

HO42/192 f.343. William Chippendale, Oldham, to John Byng, Pontefract 16 Aug. 1819. Endorsed: 'In Sir J. Byng's 18 Aug. 1819'.

Transcribed by Yvonne Jez and Peter Trumper

Aug 16th 1819

It will be tomorrow before I shall be able to give you an Account of the Meeting at Manchester, but I cannot restrain till that time the Desire I feel to give you an Account of the Training that took place in this part of the Country yesterday. The Muster at Tandle hill having become too numerous for the Accommodation a Separation has taken place and Part of them have removed to the White Moss. At both these Places there was a Muster yesterday besides another at Quick Edge in Saddleworth. I have not been able to obtain what I consider to be a correct Account of the Numbers of any of the Parties except that which assembled at the White Moss, which amounted to two thousand. The Reports of two different individuals sent by myself have been corroborated by Col. Keymer of the Newton and Failsworth Loc[al] Mil[itia] who was present and counted them himself. Two men who were present as Spectators were extremely ill treated by them. One of them was a Police Runner from Manchester, and the other a young man from the Neighbourhood. They are nearly killed. I saw the Party very distantly from Edward Lees's Garden thro a Telescope and heard the Words of Command quite plain. My Accounts of the other two Parties are so vague that I can not form any precise calculation of the Numbers. The Quick Edge Party was much more numerous than any of them, and I judge I am quite within Compass when I state the amount of all these at 8000. This is an amazing Number to be assembled within four miles of Oldham and as you very emphatically observe demands the most serious consideration, for there certainly is but one step wanting to open Rebellion. Col. Fletcher has made an Attempt against a Party on Cockey Moor near Bolton, but the men having warning of his approach, had dispersed before his arrival. He had information of the Drill Instructors and had them apprehended, and they were immediately committed. I have not heard of any other Instance of them being disturbed [e]xcept this.

With Respect to the meeting at Manchester I have been particularly fortunate in obtaining correct information of the Plans of the Leaders. Orders have been transmitted from the Executive at Manchester and conveyed to Royton to be from there circulated thro this Parish by confederated Emissaries. This took place yesterday and my information was derived from the Committee at Royton. The Orders are not to break the peace on any account whatsoever. They are to bear any insult upon themselves or even to suffer any or all of their speakers to be taken from the Stage without attempting Resistance. They are enjoined not to bring any weapons of any kind whatever, and to keep their Flags furled till they receive orders from the Committee to display them. It is impossible for me at this stage to form any idea of the probable numbers. The Parties that have passed through this Place in military order amount altogether to about 864 with four Flags from the following Places viz. Oldham, Royton, Lees & Saddleworth. [Page damaged] a long stragglng stream of men who did not [page damaged] the Column. With the assistance of a Friend I counted the Columns & made the best estimate of the Stragglers that Circumstances admitted

of and we made the whole to amount to about three thousand. I certainly anticipated a much greater number. The Stockport Column will have the most attraction. It will be headed by Major Cartwright, Sir Chas Wolseley, Mr Wooller, Hunt &c. &c. They were all at Stockport last night to hear Harrison preach at the Union Rooms. I need not say more respecting the meeting as the same Post that takes this will convey to you an account from the Police of Manchester of what has actually occurred. I remain ... XY.

Half Past three. I have this moment received a Letter informing me that Hunt and two others are taken off the Husting. They were taken by the Manchester Yeomanry. All the Flags are also taken and the Meeting dispersed, but not without Bloodshed. My Letter is from Col. F[letcher].