

Petition of William Cheetham

House of Commons, *Votes and Proceedings*, 15 May 1821

Transcribed by Alice C. Hebdon

(No. 611)

A Petition of *William Cheetham*, Weaver, of *Bolton*, in the County of Lancaster, was presented, and read; setting forth, That the Petitioner attended a Public Meeting legally and peaceably assembled at *Manchester* on the never-to-be-forgotten bloody 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 1819, when *Henry Hunt*, Esquire, was unanimously called to the Chair; and that immediately after the Chair was taken, the Yeomanry Cavalry surrounded the hustings, and to the astonished mind of the Petitioner formed line and charged the unarmed and defenceless multitude, cutting and maiming indiscriminately all before them, towards *St. Peter's Church*; the second charge was direct upon the Petitioner, and many hundreds more, down *Lad Lane*, where a great many were wounded and some killed, but with great difficulty the Petitioner escaped into *Peter Street*, and there the infuriated and cowardly *Meagher*, the Trumpeter of the *Manchester* Yeomanry Cavalry, came riding in front of four or five of them, and said, "Damn you, disperse;" the Petitioner said to him, "You stop our way, give us room, and we will begone;" he made way, and they all got past him unhurt, but as the Petitioner was the last to pass him, he said, "Damn you, I will cut your head off," and gave the Petitioner a wound in the neck of three inches in length and one deep, and cut nine inches off the rim of the Petitioner's hat; the Summer Assizes came on, and the Petitioner went to *Lancaster*, in the expectation of bringing the cowardly Trumpeter to justice; but, lo! The Grand Jury, of which the Right honourable Lord *Stanley* was Foreman, the Petitioner's late Colonel, threw out the Bill; his Lordship asked the Petitioner what Regiment he had been in; his answer was, in the second Regiment of *Lancashire* Militia; his Lordship said, laughingly, he was sorry one of his regiment should have brought himself into such a hobble; the Petitioner then attempted to show to his Lordship his hat that was cut, and the blood that run from his wound out to his clothing, but his Lordship would not look at them or allow the Petitioner to show them; so that the Petitioner most humbly prays, That the House will cause an impartial inquiry to be made into the atrocious and bloody deeds committed on that never-to-be-forgotten 16<sup>th</sup> of August; and the Petitioner would feel great pleasure in making oath at the Bar of the House to all or any part of this Petition.