

# POSTSCRIPT TO PETERLOO

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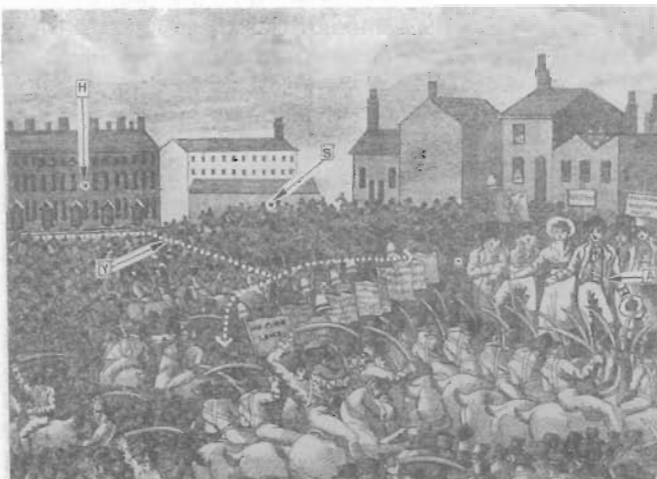
As investigations into 'Peterloo' become more detailed, studies of particular participants<sup>1</sup> and specific topics<sup>2</sup> are becoming more common. It now seems appropriate to consider less well-known individuals who were involved. cursory attention has been paid, hitherto, to the Rev. James Scholefield, or Dr. Scholefield (1790-1855), but he supported a wide range of reforms, from 1819, and his activities reveal the significance of one very minor religious sect which supplements more general accounts of the influence of religion<sup>3</sup> in the Peterloo period.

The most difficult task in attempting to determine details of what actually happened at Peterloo is to reconcile the conflicting accounts provided by participants and spectators. Press reports, narratives and statements at judicial hearings are contemporary printed sources for appraisal and the sworn evidence of witnesses in court should be the most reliable. Here, however, contradictory versions are as marked as elsewhere and later investigators have to try to assess factors which might have influenced such attestations.

One example can be instanced at the trial of Hunt and his associates where the detailed reports of Pratt and Dolby broadly agree.<sup>4</sup> After more serious charges of murder and high treason were mentioned, the attorney-general had decided that the group would be indicted for conspiracy. The judge therefore ruled clearly that this charge was solely determined by the conduct of the accused and the crowd, and would not allow consideration of the activities of magistrates, military and constables. Three crucial points in connection with the assembly were emphasised for the jury: Were the townspeople of Manchester alarmed by the nature of the gathering? Were some of those coming into the town armed with sticks? Were the military assaulted by the throwing of bricks and stones? The chief prosecution witness was obviously William Hulton, 31-year-old chairman of the magistrates who ordered dispersal of the crowd. A differing witness was 29-year-old James Scholefield, one of three dissenting ministers who were strategically called as the defence wound up its case. Hulton and Scholefield observed events from very similar positions which can be pinpointed on the Wroe engraving of the field. Like most

views, this could be biased, particularly in relation to the Yeomanry, but contemporary descriptions and maps suggest that the topography, buildings and crowd in the background, are accurately depicted. Both observers were raised, Hulton in Mr. Buxton's house at the window of a first floor room which "commanded a perfect view of all the field"<sup>5</sup> and Scholefield on the ground sloping up to Windmill Street, "on an elevated spot . . . commanding a view of the whole meeting". They were probably on about the same level for Scholefield "was near enough to see some of them [the magistrates] through the window". Conflicting statements at the trial were: "The meeting did undoubtedly inspire terror in the minds of the inhabitants" and "my opinion was that the town was in great danger" (Hulton). ["I felt no alarm nor did I hear any persons express alarm at the meeting" and "I was highly gratified to see so numerous an assembly behaving in so peaceable a manner" (Scholefield)] At the next stage, "A troop of the Manchester Yeomanry soon arrived . . . the moment they appeared, the crowd set up a tremendous shout. They groaned and hissed" (Hulton). ["I saw the military arrive; I perceived no opposition to have been manifested towards them" (Scholefield)]. Again, "Those men who had sticks shook them in the air. I saw the sticks lifted up in a menacing manner . . . I can positively swear I saw the sticks flourished in this manner" (Hulton). ["I saw nothing held up except the hats of the people" (Scholefield)]. Then, "When the Yeomanry and constables approached the hustings, I saw stones and brick-bats flying in all directions" (Hulton). ["as the cavalry advanced, . . . there were no brick-bats, stones or sticks hurled against them" (Scholefield)].

Cross-examination and summing-up introduced points which threw light on the cogency of the evidence of these two witnesses. Even the judge was cautious about the reliability of Hulton's unsupported version. Dolby's edition of the trial omits his apologetic comment on deficiencies in this account but Pratt reported that Mr. Justice Bayley "believed Mr. Hulton to be a respectable man, who would not mislead them, but he must say, that such important evidence as he had given, ought not to be permitted to want that corroboration which he might have had from his brother Magistrates who were in the room with him, and from Nadin the constable". In his evidence, Scholefield swore that he was in Manchester on the sixteenth because he "came in on business". Although wedged high in the crowd, on the side of St Peter's Field near his road home,<sup>6</sup> he stressed a second time that he had gone "to attend professional business". He occupied a sought-after viewpoint,<sup>7</sup> saw several processions coming in, and remained at least until Hunt's arrest, so that he might have been there for about two hours. It seems reasonable to presume that he had also planned to be a spectator at the meeting. Prosecuting counsel obviously felt that he was attracted as a radical supporter for he probed his background at some length in cross-examination. Scholefield readily conceded that he approved universal suffrage, annual parliaments and vote by ballot "if they were beneficial to the people" but was more reticent when Mr. Scarlett queried his association with the *Manchester Observer*, the influential outspoken radical newspaper which played an important part in the



Detail from Wroe's engraving. A—Hunt on the hustings.  
H—Hulton's situation. S—Scholefield's position.  
Y—Yeomanry route.

build-up to Peterloo. On re-examination he shifted ground and, in closing, prosecuting counsel "would say nothing more of him than asking whether he could be believed in his oath, he who could not recollect whether he had written for the *Manchester Observer* or not, or what he had written". But Judge Bayley apparently failed to appreciate Scholefield's firm opinions. In his summing-up, when he "touched upon the evidence given by the Dissenting Ministers, he applauded the observations made by them, that they abstained from any interference in party politics. In their ministry 'charity thinketh no ill', and as teachers of the Gospel, it became them to remain aloof from the angry politics of the day". In fact, in the light of other statements and actions, the evidence of both Hulton and Scholefield cannot be said to be uncompromised.

