

HO42 198 f. 671. Information of William Pollard, Manchester. Transcribed by Becky Wright.

'The information of William Pollard, No 11 Oldham Street Manchester, Tailor & draper, taken upon Oath before me one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the County of Lancaster this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of November 1819.

Who saith that on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August last he was on the area at St Peter's about 12 o'clock with a body of Special Constables of which Informant was one. Says he was within ten yards of the Hustings in the rear of the Hustings & in advance of the other Constables for the express purpose of taking down with a pencil any circumstances of importance that might occur at the meeting. Informant was frequently warned not to advance at all, that there was much danger to be apprehended from the Mob in being separated from the body of the Constables. Informant remained however in that advanced situation for half an hour at least making notes – until he became alarmed at his situation perceiving he was much noticed by the Mob, some of whom pointed at Informant & called him "pencil and paper" - others said "Yea he is trying to find at law." Informant then considered his life in danger & immediately attempted to join his party of Constables, but with the utmost risk it was that he could get to them at all. Informant heard persons of the Mob talking about "universal suffrage", some asking what it meant others explained by saying "it was hard that the poor should suffer all" and that "rich and poor should suffer alike." About half past one Hunt came upon the ground on an open Carriage with several other persons – one person was a female conveying a flag – they all went upon the Hustings. A quarter before 12 Informant saw 3 Caps of Liberty and several flags bearing different Inscriptions namely "Major Cartwright" – "Election by Ballot" – "Annual Parliaments" – "Universal Suffrage" and on a Crimson flag were the words "The people the source of all just Government". A white flag surmounted by a bloody pike had an Inscription – thinks the words were "Taxation without representation is unjust" another Inscription "Let us die like men and not be sold like slaves." Before the arrival of Hunt & as different bands of music were approaching, a person on the Hustings addressed the Mob in these words: "it is the request of the Committee of Manchester that you will fall back and give room for the bands." These words were frequently repeated but Informant thinks that the crowd was so great and so close that room was not nor could be so made. On a black flag were these words "Equal representation or Death". A person who was engaged in making preparations on the Hustings addressed the Mob in the following words, or to the effect of them "Our enemies say we are mad, if we are mad it is the madness of sensibility, & if so may we always be mad – they say (our enemies) [that] they love the Constitution – is spilling blood loving the constitution? – & they wish to spill all your blood. On a blue flag was "Unity is strength, and Universal Suffrage and annual parliaments." On a green flag "Parliaments annual Elections by Ballot." A person in a blue coat on the Hustings [was] labouring very much to clear the Hustings for the arrival of Hunt, when Hunt & Johnson appeared. Informant knows Hunt having seen him plead his own cause at a Committee of the House of Commons, & thought that he now looked very ill. Amongst their words Informant heard Hunt say "those that prosecuted the meeting occasioned double the numbers this day and we may consider by this meeting our enemies are defeated" and ex[h]orted the people "to stand firm." Informant saw the Manchester Yeomanry come on the ground and draw up in front of the house where the Magistrates were. On seeing them the Mob shouted Hurrah three times which was done as Informant believes by way of defiance. They then advanced to the Hustings on a gentle trot. As they advanced they waved their swords over their heads, and Informant did not see the least attempt to injure the people. Informant waited until they were in the act of surrounding the Hustings, & then the confusion was so great that Informant got away at some distance as well as he could. In about 5 minutes the area was so far cleared

of the mob as to admit his return. His object of such return was to assist any persons that might have been hurt. Informant saw a heap of people lying that appeared to be hurt – one person apparently dead. He immediately examined them one by one to ascertain how they were hurt. In every case of injury which he saw Informant is confident proceeded from having been trampled upon. Some of their faces were much bruised but not one of them had any sabre cut or wound, not so much as the scratch of a pin – there might be about a dozen persons so injured by falling & [being] trampled upon.

William Pollard

Sworn before me James Watkins'