

**Name:** Henry Horton

**Occupation:** Reporter/Journalist.

**Home:** London

**Date:** 18th March 1820

**Source:** Trial of Henry Hunt, 41-45

**Summary:** Saw different parties marching to SP. Saw speeches. Heard Hunt say 'put them down, keep them down'. 'I felt no inconvenience; nobody threatened to take my good coat off my back; I was certainly alarmed.'

**Done by:** RH

*Henry Horton* examined. — I live in London, but was at Manchester on the 16th of August, to take notes for a London paper. I went to St. Peter's area at half past eleven o'clock, and saw different parties marching into the area. As they entered they seemed to be conducted by persons who had the command of them. I saw several banners. I cannot say I saw a dagger painted on a flag; but one of the flag poles had the resemblance of a dagger surmounting it, and I think painted red. Before *Mr. Hunt* arrived, I saw *Mr. Jones* exhort the meeting to be peaceable, and he said the Committee had, on the Saturday previous, ordered the people to assemble round the hustings at six yards distance, and to lock themselves arm in arm, in order that they might not be broken in upon. These were not the precise words, but to that effect. I was then about six or seven yards behind the hustings. I heard *Mr. Wilde* speak to the same effect as *Jones*. *Mr. Swift* addressed the meeting at greater length than the other two, and obtained a better hearing. *Swift* exhorted the meeting to be peaceable until the arrival of their Chairman, and not to give their enemies any opportunity of exercising that power which he knew they were on the alert to do. "By this means," said he, "we shall prove to them that we are not mad as they call us; if we are mad, it is the most pleasant sensibility I ever felt in my life." As I found myself getting nearer the hustings, I thought it advisable to put up my pencil and paper, I was first among the constables, but was afterwards placed about the middle of the circles which encompassed the hustings. There were about 11 or 12 such circles, and in one of them I was locked by persons at each side of me. It was utterly impossible for any man to force his way through that crowd. When *Mr. Hunt* arrived there appeared to be a falling back to make way for him. I saw him ascend the hustings, and *Mr. Moorhouse* in the coach. A female carried a flag on the box. I heard *Mr. Hunt* address the meeting, the people standing mostly uncovered. My hat was on, and so had many in the front rows; my hands were so locked that I could not get at my hat. *Mr. Hunt* commenced by entreating silence. He said, "if any body attempts to create a disturbance with a view to interrupt the proceedings, I hope some one will be found to have courage enough to put them down, quiet them, and keep them down." On this some man behind me said, but so as not to be heard on the hustings, "why that's killing them." I am sure *Mr. Hunt* did not hear it. After thanking them for the honour they had done him, he said it was unnecessary for him to allude to the proceedings respecting the last intended meeting, and added, that the magistrates had thought they gained a victory stopping it, instead of which it had caused a greater meeting on this occasion. He then adverted to some placards, signed, as he said, by 'Jack Long and Tom Short', or some insignificant persons. Interruption then ensued from the appearance of the yeomanry, on whom all eyes were directed as they came down towards *Mr. Buxton's* house. I then heard *Mr. Hunt* say, "stand firm, my friends, they are in disorder already, give them three cheers." I won't swear these were his words exactly, but it is their import. *Mr. Hunt* set the example, and a confused cheering followed. The yeomanry then advanced: I was pushed back with the crowd; I never saw such a meeting any where, I am utterly unacquainted with Manchester; my judgment of the number is scarcely to be depended upon, but I think there were 60,000 persons present; they seemed stout and athletic men of the lower orders of society, such as labourers. I think such a meeting was calculated to create most serious alarm in the town.

Cross examined by *Mr. Barrow*. — I was on the field at eleven o'clock, *Jones* was assisting in putting up the hustings; he exhorted them to be peaceable. The numbers gradually amounted to 60,000.

Cross examined by *Mr. Holt*. — I heard *Jones* and *Swift* speak from the hustings, but to my recollection nobody else before *Mr. Hunt* came. I was within six yards of the hustings. If *Saxton* did come forward and speak, I think I must almost of necessity have noticed him. I don't recollect *Saxton* on the hustings, but can't speak positively, as all the persons there at

the time were strangers to me.