One of the studies dealing specifically with religious influences<sup>8</sup> "seeks to explain upheavals of the period . . . examining them from the standpoint of popular reaction to the ideas of the French Revolution and economic change". Coincident with the new ideas and the advent of Jacobinism<sup>9</sup> in Manchester, the Rev. John Clowes, rector of St. John's Church, Deansgate, introduced Swedenborgianism in the 1780s. Unlike Robert Hindmarsh, who founded the Swedenborgian New Church in London in 1788, he remained a member of the established church until his death, over fifty years later. However, his curate, William Cowherd broke away from the Church of England in 1793 to establish the New Jerusalem Temple in nearby Peter Street. As with Swedenborg himself, elements of mysticism and anticipation of modern Biblical criticism, based on new interests in science, were in keeping with advanced thinking of the times. In 1800, Cowherd built Christ Church, at King Street in Salford,<sup>10</sup> and in 1809 further unorthodoxy there resulted in acceptance of "some strange ideas; teetotalism, vegetarianism, and a belief that a minister should not be paid for his services, but should earn his living by honest work".<sup>11</sup> Followers were called Bible Christians. In the same year, Cowherd built a second Christ Church, in Hulme, where the Rev. James Scholefield ministered after being trained and ordained by Cowherd, in Salford. Scientific interests and advanced methods in education were strongly promoted and both men evinced genuine concern for residents in what were becoming deprived areas of Salford and Manchester. Their services as unqualified but skilled medical practitioners<sup>12</sup> were in great demand throughout their lifetimes. On Cowherd's death, in 1816, Joseph Brotherton,<sup>13</sup> who had joined the church in 1805, took over responsibility for Christ Church, Salford. He became its minister in 1818 and, in the year of Peterloo, when he retired as a moderately successful master cotton spinner, commenced 38 years of voluntary work as a middle-class reformer and radical politician of national repute. The years 1818-20 appeared to be a decisive time for the Bible Christians in extending their zeal for religious reforms into the political field. At Hunt's trial, in 1820, Scholefield acknowledged that they had accepted that "the Scripture may, in many points of view, be connected with politics" and, by this time, 'politics' meant support for the radicals. Although Cowherd's death had left Brotherton as the new leader, the influence of the former was perpetuated and strengthened by one of the first tasks undertaken by Brotherton. He edited, enlarged and re-published the first part of Cowherd's *Facts Authentic in Science and Religion* which was printed by the Academy Press at Christ Church, in 1818. In this same



### VICTORY OF PETERLOO.

A MONUMENT is proposed to be erected in commemoration of the achievements of the MANCHESTER YEOMANRY CAVALRY, on the 16th August, 1819, against THE MANCHESTER MEETING of Petitioners for Redress of Wrongs, and Grievances, and Reform in Parliament.

*Hone/Cruikshank squib for a Peterloo monument, August 1821, with contemporary MS addendum.*

year he apparently appointed the future "working-class infidel", R. Barnes, to replace J. Pratt as printer to the Press. For the next two years their common interest in reform topics resulted in the publication of several pamphlets with radical tendencies. Brotherton's seventeen-years experience in the cotton industry fostered his interest in its reform and there is evidence that Scholefield saw and opposed some contemporary evils of the factory system known from Pooley's spinning mill, adjoining Christ Church, Hulme. Scholefield proved to be less circumspect than Brotherton, who was later described as "an ardent but judicious political reformer".<sup>14</sup>

The first attempt to link Scholefield and the Bible Christians with sedition had been when the prosecution, at Hunt's trial, tried to establish a connection with the *Manchester Observer*, although the full extent of the Bible Christian sympathy for reform was not then appreciated. The paper was launched, at the beginning of 1818, by Mark Wardle, a relatively mild reformer, but early numbers show that it had difficulty in attracting advertisers. Bible Christians helped on 9 and 16 May, 1818, when its front pages carried long two-column advertisements to promote the new quarto edition of *Facts Authentic in Science and Religion*.<sup>15</sup> They outlined the entire contents and gave a full list of the 387 authors who were quoted by Cowherd to support the wide freedom of the Bible Christian system of theology and philosophy. While these were likely to encourage and appeal to those who were opposed to current orthodoxy in religion and politics, it is probable that the Bible Christians also felt that such people might be attracted as adherents. A fortnight before these advertisements, the back page of the *Observer* had carried a short letter drawing attention to the inscription on Cowherd's

gravestone at Christ Church. A minor illustration of Brotherton's inclinations is shown by an extant manuscript list of his own library books which includes the works of Tom Paine.<sup>16</sup> Scholefield, at the trial, had also agreed that "he saw two or three of his own congregation present" at Peterloo. The most revealing link with the *Observer*, however, was in the first number for 1819, when it printed an advertisement for a mass meeting, at Oldham, which was to seek parliamentary reform and abolition of the corn law and which opened the campaign leading up to Peterloo.<sup>17</sup> The following week's issue reported that "a number of respectable friends ascended the hustings, when the Rev. Joseph Scholfield was unanimously called to the chair." This designation does not appear elsewhere in the area, at this time, and a recent account gives James Scholefield as the chairman, citing General Sir John Byng,<sup>18</sup> the military commander of the district, as an additional authority. It is most likely that the chairman was one of 'the respectable friends' who seemed to control the meeting, who were from districts surrounding Oldham and who included John Knight, Joseph Healey, William Fitton, William Ogden, Joseph Mitchell, the Rev. Joseph Harrison and J.T. Saxton.<sup>19</sup> All but Saxton were leading and well-known reformers in the area. They provided all the speakers at the meeting and all, except Scholefield had been, or were shortly to be, arrested for alleged political offences. The chairman urged those present to "seal the fate of their oppressors" and was proud of the fact "that he resided in a neighbourhood that the Ministers of the Crown honoured with the enviable designation of disaffected". One intriguing poser remains about Scholefield and the Bible Christian campaign for teetotalism for, after the meeting as was customary, "several of the friends of the people retired to a neighbouring house to take refreshment".

A closer study of the background of the three dissenting ministers, Robberds, Hindmarsh and Scholefield, reveals the inaccuracy of Judge Bayley's opinion that their religion enabled them "to remain aloof from the angry politics of the day". The Rev. J.G. Robberds gave very brief evidence as he did not see St Peter's Field until after the dispersal of the meeting and could merely vouch for the peaceful behaviour of the crowd as it passed his house in Mosley Street. He ministered, however, for over forty years at Cross Street Chapel and of the eleven key middle-class radicals, listed by Dr. Read,<sup>20</sup> six were fellow Unitarians. The Rev. R. Hindmarsh was an eminent Swedenborgian who came to take charge of the Salford New Church when it opened, in 1813, in Bolton Street. Two ex-adherents of this small sect<sup>21</sup> were also on Read's list. Two contributions to the *Manchester Observer* were grounds for the prosecution suspicion that the Rev. James Scholefield supported the radical cause. Briefly, he asserted that his "writings were not intentionally or accidentally connected with politics" and that "it was no part of his persuasion to use Scripture for political purposes". But, in fact, this is what he did and Scholefield's consistent interpretation of scripture was in line with the reformist outlook of the Bible Christians. Although he did not append his name to the two pieces, other evidence enables them to be recognised. It was obvious that the authorities had been most concerned about that which appeared in the *Observer* on 21 August the first issue after Peterloo and only two days after the publication of an ultra-loyalist statement defending the events of that day. Signed 'Verax, the *Observer* contribution was headed *To the Independent Ministers who signed the Police Declaration* and, in court, Scholefield admitted that one of his articles "probably

