**Name**: Robert Hughes

**Occupation**: Inn-keeper, builder and agent

**Home**: Manchester

**Date**: April 8, 1822

**Source**: Redford v Birley, 456 - 463

**Summary**: Saw people arrive on field carrying sticks. Told by Hunt to ‘take down and keep down’ anyone who offered insult and to hold firm with linked arms. Saw ‘a great deal of resistance’ to the cavalry and attacks with stones. Believes crowd was peaceable until Hunt arrived.

**Done by**: RM

*Mr. Robert Hughes sworn: examined by Mr. Serjeant Hullock.*

Q. You are an Inn-keeper, at Manchester?

A. Yes.

Q, Was you a special constable upon the 16th.?

A. I was.

Q. Did you see any of the divisions go to the ground?

A. I did.

Q. Did you make any observation whether they had any sticks?

A. Yes; I saw a great number of sticks.

Q. They walked in regular order.

A. They did.

Q. Did you see any Cavalry come on the ground?

A. I saw them when they were turning down from Mr. Buxton’s house.

Q. With a view to go to the hustings?

A. Yes; I was very near the hustings.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—You saw them advance?

A. I did, sir.

Q. You were near the hustings?

A. Near the hustings.

Q. Were you near enough to hear any words which fell from Hunt at the time?

A. I was.

Q. Can you give us any expressions which you heard at the time, and which made an impression on your mind?

A. Hunt said when he first came upon the ground—he entered on the hustings, and, directly after, he made a speech: there were great shouts; and after that he said, those are your enemies that don't take off their hats and don't shout, and pointed towards us

constables.

Q. What more did he say that your heard?

A. “If any one mistreats you, put them down, and keep them down," and pointing with his finger.

*Mr. Serjeant Hullock*. — We know where he wanted to lead them to.

Q. Did you hear any directions given, about the way in which they were to stand round the hustings?

A. Yes; he told them to link arms, and to stand firm.

Q. How near to the hustings were you at that time?

A. First within five or six yards.

Q. And then you were forced off by what?

A. By a ring that was formed on the side looking towards the hustings. I could not see all round.

Q. Opposite to the part where you were?

A. Yes; by a linking of arms.

Q. Did the linking of arms take place immediately on Hunt giving the order of which you have spoken?

A. It did, immediately.

Q. To what extent were you forced back by this operation?

A. Somewhere between fifteen and twenty yards from the hustings. I was forced back, I suppose about ten yards.

Q. Had you any opportunity of observing how many deep the men were who linked their arms?

A. They appeared to me to be about five or six deep. I was close to the back of them.

Q. Was the line of special constables in that spot, forced back also with you?

A. There was a quantity of us there, but they were hot all there that were there at the first. I don't know what became of them.

Q. Do you remember the Cavalry coming upon the ground?

A. I saw them coming.

Q. Did you see the Cavalry begin their advance towards the hustings?

A. I did, sir.

Q. State to us what observations you made, and what happened on their progress towards the hustings?

A. They, at the first, came pretty quick, I thought, sir; and, then there was a kind of a stoppage.

Q. Well, sir?

A. There was a deal of sticks heaved up at the horses heads; whether they struck or not I cannot tell. Q. Were the sticks moved when they were held up that way?

A. They were held up and moved—a great number.

Q. Whether they hit the horses actually, you do not know?

A. That I cannot tell.

Q. What appeared to you to be the object of that course?

A. It appeared to me to be intended to knock the horses on the head, and knock the riders off.

Q. What next did you observe?

A. They advanced further, and there was a kind of stoppage again. It seemed to me as if the Cavalry were unwilling to trample the people under feet.

Q. Well sir?

A. They advanced again and I heard a report of a pistol or a gun, and I looked directly where it came from: it was top of a house below the Windmill.

Q. Did you see the smoke?

A. I did, sir.

Q. What effect it produced you know not?

A. I cannot tell what effect it produced.

Q. What next did you observe?

A. Then there came a parcel of stones thrown at the Cavalry—brickbats.

Q. From what quarter did they appear to come?

A. From Windmill-street.

Q. Were there several stones?

A. A great number.

Q. And brickbats?

A. Yes, and brickbats.

Q. Did you see them flying in the air?

A. Yes, I did.

Q; To what place or persons were they, in your judgment, directed or aimed?

A. They were directed towards the soldiers, I thought.

Q. Were you in a condition to hear any language or expressions used by the mob, during the advance of the soldiers?

A. I did not hear anything then.

Q. Did you before or after?

A. I heard a good deal before; insults upon the Cavalry by the mob.

Q. Can,you give us any sample?

A I can: “We'll settle them all before three o'clock.”

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—Some of the mob said?

A. Yes; “Aye,” says another, "we will do so." There were several other words that I could not exactly hear.

Q. Before these stones and brickbats were thrown in the manner you have described, had the Cavalry used their swords against the people?

