

HO42/196 f.40 Account of Jonathan Andrew, Constable of Manchester, 7 Oct 1819. No.4 forwarded by Constables of Manchester to Home Office, 7 Oct. 1819.

Transcribed by Tom Crolla

On the morning of the 15th August last about one o'clock when in bed, I was awoke by a noise in the Turnpike Road about two hundred yards distance from my house, situated about two miles from Manchester on the road leading to Blackley & Middleton. I immediately got up and proceeded to near the spot and to my great surprise saw a number of men halted, when the word of command was given "quick March" they then proceeded on the road. In about 5 minutes another detachment came up. The word "halt" was given & three loud shouts followed, several people amongst them enquired for Sargent Robinson and some person reply'd, he is here, the word quick March was then given & they proceeded on the Road. I sent my gardener and another young Man after them & who saw a great number learning their facings and going through other Military Movements on a place called (White Moss) near the vilage [sic] of Blackley. I saw a number of lamps had been broke during the night on this Road, just leaving the Town, and the Public Road was a continuous scene of uproar during the time of their going to drill & on returning in the forenoon of Sunday the 15th August.

On Monday Morning the 16th August we sent from the Police Office men on horseback on the different Roads leading into the Town & we were informed that great numbers were coming with Flags, Caps of Liberty &c &c and some with Bands of Music all in Military procession. I saw several large detachments come on the ground as above described a great number carrying large sticks on their left shoulders, in the manner a soldier carries his Musket, and as each party came on the ground they were received with three Cheers & they joined banishing their sticks. A length of time elapsed before Hunt arrived on the ground he came in a barouche along with several others and a Female carrying a Flag, he Hunt took off his Hat and proceeded to give several shouts turning round to the people who joined him, he then proceeded towards the hustings. The special Constables were early on the ground and got in the first instance near to the Hustings, but the Cart was removed as if on purpose to get their own party round it, which they succeeded in and the Special Constables were pressed off a considerable distance, except a few who got mixed in the crowd, being informed that it was likely a Warrant would be placed against Hunt & others on the stage. I went as near to it as I could and I stated to Mr Wheeler on returning from it, that it would not be possible to execute the Warrant without being assisted by the Military. I was immediately afterwards called up into the Magistrates rooms and I also stated to Mr Hulton the impossibility of executing it without Military assistance and that I could not think of attempting it with such appearances before my Eyes and the determined manner the People seemed to show, and in this I was not deceived, for on arrival of the Military they shouted [at] them & raised their sticks in the air as if in open defiance. I led up Captain Birley of the Yeomanry Cavalry about 8 or 10 yards and desired him to surround the Hustings that we might be able to take the parties off the stage. I never saw any person cut with the Sabre during this time and on my getting to the stage I was surrounded by Yeomanry Cavalry which enabled us to take the parties off, as I was taking Johnson the 15th Hussars came up.

Jonathan Andrew
Constable of Manchester

Manchester October 7th 1819.