may be addressed to the *Subscribers of the Manchester Police Declaration*". It was a vigorous attack on those dissenting clergymen who supported the action of the establishment after Peterloo. They were considered, by Scholefield, to have betrayed their laymen, who were mainly radical supporters. The second letter mentioned in court would be one addressed from Hulme and its signature "S" was admittedly used by Scholefield. It illustrates the breadth of his interest in political matters and is typical of his use of religious notions to justify political opinions. Intermittently, both radical and conventional politicians had advocated emigration as a solution for economic distress and this was again raised in 1819. The *Observer* advertised books written on the subject<sup>22</sup> including, on 28 August, *The Emigrant's Guide, to the Cape of Good Hope*. On 21 September it published an article from South Carolina by an emigrant who described it as "the nicest place I ever saw". Scholefield's letter was written two days later and by two lengthy quotations, including one from Cowherd's *Facts Authentic*, argued that an increased population could be supported through the adoption of vegetarianism, by substituting tillage for animal husbandry. A very brief concluding paragraph pointed out that the "numerous readers may see that Malthus' doctrine<sup>23</sup> falls to the ground; and that there is no occasion to transport British subjects either to the Cape of Good Hope or elsewhere".

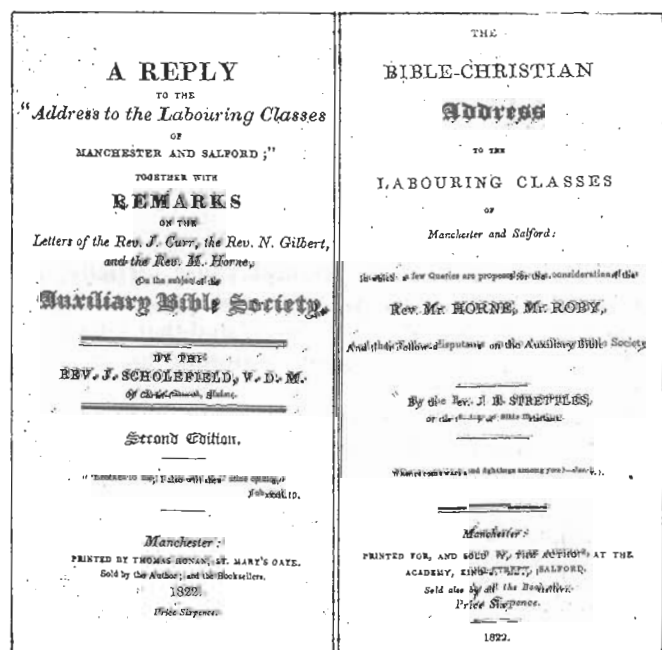
Whereas prosecuting counsel had tried to connect Scholefield with the Radicals through these two contributions to the *Observer*, a further scrutiny of the paper suggests his growing commitment to political reform and that Peterloo had stimulated his interest. In fact, in the six months between 16 August 1819 and his appearance at Hunt's trial, Scholefield was involved at least ten other times in matters mentioned in the paper, most of which were connected in some way with Peterloo and its aftermath. At the beginning of September, his 'Verax' attitude led him to participation in a wider circulated protest, in two issues of the *Observer*, when he signed the important *Declaration and Protest*<sup>24</sup> with 5,000 other middle-class radicals. This attacked the local authorities and 'loyalists' for their actions on 16 August and strongly influenced public opinion. He signed 'James Scholefield' and it might be significant that, in all his *Observer* pieces other than one advertisement, he gave no indication of clerical connections. On 21 September he was almost certainly the writer of an unsigned letter, from Hulme, which adopted *Observer*-style scorn to denigrate the local cotton spinner 'P-4-y' [John Pooley] for expelling a Sunday School pupil who wore a drab hat. This coincided with the Anglican Sunday Schools' Committee's ban on such radical symbols.<sup>25</sup> In wonted fashion, he concluded his letter with a Biblical quotation . . . "in the words of Jesus, 'The devil is come down having great wrath; knowing he hath but a short time to REIGN'." Typically, he initiated action to remedy injustice and Christ Church, Hulme, was at once opened for such scholars, with a very liberal teaching programme. This concern for those he considered to be victimized because of radical activities was reported several times during these six months. Like Brotherton, he helped in giving relief to sufferers after Peterloo. He went beyond the official efforts, for the first column of the *Observer's* front page on 2 October was headed by an advertisement in bold type, addressed "To the Public". They were "respectfully informed that the regular Quarterly Collections will take place at Christ Church, Hulme, on Sunday next, the 3rd of October; and that all the monies, above the sum of £5, will be given to the

SUBSCRIPTION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE UNFORTUNATE SUFFERERS at the late MASSACRE on St. Peter's Field". There was to be "appropriate Music for the occasion" and all seats were free. During the post-Peterloo period it seemed that Scholefield was also developing a closer association with James Wroe, by then the ultra-radical proprietor-editor of the *Manchester Observer*. Like many others, he was eventually arrested and charged and, to Scholefield, also became a victim. On 4 March 1820, the paper appealed to "the Friends of Mr. Wroe . . . to attend a meeting . . . for the purpose of forming arrangements to open a Subscription to enable him to carry on the defence of the numerous Actions brought against him". Three weeks later, with Scholefield as one of the key 'friends', the *Observer* announced the launch of "a Subscription towards defraying the heavy expenses which must necessarily occur in the defence of no less than *fifteen* Indictments, for what the prosecution are pleased to call libels, the major part of which have emanated from his manly observations on the M.Y.C., in consequence of their lawless attack on a defenceless multitude". Heading the list of five collecting agents, other than the newspaper office, was "Mr. Schofield (sic), Christ-church Square, Hulme." Culminating at this time, another important venture into political controversy had been made by Scholefield, arising from the dissension among the Methodists after Peterloo. Although the majority of this sect was radically inclined, some leaders, including the Manchester superintendent-minister, adopted a 'loyalist' outlook to the affair. A month after Peterloo, the Rev. John Stephens preached a sermon on *The Mutual Relations, Claims and Duties of the RICH and the POOR*. It rigidly copied Canon Paley's Jacobin-period thesis in his *Reasons for Contentment*<sup>26</sup> and a printed version, prefaced 13 October, soon followed. Equally quickly, a vigorous refutation by Scholefield was dated 26 October and the *Manchester Observer*, overnight, advertised its publication 'this day'. As usual, the title page summarized the purpose of the pamphlet in one sentence; *Remarks on the Sermon, Adapted to the State of the Times, preached by the Rev. John Stephens, in the Methodist Chapel, Oldham Street, Manchester*. Although printed by R. Barnes, probably at the Academy Press, it was available from the author and James Wroe at the *Observer* office.

