

THE IMPACT OF

THE PETERLOO MASSACRE

Lesson Three



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the consequences of the Peterloo Massacre
- To evaluate the effectiveness of this campaign

WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED NEXT?

Imagine you had been there on the day:

How would you feel afterwards?

What would you do next?

Activity: Write down on a post-it note one idea for what you would do next.

Come up one by one and put your ideas on the board.

Explain why you would take that action.



SOME TURNED TO VIOLENCE

In 1820 there was an attempt to assassinate the government. It was known as the *Cato Street conspiracy*.

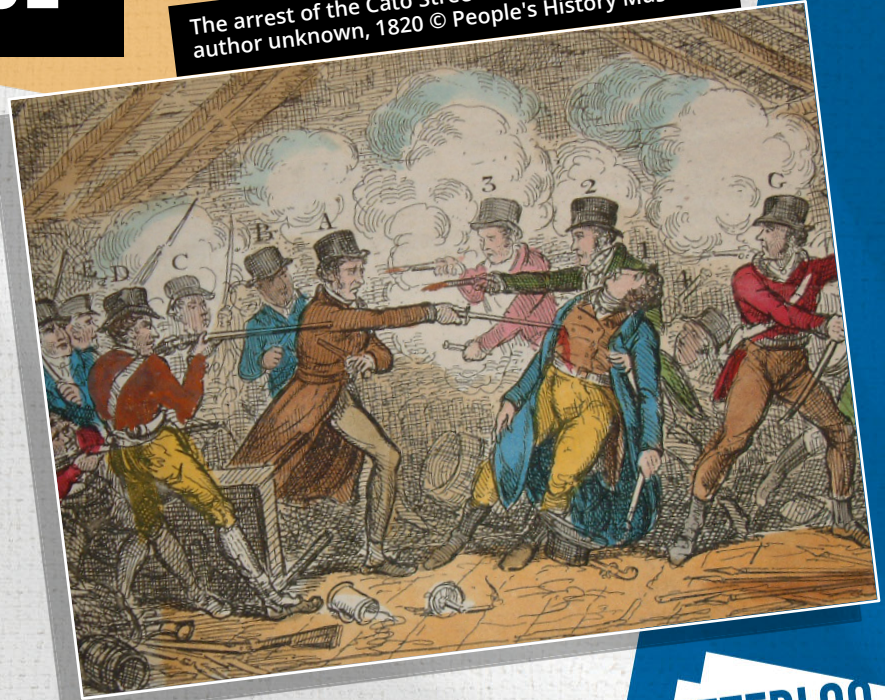
A group of radicals led by Arthur Thistlewood met in a hayloft in Cato Street, London.

The government heard about this through a spy called George Edwards.

On 23 February the hayloft was raided and Richard Smithers, a policeman, was killed.

The conspirators were sentenced to death.

The arrest of the Cato Street Conspirators print, author unknown, 1820 © People's History Museum



PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

SOME CREATED THEIR OWN MEDIA

The Manchester Guardian began in 1821.

It was founded by John Edward Taylor, to give a voice to the reform movement as a direct consequence of what happened at St Peter's Field.

The attempt to silence government critics only encouraged journalists to develop innovative new ways of conveying the message of reform. The Manchester Guardian is now The Guardian newspaper, and is still widely read today.

On Saturday, the 5th of May, 1821, will be Published,
Price Seven-pence,
No. 1 of a New Weekly Paper,
TO BE ENTITLED
The Manchester Guardian.
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. GARNETT, MANCHESTER.
The Place of Publication will be announced when the necessary arrangements are completed; and, in the mean time, Orders, Advertisements, and Communications, will be received by Mr. SOWLER, Bookseller, St. Ann's Square, Messrs. ROBINSON AND ELLIS, St. Ann's Place; and Mr. JOHN FORD, Market-street.
PROSPECTUS.
IT may safely be asserted, that no former period, in the history of our Country, has been marked by the agitation of questions of a more important character, than those which are now claiming the attention of the public. To any one, who regards, for a moment, the conflicting views and wishes of the Commercial and Agricultural Interests,—the considerations which may arise out of the existing Laws for the regulation of our Currency,—the present and the anticipated pressure of the National Debt and of Taxation,—this statement will be sufficiently apparent.

The original Prospectus for The Manchester Guardian,
1821. © The Guardian

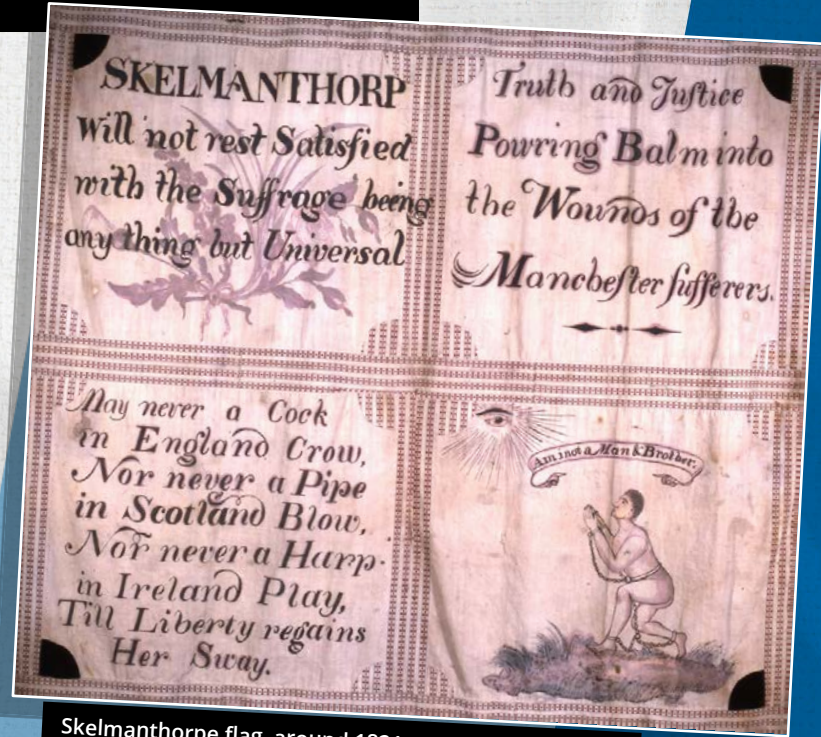
PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

SOME DEFIED THE GOVERNMENT IN SECRET

Despite oppressive new laws, people continued to meet in secret in support of reform.

