

Name: Edward Baines

Occupation: Reporter

Home: Not stated

Date: 23rd March 1820

Source: *Trial of Henry Hunt* 126-128 and 133

Summary: Attended meeting. Was close to Hunt during the speech. States that meeting was peaceable and that Hunt exhorted the crowd not to resist the yeomanry. 'Heard no person call on those who first arrived, to prevent the cavalry and the corruption from coming among them.'

Done by: RH

Edward Baines examined by Mr. Hunt—Had made no deposition; had not read or been made acquainted with any part of the evidence on this trial. He attended the Manchester meeting, for the purpose of reporting the proceedings. Saw the different bodies come up, arm in arm, towards the hustings. They were received with three cheers. They did not take up their stations in a very regular manner. Saw nothing very particular in their manner, but that they came in different bodies. Saw nothing more than common walking sticks among them. A considerable number had sticks. Did not notice a greater proportion among them with sticks than was usual in a mixed assembly. Saw no large stones carried by any of them; had such been carried, thinks he must have seen them. He then described the proceedings of the meeting. Some persons, who came from a distance, had wanted refreshment, and a subscription was made for all. Afterwards it was determined to have nothing but water, and a can of water was sent for. When Mr. Hunt arrived, he seemed dissatisfied with the situation of the hustings. He, (Mr. Hunt) mounted them, as did about fourteen girls, dressed uniformly in white. They were placed there for safety, as the pressure of the crowd was very great. One or two women had previously fainted, and been lifted on the hustings; an attempt was made by those nearest the hustings to push themselves-back and leave a space between them and the hustings. They succeeded but very partially in this, and to the best of his recollection, they were close up to the hustings while Mr. Hunt was speaking. Mr. Hunt spoke, and witness took notes of his speech in short and he then read the speech, which, in substance, agreed with the report given of it by other witnesses for the defence. Towards the close of the speech witness observed the cavalry advance; they were in considerable disorder. Before they came in sight, Mr. Hunt stopped in the middle of his speech, for what reason witness did not know, and called on the people to give three cheers. He then said, "there is some disorder on the outskirts, it is only to rally them, that is all." Three cheers were given, but no more before the cavalry came. Mr. Hunt said, "this is a trick, you see they are in disorder." The cavalry, after halting for about three minutes brandished their swords.

By the *Judge*. — Witness saw nothing done to encourage the crowd to offer resistance. His eyes were fixed on them as he advanced into the house, till they had got about ten yards into the crowd. Saw no stones thrown, or sticks lifted at them, or any other insult offered. Should think Mr. *Buxton's* house sixty or seventy yard's from the hustings. He continued to look on the cavalry till they arrived within twenty or thirty yards. Then he turned away, and in about half a minute they arrived at the hustings. Mr. Hunt stood, and

stretching put his arm, cried "Be firm." His face was then in the direction of the cavalry, and the words were addressed to the whole crowd. No application was made, to witness's knowledge, for the cavalry to pass through. He had no knowledge of the purpose for which they approached, and had no reason for thinking that Mr. Hunt had. He saw no constables accompanying the cavalry. Mr. Hunt said, give three cheers; this was whilst the cavalry, were advancing. While they were among the crowd Mr. Hunt cried out several times, "be firm." Three cheers were given before they were in sight; which had not expired when they halted at Mr. *Buxton's* door. Did not remain on the hustings till Mr. Hunt was arrested.

Re-examined by Mr. Hunt. —He left the hustings when the cavalry were about ten yards within the people; he then went about four yards in the opposite direction to Mr. *Buxton's*. He saw a trumpeter on a pyebald horse wheeling about. The crowd, by a sudden impulse, fell back He was carried thirty yards from the spot on which he had stood. He then got on a cart to see what was passing. Met with no impediment to his retreat, but from the density of the crowd. The trumpeter was about two yards from the hustings, between witness and the hustings. There was no locking of arms behind, and on the side where the witness was. Saw no cordon of people with locked arms, six or eight deep, surrounding the hustings at a distance of six yards. He thought it impossible for any one to see that arms were locked at a distance of four yards from the hustings; he could not say whether or not they were linked arm in arm before. Saw no difference in the people's forming on that day, from the manner in which they assembled on other occasions. Heard no person call on those who first arrived, to prevent the cavalry and the corruption from coming among them. It was not possible for a person at 10 yards distance (from *Buxton's*) to see that the people stood round the hustings with locked arms. Saw nothing warlike in the appearance of these persons; they did not seem at all like disciplined troops ready to protect *Hunt*, or to fight for them as occasion offered. There were many women among them. The three cheers given, if he expressed his opinion of them, were three cheers of conscious innocence, confidently relying on the protection of the laws.

Mr. *Scarlett* objected to this being received as evidence,

The *Judge* said the witness had a right to give the impression on his mind, and it might very possibly have been as he supposed.

Examination resumed—Heard Mr. Hunt say nothing (referring to the military), like "get them down, and when you have got them down, keep them down." He was close to Mr. Hunt; thought he could not have acted thus without his knowledge. Did not hear him say, "Never mind; they are only a few soldiers, and we are a host against them."—Had such words been used, he must have heard them. The manner in which he (Mr. Hunt) had used the word "Reform," was accompanied by nothing to induce resistance, but seemed merely intended to induce the crowd to stand where they were, to prevent them from running, and to guard against danger and confusion.

Mr. *Scarlett* objected to a question being put as to the impression on the witness's mind.

The *Judge* thought, after getting at the words and manner of the party, a question as to the impression produced by them might be put. Mr. Hunt would consent to give up the point, if that which had been obtained from the impressions of some of the witnesses for the Crown were struck out.

Mr. *Scarlett* said, those went to show the character of the meeting;

Mr. Hunt remarked, the *Learned Counsel* thought impressions might be taken on one side, but not on the other.

Examined by the *Judge*—Saw no disposition in the crowd to put themselves in any posture of offence or defence; Mr. Hunt found no fault with them for putting themselves in a posture of offence or defence.

Re-examined by Mr. Hunt—He (Mr. Hunt) did not stretch out his arm in a threatening attitude, but in a way to preserve peace.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Scarlett*—Did not know whether Mr. Hunt had his hat on, or whether it was in his hand at the time; had taken notice of the walking-sticks in consequence of what had been said on the subject of the intention of the reformers, in the papers.

By Mr. *Barrow* - Did not remember seeing *Jones* on the hustings.

By Dr. *Healey*. —Remembered seeing Dr. *Healey* on the hustings, and remembered that he had desired the people to be silent or quiet.

By the *Judge*. Took notes previously to the arrival of Mr. Hunt. Did not know for what purpose the cavalry were coming towards the hustings.

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Edward Baines again called by Mr. *Bamford*. —By the Court. Did you see the Middleton procession? I saw the Middleton and Rochdale united.

Were there many women? —A great many old and young.

Was their conduct orderly? —Perfectly so; they opened to let us pass. We were going a contrary way.