An echo of this clash might have been partly responsible for Mr. Scarletts cross-examination about the nature of Scholefield's relationship with the *Manchester Observer*. After obtaining Scholefield's admission of approval of some reformist opinions, he got him to agree that he had "written for several newspapers, but not particularly for the *Manchester Observer*". Scholefield asserted that he was "not a hired writer" which presumably meant that he was not paid to write solicited articles. Scarlett then refrained from openly suggesting that Scholefield's radical sympathies led him to take an active role, through writing, in the period between Peterloo and the trial. He appeared to be insinuating, however, that Scholefield was a recognised contributor to the *Observer* on behalf of the Radicals. There could be justification for this. If, as Scholefield said, contributions "were not of a political nature, farther than the Scripture connected them with politics", the Bible Christian interpretation of scripture enabled him to use it as an effective means for advocating radical politics. Scholefield's 27 October 1819 pamphlet reply to Stephens had largely consisted of a point by point demolition of the latter's arguments. On 4 March 1820, it seemed rather incongruous for a two-column reprint of the first third of this pamphlet to be re-printed, without

comment, in the *Observer*. Title and author were given in small italics, but the second part of the title — "Adapted to the State of the Times" — was omitted.<sup>27</sup> Originally written to deal with the state of affairs in August 1819, the reprint was quite appropriately used, in March 1820, to influence the state of public opinion for the trials of the accused reformers. The trials opened less than a fortnight later. The re-printed portion, complete in itself, was a scriptural and political statement of Scholefield's view respecting the moral merit of government. After a brief historical review of eight despots, it concluded with the inference from Stephens and the Apostle Paul that "all bad government is of the Devil!" The opposing views of government by the establishment and the radicals, were to occupy columns of the *Observer* for the next few weeks. Other earlier items in the paper, immediately after Peterloo, had almost certainly been contributed by Scholefield and may have been viewed with suspicion by the government. Although there might have been concern about the developing affinity between Scholefield and James Wroe, there would have been less anxiety about his inclusion of some reformist ideas which were peculiar to the Bible Christians. On 9 October, three weeks after his important attack on the subscribers to the police declaration, 'Verax' had again contributed a shorter piece describing how "the glorious cause of Reform is making rapid strides" aided by the "abominable conduct of the Magistracy of Manchester". He deplored the "preposterous nonsense" of talk about emigration, deprecated "the abominable system of oppression and tyranny" and welcomed the growing "spirit of liberty and independence". In the same issue, it is not difficult to identify the man who had "credibly informed" another correspondent about the exclusion of sixteen scholars from the Hulme Sunday School, for wearing drab hats. A week later, correspondent 'White Hat' contributed a lengthier article on 'Drunkenness', with sundry details and advice from Dr. Darwin, Sir John Sinclair, Dr. Reid, Hoffman and Smollett. All these authorities were quoted from Cowherd's *Facts Authentic*.

After the trials, a decline of the radical movement of the type associated with the Peterloo gathering took place. There are numerous accounts of the effects of the



Bible-Christian pamphlets in one of the post-Peterloo controversies.

imprisonment of many leaders, the disagreements amongst others, the introduction of the Six Acts, the overriding interest in the Queen's Affair and the overall improvement in the economic situation. Even as early as the middle of 1820, the change was marked and was reflected in the commemoration of the first anniversary of Peterloo. This was indifferently organized from the Union Rooms at George Leigh Street, Ancoats, where an address was delivered from the window at 1.00 p.m., to coincide with the timing in 1819. A procession to St Peter's Field included boys and girls who were frequently "singing the dirge in a solemn and impressive manner". This mournful tribute was the keynote of the demonstration and contrasted with the enthusiasm for the leaders, twelve months earlier. On St Peter's Field there were brief cheers for Hunt and groans for his persecutors but it was significant that more frequent cheers were given for the queen. Although a short account of the day occupied the front page of the next issue of the *Manchester Observer*, the first page in the following week was filled by reports of the trial and divorce of the queen.<sup>28</sup> The first suggestion for a monument to commemorate Peterloo was in 1821. It was a fanciful Cruikshank satire,<sup>29</sup> but was in line with the tendency to divert sympathetic interest from Hunt to others who were involved; in this case the victims of the day. James Scholefield, however, retained respect for Henry Hunt, which may have been based on the friendship which was noted between the two men. Taking part in planning arrangements for 1821, Scholefield brought Hunt back into prominence and applied his belief that reform should be achieved by gradual change, best channelled through the young. A procession again started in Ancoats, went through St Peter's Field and on to Christ Church, Hulme. Here, in keeping with the vain streak in Hunt's character, the peaceful climax of Scholefield's staged baptismal

Catholics in Manchester numbered 1,000 in 1778 when the Rev. R. Broomhead was appointed to the district mission and, at his death in 1820, the number had increased to 40,000. He was popular with Mancunians but his successor, the Rev. J. Curr, was immediately in dispute with most other sects as the campaign for Catholic Emancipation developed. He had a particularly bitter exchange with the Auxiliary Bible Society of the Anglican Church. The old 'Church and King' type politics of this group were opposed by those of radical sympathies so that Scholefield allied himself with the Catholics. It has been suggested that he also took this stance because the Bible Society attracted funds which might have gone to help Henry Hunt.<sup>32</sup> Scholefield was an early contributor to the resultant pamphlet war, his first tract in 1821 attacking the Rev. M. Horne, curate of St Stephens Church, close to Salford Bible Christian Church. The Bible Christian policy of promoting reform by influencing young people was exemplified in the following year by a similar attack on Horne by the Rev. J.B. Strettle,<sup>34</sup> assistant minister to Brotherton at Salford. Strettle left Manchester Grammar School to complete his education at Salford Academy where, under the influence of Cowherd, he became teacher and ordained minister. At Hulme, also, young men of the next generation were putting forward advanced notions of reform, after absorbing the ideas of Cowherd and Scholefield. The most remarkable was Rowland Detrosier,<sup>35</sup> who was Rowley Barnes of the Academy Press until he discovered his real parentage in about 1820. He commenced successful teaching in Christ Church School before he was fifteen and "throughout the twenties Detrosier was heavily involved in working-class radicalism of its more intransigent forms". After becoming a minister, the Bible Christian commitment to science would have encouraged his move to Deism and he invited Richard Carlile to preach agnosticism to his congregation. Even Scholefield and Brotherton became concerned and he was ejected from the Bible Christian church, near Stockport, which they had built in 1823.<sup>36</sup> Another young enthusiast, contemporary with Detrosier at the Hulme school, was James Gaskill. He was particularly attracted by the Bible Christian educational ideals and, with Detrosier, founded the Hulme Philosophical Institution, in 1819. Their pioneer work in promoting democratic control in the new system of Mechanics Institutes introduced another change which was to be of permanent value.<sup>37</sup>

The early twenties also brought change for Scholefield himself. As a result of differences of opinion, further divisions split up a number of groups in the radical movement, after Peterloo and the trials. Although details are not available, Scholefield had then disagreed with members of the Hulme Church and he left in 1823, to build his own Bible Christian Church and community in Every Street, Ancoats. It would be interesting to explore the motives for choosing this site. It may have been connected with the cardinal place of Ancoats in reform, as East Manchester became a vast workshop, or with the potential religious and social work which would be available for a church in such an area. As with the earlier churches, the minister's residence was adjacent, a schoolroom was provided, a surgery was included and a burial ground would produce income for the minister.<sup>38</sup> For some time after the move, Scholefield would be deeply engaged in creating the new centre and, for about ten years, there is no significant mention of his reformist activities. On the other hand, Brotherton's retirement freed him to play an effective part in the middle-class drive for parliamentary reform<sup>39</sup> and he was largely

