

Name: Thomas William Saunderson

Occupation: Merchant

Home: Manchester

Date: 24th March 1820

Source: *Trial of Henry Hunt* 154

Summary: Was at SPF, but not for the purposes of attending the meeting. Saw no resistance from the crowd. Does not consider himself a Reformer. 'He found nobody in a state of alarm; saw nothing to excite the alarm of any sober rational mind when he first came to the ground.'

Done by: RH

Thomas Wm. Saunderson, examined by *Mr. Hunt*—Was a merchant at Manchester, in the firm of Sanderson and Co. Lives at Chowbent, twelve miles from Manchester; has a warehouse at Manchester; some of his firm live at Manchester; keeps his own carriage; was Manchester on the 16th of August; arrived about eleven in the morning; saw no processions on the road or in Manchester; went to his warehouse, and the ordinary business was transacted during the whole of the day; went to Peter's Field; did not go as a Radical Reformer to take part in the proceedings of the Meeting; he had an affidavit that it was necessary to swear before a Magistrate; he went to *Mr. Buxton's* house where the Magistrates were assembled; he went merely on private business; saw the Magistrates assembled; had seen nothing to excite alarm for his person or property; he found nobody in a state of alarm; saw nothing to excite the alarm of any sober rational mind when he first came to the ground; he saw nothing to excite alarm before the cavalry came; he did not see the cavalry arrive.

Cross-examined by *Sergeant Cross*. —Knew there was to be a meeting that day, but how it was to be composed, or what numbers it was to contain, he did not know. Having dispatched his private business he returned, did not hear of any alarm among the Magistrates. Was in their company from five to ten minutes. Was not a stranger. He knew *Mr. Fletcher*. Did not approve of the object of the meeting, nor the manner in which the meeting was drawn together. Never saw such a meeting before. Never knew a meeting formed by large bodies marching together with colours. Did not see the bodies take up their ground that day, so could not say if people on the race ground drew up in the same way. He objected to the mode of forming a meeting of large bodies from distant places, but did not think that a meeting of a hundred thousand men, like that, from the temper which prevailed, endangered the safety of Manchester; the people were quiet; he had heard many expressions of discontent from the people at other time: but thought Manchester was not in danger from what he saw in their temper on that day. Chowbent is in a populous labouring district; the people there were perfectly quiet and content; Chowbent is seven miles from Wigan; the poor of Manchester were content so far as he knew, unless they were dissatisfied at not being able to earn a subsistence & saw no danger from the assembling of a hundred thousand men that they conceived that such a number of belabouring classes might assemble without danger to the public peace. He disapproved of large bodies being brought together from distant places, because it led to great idleness; he did not know that it would lead to any disturbance; it might do so; disapproved of the mode in which the meeting was brought together; did not know the objects of the meeting; might be a Reformer himself; he did not know *Mr. Hunt*. Several other questions were put to witness on the subject of Radical Reform. Witness did not understand the words. *Mr. Hunt* then enquired if he were told that a pistol loaded with nine bullets was connected with Radical Reform, whether he would not know that that was untrue.

The *Judge* objected to this question.

The witness was then allowed to retire; and at a quarter before seven o'clock the Court adjourned till Saturday.