

**Name:** John Tyas

**Occupation:** Reporter

**Home:** London

**Date:** 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1820

**Source:** *Trial of Henry Hunt*, 120-123

**Summary:** Was on the hustings when Hunt made his speech. Saw no insurrectionary activity or resistance from the crowd. 'As the cavalry advanced, the people fell away on each side; the constables seemed to be striking persons behind the cavalry'.

**Done by:** RH

*John Tyas* examined by *Mr. Hunt* — Is a reporter to the Times newspaper attended in Manchester in August last; came to Manchester the Friday before the 9th, to report the proceedings; met him (*Mr. Hunt*) in a room in the New Bailey; had relations in Manchester; sent one report to the Times in the course of that week; remembers writing an account headed "Another bounce of the Orator's;" went to St. Peter's field at eight in the morning to see the state of the ground; was alert in his observations; was anxious to collect everything; there were few people on the field at eight o'clock; at ten o'clock there might be about 25 persons; gave no deposition to an *Attorney*; refused to be examined; saw the parties marching into the field; they arrived with flags and music; walked as he saw the electors of York march on Tuesday after the election, with somewhat of a military step: it would not have struck him as irregular unless he heard of this important trial; has the notes he took upon the occasion; about half-past eleven the first party arrived on the ground with two banners; they marched into the centre of the field, and a car was soon after brought to them; saw several other parties arrive; they behaved very peaceably; did not take up their position in a military form; did not act differently from those whom he saw at other public meetings; perhaps they were more orderly than any he observed at any former meeting; saw several other parties arrive and that with the black flag, the Saddleworth, and Mosley Union. There was nothing particular in them but coming with music, and a sort of step; when the flags arrived at the hustings, the band of the several parties played "*Rule Britannia*" and "*God save the King*" it did not strike him that they took any particular position; most had sticks in each division, they appeared only walking sticks; saw no large long staves shouldered like muskets; looked to that circumstance particularly, *The Courier* having stated that the persons who before attended Mr. Hunt into Manchester, were armed with long staves fit to make pike handles; if such a circumstance occurred, it would have attracted his attention; saw nothing to excite the slightest alarm for the safety of the town; saw nothing in their conduct, tending to riot, disorder, and confusion, quite the contrary; had conversations with many of them, who said they were desirous above all to preserve order and tranquillity; saw no act of violence, no insult offered to any respectable person; there was a great number of women and children among them; they came with the different parties, and many of them in the same order as the men; saw two parties of them at the head of the procession; thought they were dressed in their best clothes; had he seen any thing to create alarm, he should as an Englishman, have felt it his duty to communicate it to the authorities; saw a crowd meet him (*Mr. Hunt*) near the Exchange, the people were huzzaing; desired he would use his influence to have him admitted to the hustings; proceeded there with the carriage; saw in the progress there no violence; there was hissing at the Star Inn; did not see him (*Mr. Hunt*) take the command there, or get up to bid the crowd hiss or hoot; did not observe him (*Mr. Hunt*) take a part in these hissings; when they came by the Police office, *Mr. Moorhouse* was admitted into the carriage; he (*Mr. Hunt*) hailed him, and asked him to take a seat; on his (*Mr. Hunt's*) arrival in the field See the Conquering Hero comes, was played and there was much cheering; he (*Mr. Hunt*) appeared to bear his "blushing honours thick about him;" when they arrived at the hustings, the black flag was posted at the far end of the hustings and he (*Mr. Hunt*) remarked that it was very foolish or words to that effect he (*Mr. Hunt*) complained that they were erected so as that he had to speak against the wind; he ascended with him (*Mr. Hunt*) and several others; many of them females; and observed a banner in the middle of the crowd and several women; the crowd was more jammed and dense than he ever saw before or since; the people kept cheering; *Mr. Johnson* proposed *Mr. Hunt* as Chairman; there was no military appearance in the crowd; could not see from the waggon whether their arms were locked or not; saw nothing in front to

keep them from the hustings; heard him (*Mr. Hunt*) make a complaint that the hustings might be broken down from the continual pressure; must have perceived it if the people were locked; they were close up to the hustings all the way round; there was no vacant space round the hustings; does not recollect that they kept off their hats, except as usual upon such occasions, when the person who is to act the principal part makes his appearance.

(Here witness read from his notes the account of the meeting, as it appeared in the Times of the 18th of August).