*List of the Parents and Childrens' Names, baptized at Christ Church, Hulme, by the Reverend J. SCHOLEFIELD, August 16th, 1821.*

- Henry Hunt Carlile, son of William and Mary Walker.
- Henrietta Hunt Carlile, daughter of James and Nancy Wheeler
- Henry Hunt, son of John and Sarah Crowshaw.
- Henry Hunt, son of Thomas and Elizabeth Stevenson.
- Henry Hunt Thomas, son of Benjamin and Ellen Lee.
- Henry Hunt, son of Thomas and Mary Bullock.
- John Cartwright, son of William and Mary Fildes. (The parents of this child had a son christened twenty months ago by the name of Henry Hunt.)
- Henry Hunt, son of William and Elizabeth Barnes, of Bolton.
- Henry Hunt, son of Thomas and Hannah Mores.
- Henry Hunt, son of Thomas and Ann Crabtree.

This interesting ceremony being gone through, the Reverend Gentleman ascended the pulpit, and addressed the parents of the children; admonishing them of the duties they had to perform in the religious education of their offspring.

He paid a tribute of praise to their patriotism in calling the young Christians after a man of such great talent and political firmness, as Henry Hunt, and trusted his namesakes would emulate his virtues without being subject to the persecutions and misfortunes which had distinguished the life of that noble patriot.

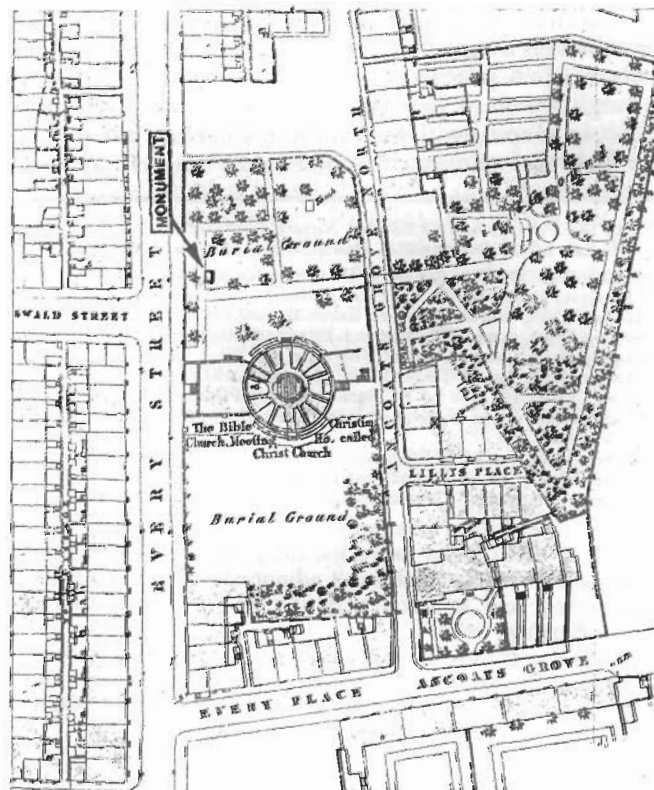
*Hunt's report of 1821 commemoration in his "Letters from Ilchester Gaol".*

ceremony was later recorded by the self-styled 'noble patriot' himself.<sup>40</sup> Once more, the religious ideas of the Bible Christians would be associated with political reform in the public mind.<sup>41</sup>

In these changing circumstances, Scholefield became involved in another religious and political controversy which shed a side-light on the general movement for reform. It also had a tenuous link with Hunt. Roman

responsible for the enfranchisement of Salford by the 1832 Reform Bill. Reaction to this Act, together with the economic stress of the 1830s, made it clear that the measure did not satisfy the high hopes of working men and it was therefore followed by the build-up to the Chartist movement. Scholefield's former pupil, Detrosier, seemed set to play a most important part in renewal of working-class agitation for parliamentary reform, until his early death in 1834. When Scholefield's son took over the school in Every Street, Scholefield himself once more became actively involved with the reformers. As in the Peterloo period, his strategy seemed to be to build up the images of the popular leaders. After the monster Kersal Moor meeting in 1838, Feargus O'Connor, the most influential Chartist leader, stayed at Every Street during visits to Manchester. In 1840, while O'Connor was in prison, Scholefield took a major part in organising Manchester celebrations to welcome earlier Chartist leaders, McDouall and Collins, on their release from imprisonment.<sup>40</sup> The timing was almost certainly not fortuitous. On 15 August a procession wound round the town and a dinner, for 500, was held in the Hall of Science at Camp Field on 17 August. The sixteenth, Scholefield's preferred date for demonstrations, was a Sunday. He did, however, appear to relax some of his Bible Christian principles for, after playing 'See the conquering hero comes!' to greet the chairman (Scholefield) and the released prisoners, the Foresters' Band was allowed to strike up with 'Oh, the roast beef of Old England' as "the plain and substantial dinner" was served. Whether the menu conformed to vegetarian rules is not known but it was "provided by the dinner committee themselves, they not being able to get anyone to undertake it, because they would not allow intoxicating liquor to be drunk".<sup>41</sup> Release of other former leaders from prison, in 1840-41, marked the beginning of the Chartist revival and also seemed to inspire Scholefield to try to rekindle the optimistic support of 1819 for parliamentary reform. He considered that the 1819 enthusiasm had centred round Hunt's flamboyant leadership and drew a parallel with O'Connor. In retrospect, the similarity of the mass followings which each of the two demagogues attracted in his heyday can readily be appreciated. At Lancaster Assizes, in 1843, Peterloo commemorations were referred to as 'Hunt's Festivals' and there was evidence, by a police officer, of their decline. He recalled "five or six thousand or more than that" in earlier processions but only about two thousand by 1840. In that year, however, it would be replaced by the Chartist procession escorting McDouall and Collins from Cross Lane railway station into Manchester. 1819 was still remembered by a banner with a painting depicting "The Massacre of Peterloo". There was linking of the two campaigns by the larger than life banner of Feargus O'Connor, holding in his hand the People's Charter and in the distance Hunt's Monument. It was surmounted by a cap of liberty and inscribed at the base "To the memory of H. Hunt, Esq.". The link was sealed with a third banner announcing "O'Connor, Hunt's Successor". The banner showing Hunt's monument was carried into Manchester by a contingent from the Wigan Association where it had been admired at a Grand Radical Demonstration, in 1838.<sup>42</sup> The monument had not yet been built so the banner probably depicted a proposed design. Scholefield had chaired a monument meeting at his chapel, in 1835, to review progress.<sup>43</sup> As Hunt did not die until 1836 and another task had been "to elect a more efficient committee", it is likely that delay was caused by the decline of Hunt's popularity. One senses Scholefield's recognition of the

