

Transcribed by Peter Castree

Edward Owen of Manchester in the county of Lancaster, Gentleman, upon his oath saith that on the sixteenth of August last he was on Saint Peters Field twice before any of the processions came there.

That at each time there were comparatively few persons. The second time was about eleven o'clock, many persons were then coming apparently from the Country in groups of three or four, many of them with sticks. Those who appeared Townspeople generally had not sticks.

That on leaving the field the second time a little after 11 Deponent went up towards Mosley Street. That great numbers of people there were running towards Piccadilly. That on Deponents arrival at the end of Mosley Street he met a procession of people coming from Stockport and Ashton. A Coach stood near the White Bear apparently just come in. Moorhouse stood on the Dickey and the people huzzaed him as they passed.

That the men who formed the procession had mostly sticks. Many of them walked in regular time and kept repeating the word 'left' as they put their left foot down. Deponent does not remember how many walked abreast but he thinks four or five. There were some Lads and Women but the greater part were Stout Men. The Lads and Women appeared [trying?] to walk in order but were rather straggling not like the Men. They had several flags and caps of liberty but Deponent does not remember the motto's. They were he should suppose about twenty or twenty five minutes in passing by him. That immediately after they had passed he went through High Street to Shudehill perceiving many people running that way. That on arriving there he found the procession from Royton and that Neighbourhood. The Street was completely full of them and of the Spectators. Deponent walked quickly until he reached the van of the procession about the bottom of Old Mill Gate. When they had reached the middle of Old Mill Gate the word "Halt" "halt" was shouted from the rear. The shout came to the van like a running fire.

That all those in deponents sight halted and he thinks the whole line then halted. That they halted about a minute. The Shopkeepers in Old Mill Gate and the Market place closed their Shutters as fast as they could when they saw the procession coming. There were several Men in front with Sticks who appeared to be directors or Leaders.

That during the time of the halting they shouted to several Shopkeepers who were closing their Shutters "you need not be afraid we are not come to harm you". This however had no effect upon the Shopkeepers who went on closing their Shutters. The word then came from behind go on or march (Deponent does not know which). Deponent went before them to the front of Exchange and there stayed till the whole procession came by.

That on going through the Market place Deponent observed several of the Market Women taking away their Stalls. The Market place was not very much crowded with Spectators so that Deponent had full opportunity of seeing the whole

body of the people pass. That the greater part consisted of stout Men – a great many with Sticks.

That they walked several abreast and in very great regularity and time much more so than those Deponent had before seen from Stockport. Deponent is convinced that they could not have walked with that regularity and time without previous practice.

That from the best of his recollection he supposes they were about twenty five minutes or half an hour in passing. That about the middle of the body of people there was a Man with a Bugle which he sounded to a tune. Those near to him appeared to March in time to the tune. There were some Women in the procession but the proportion of them was small and there were also lads of about 12 or 14 years of age but the proportion of them was also small. This Body of people appeared to come from different places and had several flags and Caps of Liberty. On a Black flag was inscribed “Equal representation or death” “Saddleworth Lees and Mosley Union”. A Woman carried one flag. The Spectators in general appeared much surprised at seeing the procession and many looked alarmed and expressed themselves so. The Black flag seemed to excite very strong sensations of alarm. Deponent shortly afterwards went again to the field. There were then a great many persons assembled. Other Bodies appeared to have come with Bands of Music and flags. That amongst the flags then on the ground was one with what Deponent supposed to be the representation of a red Pike on the pole and several persons to whom Deponent pointed it out at the time said they supposed it was meant to represent a pike.

That he remained on the field near the Quakers Meeting House for about an hour (excepting an interval of about ten minutes during which he went into Deansgate and observed many of the Shops there were closed). That the numbers kept increasing all the time and the Music played and occasionally some one spoke from the Hustings.

That the wall of the Quakers Meeting House yard was completely covered with people. That Deponent saw **Hunt** come to the field. His Band played a tune. Believes it was “See the conquering Hero comes”. Soon after Hunt had begun his speech of which Deponent could hear only the first word “Gentlemen” Deponent crossed Peter Street and went to the West end of the Area of the field at the outsides of the great Mass but still kept near to Saint Peter Street. **Hunt** spoke for a short time and then the people began to shout and turn their faces towards Cooper Street. Deponent could not tell why they shouted not being able to see in that direction on account of the great Body of the people and his not being tall. The people about him said “Its **Major Cartwright**” “Major Cartwright”. Deponent directly ran along the edge of the crowd keeping in Peter Street until he saw some of the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry stationed under the wall of the Cottage or in front of Buxtons House where the Magistrates were.

