**Name**: George Brown

**Occupation**: Merchant, working as a special constable on 16th Aug 1819.

**Home**: Manchester

**Date**: April 8th, 1822

**Source**: Redford v Birley, 390-402

**Summary**: Testifies to the violence of the crowd, claiming Hunt instructed them to take down and keep down anyone who attempted to interfere with the meeting. Saw members of the crowd hitting the Yeomanry horses with sticks and was himself knocked down by a large stone.

**Done by**: RM

*George Brown sworn: examined by Mr. Starkie.*

Q. Are you a merchant in Manchester?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you attend on the morning of the 16th. August, at St. Peter's Field?

A. I did.

Q. Did you, in consequence of the directions you had received, place yourself near the cart intended for the hustings?

A. I did.

Q. How near to the cart did you get?

A. In the first instance, within about six yards.

Q. Was the cart removed from the place where you first saw it?

A. It was.

Q. How far was it removed?

A. I should think from five to six yards.

Q. Had you seen the line of constables at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it removed from them, and how far?

A. Five or six yards.

Q. The cart being removed, did you hear any order given by any person in the cart?

A. I did; by a person of the name of Swift.

Q. What was the order?

A. The order was to link arms and stand firm.

Q. Upon that order being given, what did you observe done?

A. In consequence of that order being given, there was a very great pressure, and I was closed in between those that were in the crowd.

Q. You say there was a great pressure?

A. Yes.

Q. Was that in the space between the constables?

A. Between the constables and those that were locked.

Q. Did you see whether there was any pressure on the constables?

A. A very great pressure; so as to make them fall back.

Q. Did you see whether they were in fact, pushed back?

A. They were forced back, to a certain distance; but they gained their ground again.

Q. Did you see whether they attempted to get nearer the hustings?

A. Yes.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—When you say they attempted, who do you mean?

A. The constables.

Q. Did they succeed in doing this, or what prevented them?

A. They did.

Q. Did they get up to the hustings?

A. I was within one man of the hustings myself.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—You was one of the special constables?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. You say you got up to within one of the hustings?

A. Within one.

Q. Did the body of constables get up?

A. They did not.

Q. What prevented the body of constables from getting up to the hustings?

A. The body of constables, or the greater part of them, were formed in a row, it was only me and a few others that kept our ground.

Q. Then you and a few others were separated from the rest?

A. Separated from the rest.

Q. How were the persons between you and the constables; were they linked?

A. There were a great number linked; I was completely cut off.

Q. Then, by the linking of arms, you and some others were cut off from the main body of the constables?

A. We were.

Q. For what purpose did that appear to be done—the linking of arms?

A. To protect the hustings.

Q. From whom?

A. From the constables.

Q. To what distance from the hustings did this linking of arms continue to shut out the constables?

A. It might be ten or twelve yards or more; I was so near to the hustings I could not judge.

Q. Did you remain in that situation, near to the hustings, when Mr. Hunt arrived?

A. I did.

Q. We have heard from the other witnesses what took place; that there was a great shouting.

A. Most tremendous.

Q. A most tremendous shouting?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear Mr. Hunt say any thing, when he got on the hustings?

A. Yes.

Q. State what it was he said?

A. He was speaking as to the all powerful right they had, as British subjects, to petition; he was going on to make a long speech.

Q. I do not wish you to go through the whole he said, but did you hear him give directions to the people what they were to do, in case they were interrupted?

A. He said, if the enemies shewed any symptoms against them, they were to put them down, quiet them, and keep them down.

Q. Did you hear what was said by any of the mob to this?

A. I did.

Q. What was it?

A. Two men were linked arm in arm; one said to the other, “I reckon mon, he means we mun kill 'em." The other man replied, "Aye, to be sure, you fool, he does."

Q. Did you see the Yeomanry Cavalry approach?

A. I did.

Q. Was there any expression on the part of the people on seeing the Cavalry?

A. I heard Hunt ------

Q. What did he say?

A. He said to Johnson, "they are already in disorder."

Q. Well?

A. And when they had formed in front of the Magistrates' house, he pointed in this sort of way (extending his arm and pointing) to the Cavalry, and said "there is a pretty sight for you."

Q. What did he do then?

A. Mr. Hunt desired the men to be firm.

Q. Do you recollect what his particular expression was?

A. "Be firm."

Q. What was done then?

A. I do not recollect.

Q. Do you recollect his directing a shout, as soon as they had formed?

A. Yes, he said "let us give them a shout," or "cheers."

Q. That, I think you say, was when the Cavalry had formed near Mr. Buxton's house?

A. They had already formed.

Q. On Hr. Hunt using these words, what was done?

A. Upon his giving these directions to shout or cheer, there was a very loud shout.

Q. One or more?

A. Three.

Q. Very loud shouts?

A. Very loud shouts.

Q. Did you see whether he joined in the shout?

A. He did.

Q. How was his hat?

A. He put it round, with Johnson and others, in this way (imitating the motion of a man waving his hat while in the act of cheering).

