

**Name:** John Walker  
**Occupation:** Attorney  
**Home:** Manchester  
**Date:** 18th March 1820  
**Source:** Trial of Henry Hunt, 56-61

**Summary:** Special Constable in the party that dispersed the crowd at SPF. Gives detailed account of the 16<sup>th</sup>, including quotes from members of the crowd. Of the opinion that the meetings of 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> were both illegal. 'The crowd so assembled was calculated to overawe, to intimidate, and to create fear and alarm in the minds of the people of the town. This was the impression on my mind.'

**Done by:** RH

FOURTH DAY. — MONDAY, MARCH 2,

The interest excited by this trial remained unabated. The moment the galleries were opened they were crowded to excess. —The whole of the seats in the lower part of the Court were filled before eight o'clock by females of the most respectable appearance.

At nine o'clock *Justice Bayley* entered the Court, and the different defendants having taken their places, the *Counsel* for the prosecution proceeded to examine the following witnesses; —

*John Walker* examined by Mr. *Scarlett* —I am an *Attorney* at Manchester, and have resided there all my life. I was at the meeting between eleven and twelve o'clock on the 16th of August. I saw several bodies of persons arriving there. I saw a cart as a hustings, from which a line of constables extended to Mr. *Buxton's* house. The leaders of the first division on coming up got into the cart, and ordered it to be removed a little. It was not removed far. *Wilde* was one of the persons who got into the cart. I did not know him then, but I saw him the next day at the New Bailey, He headed a party, and ordered them to place themselves three deep round the hustings. He had before ordered the cart to be removed, I do not know the other man. He was taller than *Wilde*: the people obeyed *Wilde's* orders. The division had a cap of liberty, with *Hunt's* name upon it, and said, as they came up, they were the Ashton division Ashton is eight miles from Manchester. The next division that came up was, I think, the Stockport; they had a cap of liberty. Stockport is seven miles from Manchester. The Saddleworth, *Lees*, and *Mosley* Union came up with the Oldham party. Their leaders, as they arrived, ordered them how to place themselves. They had all flags. *Wilde* said, "stand firm to your post—if you have a leader of ever such strong nerve it is impossible he can do if you do not stand firm." This was addressed to the different columns or divisions ranged around the hustings. The taller man told them to link arm in arm round the hustings. He said, "Every man will know his neighbour, and who is staunch to the cause, and by that means you will keep your enemies from the hustings." I took this down at the time. The persons assembled obeyed this order. I was close to one of the divisions; the people were probably fourteen or fifteen deep when these words were used. I fell back as they kept forming between me and the hustings. I could distinctly observe that they were linked arm in arm; I have no doubt of it. They were about fourteen deep. I cannot say that all were linked; I could see some of the back rows linked, and also some of the row immediately preceding? them, After the party was so formed, *Wilde* gave an order to fall back six yards from the hustings; it was after the directions to link arm in arm; there was a little falling back, but not to the extent of six yards; I receded as they fell back; they still continued the linked position. The taller man said the word of command has been given to fall back six yards; unless you obey you'll give your enemies an opportunity of letting in the cavalry amongst you. " The same man soon after added, "I do not see any of our enemies amongst us; if I did I would tell you, and probably they might wish themselves in another place. " After this was said there was further falling back. As I was placed I could not see whether any opening was left to the hustings. I then left the ground. I was absent half an hour. I returned about one o'clock. Mr. *Hunt* and a number of others were then on the hustings. —*Johnson* was there also. I was 5 yards distant. I heard Mr. *Hunt* desire the people not to call out silence, but to keep silence; and if their enemies would not keep order, to put them down and keep them down, or something to that effect. In my judgment, it was not possible to penetrate the crowd, near the hustings, without absolute force. They formed a solid body; I saw no aperture; this body was formed between the extremity of the line of constables and hustings. There were upwards of fifty thousand persons present. The divisions I saw marched to the ground in a

