

HO40/16 fol. 291. Statement of William Cooper.

'I **William Cooper** of Manchester Gentleman residing facing the area of St Peter's upon oath state that I was on duty on the 16th of August last as a Special Constable, and about twenty yards from the hustings the appearance of the different bodies coming in, out of the country marching in Military order wore a very threatening aspect from their manner of approaching and forming together and their having sticks. The ground previous to the meeting was clear from stones, and loose bricks, measures having been taken to remove all loose stones and bricks from the area of St Peters and the adjoining streets by my directions. I had no opportunity of noticing on the Monday, after the Meeting was dispersed, the appearance of the ground then, but on the following morning Tuesday I saw stones and brickbats scattered about. A considerable quantity of sticks some of which were very large ones, from four to five [feet] long and as thick as my wrist were picked upon on the Monday by a number of Gentlemen and brought into my yard after the dispersion of the Meeting.

From the circumstances of living so near St Peter's Area I considered the property on my house in considerable danger and to protect it I was under the necessity of having a Man in my house whilst I was on duty as a Special Constable.

The impression on my mind at the time I was on St Peter's area before the apprehension of **Hunt** and those on the hustings was, and it now forcibly remains the same, that had the meeting been allowed to proceed the most disastrous consequences would have ensued to the Town of Manchester – that impression was produced in mind from the appearance of the people assembled and from the total impossibility of the Civil power to restrain so large a multitude.

William Cooper

Sworn the 17th day of April 1820. Before me Ra: Fletcher.'