Q. Did you see the Cavalry advance?

A. Yes; I did.

Q. As the Yeomanry moved forward, was there any expression on the part of the mob towards them?

A. I do not recollect.

Q. What happened then as the Cavalry were moving?

A. The men, locked arm in arm, cried out one to another "be firm, stand fast;" and I being hemmed in, they turned towards the Cavalry, and, consequently, I must turn with them.

Q. What did you then see?

A. I saw the Cavalry advance, and the men with their sticks up, fitting, in this kind of way, their horses' heads (imitating the motion of a person so striking).

Q. How far were the Cavalry from the hustings at that time?

A. I should suppose twenty yards, perhaps more—from twenty to thirty yards. About half the distance between Mr. Buxton's house and the hustings.

Q. You say you saw the men hitting; by the men do you mean the mob?

A. I mean the mob.

Q. With their sticks up, striking the horses' heads?

A. Yes; with their sticks up striking the horses heads.

Q. What did that appear to be done for?

A. To prevent their approach to the hustings.

Q. Did you see any stones thrown?

A. A great number.

Q. Against whom were the stones directed?

A. Against the constables and the Cavalry.

Q. Was that about the same time you saw the sticks raised, or afterwards?

A. It was just at the approach of the Cavalry, the same moment.

Q. When you saw the Cavalry about half way?

A. About half way.

Q. Were there many stones thrown?

A. There were several, and pieces of brick, which I noticed particularly.

Q. Several stones and pieces of brick, which you noticed particularly?

A. Yes.

Q. These you say were directed both against the Cavalry and constables?

A. Both; that was what I supposed at the time.

Q. Were the constables distinguishable from the rest by their truncheons?

A. It was the only means by which they could distinguish themselves, by holding up their truncheons.

Q. What further happened on the advance of the Yeomanry?

A. When the Yeomanry advanced, there was a very great

bustle, tremendous; and these men with the locked arms, appeared to get completely in the rear of the constables, who were acting with the Cavalry; and, at that period, there were more stones thrown.

Q. Well?

A. Then I was myself knocked down.

Q. By what was you knocked down?

A. By a stone or brickbat; but by which I could not tell.

Q. Well?

A. I was some time on the ground before I could recover myself.

Q. Had any violence been offered you before?

A. Yes; immediately on the approach of the Yeomanry, a man ered to knock me down with a stick; I prevented the blow, by striking the man, when he had his arm raised, just under the elbow.

Q. Who was this man who struck at you?

A. One of the same men I heard speak before, who said, “he ans mon we mun kill 'em.”

Q. How soon was this, after the order had been given by Hunt quiet them and keep them down?

A. Not more than two minutes, for they halted a short time.

Q. You say part of the persons linked arm in arm got in the rear the constables?

A. Yes.

Q. Did any get in the rear of the Cavalry?

A. Yes, they did.

Q. Any of those linked arm in arm?

A. Yes: many of those linked arm in arm.

Q. Were the Yeomanry at that time surrounded by the mob?

A. They were surrounded by those linked arm in arm—particularly those. The Cavalry then began to make way (describing the motion of the sword).

Q. What did they do?

A. They hit the men with the flat sides of their swords, spurred their horses on, and got round the hustings.

Q. And got round the hustings?

A. Yes.

Q. Did the Yeomanry use their swords before, or after they had so been assaulted by the mob?

A. Not till after they had so been assaulted by the mob, to my certain knowledge.

Q. Did you see many persons with sticks?

A. I should think there were a thousand.

Q. Now, sir, were they small rods or switches, or such as are calculated to do serious mischief?

A. Some of them were very large.

Q. Were those of that description, which you saw actively used against the heads of the horses?

A. The same.

Q. Did you see any of those, after the meeting had been dispersed, on the ground?

A. A very great number indeed.

Q. What number of them do you mean, ten or twenty?

A. Many hundreds.

Q. Were any stones lying on the ground afterwards?

A. A great quantity.

Q. Upon the approach of the Cavalry did you at any time hear any hissing?

A. As they came round the corner of the cottage wall.

Q. Great hissing?

A. From the mob.

Q. From those on the hustings as well as the mob?

A. Yes.

Q. The hissing was from those on the hustings, as well as from the mob?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was you at all acquainted with the previous state of the town of Manchester and its neighbourhood?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. And was you aware, before that, of the intended meeting at which Mr. Hunt was to preside?

A. Yes; I was aware there was to be a meeting,

Q. Upon which occasion you came forward as a special constable, as well as others?

A. I had been a special constable two years.

Q. Under these circumstances, did you feel any alarm or apprehension?

A. Very great.

Q. Was that alarm increased or diminished, when you saw the nature of the meeting?

A. Very much increased.

Q. In your judgment, was the town of Manchester in danger?

A. I considered it was in very great danger.

Q. I believe you have a warehouse in Manchester?

A. I had at the time; it is now divided between two of us.

Q. Was your warehouse open or closed?

A. I ordered it to be closed at half-past ten o'clock.

Q. Was that in consequence of the alarm you felt?

A. In consequence of seeing the people come in in such large bodies?

Q. As far as you can judge, were those apprehensions general?

A. I think they were—generally so, in Cannon-street and High-street.

Q. These are the principal streets for warehouses in the town of Manchester?

A. Two of the principal streets.

Q. Were other warehouses also closed?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. What number?

A. I cannot say as to numbers, there were several.

Q. To your knowledge, was any kind of business carried on in the morning?

A. I should think not from ten or half-past ten.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*. — There was a general suspension of business?