That many of the people near the Cavalry were hooting groaning shouting and hissing at them. Deponent does not say this was universal [even?] amongst those who were near, indeed he believes that some on that part of the field from whence he came did not know the Yeomanry were there. He did not turn round to look at the people but kept his eyes on the Yeomanry until he got almost in a line

with them still keeping in Peter Street. That the moment he stopped the Cavalry rode up to the Hustings. He supposes there were about fifty. They went at a gentle trot or Canter at first till they got amongst the thick of the people. That they then pushed their Horses through at what Deponent thought a walk. Some got separated a little by the pressure of the Crowd and when they got free trotted up to the others, they made directly towards the Hustings and the Hustings were surrounded or nearly so by them. Deponent did not see a blow struck by the Sabres until the Hustings were surrounded or nearly so, though he will not swear no Blow was struck but the conviction in his own mind from what he saw is that no Blow was then struck by the Yeomanry.

That he does not think it was possible to penetrate through that Crowd without occasioning some confusion to themselves but he heard no cries or shrieking.

That as they surrounded the Hustings many of them stood with sloped swords. That he then saw several of them who appeared separated from the others striking. This was not at all general the greater part held their Swords still and he supposed at the time that those who struck did it for the purpose of disentangling themselves from the Crowd which he thought was endeavouring to prevent them from joining the main body.

That the greater part of the Crowd round the Hustings appeared to keep firm and Deponent was much alarmed for the Yeomanry but many of the people at the outskirts soon began to run very fast and deponent was compelled by the Crowd to remove.

That he ran towards the Quakers Meeting House keeping close to the wall of the new School. The outlet between the School and the Meeting House was so narrow that the Crowd was jammed up and Deponent was wedged fast for a short time. At this time he observed great quantities of Stones and Bricks flying from out of the Meeting House Yard towards that part of the field where the Yeomanry were. The persons flinging them were considerably above him. This flinging of Stones much alarmed him as he thought it might occasion the Military to fire and if so he should be in great danger. Deponent determined to push back to Peter Street thinking it safer than to be kept fast until the Crowd could get through the narrow avenue. He succeeded in forcing his way back and then ran to Saint Peters Church where he stopped to look about him.

That he observed the Cheshire Yeomanry coming from Bridgewater Street. That Deponent then went up Mosley Street and left the ground and returned again in about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour by the way of Deansgate and Peter Street.

That on his return he did not go higher up Peter Street than the Swedenborgian Chapel which is about twenty or thirty yards from the area where the Meeting was. That he did not then see **Hunt** and the other persons who had been taken and supposed they were then in **Mr Buxtons** House. That some of the 15th Hussars and he thinks also the Cheshire Yeomanry were dispersing the people who stood on the footpaths but he did not see anyone hurt by them.

That whilst in Peter Street Deponent heard two or three shots fired in the direction of Watson Street or Lad Lane but by whom he does not know. That on the

Military approaching to where he was he crossed Deansgate and went about fifteen yards into Quay Street.

That a young Gentleman of about twenty years of Age whom he believes to be named **Lingard** was walking quietly down Quay Street with a Constables Staff in his hand. That at the corner of Longworth Street a number of Men attacked him flinging great stones at him and striking him and crying "Kill him" "Kill him". That the Gentlemen drew a Sword out of a Cane to defend himself but ran up Longworth Street and Deponent did not see him hit anyone with it. That the Crowd ran after him shouting "Kill him". That Deponent durst not assist him and thought he would have been murdered and ran to an Hussar who stood at the end of Peter Street requesting him to go to the assistance of the Gentleman. That the Hussar did not go on account of being ordered to join the others who were then conveying the prisoners to the New Bailey whom Deponent saw taken.

That the March of the Bodies through the Town to the Meeting certainly appeared to occasion alarm to a great many persons. Deponent feared them and was apprehensive that after the Meeting was over they would return through the town in procession in a formidable and menacing number and that occasional acts of violence might then be committed by some of them which their leaders could not prevent.

Deponent certainly considered that one of the objects of the Leaders of the Meeting was to intimidate the Government by the number they called together and the organized way in which they approached.

That Deponent has attended many public Meetings and the Blanket Meeting in 1817 but at none of them even the Blanket Meeting did the numbers assembled amount to near so many as those at the meeting on the sixteenth, nor did any of those meetings resemble that of the sixteenth in the manner of assembling.

That on the sixteenth from the time the Crowds came pouring into the Town Business seemed mostly to cease which shewed to Deponent the impression of anxiety and alarm in the public mind.

Edward Owen

Sworn at the New Bailey Court House this 6th day of Nov 1819 before me
W Marriott.