

**COL/SJ/03/005 (MISC MSS 3.37 No. 2)**  
**Transcript of John Bowler's eye-witness statement**

John Bowler maketh oath that on Sunday the Second day of Sept[ember] 1666  
betweene the Houres of 9 & 10 that night being very weary the day before  
he was desirous to repose himselfe for some time but had not lyen downe  
not halfe an houre before he was Called by a watchman to come to the  
watch for that there was one taken upon susspition of fireing a howse at  
or neere the three Cranes in Theames Streete, I made all the Speed I  
Could to come to the watch, and there found a man w[i]th a Staffe in forme  
of a Cunstables Staffe and a very good steele Murrane on his head I  
Examined him whether he was a Cunstable he tould me no I asked him  
~~whether~~ what he did w[i]th that Staffe he told me it was not a Cunstables  
Staffe for it was not paynted only desired to p[er]sonate himselfe to be a  
Cunstable that he might doe good in the fire, I asked him why he wore  
his Murrane he told me to Save his head from the fall of tyles or  
Brickes, being in a Crowd I comanded two watchmen to light their  
Candles and see him home to his howse in Shou Lane where he said first  
he lived & alsoe comanded the watchmen to aske the next Ajasent  
neighbours on both sides of his Life & conversation if they gave him a  
good report to lett him remayne ~~there~~ at home or otherwise to bring  
him back agayne, he had not departed above halfe a furlonge but  
desired the watchmen he might Come backe agayne to the Cunstable for  
that he lived not in Shou Lane but behind St Clements Church w[i]thout  
Temple Barre in the meane time a little boy of about 13 or 14 yeares  
of Age as I Sopose Cryes to me S[i>r he Burnt my fathers howse at  
the three Cranes in Thames Street & hath wild fire in his Pockett at  
w[hi]ch I searcht him & found in his Pockett a horne of Powder and  
the Boy affermed he Layd a trayne of Powder in his fathers window  
and a Ball of wildfire w[hi]ch sett the howse on fire before he Came  
out I Comitted him to Wood street Counter to the hands of Mr

Hackett, on Monday & Tewsday in the fire I was spoken  
to by a young man in his behalfe that he might be had before  
some Justice for that he was a very honest man, Sara said I, I  
will know what you are that are Soe Solicitus in his behalfe and be  
ing in St ffayths Church w[hi]ch was very full of goods he Run from  
me & I saw him no more, nor heard noe more of the man

[*Taken before me (translated)*]

John Bowler

W[ilia]m Peake Maior