the Man who Garry this Paper.

The above advertisement was presented by the following letter, printed immediately above :

To Mr. Jackson, Printer of the Oxford Journal.

Sir,

In my journey thro' your County towards Bath, at my Inn at Oxford and Burford, I observed a printed Paper stuck up, and was informed the fame was done at almost every Inn and Publick House in this County—The Title A Proposal for the Discovery, Punishment, and Prevention of Theft, Robbery, &c, in the Said County.

I could not help, upon reading the fame, but paying the greatest regards, since it appears very evident the Promoters thereof (at so very small an Expense as One Shilling only by each Subscriber) have pointed out a Method for, detecting, punishing , and consequently preventing of Murders, Robberies, Thefts and the like, too recent in the minds of many, as well your* as in most, if not, in all the Counties of England, and of which the common News Papers often Furnish us with melancholy Examples*

I could heartily wish a Proposal, so worthy Imitation, might be put in Practice in such Manner, as that it may become universal, especially throughout this Kingdom: Persuaded am I, that almost everyone will cheerfully contribute so small a Latter, which carries with it a manifest view of Disinterestedness, and as manifestly proves, the Publick's Benefit and Advantage, Gentlemen upon this Occasion will exert themselves amongst their neighbours and Parishioners in Order to forward their Subscriptions.

You will excuse me for dropping a few loose sentiments in Support of this laudable Scheme, which I shall labour to promote in my own County, the First leisure Hour, I reach the fame, being not fifty miles remote from the Place I trouble you with this letter, and am

Your confant Reader,

Burford,

April 21, 1756, * At Hopcroft's Holt. The Man and his Wife murdered, robbed and Plundered, 1754

Jackson's Oxford Journal, March 20, 1756

We are very well assured that a Scheme is prepared, and will soon be put in Execution, for the Discovery, Punishment, and future Prevention (as much as possible) of all Murder, Robbery, Sheft, and all manner of Invasion of Property within the County of Oxford.

The Particulars of this Scheme will be published at Lady Day next, and may be had at Mr. Jackson's Printing Office in Oxford.

As this is calculated purely for the public Good, it must meet with publick Approbation, and the Proposals will shew every Man, within the said County, how he may be supplied with Money to prosecute every Murderer, Robber, Thief, or other Offender, without being at the Expense of One Earthing attending Prosecution.