renewed enthusiasm for Chartism and its Peterloo forerunner in 1840 for it was in that year that he offered to give a site in his Every Street graveyard for erection of the monument. Release of O'Connor from prison, in August 1841,<sup>44</sup> was followed by a triumphant tour of the country and an almost overwrought reception in Manchester on 27 September. Effusive reports in the *Northern Star* were reminiscent of the Peterloo period accounts in the *Manchester Observer*. A repetition of the previous year's successful procession into Manchester displayed a new large flag showing O'Connor, with Hunt pointing from the clouds and charging him "Welcome Feargus! . . . now lead my people on to victory". Another banner urged spectators to "remember the foul deeds of Peterloo". James Scholefield again stressed the affinity with 1819, for he was "proud to see in their ranks the old banners of freedom which had for some months back been lowered. They were again unfurled in the glorious cause".<sup>45</sup> He was once more called to preside at the evening soirée which extolled O'Connor as a leader. In thanking Scholefield, O'Connor claimed to be "an esteemed personal friend of his". Scholefield had re-organized the Hunt's Monument Committee which was to appeal for Chartist funds for the monument and to arrange a large gathering for its opening on 16 August 1842. A prelude was the laying of the foundation stone on Good Friday 1842. This was carried out by O'Connor and gave about 16,000 people at Every Street, the opportunity to acclaim him. The *Northern Star* described the crowds, from "all



Ordnance Survey Map showing site of Hunt's monument.

parts of Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire . . . and every railway train", who lined the circuitous route from Stevenson Square to the graveyard. It reported, in detail, the usual evening tea party, the list of complimentary toasts and the flattering speeches. In conclusion, a 'fine youth', about 15-years-old, presented O'Connor with a scroll from the Manchester Youth Chartist Association; a token of Juvenile support which would have appealed to James Scholefield. "Amidst loud applause" the boy said they would give little for the Charter "unless it would give

them a Government based on the principles of Republicanism” and warned O’Connor that if he did not abide by these principles they would “throw him overboard (loud cheers)”. The address was signed by the sub-secretary of the Association — John Scholefield.

Events connected with the Bible Christian Church in Ancoats, in the middle of August 1842, were, unknowingly, of national significance for they marked the commencement of the long, final decline of Chartism. They also halted, for many years, the use of Peterloo as a feature of radical political campaigns. Briefly, Hunt’s Monument Committee invited people from a wide area to attend the opening ceremony on 16 August. Three attractions were planned to draw a large crowd. The meeting was to be addressed by O’Connor, an attempt was to be made to resolve differences between the Chartist leaders and national re-organization was to be reviewed. A successful ‘Hunt’ occasion would, incidentally, boost support for Chartism<sup>46</sup> and provide some publicity for the Bible Christians. On 1 August the committee placarded a reminder and gave details of a grand procession to welcome O’Connor at Ardwick Green and go round the town to Every Street. Passing down Peter Street, the band was “instructed to play ‘The Dead March’”. Scholefield also gave permission for his chapel to be used for a delegate meeting of the National Chartist Association during the week of celebrations. By coincidence, economic distress reached a peak during August. A week before the planned meetings, industrial distress in the Lancashire cotton districts culminated in widespread strikes and the ‘Plug Riots’.<sup>47</sup> Thousands of Ashton strikers came to Manchester to spread these, on 9-10 August; trade delegates met in Carpenters’ Hall on 11th and 12th to issue a Chartist manifesto for a further meeting at the Hall of Science on the 15th and the National Chartist Association delegates began to arrive at Scholefield’s chapel on the 12th. Dissension clearly split the Chartist leaders into ‘moral’ and ‘physical’ force sections. Scholefield, throughout his life, advocated keeping the peace and took steps to avoid confrontations which might lead to violence. On 10-11 August he had already issued posters and written to the *Northern Star* announcing “that in consequence of the very unexpected excitement of the town of Manchester and its vicinity, occasioned by the ‘Turn-out for an advance of wages’” the procession would be cancelled lest the consequences should be blamed on the Chartists.<sup>48</sup> The meeting, on Scholefield’s private premises, and the tea party would be retained. The ‘excitement of the town’ resulted from the presence of wandering groups of disaffected strikers from neighbouring districts, inflammatory speeches, intimidation of shopkeepers, breaking of windows, assaults on factories to turn out workers and draw plugs and the presence of thousands of troops and specially enrolled constables. Unknown to Scholefield, informers and spies were active and his letters were being intercepted by the Home Office.<sup>49</sup> While trial reports become somewhat confused, it seems that the following sequence of events occurred during the week-end before the anniversary of Peterloo. Local and government authorities became alarmed and were anticipating a climax on the sixteenth. For Daniel Maude, the stipendiary magistrate, the consequences of possible coercive pressure by police or military revived “the shades of Peterloo”.<sup>50</sup> Similar concern must have been voiced on 13 August in the Cabinet Room in Downing Street, from which Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister, wrote to young Queen Victoria<sup>51</sup> “. . . it is proposed to send a battalion of Guards by railway this evening.<sup>52</sup> The

16th of August (Tuesday next) is the anniversary of a conflict which took place in Manchester in the year 1819 between the Yeomanry Cavalry and the populace, and it is feared that there may be a great assemblage of persons riotously disposed on that day”. Sufficient Privy Councillors were rushed to Windsor Castle, that Saturday evening, to enable the queen to take action. In 1819, there was debate about whether the magistrates should have banned Henry Hunt’s meeting or waited, as they actually did, until they considered that the peace had been broken. No doubt with this in mind in 1842, the Manchester and County magistrates combined to adopt the alternative plan, on Sunday 14 August. They sent for ‘the Reverend Chairman and several communications passed between him, the committee and the magistrates, from which it appeared to be the determination of the latter to act with unconstitutional authority and disperse the intended meeting however legal and peaceful’.<sup>53</sup> A proclamation was issued forbidding large assemblies and warning about attendance at meetings and processions. The government acted independently to issue a Manchester printed Royal Proclamation threatening

## PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS, the present disturbed state of this Town and District calls for the adoption of the strongest measures for the restoration of Peace and Order. We, the undersigned, respectively MAGISTRATES of the County Palatine of Lancaster, and the Borough of Manchester, deem it our duty publicly to make known that all assemblages of persons in considerable numbers, having under present circumstances a manifest tendency to endanger the Public Peace, and to excite the fears of Her Majesty’s peaceable subjects, are illegal, whatever may be their avowed object and wherever held, and notwithstanding they may not at the time be attended with acts of open Violence. And we hereby declare our full determination to use all the means in our power to prevent and repress, and if necessary, forcibly to put down the same. And we further Caution all well-disposed persons against joining in, or being present at, any Meetings or Processions of this character, as they will thereby bring themselves into peril, and incur the consequences of the measures which may be adopted for the Preservation of the Public Peace.**

*County Magistrates acting within the Division of Manchester.*

J. Frederick Foster  
John Bentley  
William Garnett  
Robert J. J. Norreys  
S. Phillips  
George William Wood  
Samuel Fletcher  
D. Maude  
P. M. James  
Joseph Leese  
J. B. Wanklyn  
John Bradshaw  
George Clarke  
Elias Chadwick  
Robert Gardner

Town Hall, Manchester,  
Sunday, 14th August, 1842.

