**Name**: Edmund Pilling

**Occupation**: Spindle grinder, became a constable in 1819 shortly after seeing drilling

**Home**: Rochdale

**Date**: April 6th, 1822

**Source**: Redford v Birley, 288-295

**Summary**:

**Done by**:

*Edmund Pilling sworn: examined by Mr. Starkie.*

Q. Where did you go to on the morning of the 16th. August before the Manchester meeting?

A. To the Broad field.

Q. In Rochdale?

A. Adjoining close to Rochdale church yard.

Q. You went there by the direction of Mr. Crossley the Magistrate?

A. Yes.

Q. What time in the morning did you go there?

A. Between two and three in the morning.

Q. How soon did you see any person there?

A. When I went up between three and four.

Q. How soon did you see any larger number?

A. I turned back then into the town; I walked up and down the streets till between three and four in the morning.

Q. Did you see any number of persons after that?

A. No; only eight or ten at once.

Q. About what time was that?

A. Between three and four in the morning.

Q. Did you see more than one party of eight or ten?

A. Yes; I saw several parties come.

Q. Do you know where these parties were going?

A. They were going to the Tandle Hills.

Q. That was on the Sunday morning?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they say any thing to you about going?

A. They asked me if I would go with them.

Q. To the Tandle Hills?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they say what you was to do there?

*Mr. Evans*.— I- object to this conversation with other people; I submit that this conversation is not evidence. He may prove what parties of people were present, but he is not to injure the plaintiff by stating the result of conversations with total strangers.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—Sometimes conversations are facts; a person desiring another to go with him is a fact. Let us hear the next question.

Q. Did they say for what purpose you was to go to Tandle Hills?

A. He asked whether I would go to get a big loaf for a little one.

*Mr. Evans*. —This is the very kind of question I object to.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—State the ground of your objection.

*Mr. Evans*.—It is an attempt to prejudice the plaintiff, through the medium of conversations by persons who are strangers to him. You might as well give evidence of the conversations between indifferent persons, and contend that the plaintiff was bound by what they said to each other.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*. — I am of opinion it is evidence. What goes to shew the purpose of these meetings, is very proper to be laid before a Jury; and I think their endeavouring to instigate the witness to go along with them, is, by law, evidence which I am bound to receive.

Q. Did you afterwards go to Tandle Hills?

A. I did.

Q. What time did you get there?

A. Between four and five in the morning.

Q. What number of persona did you find there?

A. A body of about fifty, who were all looking on.

Q. You say looking on; were there any other persons there?

A. No; they were looking one at the other.

Q. Did they say any thing to you as to what you were to do?

A. Yes.

Q. What did they say?

A. They asked me if I would join them.

Q. Well?

A. I said I had not rightly considered of it.

Q. What did they say?

A. Then soon afterwards the Royton party came up.

Q. Then the Royton party came up?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they say any thing more?

A. They said I was foolish for considering any thing about it.

Q. You was foolish for considering any thing about it?

A. Yes.

Q. What more?

A. Then they went away.

Q. Did they say for what you was to join them?

A. No.

Q. Did they say to you, while you was there on the 15th., what their intentions were?

A. Yes.

A. What were they?

A. They said they would have a reform in Parliament.

Q. They said they would have a reform in Parliament?

A. Yes; and they said they would go up to London. They said they would make the best of their way there, and any person as had any property, they would make use of it as they went on the road.

Q. They said if any person had any property, they would make use of it on their way?

A. Yes; then I left them and had no more conversation with them.

*Mr. Justice Holroyd*.—Had you hesitated joining them, when they said you was foolish for considering any thing about it?

A. I would not join them.

Q. Was any thing said about arms?

A. They said that when they took their work to Manchester they bought arms to defend themselves with.

Q. You told us that the Royton division came up; how many men might be in that division?

A. I cannot say; perhaps 200 or 300.

Q. Did any other parties afterwards arrive?

A. Yes.

Q. Which?

A. The Middleton.

Q. How many might there be altogether, when all had arrived?

A. About 700.

Q. What did they do when they arrived?

A. They all formed in a line.

Q. What did they do after forming in a line?

A. They formed in sections; they wheeled back in sections.

Q. I believe you have been in the Local Militia yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. I ask you whether, in your judgment, they appeared to understand military exercise?