Cross examined by *Mr. Hunt*—The papers I hold in my hand are two of *The New Times*, containing my accounts of the transactions at Manchester, which are the same as I have verbally given in Court. I was sent down as a Reporter to *The New Times*. The accounts in these papers are not perhaps exactly the same as I sent, for they were drawn up in a hurry, and might require verbal corrections. I have no other occupation than that of a Reporter on *The New Times*, and an occasional correspondent for some country papers. While at Manchester, I was frequently at the Police-office to gain information of passing occurrences. I did not communicate any information to the Police-office. I merely reported for the paper I have mentioned. I was never employed by the Solicitor to the Treasury. I sent no communication of the Manchester business to any other London Paper than the *New Times*. I never told any one that my report was made up from what I heard from other London reporters. That was not the fact; I was locked in among the people.

*Mr. Hunt*—You must, being so high-bred a gentleman, have been curiously situated among the lower orders.

Q. Did you get any thing unpleasant in the crowd? —I felt no inconvenience; nobody threatened to take my good coat off my back; I was certainly alarmed.

Q. How came you to omit the putting down and keeping down in the account that you sent up? A. Because I wrote the report in a private room; the moment I got out of the crowd, I, without reading it over, sent it by an express to town; I afterward noted down more particulars on refreshing my recollection, and then I remembered that passage in your speech as well as another which I did not know I omitted until the paper reached Manchester. I did recollect the omission before I saw any other paper, and corrected it the very day of the meeting. It certainly never struck me that by making the observation "keep them down &c", you meant to put any body to death. There were no military in view when you said, "keep them down, &c.;" it was when you spoke to the people at the back of the hustings. I was very near you at the time, and did not see you point to any one,

Q. Then those who have said, I pointed to the soldiers and said, "there are your enemies, put them down," are not correct? —A. Certainly not. According to my recollection. The notes I took on the field I lost on the same day in *Mr. Petty's* offices, the solicitor at Manchester. I have not brought down my manuscript reports to the papers; I never saw them since they went. I refreshed my memory from the account in the papers which I hold in my hand. I did not hear you exhort the people to any, act which had a tendency to lead them to violence and disorder.

*Mr. Hunt* (holding in his hand a number of *The New Times* of the 18th of August)—Look, Sir, at the early part of the report in this paper; is this yours? —Yes; I wrote it

The paragraph, referred to, stated the arrival of *Mr. Hunt* and others at the hustings, in a coach accompanied by "Tyas."

Q. Is that true? —I cannot swear to it; I was told *Tyas* was one.

Q. Did you know *Tyas*? —No; I received my information on the field as well as I could.

*Mr. Hunt*—Is this passage in which you speak of a lady who was on the box of a coach as a "profligate Amazon," your writing? —It is.

Q. Where did you get this information? —I received it from some person who told me who were the parties, for I did not know any of them myself. I called her a profligate Amazon, because I thought her appearance in the manner and place where I saw her, justified the observation. I never saw a lady present colours at the head of a regiment

*Mr. Hunt* read on from *The New Times* report—"The soldiers advanced and surrounded the hustings, when *Mr. Nadin* with the utmost resolution, seized hold of *Johnson* first, and then of *Hunt*, and afterwards of several others, whom he handed to his assistants, and the latter carried them immediately to the New Bailey. The banners were the next objects to which the police officers directed their attention, and with very little resistance they got possession of the whole of them. The scene that now ensued was truly awful. The shrieks of women, and the groans of men, were to be heard at some distance. Every person who attended out of curiosity, finding his personal safety at risk, immediately fled; and where was then the boasted courage of these mad headed Reformers? They were seen retreating in all directions with the utmost speed. The crush was so great in one part of the field, that it knocked down some outbuildings at the end of a row of houses, on which were at least 2 or 3 persons, with an immense crash. As I was carried along by the crowd, I saw several almost buried in the ruins. Others in their anxiety to escape, had been trampled on by populace; many of them to death. A feeling of '*sauve qui pent*' appeared now to fill the mind of every body, and the dreadful

result is not yet known. The Yeomanry Cavalry arrived on the ground at full speed; they took up a position under the wall of 'The Cottage' (a well-known building so called), where they remained in line about five minutes, immediately after which they made a dash into the crowd, and took *Hunt* and the other desperadoes into custody, in the manner that I have already related. The Yeomanry were supported by the 15th Hussars. Among the 'spolia opima', they say, are to be reckoned 16 banners with seditious inscriptions, and 6 caps of Jacobinism. "

