

Name: James Dyson

Occupation: Weaver

Home: Middleton

Date: 21st March 1820

Source: Trial of Henry Hunt, 104-107

Summary: Part of the procession led by Bamford to SPF. Saw Bamford address the crowd requesting them to be peaceful and non-violent, even if they were attacked. 'I neither expected or believed, from the tenor of your address, that any disturbance would ensue on the return of the party.'

Done by: RH

James Dyson examined by Mr. Bamford. —I am a weaver, and reside at Middleton. I was on the *Barrowfields* on the 16th of August last, between nine and ten o'clock in the morning. There were 600 or 700 people, both men, women, and children, there: I saw you there; you were walking about when I first saw you. I did not hear you say anything until you got upon a chair and addressed the people; you said, "Friends and neighbours—Those of you who wish to join the procession will endeavour to conduct yourselves orderly and peaceably, so that you may go as comfortable as possible. If any person insult you or give you offence take no notice of them. I make no doubt but there will be persons who will make it their business to go about in order to disturb the peace of the meeting. If you should meet with any such, endeavour to keep them as quiet as possible; if they strike you don't strike them again, for it would serve as a pretext for dispersing the meeting. If the peace officers come to arrest me, or any other person, offer them no resistance, but suffer them to take us quietly. And when you get there, endeavour to keep yourselves as select as possible, with your banners in your centre; so that if any of you should straggle or get away, you will know where to find each other by seeing your banners, and when the meeting is dissolved keep close to your banners, and leave the town as soon as possible; for if you should stay drinking or loitering in the streets, your enemies might take advantage of in and if they could raise a disturbance, you would be taken to the New Bailey. That is as much as I recollect; it is to the best of my knowledge, the substance of what you said. I think I recollect something of your saying, "I believe there will be no disturbance." I neither expected nor believed, from the tenor of your address, that any disturbance would ensue on the return of the party. I saw some few with sticks, but none with those who were not in the habit of using them. I thought to take a stick myself, having experienced the fatigue before, but I was prevented. I took one to *Barrowfields*, and there I lent it to a man named *John Barlow*, who was also going to Manchester. The procession had not gone more than a quarter of a mile before he returned it to me again; and this being observed, several cried out, "No sticks shall go with us." They said it had been agreed that no sticks should go. I said one stick could not make much difference; and they said I was as well able to go as they were, and I must leave it behind, and so I sent it home with my father-in-law. I went to Manchester with the procession. I saw nothing on the way but peace and good order. We walked four abreast. There was no disagreement on the way. Saw no insult offered to any one; there were some jeering words used, but nothing worth notice; they were used to the bystanders who were looking on. We went in this order to St, Peter's field. You led the party up, and got upon the hustings yourself. This was before *Mr. Hunt's* arrival; I saw him arrive. You were then standing near me about forty yards from the hustings. —You did not go upon the hustings afterwards to my knowledge. When *Mr. Hunt* arrived I removed about 5 yards from the hustings, and I saw you no more that day. I did not see you upon the hustings after that period,

Cross-examined by Sergeant Hullock. —I can't tell where *Bamford* went after I left them. We we're not joined by any party before we left the ground. The Rochdale people passed us, but we met and joined with them in the town. About half the meeting were men. I cannot exactly say how many persons joined in the procession—perhaps 1,000. Some persons had laurel. I had none. I know not whether those who wore laurel were officers; those who were in front wore it. There was no one in particular to give the word of command I don't know that *Bamford* was Commander-in-Chief on that day. I was not a Sergeant. There were men by the side to keep order, and when the step was lost it was recovered again by their calling out, "Left—Right." When we met the Rochdale party they fell in behind us. I do not know how

many persons were in the Rochdale procession. Perhaps there was not much difference between their numbers and ours. It was said to be agreed upon that no sticks should go. We had two banners that day, one of which was left on St. Peter's Field. Upon a green flag we had the words—"Parliaments Annual"—"Suffrage Universal". Upon a blue one we had—"Liberty and Fraternity"—"Unity and Strength". We never had been mustered before to my knowledge. On a Sunday morning, a few weeks before, a party of Middleton people marched down through the town, and I went by the side of them. After going through the town they dispersed. It was said they had assembled on the Tandle Hill. It was after six o'clock when I met them. They were not all Middleton people. I might have remained near an hour on the hill, looking at what was going forward. There were several men drilling, as it is called. I never was drilled in my life. I marched to Manchester as others did. *Bamford* was not present on that day. There was 2,000 or 3,000 persons assembled. I think this was on the Sunday week before the meeting of the 16th; but I will not swear it. There were women and children present. The women were not drilling. I never saw a drilling party before. The Rochdale party had banners, but I do not recollect the inscriptions upon them. We did not go from Middleton to St. Peter's field by the nearest road. I do not know the reason why we went round. We had music on that day; we had a drum; they not use it in church music unless at oratorios. We have sacred music sometimes in church, at Middleton; we also have bassoons and clarinets, occasionally on Sundays. The bassoons in our party, belonged to the man who played it; the drum belonged to a man who keeps a farm. We left Middleton about ten o'clock. On arriving at St. Peter's field, I saw many flags and banners on the hustings; ours were taken to the hustings, but *Mr. Bamford* ordered them back again; we joined the other parties on the ground; our line was broken, and every man went where he liked. I never heard *Mr. Hunt* speak before that day. I was not at the meeting in January. I did not write *Mr. Bamford's* speech; I took it from memory I suppose it has been in my head ever since I made a deposition to *Mr. Pearson*, and then saw it wrote down.

Sergeant Hullock. —How long is it since you saw your deposition? Witness, how long? Why you seem to want to know the time particular. I saw it about the middle of the week before last, at *Samuel Bamford's* house. After the words, "if they strike you, don't strike again," were the words, "for it would serve for a pretext for dispersing the meeting"

Sergeant Hullock. —Go on.

Witness. —Must I go on?

Sergeant Hullock. —Yes; you seem to have forgotten it. You had better begin again.

Witness. —No, no; but you seem to hurry one on like. (Witness went on to repeat the speech, nearly in the same words as before; but not precisely in the same order as before). —I cannot exactly recollect the words *Bamford* put to me.

Re-examined by *Mr. Bamford*. —I know *Thomas Ogden*, a musician; he did play in church, but I do not know whether he does so at present. I know *Thomas Fitton*; he and *Ogden* played with our party.

To questions by the *Judge*. —My wife did not go with me on that day, but the wives of several of the party accompanied their husbands. There were several hundreds of women with our party and the Rochdale party I saw many of them in Manchester; several boys also accompanied us; I saw several on the ground that I knew; I saw no Middleton women on St. Peter's field that I recollect; it appeared that the women did not wish to press so far into the crowd as I did; the women who accompanied us were relatives of the men who marched in the procession, it is customary at our wakes and rush-carts in Lancashire to have banners and music; the rush-carts are held on a Saturday, and on the following Monday the men walk in procession, but they do not keep the step.

Justice Bayley asked for an explanation of the term "rush cart"

Mr. Bamford said, that it is an annual custom to have a cart in which rushes are neatly placed; this cart is drawn by young men decorated with ribbons, and preceded by young women, music, &c.