After the speech great alarm prevailed at the outskirts of the meeting; the yeomanry rode up in a rapid trot, and stopped opposite *Mr. Buxton's* house - then I first observed their swords drawn; they rode into the crowd; and *Johnson* then said, "give them three cheers;" my conclusion was, that this was done to show the military that they were not to be deterred from doing their duty by their unwelcome presence. The cheers were given, and you said it was a mere trick to interrupt the proceedings of the meeting, but you trusted they would all stand firm; the military arrived at the hustings, and took the individuals into custody; an officer came up to you with a sword in his hand; you said you would not surrender to a military officer, but if a peace officer came up you would surrender; no peace officer had presented himself upon the hustings before that; *Nadin* appeared to me as if he came from under the waggon, and took you into custody; you immediately surrendered, first desiring the people to be quiet; the people, as saw, used no resistance in the progress of the yeomen to the hustings; they got out of the way as fast as they could; I watched their progress from the time they left *Mr. Buxton's* house till they came to the hustings; in their progress I saw no stone, brickbats, or bludgeons hurled at them; could not say whether you turned pale and seemed much alarmed; you urged no person to an act of resistance; I must have seen brickbats, stones, and bludgeons, if they were hurled in the air in any great quantity; I saw no such thing; do not recollect having seen regulars before the yeomanry came upon the ground; had they appeared, and had you said there are your enemies, get them down, and when you have got them down, keep them down, I must have heard it; must have heard it if it occurred; when the yeomen arrived you desired the people to cheer; they did cheer; the cheers were of the same description as greeted your arrival, and still louder; I did not hear the multitude hiss, hoot, and groan; the cheer-round the hustings would prevent me from hearing it if it occurred; no part of the crowd advanced towards the military brandishing their sticks; on the contrary they retreated; and I saw the staves of the constables lifted up hitting the people after the military turned round to surround the hustings; the constables were in the rear of the yeomanry; had the people, when the yeomanry arrived, hissed, hooted, and brandished their stick, I must have heard it; had there been a general resistance on the part of the people when the military advanced to the hustings, I must have heard it.

Examined by *Mr. Barrow*. —I did not see *Mr. Moorhouse* get on the hustings; I did not see *Jones* there; I saw *Mr. Hunt* call *Moorhouse* to get into the carriage; did not see him after I got upon the hustings.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Scarlett*— As the cavalry advanced, the people fell away on each side; the constables seemed to be striking persons behind the cavalry; the whole business would not occupy more than six or seven minutes; saw no brick-bats flying at any time; feeling himself in danger, put himself under the protection of a constable and went to the New Bailey. (Here *Mr. Tyas* gave account of the banners and their various inscriptions). The Royton Female Reformers had a banner with the inscription, "Let us die like men, and not be sold like slaves." Knew none of the persons in the carriage which passed the Exchange but *Mr. Carlile* and *Mr. Knight*; did not know them then, but has since seen them, and knows they were there; *Mr. Moorhouse* got in when they had passed the Star Inn; does not recollect meeting two officers; remembers that opposite the Star Inn and the Police Office the carriage stopped and every symptom of popular disapprobation was shown; knew that, the Star was the headquarters of the Magistrates; the persons accompanying were very immense. When they arrived on the field, the carriage was surrounded; cannot tell how the people formed round the hustings, they were pressing towards the hustings, but could not see distinctly; when the cheer was given to the cavalry, it was louder than that with which they greeted *Mr. Hunt*, appeared to him to be a cheer of defiance; that they had met there for a particular purpose, and would not be interrupted—a defiance in one sense and not in another; does not think they intended that if attacked they would resist, but they had met in no transgression of the law, and they were determined to pursue the purpose for which they had met; has given the words spoken by *Mr. Hunt* with as much accuracy as possible; should think the number assembled amounted to about 80,000; major part of the divisions assembled had walking sticks; did not

observe they were shouldered; did not take particular notice of the Stockport division; arrived at Manchester, Friday the 6th, or Saturday 7th August; saw *Mr. Hunt* on the 9th, he came down Piccadilly, and followed him through a part of the town; knew nothing of the plans or arrangements of the meeting; knew none of the defendants.

Re-examined by *Mr. Hunt*—The report in *The Times* was partly written in the New Bailey, and partly in London; some part of it reflecting on the Manchester Yeomanry, was softened down, and other circumstances suppressed; saw no flag with a bloody dagger painted upon it When the military appeared, there was a disposition in some part of the crowd to run away, and the cheer was recommenced for the purpose of restoring confidence to the people; *Mr. H* at the time assigned that as a reason for his so doing – there was not the least possible resistance offered by the people when the Yeomanry appeared; the people did fall in again upon the military but it did not appear to have been done for the purpose of cutting off their retreat, the rush to their former places was occasioned by their pressure; the people were flying at the outskirts of the meeting upon the appearance of the military, but the general flight did not take place until the attack upon the flags, &c. when the people were flying in all directions; he was cut at twice while on the hustings, before the surrender of *Mr. Hunt*; *Mr. Hunt* particularly urged them to make no resistance; On *Mr. Hunt's* arrival, witness heard nothing but cheering; some disapprobation might have taken place without his hearing it; should think from the peaceable disposition of the meeting, that disapprobation took place.

By the *Learned Judge*. -Nothing that he saw was done by either *Mr. Hunt* or *Mr. Johnson* when opposite the Star to create disturbance, nor was anything done to put a stop to the disapprobation; nothing was said or done by them at the Police office, nor was anything done to put a stop to the disturbance, which was not very long, though it was general; *Mr. Hunt* desired them to preserve tranquillity at different times; thinks that the carriage was drawn by hordes, and stopped by them without directions; no directions were given either by *Mr. Johnson* or *Mr. Hunt* for stopping the carriage; *Mr. Hunt* requested the meeting to be peaceable, perpetually while on the hustings, and after the arrival of the military on the field as they, were advancing, said, "If they want to take me, let me go;" this was before the military got up to the hustings; has an indistinct recollection of *Mr. Johnson's* waving his hands when opposite the Star and Police-office to prevent their hooting. The Court then adjourned at half-past six.