Mr. *Hunt*—What do you mean by six caps of Jacobinism? —Those were red caps of liberty, with "*Henry Hunt, Esq.*" on them. It was the colour and the shape, not the inscription, which gave me this notion of them. I did see several people hurt, near the out-house, by the pressure of the ruins. I saw nobody cut while I was there. The groans proceeded from the pressure of the crowd getting away from the field. I escaped amid the pressure of the crowd; no one attacked me, no one cut at me with a sword, nor did I ever tell such a thing to any one. I had no constable's staff on that day, nor ever said I saved myself from a blow of a sword by holding it up, nor that a Yeoman who struck at me exclaimed, "d—n you, why did not you show that staff before?" I certainly told people that I was coming here as a witness for the prosecution, and might have said, "against *Hunt*," but I never said, "I would do for him in the witnesses' box." Mr. *Hunt* again read on from the report.

"Had it not been for the interference of *Nadin*; the Deputy Constable, whom these men have particularly calumniated, it is certain that *Mr. Hunt* would not now have been alive, for the military were determined to cut him to pieces. "

Q. Who told you that? —I was told it by somebody between the meeting and twelve at night. — I do not recollect by whom; as it struck me to be a forcible circumstance I mentioned it, though I cannot think it was likely to be true.

Q. How came you to insert, "it is certain," when you say you did not believe it to be true. I did not think it possible, yet having heard it, I felt it right to mention it, as it was related to me, and I certainly wrote, "it is certain", merely stating what had been communicated to me. I am employed by *The New Times*. I know *Dr. Stoddart*; he is no relation of mine. I did not know when I wrote that account, that you had bills found upon an indictment against that Paper for an alleged libel. Though I knew you were proceeding for some libel, I did not know it was for urging people to assassinate you.

Q. Did you not know that *John Tyas*, instead of being a delinquent, was, like yourself, a London Reporter? No, I never saw him until the-Manchester Meeting.

Mr. *Hunt* then turned to the leading article in the same paper and read the following extract: —

"This wretch, who has so often and so insolently threatened, that, in the hour of trial he would not be found skulking, but would be the foremost to encounter danger, and to perish in the cause that he had espoused; he who, when no soldier was near, opened his breast, and called on the soldiers to fire—what did he now? The grin of malice died away on his quivering lips; the colour forsook his sallow cheek; he seemed ready to sink into the earth with fear; and he yielded at once to the touch of a constable, too happy to feel himself under the protection of the laws, though it was but as a criminal. "

Q. Is that your writing? —It is not.

Q. By whom was it written? —I don't know.

Q. Is it true? —It is true that you looked pale at the approach of the military.

Q. and that my lips quivered? —I have nothing to do with the garnishing of it; you certainly looked pale.

Q. Were not the shrieks of the women and the groans of the men calculated to appeal the stoutest heart? —I heard no shrieks at that time, nor until afterwards.

Q. You saw me make no resistance to the constable's staff? —I saw you make no resistance, but it was rather a seizure than a surrender. I think it was *Nadin* who seized you. I saw *Nadin* take *Johnson* off the hustings by the leg, and it appeared to me that he was about to do the same to you; but as I turned round at the moment, I can't say how he took you.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Bamford*. I occasionally saw *Mr. Nadin* at the police-office, and got accounts from him. It was not he who communicated to me the intention of cutting *Mr. Hunt* to pieces. I never communicated with *Mr. Milne*, but I have with *Mr. Cowper*, the accountant.

Q. From your appearance, I should presume you have the honour and manners of a gentleman, why not then have communicated to *Mr. Hunt* the intention to cut him to pieces? —  
A. I did not hear it until after the meeting, and of course could not have made a previous communication.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Swift*. —I know you, though I did not see you until the meeting at Manchester. I refer these words to you as having uttered them in your speech (some few sentences recommending peace and good order). Your speech was, I think, applauded, and so was that everybody who spoke.

Re-examined by *Mr. Scarlett* I do not know of any indictment against the paper for a publication to urge any body to assassinate *Mr. Hunt*, but do know there is a charge of libel for something like calling him a coward;" it relates to some occurrences at the Westminster Election, between *Mr. Bowling* and *Mr. Hunt* on the hustings. There is nothing, I think, in that article, inciting any body to assassinate *Mr. Hunt* I have no recollection of hearing *Mr. Saxton* address the meeting, but I occasionally left the field. I was not near the hustings the whole time. As near as I could, I sent a faithful relation of what I saw, and what was told me by others.