

Name: John Shawcross

Occupation: Clerk to the Manchester Police-office

Home: Manchester

Date: 16th March 1820, 20 March 1820

Source: Trial of Henry Hunt, 25-26, 62-64

Summary: (16 March) Went with *Murray* to the drillings on 15th August. Was beaten with sticks there. '[A] person gave him a violent kick in the side, which deprived him of sense for a few minutes'. (20 March) Saw placards and newspaper advertisements for the meeting of the 16th, but did not know which aspects of them were considered illegal.

Done by: RH

John Shawcross said, he is clerk to the Police-office, Manchester; he recollected the publication of bills, and their being affixed to the walls about the 23d of July, the day of its being posted. The bill produced was taken off the walls wet. (The bill was produced, and in it a meeting was appointed for the 9th of August). Witness went to White Moss with *Murray*; they arrived before day-light: they might be there about ten-minutes before anything happened; a person called out "Follow them," and another "Come back;" there were then at least 5 assembled; they were followed by a party, one of whom knocked witness down, and more called out "Murder him, kill him;" a person gave him a violent kick in the side, which deprived him of sense for a few minutes; he then got into the road out-of the ditch, saw them round *Murray* he took a contrary direction, and got off.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Hunt*—Witness said he was employed by the Police; some of the beadles knew of his going to White Moss: he did not know all the defendants went with *Murray* to the prison of Lancaster, but did not know what his object was; he saw none of the defendants at the. Drilling at the Moss, which is about a mile and a quarter over; they left a little after three; some of them were at their exercise, and there were some bystanders, perhaps twenty; he would swear there were not one hundred: he could hear no word of command but "right left, left right;" he was met with *Murray*, who was a little in advance, and might have heard something witness did not hear; he concluded they were teaching the awkward squad to march; this was in broad day-light; he thought the lookers on. Fell in before the beating; witness was not forced to fall in; he gave them no hopes that he would fall in; others might have been asked to do so without his hearing it; some were marching in files, others in squads; the latter did not seem very perfect in their marching, but others did; he heard parties going very noisily the whole of the night to White Moss. He described the advance of the Reformers to Manchester, as it had been previously described. Some of them spoke to him, and told him that if he would go to Manchester they would give him what he had been short of yesterday. He had been beaten on the day before), Witness went near Smedley Cottage, where he heard *Mr. Hunt* address a crowd of three or four hundred people. He should know anyone who beat him again. The five men who spoke to him on the road he had not recognized as those by whom he had been used. The people at White Moss were doing soldiers' exercise to the left and to the right about. He saw no sticks but those he was beaten with; heard no word to fire; was looking on three quarter of an hour; was not asked to join them, but was at last attacked, because they knew he would not fall into their ranks. He saw *Mr. Hunt* speaking from Smedley Cottage, but heard nothing of what he said. He saw *Mr. Hunt* throw up the window and speak; that was true, and all that he had stated was as true as that.

Re-examined by *Mr. Scarlett*—Knew *Mr. Hunt* by sight. The people training at White Moss were marching all the time he saw them, except whilst they were beating him.

A paper being produced, *Mr. Hunt* hoped this paper would not be allowed to be read. The paper was posted in Manchester, stating the intended Meeting to be illegal.

The *Judge* said, it was not said they swore he knew of it, but it might be of importance that it should be read, on account of the bearing it might have on the other defendants.

The paper was then read. It was a placard calling a meeting for the 9th of August, which did not take place.

The Court then adjourned at six o'clock, till nine the next morning.

Mr. Hunt was cheered as he passed home to his lodgings. He cross-examined the witnesses with great ingenuity, and appeared cool and firm in his deportment throughout the day.

John Shawcross, examined by Mr. Littledale. —I purchased a newspaper on the 31st July, at the shop of *Mr. Wroe*; it was that which contained an advertisement of the meeting. I saw placards stuck up in Manchester, announcing a meeting on the 9th; I afterwards saw other placards, declaring that such a meeting would be illegal. I am a clerk in the Police-office. I saw some of the former placards, after they were taken down and brought to the office. It came to my knowledge that after the intended meeting of the 9th was stated to be illegal, it was abandoned by the parties who called it. I afterwards saw other placards, announcing a meeting for the 16th; I believe some of those placards were taken down, and brought to the Police-office. I do not know which part of the placard of the 9th was considered illegal. I do not recollect that the express purpose of the meeting of the 16th was stated to be, in order to consider of the best means of bringing about a Reform in Parliament. I saw a placard similar to the advertisement which appeared in *The Manchester Observer* of the 7th Aug. announcing the meeting of the 16th. I know that flags and banners, and caps of liberty, have been brought here. They are in the custody of *Mr. Nadin*.