

James Moorhouse

Statement at the trial of Henry Hunt, day 4, pp. 93-5.

“My Lord, and Gentlemen of the Jury—I am charged with combining, conspiring, confederating, and agreeing to overthrow the Government of this country by force and threats. Now, Gentlemen, I am persuaded if there be any such combining, conspiring, confederating and agreeing, it will be found to be my prosecutors; it will be them that will be found guilty of that most abominable crime, conspiring to deprive me of my liberty, and for what I know not. Now, Gentlemen, you will be surprised when I inform you, that five of the persons with whom I am charged with having conspired &c. five of them, viz. *Swift, Wilde, Jones, Bamford, and Healey*. I never in my life was in company with, until the day on which we were all brought into Court together, which I believe was on the 27th of August last; I shall, therefore, I think, be entitled to your acquittal of conspiring along with them. With respect to *Mr. Knight, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Saxton*, I never exchanged half a dozen words with any one of them in the whole course of my life, previous to our confinement in the New Bailey. Now, Gentlemen, with respect to *Mr. Hunt* it is necessary in this stage of the business to inform you I am what is commonly called a coach proprietor, that is, I employ coaches to travel between the towns of Stockport and Manchester; and it sometimes happens, though not often, that a passenger may want bed, who, from variety of circumstances may prefer a private house to a public. I was applied to by some one to inform them where a bed could he had; to which I replied—I have a good bed, provided the room will be approved of, it being small. The room was seen and approved of, and on the evening of the 8th of August, *Mr. Hunt* slept at my house, and left on the 9th for Manchester, in company with *Sir Charles Wolseley*. From that day until the 16th of August, I never either saw or heard any thing from *Mr. Hunt*. On the 16th, in the morning, a little after ten o'clock, I left Stockport with one of my coaches, and near the second mile-stone I passed the procession from Stockport, consisting of near one thousand men and boys, and near one hundred women and young girls, several of them being the wives and daughters of the men. Their conduct was perfectly peaceable. At the midway, while watering my horses, the procession passed again, and we did not overtake them till we got into Longsight, a little on the Manchester side of which we left them, and got into Manchester ten minutes before them. While the procession was passing the White Bear, Piccadilly, it was proposed by some of the passengers to take the coach on to the ground for their accommodation, to which I consented, provided they would agree to pay me 1s. each for the accommodation of standing on the roof. But this was done at the suggestion of myself, who said, otherwise there would be so many crowding on, that the roof would be broken in, and I should have £10 damage done to the coach, though I might not make one by it; upon this it was given up.

I went to the ground a little after 12 o'clock, where I saw an immense concourse of people assembled; after I had been there some time in conversation with various persons, who all appeared delighted with the orderly manner in which the various processions came upon the ground, with joy beaming on every countenance, and several I heard declare it the most gratifying sight they ever beheld in the whole course of their life. Some one pointed out the constables, formed in two lines with a space betwixt them, from the hustings to the house

where I was informed the Magistrates were sitting; and credit was given to the Magistrates for the judicious plan they had adopted to bring before them any one who might be guilty of disturbing the peace of the meeting. This was actually the opinion I had formed of the purpose for which the constables were thus placed. After listening for some time to the music, which was playing a variety of national airs, and amongst the rest, "*God save the King.*" I went into Deansgate to get a little refreshment, where I had not been long before *Mr. Hunt* was announced; and on going into the street, near the Dog Tavern on the carriage passing where I stood, *Hunt* perceived me in the crowd. He called out to me, saying, *Moorhouse* will you get into the carriage, we will make room for you; in an instant the door was opened; I was seized by the arm by *John Collier*, and instantly shoved into the carriage, but before I had time to take away my hand, the door was hastily shut, and three of my fingers were caught and most severely trapped, so as to give me very great pain, and immediately on the carriage arriving at the hustings, I got out and went to the public house to get some beer and to allay the pain; I remained in there until the dispersion had in a great measure taken place, and on going down stairs to leave the house, I found *Mr. Tremlow* at the front door, for the purpose, as I supposed, of preventing any one from going out that way; he directed me to the back-door, and I left the house in search of my wife, who was at that time six months advanced in her pregnancy. It was near two hours before I met with her, during which I was several times informed she was thrown in a cellar-hole, and crushed to death; but thank God it was not so; we met at the Flying Horse, and while drinking a glass of wine and water, and returning God thanks for delivering her from the perilous situation which she was in, being betwixt the constables and the carriage at the time the cavalry surrounded the hustings, two police officers, *Platt* and another, came into the room, and told me I was their prisoner; I demanded their authority, they produced their staffs; I observed, that is no authority, you must produce a warrant, and I will go with you; to which *Platt* replied, if I did not choose to go without a warrant, he would fetch some soldiers who would not be trifled with; I then rose up and went along with them to prison; this took place betwixt four and five o'clock in the afternoon on Monday; I remained in the New Bailey from that day until the 27th of August, on which day I was admitted to bail."