*Magistrates for the Borough of Manchester.*

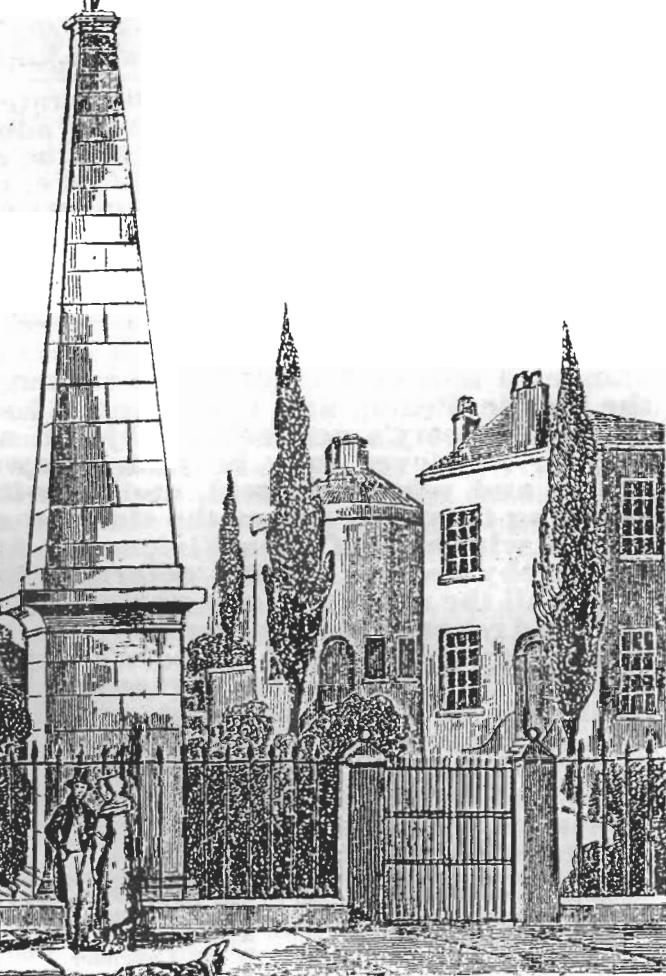
William Neild, *Mayor*  
Thomas Potter  
A. Watkin  
W. R. Callender  
James Kershaw  
Daniel Lee  
John Brooks  
Robert Stuart  
James Burt  
Richard Roberts  
C. J. S. Walker  
John Leeming  
David Price  
Fereday Smith  
E. Armitage  
Alexander Bannerman  
Henry Tootal  
Thomas Cooke

*Magistrates’ response to proposed meeting.*

action against “lawless and disorderly Persons” who “assembled themselves together in a riotous and tumultuous manner”. This was posted up in Manchester on Monday, 15 August, and seen by Scholefield that night. At four o’clock the following morning, the anniversary of Peterloo, he was at the printers to order 500 copies of a placard to announce that both procession and meeting would not take place.

A week later, the *Northern Star* correspondent summed up the previous week in Manchester with the brief statement “All is peaceable now”.<sup>54</sup> Work was resumed, 59 Chartists (including James and William Scholefield) appeared at Lancaster Assizes, trade improved and the social atmosphere changed.<sup>55</sup> Although Chartism was seriously weakened, many Mancunians retained a broad interest in it but diverted their energy to help other reforms. James Scholefield was with Feargus O’Connor

Scholefield’s death in 1855. The Hunt monument was never ‘opened’ or dedicated to the public. For nearly fifty years the massive stone pyramidal obelisk, 32-feet high and 6-feet broad, stood on a 10-foot square base<sup>58</sup> almost half-hidden behind the wall of Every Street burial ground. It was apparently a permanent postscript to Hunt and Peterloo and was most appropriately sited. In 1850, it was at the heart of the classic landscape of the industrial revolution<sup>59</sup> and the industrial revolution was behind the politics and happenings of Peterloo. However, the polluted atmosphere of industry rapidly affected the monument and in 1888, after the sale of Scholefield’s property by his descendents, the stonework was said to be decayed and it “was in a very dilapidated condition”.<sup>60</sup> It was therefore demolished as it was “endangering the safety of the public”. As the demolition contractor sold the materials for £4, he made a profit of £1 on its acquisition.<sup>61</sup>



*Hunt monument erected in Every Street graveyard in 1842.*

at the opening of the Manchester Chartist Hall, in July 1846,<sup>56</sup> and addressed the gathering, but became friendly with Richard Cobden, leader of other successful reform movements. From 1847 to 1852 Scholefield represented Ancoats radicals on the newly created Borough Council, completing his service a year later as a member of the first City Council.<sup>57</sup> Interest in Peterloo had declined and it would have been difficult to sustain popular enthusiasm for commemoration of the event, even before



*L.S. Lowry’s drawing of the Round House, 1930.*

A sad PPS can be recorded a hundred years later when, in 1888, the whole site was levelled by bulldozer as it was said to be unsafe to the public. It had been acquired, in reasonable condition, by the Greater Manchester Council for an abortive road scheme and listed as a building of architectural and historic importance in 1974. A more enduring postscript, associated with James Scholefield, stemmed from his 1819 contribution to the Peterloo feud. One proposal resulting from the day was put forward by the Rev. John Stephens who, with some reason, said that “reading these infidel, seditious, and blasphemous books, tracts, pamphlets, and newspapers with which this part of the country is at present inundated” was partly responsible for the strife. He would remove their influence by ceasing to “put into the hands of the poor the key of knowledge, by teaching them the art of reading”. Scholefield’s conception of reform included opposition to violence, the gradual introduction of new ideas and reliance on changes which would be developed by the young. Not surprisingly, therefore, his reply to Stephens<sup>62</sup> was that “for myself I should wish, as far as my feeble abilities would enable me, to encourage every institution which is calculated to promote the instruction of youth and the welfare of society”. He followed with the suggested postscript, that gained wider approval in later years, when he concluded “by recommending that the rising generation may continue to be taught the ‘art of reading’, writing, &c, and, in particular, the art of *thinking*; that they may exercise that reason with which it has pleased God to endow them”.

