HO 40/16 f.303 Evidence of John Barlow, Manchester, 11 April 1820.

Transcribed by Frances Jackson

John Barlow of Manchester, Warehouseman says that on the morning of the 16th of august last he went to the Manchester Exchange about a quarter before 11 o'clock and he remained there about half an hour. Whilst there he observed that there was not by any means the usual number of persons in the Exchange. Informant is positive there was not twenty, the usual number of persons attending at that hour being upwards of a hundred. That during the time he was in the Exchange Room a very large party of people, principally men passed, headed by a man with a Bugle – they had also a black flag and the inscription "Equal Representation or Death". Informant observed that a very great number of their party had large sticks and bludgeons many appearing like hedge stakes just taken up. That immediately round the black flag every man had a large stick or Bludgeon. This party all marched like military, and halted and marched on to the sound of a bugle. Examinant afterwards went to the meeting and remained there till after the dispersion took place. Informant wishing to see how the people were near the hustings raised himself upon the shoulders of two Gentlemen, whilst in that position he saw the people about a dozen deep linked arm in arm around the hustings.

Informant saw the Yeomanry approach the hustings, they seemed to separate past going one way and past the other round the hustings. Informant himself saw as he approached, a number of stones and brick bats thrown at them, and a number of the Cavalry struck by the people who had sticks. From one man near him whom he saw strike at a yeoman he took a large Bludgeon, it seemed to have been fresh cut. That after the dispersing of the meeting Informant saw hundreds of heavy sticks lying up and down the ground such as he saw carried by the people to the meeting. In number so many as would (I believe) fill a cartchest.

John Barlow

Sworn before me this level day of April 1820.