This flag is one of the most impressive survivors from these times. It had to be hidden between meetings and buried in a specially made box. Anyone found in possession of it would have been arrested.

It is believed to have been made by Mrs Bird, a pattern-maker from Radcliffe Street, Skelmanthorpe in 1819 to honour the victims of the Peterloo Massacre.



Skelmanthorpe flag, around 1821 © Tolson Museum

WHAT DID THE GOVERNMENT DO?

Despite widespread public sympathy in response to the massacre, the government's immediate response was to toughen laws, which limited the freedoms of both the public and the press.

The new legislation became known as the Six Acts.



WHAT DID THE GOVERNMENT DO?

The Six Acts which included:

- Banning organised marches and meetings of more than 50 people.
- Giving local magistrates the power to search homes and private property.
- Putting a tax on newspapers which disproportionately affected smaller publications, as these were more likely to support the radicals.



WHAT DID THE GOVERNMENT DO?



© Peterloo 2019 courtesy of TripleDotMakers

They also arrested and put on trial all the key speakers from Peterloo including Henry Hunt.

Eventually parliamentary opinion began to change and reflect public opinion, which led to the introduction of the 1832 Reform Act.

PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

THE 1832 REFORM ACT

In 1832 Parliament voted to expand the voting franchise in the UK. This was known as the Great Reform Act.

Men that were small landowners, tenant farmers, and shopkeepers were given the vote along with all householders who paid a yearly rent of £10 or more and some lodgers.

It also rebalanced the constituencies, removing the MPs of 56 rotten boroughs in England and Wales and reduced another 31 to only one MP in addition to creating 67 new constituencies in places that were under-represented.



The reformers' attack on the old rotten tree, E King, 1831 © The British Museum

Teacher Notes: Expansion Video - 1832 Reform Act
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V8w6Dg96bmO>

THE 1832 REFORM ACT

Women were also formally excluded from voting in Parliamentary elections, as a voter was defined in the Act as a male person.

Before 1832 there were occasional, although rare instances of women voting if they were landowners.

Question: Does anyone know when all women did get the vote?

Teacher Notes: answer on next slide



THE 1832 REFORM ACT

Women were also formally excluded from voting in Parliamentary elections, as a voter was defined in the Act as a male person.

Before 1832 there were occasional, although rare instances of women voting if they were landowners.

Question: Does anyone know when all women did get the vote?

Answer: 1928



WHAT WAS THE LEGACY OF PETERLOO?

The people who gathered at Peterloo went for a variety of different reasons. However, three of their key demands were:

- **Election by Ballot** – voting in private on paper
- **Annual Parliaments** – having an election every year
- **Universal Suffrage** – the right to vote for all men



WHAT WAS THE LEGACY OF PETERLOO?

Activity: Using the Road to Reform activity sheet, work out how long it took for each of these things to come into law.

You can also use the [Peterloo 1819 website](#) to search for these answers.



© Polyp Schlunke Poole, Peterloo - Witness to a massacre, 2019

DO YOU THINK IT WAS WORTH IT?

Given everything you know about Peterloo, do you think that it was worth it?

- If you knew everything you know now about Peterloo would you still go?
- What is happening in the world today that you care about, and would you campaign for it?

Activity: Write down on a post-it note one thing you would campaign about today.



Manchester Heroes print, by George Cruikshank, September 1819
© People's History Museum

PETERLOO 2019 AN ANIMATED FILM BY RECLAIM



© Peterloo 2019 courtesy of TripleDotMakers

This animation was made by a group of young people from Greater Manchester who are passionate about everyone having the right to representation.

They see the 200 year anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre as a chance to shout about their own experience of democracy.

Whilst planning the animation, the group discussed the issues they face today, from votes for 16 year olds to education reform.

Teacher Notes: click image for hyperlink to the film

PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

PETERLOO 2019 AN ANIMATED FILM BY RECLAIM



© Peterloo 2019 courtesy of TripleDotMakers

What are the things that are important to you?

Do you feel that your voice is heard?

Watch this film through clicking on the image and then spend a few minutes discussing this together.

Teacher Notes: click image for hyperlink to the film



#MYPETERLOO CAMPAIGN

- Write a postcard or shoot a 30 second video outlining an issue that you would like to change.
- Look up the name of your local MP or councillor by going to writetothem.com and putting in your postcode.



Philly Philadelphia, Me Too, Womens March, 2018

PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

#MYPETERLOO CAMPAIGN

- Remember: MPs play a role in making or changing laws and councillors are responsible for local service management (for instance, recycling and potholes). Which one is best to write to about your issue?
- Share your message with them via post, email or social media.
- Share it on social media via #MyPeterloo #Peterloo2019.



People's Protest, 15 August 2014 © RECLAIM

PETERLOO
PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

PETERLOO

PROTEST.
DEMOCRACY.
FREEDOM.

This learning programme for young people has been created by Manchester Histories and People's History Museum. The programme is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England and UK Parliament Education and has been co-designed with The Politics Project.

