

HO42/198 f. 680-1. Information of John Whittaker.

Transcribed by Claire Robinson.

'Information of John Whittaker of Blackley, Bricklayer, taken upon oath before me one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the County of Lancaster this ninth day of November 1819...

Who saith that on various occasions and within one week of the sixteenth of August last he was at a public house in Harpurhey called the Red Lion kept by Samuel Ogden, to pay his men, as was not only his custom to do so, at that House, but also at another public house called the White Lion in Blakeley kept by James Ogden. Informant always found many persons who were strangers drinking in both the said Houses and their constant conversation was against the King – the Government and the Laws. About a fortnight before the tenth of August last, two well dressed persons came into Samuel Ogden's House and spoke to the following effect to Informant and to about six or seven other persons – after abusing the Government and "black tribe" said, "there will not be a Church or Chapel left except a few for Barracks for ourselves, in three months time, if they (meaning the Government) did not come into their the Reformers terms at the meeting in Manchester" The conversation of these Reformers was the same at James Ogden's House, saying that in a short time "There would be neither parson, clerk nor constable left; and in a short time that the Borough Mongers should be done away with, and that they should have annual parliaments and the Corn Laws should be destroyed – such was the common and consistent conversation of the public frequenting these public Houses – whose persons were not known to this Informant and understand that they principally came from Royton, Middleton, Rochdale and Chadderton.

On the morning of the sixteenth of August Informant was at his work near the road side at Harpurhey, saw, about ten or eleven o'clock, very large crowds of people going to the meeting at Manchester, marching in military order with flags & caps of liberty and bands of music – the mottoes on some of the flags were – "No Corn Laws" – "Hunt & Liberty" &c. &c. Informant accosted them, saying "you will not come back as merry as you go" – they said – "we will let you know better than that, we will show you different in a short time" about three o'clock in the afternoon they (the mob) began to come back – Informant said to them – "I told you how you would come back, did not I?" they answered – "We shall come back again and give you some cold steel, we will not come naked as we have done this time, we shall come armed, we have plenty of arms at home and we will fetch them."

After Bamford had got bail at Lancaster he was carried by the people thro' Blakeley – Informant saw them opposite to James Ogden's House who had been sworn a special constable – they gave three Huzzas and Bamford waved a cap of liberty which he had on his head – the whole body of the people with Bamford shouted "Death or Liberty" – the crowd than went away.'

(See another version in TS11/1051)