military manner, as I conceive, and as each division came up, they were cheered by those previously assembled and by the crowd. I have seen as many men assembled at Manchester Races as I did that day. The crowd so assembled was calculated to overawe, to intimidate, and to create fear and alarm in the minds of the people of the town. This was the impression on my mind. I felt fear and alarm, as I thought it would create a disturbance. The distance of Oldham from Manchester is about eight miles. Moseley and Saddleworth are farther; the former is ten or twelve miles distant. Rochdale twelve miles.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Hunt*— I have always been an *Attorney* in Manchester. I was a special constable on the 16th; when I left the ground I went to Moseley-street, to *Mr. Fielding's*, to get a little refreshment; I was overheated from being in the crowd. *Mr. Fielding* is not a Magistrate; I saw none of the Magistrates during my absence. I was at *Mr. Buxton's* house that day, and saw some of the Magistrates there; I was not employed by them; I went as a special constable, thinking it a duty I owed to the town to protect the peace of it in my power; that was my only intention in going. I did not consider myself under the control of the Magistrates; I was under the Chief constable of the town; I was sworn in by the Magistrates, but I considered that I was to be directed by the Chief Constable. I was not there as an amateur reporter, I had only an old letter to write upon; the words struck me as very remarkable to be addressed to such a meeting, and therefore I took them down, I am not usually in the habit of reporting speeches at public meeting. I do not know a person named *Horton*. When at *Mr. Buxton's* house, I only saw one of the Magistrates. It was between 11 and 12. I do not call being at *Mr. Buxton's* house being absent from the ground. I was in the house. I saw *Mr. Norris*; he is the stipendiary magistrate of Manchester. I communicated my fears to him. I merely said I was afraid there would be a disturbance. I thought it necessary to make a deposition on the subject. I had drawn up a deposition before I came to the ground of what I saw in the morning. This was at ten o'clock, or a little earlier. I do not know whether *Sergeant Cross* was then in Manchester or not, The affidavit I then drew up was that which I swore to when I went to *Mr. Norris*, We had no conversation as to the relevancy of that affidavit to meet the question. I drew it up at the police-office. I was induced to make this affidavit from several circumstances; in the first place, from a knowledge that different parties had been training in the several townships round Manchester, and information that those persons meant to march into the town with caps of liberty, which I considered revolutionary emblems; and, as I thought, it was calculated to overawe the town, and create disturbance, and be productive, as I considered, of riot and confusion. These were the reasons which caused me to make that affidavit, and they were felt by several other gentlemen as well as myself. Several expressed their fears to me. There were thirty or forty gentlemen in the police office at that time, and they all concurred with me on the subject. Several of the gentlemen, probably a dozen or 20, joined us in making the affidavit. I might have got many more to join it, had it been necessary, but the others left the place to go to the meeting. Upon recollection, I think 40 or 50 joined in that affidavit. We met in the morning at the police-office, and my intention was, that the Magistrates should have information in order to stop those respective bodies, as I thought it wrong that such numbers should be suffered to come into town. I thought they would create a riot. This question had been discussed the day before at the police-office. None of the Magistrates were present, either on Sunday or Monday. I was at the Police-office about noon on the Sunday. About half a dozen or a dozen of hose assembled on Monday were there at the same time. The purpose of the affidavit made on Monday was discussed on Sunday. I then declined making any affidavit; at least I did not make it. I was not asked to, and therefore I did not make it; I was not urged or asked to make one. By saying declined, I meant to say that several gentlemen had drawn out statements of what ought to be submitted to the Magistrates, as to their fears on the following day. They were respectable inhabitants of the town of Manchester. I think *Mr. Green* was present on the Sunday, but I do not think I had any conversation with him on the subject of the affidavit. I think he was not one of those who deliberated upon that day; I have no recollection of it. He was at the Police office on Monday morning, between 9 and I do not recollect seeing *Mr. Jonathan Andrews* at the office on Sunday; I think he was present on Monday morning, but I am no: sure. I do not think *Mr. Francis Phillips* was present on Sunday. No conversation took place upon the affidavit which I made. *Mr. Phillips* was at the Police-office on Monday morning, but I do not think he was present when I made the affidavit. *Mr. Roger Entwistle* was not present either day. I had known previously to the Sunday what had been going on as to training and drilling. Understanding how the parties were to come into Manchester, I was induced to make the affidavit. I was under considerable apprehensions of danger on Monday morning before 1 o'clock. Those apprehensions were excised both from