A. Not at all; for my particular attention was towards them.

Q. From the situation in which you were placed, if any such occurrence had taken place, must you have seen it?

A. I think I could not have missed seeing it.

Q. Had the Cavalry reached the hustings at the time these stones were thrown?

A. No; they got within about fifteen yards.

Q. When the Cavalry approached near the hustings, did the mob close in upon them behind—in their rear?

A. They did.

Q. Did you see the Cavalry surround the hustings?

A. I did.

Q. Did you observe afterwards whether they kept in in a body— whether they preserved their order as a body, or whether they were much dispersed or not?

A. They could not keep in a body.

Q. Did they experience any resistance at the hustings?

A. Yes; a great deal from the mob.

Q. From the resistance -which they met with, and from the circumstances under which that resistance was given, did you apprehend they would be overpowered?

A. I certainly did. I expected that every man would he murdered.

Q. Was that your belief, formed at the time from the circumstances passing under your eyes?

A. It was. I believe it would have been the case, had it not been for the 15th. coming up—the Hussars: that was my opinion.

Q. In your judgment, then, was the safety of the Manchester Yeomanry owing to the seasonable arrival of the 15th. Dragoons?

A. I believe it was entirely owing to them.

Q. From what you observed at the time, in your judgment, would it have been safe to have attempted to execute a warrant by the civil power, unaided by the military?

A. I don’t believe it would be possible.

Q. In your judgment, would it have been wise or prudent to have made the attempt?

A. I think it would have been very unwise to have made the attempt.

Q. In your judgement, could the attempt have been made without endangering the safety of the persons by whom it was made—of the constables?

A. No; I believe not. I have every reason to believe so, from the threats that were thrown out?

Q. In your judgment, was the public peace endangered by the meeting of that day?

A. I thought so; very much endangered.

Q. Did you feel any alarm or apprehension on your mind upon the subject?

A. I felt very great alarm for the safety of the town, and the neighbourhood.

*Cross-examined by Mr. Blackburne*.

Q. What are you?

A. I am a builder and innkeeper, as well as other business.

Q. What other business are you?

A. An agent.

Q. Is it in these respective capacities you form your judgment?

A. No; not at all.

Q. How long had Hunt been speaking, before you heard this about mislesting him?

A. Not many minutes; I cannot exactly say how many.

Q. Did you take it down, or have you kept it for your memory ever since?

A. I have them certainly in my memory, and always will have.

Q. You are quite sure as to the expression?

A. Or nearly so. I think I shall never forget that day.

Q. But the expression that was used upon it?

A. Some of the expressions, certainly, I have forgot, or certainly I would have told now. He said a good deal more than I said, a great deal.

Q. You have told us he said they were to keep their enemies down, and pointing to the constables who had their hats on?

A. Yes.

Q. You did not see him point to Dickinson-street?

A. We were more on the side of Windmill-street.

Q. When you saw him pointing to the constables?

A. There was a great quantity of us there at that time.

Q. Did you see him point to the Yeomanry?

A. He says, "there your enemies are coming now;” and he said something, I don't know whether he said "bloodsuckers," or "feather-bed soldiers" he said something to that effect.

Q. They are so much alike that you don't know which it was?

A. He said something. I could not hear exactly what he did say.

Q. How long had he been speaking, when he desired them to link their arms?

A. He had not been speaking, I suppose, three minutes, before he told them to link their arms.

Q. And all that you saw immediately did so?

A. They did; a great number.

Q. Then they were not linked?

A. They were not, till he desired them.

Q. What time did you go on to the field?

A. I suppose it was near about half-past eleven.

Q. You formed one of the line of special constables from Mr. Buxton's house to the hustings?

A. I did.

Q. And joined how near?

A. Within about five or six yards of the hustings.

Q. Then until this command from Hunt to link their arms, you were within five or six yards?

A. I never saw any linking.

Q. Did not you tell us he gave the word?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you from eleven o'clock, when you first went, continue in that place?

A. No; they shoved me off when they linked, about ten yards further.

Q. How long did you continue this distance from the hustings, you were never thrown back more than fifteen yards?

A. From fifteen to twenty yards.

Q. Did you remain fifteen or twenty yards distant, or did you go back to your old position?

A. Some of the mob got betwixt me, after that and the linking of arms, and some constables as well.

Q. You say the sticks were lifted up with an intention of knocking the horses on the head, and knocking the riders off?

A. It appeared so to me.

Q. Did you see any rider knocked off, or any horse knocked on the head?

A. I did not see either. I saw the sticks in great motion.

Q. Where were these men who were saying "we will settle them before three o'clock"?

A. They were amongst us constables. Not only that, they said they would have our garments off, they were better coats than theirs.

Q. About what period of the day was this?

A. A little past one; I cannot be positive.

Q. It was after Hunt had come to the hustings?

A. Yes; we had no insult till he came; it was all quiet till he came.