

**Name:** James Platt  
**Occupation:** Police Constable  
**Home:** Manchester  
**Date:** 8 October 1819  
**Source:** Lees Inquest 478 – 482  
**Summary:** Testified he saw only sticks, brick-bats and stones on the empty ground of St.Peter's-field after the meeting, but swears he saw no garments, shoes or other personal effects strewn around.  
**Done by:** CW

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JAMES PLATT called in by Mr. ASHWORTH; sworn by the CORONER.

The CORONER—What are you?

A. A Constable of Manchester.

The WITNESS examined by Mr. ASHWORTH.

Q. Did you examine the ground before the Meeting?

A. I did.

Q. Was there any quantity of sticks and stones upon it, before the Meeting?

A. I saw none.

Q. Did you examine it for the purpose of seeing whether it was clear from every species of weapon?

A. I did.

Q. What time did you examine it before the Meeting?

A. I examined it about 10 o'clock, in the forenoon.

Q. Did you examine it after the Meeting was over?

A. I did.

Q. When you saw it in the morning, was it cleared; or do you say that you saw none?

A. I saw none.

Q. And after the Meeting was over, you say you examined it again?

A. I did; but not with an intent to such a thing.

Q. What did you go there for?

A. I was ordered to go there from the New Bailey. I had been there with Mr. Hunt, and I was ordered to go back to apprehend Moorehouse, if I could find him.

Q. Was the ground then cleared of people?

A. It was.

Q. Did you find any sticks or stones there, then?

A. To the best of my opinion, many hundreds lay on the ground.

Q. Hundreds of what?

A. Stones, brick-bats, and sticks.

Q. About what time was that?

A. From two to three o'clock, in the afternoon.

Q. Were they gathered from the ground?

A. Not then.

Q. Were they afterwards?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you concerned in gathering them up?

A. I was not.

Q. Did you see any iron palisade there?

A. No.

The WITNESS cross-examined by Mr. HARMER;

Q. Did you not see bonnets, caps, coat-laps, hats and shoes, distributed about, in all directions?

A. I did not, to my knowledge.

Q. Your knowledge?—You say that there were hundreds of sticks and stones: I ask you if there were not also numbers of the other things I have described—pieces of the dress of people?

A. If you will give me liberty, I will answer. I was sent, as I said before, from the New Bailey, to apprehend Moorehouse, if I could; and I went that road imagining I might meet him.

Q. Did you apprehend him?

A. I did not; but I saw these sticks and stones, and I remarked a quantity particularly under a new building, which I understand is a Quaker's school.

Q. You say you noticed a great many under this new building.

A. Yes; I saw more there, than upon the field, though there was an immense number on the field, and they lay in great quantities under the wall; and, as I had been directed, I went to the White Bear in Piccadilly, and I thought it would not be much round to go in that direction; so I came round in that direction, and I was three hours and a half trying to apprehend him.

Q. Your eyes seeing only to have seen the sticks and stones; now, I ask you, upon your oath, did you cross the ground?

A. I crossed it in the regular direction.

Q. Then, were there not shoes, and various pieces of garments on the ground.

A. I did not see them.

Q. Will you swear there were not such things on the ground?

A: No; I will not swear there were not.

The CORONER—Well, we will now adjourn until to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock.

Mr. BARROW—Oh! Mr. Harmer, Mr. Harmer, you shall take your witnesses tomorrow.

Mr. ASHWORTH—Now, Mr. Coroner, with respect to the character of the Meeting, I have only produced the evidence I have produced, to put it upon your notes, in answer to the evidence that has been produced by Mr. Harmer upon that subject. I have only produced four witnesses, with respect to the character of the Meeting, with the exception of Nadin, whom I produced, in fact, for the purpose of shewing the warrant, and Booth, who said certainly a few words on the subject; but though there were more witnesses produced on that subject, on the other side, they have been so satisfactorily answered by those I have called, that it is not necessary scarcely for me to call any more. It is certainly perfectly illegal evidence in this inquiry, but as it has been received, it was only justice that my evidence, which proves the Meeting to have been of a contrary description, should be received. I have produced it to satisfy you, Sir, and the Jury, of the real character of the Meeting; and though I have riot produced as many witnesses on that part of the case, as have been produced on the other side, I shall stop here, unless I am told that the learned Gentleman is going to call witnesses to contradict mine. If that is to be the case, where the inquiry is to end, I know not, nor can any body tell. Whether it will terminate on this side of Christmas; or whether, from the heat of the room, and