what I knew myself and from what I heard. I knew from what had been informed, by those who saw them that training had been going on. I had seen considerable numbers of persons coming into town. I knew of the training only from report. I knew of my, own knowledge, before I made the affidavit that numbers of persons were coming into the town. The manner of their coming in gave me no idea of their having been trained. I live a mile from Manchester, on the Cheetham road. I left my house about nine o'clock. I observed before I set off, numbers of people passing my house. There was nothing particular in that to create alarm in ray mind. My fears were excited both from what I saw and heard. I saw nothing else besides the people who were going to town in the morning. This is all I know of my own knowledge. There was a good number of persons together. They did not march, nor had they flags or caps of liberty, or any other revolutionary emblems. My affidavit was not fairly copied or finished-at the time I left the Police office. I drew up the sketch of it, and left it to be copied and then to be brought to me. There were some alterations made in it at my own suggestion, Nobody signed the affidavit at the Police office. The other persons I mentioned signed it at *Mr. Buxton's* house. I did not stop in the Magistrate's house more than a few minutes; I went back a train. My fears were excited before I made the deposition by seeing large bodies of people in the town. The purpose of my affidavit was, that hearing there had been considerable training, and that large bodies had been approaching he town with banners, flags, caps of liberty, and other revolutionary emblems, their being allowed to enter would overawe the town and create disturbance and confusion. I was of opinion that such entry would be illegal I did this to submit my opinion and that of others to the Magistrates, in order that they might take what steps they thought necessary, I suggested nothing for the Magistrates, I thought they would exercise their discretion and stop the people if they were acting wrong. I had not at this time seen any flags or caps of liberty. I have not heard of such flags having been exhibited before that day. From the calculation which I made at the time, I estimated the number assembled on the field as I had not an opportunity of seeing a long way into the crowd, but there was a number near me with sticks, One man stood before with a bludgeon, which appeared to have been recently cut from a hedge: he held it over his shoulder until a man nodded to him, and pointed to it, and then he put it down: this was on the outside of the close body. It was not held as muskets are by soldiers. The man that pointed had also a large stick in his hand. Neither of the bludgeons were used on my head. I was not insulted or assaulted by anyone. I saw several divisions march on the field, but I could not see whether they had sticks or not, as I was in the crowd; if they had been near me, with large sticks on their shoulders, probably I should have seen them. Many divisions arrived while I was absent. I think I saw the black flag arrive; it was at a distance from me. I heard part of what you said; it was this—(Here witness repeated what he said in his direct examination). This was a little before the military had arrived, but I am not quite sure. I do not recollect that in making this speech you pointed to anyone. I cannot say that if you had pointed to the soldiers as the enemies of the meeting, and directed the people to put them down and keep them down, should have noticed it. I do not recollect your having done so. I have repeated the words as nearly as can recollect them.

Re-examined by *Mr. Scarlett*—*Mr. Hunt* was ten minutes speaking, but I did not hear all he said. I was not in a situation to see the soldiers in Dickenson-street, or anywhere else, unless they were above me. Before I drew up the affidavit I was aware that inhere was to be a meeting on that day. I knew that a meeting had been intended on the 9th, and I understood that *Mr. Hunt* was waiting in the neighbourhood to preside at it. Until I saw the crowds pass on the 16th, I could not tell, except from information, that such a meeting was to be held on that day. I did not swear my affidavit until after I had an opportunity upon the ground of seeing the columns advancing as I have described. I know *The Manchester Observer*. I do not recollect seeing in it an advertisement of the meeting of the 9th. I never read that paper. I saw placards announcing both the meeting to be held on the 9th and that on the 16th. I recollect that part of the advertisement of the meeting for the 9th was, in my opinion illegal; it that where they stated their intention of electing a *Representative*, or *Legislatorial Attorney*.

*Mr. Hunt*—Was it the intention of that meeting to elect a *Legislatorial Attorney*?

*Mr. Scarlett*—He said a *Representative*.

*Mr. Hunt*— *Mr. Scarlett*, yon charge me with putting- words the months of witnesses, now you are doing so yourself; the witness said a *Legislatorial Attorney*; you ought to act with more decency.

*Justice Bayley*—I never saw *Mr. Scarlett* act indecently.

*Mr. Scarlett*—My Lord, I have not acted indecently, I have put up with much indecency since the commencement of this trial.

*Justice Bayley* —I believe, *Mr. Scarlett*, that others have also borne much during this trial.

*Mr. Scarlett*—I am fully aware of that, my Lord, I assure you I feel very much for your Lordship's situation.

(The examination was resumed)—It was something about returning a Representative for Manchester. The objectionable part of the advertisement of the 9th was removed from that of the 16th. I never was secretary to the Pitt Club at Manchester. (Here some placards were shown to witness). This is the sort of placards I saw announcing the meeting of the 9th.