A. They did.

Q. Was there any clapping of hands?

A. Yes; at the word "fire."

Q. That was when the word “fire” was given?

A. Yes.

Q. Were there different persons commanding?

A. Yes.

Q. How long was the exercise continued?

A. From about six in the morning till eight.

Q. Had you been at any previous meeting, at this place?

A. Yes; I had been on the 1st. and on the 8th

Q. Were the same things done upon the other occasions, when you came there?

A. They were.

Q. Do you know a person of the name of Thomas Redford, of Middleton, the plaintiff?

A. I do.

Q. Was he present on any of these occasions?

A. He was present on the 1st. August, the 8th. August, and the 15th. August.

Q. All three days?

A. Yes.

Q. Had you frequently seen him before?

A. I had.

Q. Was any bugle used?

A. There was.

Q. What was the bugle used for?

A. They were training one company in light infantry facings.

Q. In the light infantry manoeuvres, I suppose you mean?

A. Yes.

Q. Was the bugle used for the motions of that company?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Is that the way in which a light infantry company is manoeuvred?

A. It is, to the best of my knowledge.

Q. To the sound of the bugle?

A. Yes.

*Cross-examined by Mr. Blackburne*.

Q. What are you now?

A. I assist the Constables in the police office.

Q. Where?

A. At Rochdale.

Q. How long have you been in that employ?

A. Since 1819.

Q. Since you was employed by Mr. Crossley on these missions?

A. Yes.

Q. What was you before?

A. A spindle grinder.

Q. Then you left spindle grinding, and took to the police?

A. Yes.

Q. How soon after those times you went to the Tandle Hills?

A. Soon after.

Q. Perhaps you can tell us the day on which you was admitted of that body?

A. No, I cannot.

Q. You came back, and gave Mr. Crossley this account, and then you was admitted a member of the police?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recollect the person with whom you had the conversation?

A. No.

Q. Do you know him?

A. No.

Q. He was a perfect stranger to you?

A. Yes.

Q. When you first saw him going down the streets of Rochdale?

A. No; on the Tandle Hills.

Q. Did you first meet with him on Tandle Hills, or at Rochdale?

A. I had not seen him at Rochdale.

Q. Then you first saw him at Tandle Hills?

A. Yes.

Q. Was he a looker on?

A. One of the lookers on.

Q. You rejected every offer to join them?

A. Immediately.

Q. Was it after you refused to join with them, that he told you this?

A. After I refused to join with them.

Q. I suppose they wished to induce you to become one of their party?

A. They proposed me to join them.

Q. So he told you they would go to London, have a reform in parliament, seize persons' property on the way, and that when they took their work home to Manchester, they bought arms with the

money?

A. Yes.

Q. And this, you say, was told you, after you had refused to join?

A. Yes.

Q. Did he keep looking on, or marching?

A. Kept looking on.

Q. He did not form one of this body of 600 or 700 that formed in line?

A. He did not.

Q. How many lookers on were there?

A. I cannot exactly say.

Q. I take it for granted you did not count the line, or the lookers on?

A. There were about fifty or sixty lookers on.

Q. They did not increase much after you went?

A. No, sir.

Q. Did all the fifty or sixty lookers on, continue to be so?

A. They continued till the meeting was disclosed.

Q. You mean till it broke up?

A. Yes.

Q. Then I understand you that the conversation was with a person who was looking on, not one of the party?

A. With a person who was looking on.

Q. A stranger to you?

A. Yes.

Q. Whom you have not since seen?

A. Not seen, to the best of my recollection, since.

Q. Were other persons present at the time of this conversation?

A. There were three or four of them together.

Q. Did they hear what was said?

A. They did not hear all.

Q. Were other persons near you, walking about?

A. I was with my back towards a hedge.

Q. Do you know what became of the other persons?

A. No.