the length of every day's sitting, we shall all be in our graves before it is terminated, God Almighty only knows. But Sir, I will not produce before you another witness, unless it be absolutely necessary for the purposes of justice. As to the character of the Meeting, you told me that you would receive witnesses; but it is insinuated, that witnesses are to be called, in answer to the case that I have made out, and in contradiction of that case; but I trust you feel it your duty to restrict this inquiry, within some rational limits, and unless some new facts are to be elicited, I trust you will put some bounds to this investigation, I say, that as far as we have gone, I am fortified again and again, in the law that I have laid down; and I am also fortified in it, by the opinion of a noted Barrister, who stands high in his profession, having great professional reputation, and wearing a silk gown. There is a case also, which strongly fortifies me in my argument, and to which, I dare say, the gentleman has referred. I pledge myself again, that the case of *Demaree and Purchase*, fortifies me in the arguments I have propounded; and let the learned Gentleman state it is not so, if he can.

Mr. HARMER—I understood it had been settled, on a former day, that if the learned Barrister called witnesses to prove the character of the Meeting, to be different to what I had then established it, I should be at liberty also to call witnesses again, to contradict those whom he should produce; and even without such an understanding, I submit I have a right to do so; and the Jury will judge of the credit that is due to the respective witnesses, on the one side and on the other.

The CORONER—I have concluded not to hear any more evidence, as to the character of the Meeting.

Mr. HARMER—You have determined not to hear any more evidence upon this subject, Sir. Certainly, you before stated, Sir, that if the learned Counsel brought forward testimony, as to the character of the Meeting, I was to be at liberty to call evidence in answer to it; and to contradict it.

The CORONER—Yes, yes; but have you any witnesses, whose whose testimony can vary the evidence, you have already produced upon the subject.

Mr. ASHWORTH—The character of the Meeting is established.

Mr. HARMER—If the learned Gentleman concedes to me, that I have already established the Meeting, was a peaceable Meeting, it is unnecessary I should produce any more witnesses.

The CORONER—That is to go to the Jury,

Mr. HARMER—Some time ago, the Jury stated, that they were perfectly satisfied as to two points: one was, that the Riot Act was not read; and the other, that the Meeting was perfectly peaceable. I should therefore insult the Jury, by calling any more witnesses to either of these points, unless the testimony I have already produced to them be rebutted.

The Coroner—I say the Jury never said any such thing.

Mr. HARMER—I beg your pardon, Sir; I understood they said, that they were perfectly satisfied as to those points.

Mr. ASHWORTH—How could they say that?

Mr. HARMER—I understood the Jury to say, that until the testimony I had given, as to the character of the Meeting, was beaten down, further evidence was unnecessary. God forbid, that I should ask the Jury now, their opinion upon the subject; but if the testimony of those witnesses whom I called, is at all disproved or disturbed, I have five hundred witnesses, who would, if necessary, confirm them.

Mr. BARROW—And so have we five hundred witnesses,

Mr. HARMER—Then go on, and call them.

The CORONER—I shall hear no more on the subject.

Mr. HARMER—Well, Sir, I shall feel it my duty to tender to you several other witnesses. It is not the evidence of two or three police officers, nor the evidence of two or three gentlemen, who will beat down all the testimony I have produced.

Mr. ASHWORTH—I was not saying any thing about beating down; and the Jury will

tell the Coroner about their satisfaction. I hope Mr. Coroner, that you will now feel it necessary to decide this point, as to whether you will feel it necessary to have the testimony of any more witnesses upon the subject of the character of the Meeting.

Mr. HARMER—I shall feel it my duty, to tender all witnesses who can give any material evidence on the subject; but if the Coroner refuses to receive that testimony, certainly, I am obliged to yield to his decision.

The CORONER—I am of opinion, at present, that I ought not to receive any more evidence on these two points.

Mr. HARMER—On what points, Sir?

The CORONER—Why, as to the conduct of the Meeting.

Mr. HARMER—Oh, Sir, I thought you were alluding to some new points. I shall produce these witnesses here to-morrow, and then you will decide whether you will receive their testimony, or not.

The CORONER—Don't you say, you cannot vary the testimony your witnesses have already given?

Mr. HARMER—No Sir; nor do I propose any thing so absurd; but I say Sir, I can confirm all that the witnesses I have already produced, have proved.

Mr. ASHWORTH – So can I do so, with respect to the witnesses I have called. But to what length are we to proceed? Are we to proceed to the sacrifice of our lives, by the fatigue and length of this

Mr. HARMER—I don't care a farthing for risking my life, Sir, when I am doing that which is my duty.

Mr. ASHWORTH—Well, I think my life worth preserving, for the sake of my family.

Mr HARMER—Mine may not be worthless, Sir, in that point of view; but I would never hold it, by a dereliction from my duty.

*[Some of the Jury here expressed a wish that the Inquest might be adjourned until 11 o'clock, instead of 10 o'clock, to-morrow morning.]*