A. Yes

*Cross-examined by Mr. Evans*.

Q. Your name is George?

A. George.

Q. Where did you reside at that time?

A. In Brazennose-street.

Q. What number?

A. No. 32.

Q. Where do you reside now?

A. No. 5, Princess-street.

Q. Where was your warehouse at that period?

A. No. 15, High-street, Manchester.

Q. Is. it now in the same street?

A. Yes.

Q. How far was you from the hustings, when you say you was closed in by the people who were linked arm in arm?

A. At that period, I do not think I was more than three yards.

Q. Did you make any memorandum of what took place on that day?

A. I did.

Q. Have you it here?

A. I had it till within this six months, when not knowing it would be wanted, I destroyed it.

Q. Pray tell me which—had you or the persons on the hustings the best means of observing the field?

A. From the hustings.

Q. Pray which do you think, could you or the people on the hustings hear Mr. Hunt best?

A. I do not think there would be much difference; I could hear very distinctly.

Q. You have said that he said "if the enemy make any symptoms, put them down, quiet them, and keep them down"?

A. Yes.

Q. You undertake now to say, that he used these expressions?

A. I put them down.

Q. Then if any one had said these were the words he used, he was incorrect; "if any one attempt to destroy your tranquillity, I hope some person will be found with courage enough to put them

down, quiet them, and keep them down". Perhaps you consider them the same?

A. Nearly.

Q. How far was the Cavalry from the hustings, when you saw the people use sticks?

A. About twelve yards, as near as I can judge.

Q. Was the crowd very dense?

A. It was very much so.

Q. At what distance were the Cavalry from the hustings, when first you saw the stones thrown?

A. I should think half the distance from Mr. Buxton's house to the hustings.

Q. What size might the stones be?

A. Some as large as my fist, some smaller. As well as I could judge, they were all sizes.

Q. There were brickbats among them?

A. Yes, there were.

Q. You have said that the nearer they got to the hustings, more stones were thrown?

A. That was the case.

Q. Were there a great many spectators that took no part in the business at all?

A. I think there were some.

Q. A great many?

A. It is impossible for me to say how many.

Q. Did you see where the people got the stones?

A. I did not see where they got them, but I saw the direction they came from.

Q. How far might you be from the Cavalry when they threw the stones?

A. From twenty to twenty-five yards; just at the end of Windmill-street.

Q. How many persons did you see the Yeomanry cut down with the sharp edge of their swords?

A. Not one, sir.

Q. Where was you when the Cavalry surrounded the hustings?

A. Near to the hustings, hemmed in.

Q. Did you remain there till the hustings was cleared?

A. It was impossible.

Q. Where did you go to?

A. I was pressed forward with the crowd.

Q. Towards the Quakers' Meeting-house?

A. No, sir; towards Windmill-street, upon an eminence.

Q. Will you swear you did not see them cut any person?

A. I will swear I did not see it.

Q. Will you swear that there was nobody cut?

A. I can swear, as far as my knowledge goes, while I was on the ground.

Q. Do you believe there was?

*Mr. Serjeant Cross*.—What he believes is not evidence.

*Mr. Evans*.—Surely I have a right to try his credit, by asking him whether he believes that which he knows has taken place.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—I am of opinion you cannot legally put the question.

*Mr. Evans*.—Your Lordship allowed them to ask questions as to belief.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.— I am quite surprised you do not see the difference between the two cases. The first issue for the Jury to try is, whether there was not a meeting of a seditious and turbulent character, in the town of Manchester, which excited terror and alarm among his Majesty's subjects. To prove the affirmative of that issue, it would be necessary to inquire into all the circumstances by which that alarm was created; and, consequently, evidence of belief of persons acquainted with the state of the town at the time, was, upon every principle of law and rule of evidence, admissible. But it is quite a different thing when you are asking a witness as to his belief of a person being wounded. You must get that fact from a witness who saw the wound inflicted; I am surprised that such a question should be pressed, and I am surprised to hear the observations in support of it from a gentleman at the bar.

*Mr. Serjeant Cross*.—I understand him to have stated that he-saw no one cut.

Q. You said you saw no one cut by the Yeomanry?

A. Not one.

*Re-examined by Mr. Starkie.*

Q. Did you see any of these stones in the air?

A. Yes; I saw them coming.

Q. Now, with respect to these stones which you saw in the air, you would be as able to see them as any gentleman on the hustings?

A. Equally so—on this account: that they were thrown from an elevated ground.

Q. As to the size of these stones, that which came on contact with you was large enough to knock you down?

A. It did knock me down.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—You could not tell whether it was a stone or a brickbat?

A. I could not at that time.

Q. Where did it hit you?

A. On the left side.

Q. It knocked you down by a blow on your side?

A. A blow on my left side.

Q. Suppose you had been on horseback, was that blow sufficient to dismount you?

A. I have no doubt of it.