## NOTES

1. J. Belchem, 'Orator' Hunt and English Working Class Radicalism (1985); R. Walmsley, *Peterloo: the Case Re-opened* (1969), for Hulton.
2. Such as contributions to this issue of *Manchester Region History Review*.
3. W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (1972); D. Read, *Peterloo* (1958) chaps.3 and 14.
4. Occurrences on 16 Aug. 1819 which are mentioned are all from the two trial reports: J. Pratt, *An Impartial Report* (1820), T. Dolby, *The Trial of Henry Hunt* (1820).
5. Later corroborated by Hulton in his evidence in Wheeler's *Report of the Proceedings* in the Redford trial (1822) p.407.
6. It was ¼ mile from his viewpoint to his house in Christ Church Square, Hulme, along Deansgate and Chester Road.
7. The viewpoint was on the site of a windmill, offered for sale in 1811 and demolished before 1819. Mount Street led to its raised site.
8. W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (1972).
9. See A. Prentice, *Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester*, chs.1-4. T. Crompton, *The Rev. John Clowes M.A.* (1898).
10. The most complete record of this church is W.E.A. Axon, *A History of the Bible Christian Church, Salford* (1909).
11. MS letter, E. Axon (church trustee) 29 July 1932 prior to closure of last church 11 Dec. 1932.
12. Hence 'Dr.' Cowherd and 'Dr.' Scholefield. More accurately apothecaries.
13. See entry in *Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *D.N.B.*).
14. W.E.A. Axon, p.42.
15. There was one advertisement in Wheeler's *Manchester Chronicle* on 9 May but none in the *Mercury*, the *Exchange Herald* and the *Gazette*.
16. Manchester archives Manchester City Library, dated 1911.
17. It was also to announce the first Hunt Meeting in Manchester on 18 Jan. There is no mention of Scholefield's attendance at the Manchester meeting or at the subsequent dinner at the Spread Eagle when 22 toasts were drunk, *Manchester Observer* 23 Jan. 1819 p.6.
18. Belchem p.76 quoting HO, 42/183.
19. John Thacker Saxton came to prominence in 1819, later than the others. Assistant editor of the *Manchester Observer*.
20. Read, p.57.
21. J. Brotherton was listed as a Swedenborgian and his relative W. Harvey was the other. By this time, both were Bible Christians.
22. Several references to emigration include Read p.70, *Manchester Gazette* June, July 1819.
23. Discussed in Manchester 1818-19. See Prentice pp.118-9, 212.
24. *Manchester Observer*, 4 Sep. 11 Sep. p.1 Re-printed in F. Philips, *An Exposure of the Calumnies* (1819) pp.xxv-xxvi.
25. Chetham's Library MS minute book Manchester Sunday Schools' Committee 24 Sep. 1819.
26. W. Paley, Archdeacon of Carlisle, *Reasons for Contentment addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public*. Several widespread re-printings, including Manchester in 1793. Copy in possession of Magistrates in 1819.
27. The only other alteration was the substitution of "\*\*\*\*\*" for 'butchery' in Scholefield's account of Yeomanry action. The change was probably connected with an imminent libel action against the editor.
28. The front page of the *Manchester Observer* on 13 May carried a further appeal for 'Mr. Hunt's Indemnity' fund which would aid his expenses at York. The committee was "sensible that the spirit in which the subscription has hitherto proceeded is altogether inadequate".
29. It was on the front cover of the first edition of W. Hone's *Slap at Slop* issued in newspaper format in Aug. 1821.
30. *Memoirs of Henry Hunt Esq. written by Himself in His Majesty's Jail at Ilchester* (1821) p.30.
31. Services would be based on *Offices of the Bible-Christian Church* printed by R. Barnes at the Academy Press in 1818. This included a baptism service.
32. W.R. Ward p.121. W. Dobson, *History of the Parliamentary Representation of Preston* (1868) pp.66-7. Hunt contested Preston in the 1820 election, while on bail. He came bottom of the poll. Election expenses were met by supporters.
33. Rev. J. Scholefield, *A Reply to the Address to the Labouring Classes of Manchester and Salford; together with Remarks on the Letters on the Subject of the Auxiliary Bible Society* (1821). For Horne see Read pp.27, 87.
34. Rev. J.B. Strettles, *The Bible-Christian's Address to the Labouring Classes of Manchester and Salford; in which a few Queries are proposed for the Consideration of Mr. Horne and Mr. Roby, and their Fello-disputants in the Auxiliary Bible Society* (1822).
35. *D.N.B.*; R. Carlile, *The Lion* (1828). His ideas on promoting reform closely followed those of Scholefield; R. Detrosier, *On the Necessity of an Extension of Moral and Political Instruction among the Working Classes* (1831). G.A. Williams, *Rowland Detrosier A Working Class Infidel 1800-34. Manchester City News Notes and Queries* (hereafter MCNNQ) vol.IV pp.194, 199, 200-2. J.L. and B. Hammond, *The Town Labourer* (1925) pp.249, 254.
36. Carlile wrote scathingly about the Bible Christians, accusing Scholefield of hypocrisy. He thought that, in private, he was sympathetic to Deism. *The Lion* pp.635-40.
37. MCNNQ, vol.I p.286, vol.5 pp.178, 186-7. Axon, pp.81-2.
38. The style of building was responsible in the twentieth century for its common name of the 'Round Chapel' or, later, the 'Round House'.
39. *D.N.B.*; W.E.A. Axon, pp.46-50; J.S. Cowan, Joseph Brotherton and the Public Library Movement in *Library Association Record*. May 1957.
40. *Northern Star* 22 Aug. 1840 p.7.
41. See D. Jones, *Chartism and Chartists* (1975) pp.45-49 on Chartism and Temperance; B. Harrison, Teetotal Chartism in *History*. June 1973.
42. *Northern Star* 17 Nov. 1838 p.6.
43. *Poor Man's Guardian* 26 Sep. 1835 pp.685-6.
44. See 'Chartism in Manchester' in A. Briggs, ed., *Chartist Studies* (1959) pp.50-52. *Northern Star* 2 Oct. 1841.
45. *Northern Star* 20 Oct. 1841 pp.6-7.
46. Despair was reported among Chartists when parliament summarily rejected the monster national petition in May 1842.
47. A.G. Rose, The Plug Riots of 1842 in Lancashire and Cheshire in *Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society Transactions* (hereafter L.C.A.S.). vol.LXVII (1957) pp.75-112.
48. Two sources provide detailed accounts of all Chartist and Every Street occurrences in 1842; the *Northern Star* and *Trial of Feargus O'Connor, Esquire, and 58 other Chartists on a charge of Seditious Conspiracy* (1843).
49. D. Thompson, *The Chartists* p.168.
50. A.G. Rose, p.93.
51. A.C. Benson, *The Letters of Queen Victoria* (1907), vol.I p.529.
52. A *Northern Star* news item from Manchester, marked 9 o'clock Sunday morning [14 Aug] reported "another extraordinary large train has arrived filled with Coldstream Guards".
53. *Northern Star* 20 Aug. 1842 p.3.      54. *Northern Star* 27 Aug. 1842 p.1, reporting from Manchester on Wednesday.
55. Briggs, pp.56-57.      56. D. Thompson, p.169.
57. W.E.A. Axon, p.60. Biographical File, Local History Library, Manchester.      58. L.C.A.S., vol.VII (1890) p.325.
59. The Ancoats vista would be that seen by Thomas Cooper when he got off the train on 16 Aug. 1842 to attend the N.C.A. meeting at the Round Chapel after hastily departing from the riots in the Potteries. He wrote of "the city of long chimneys" and that "every chimney was beheld smokeless" as the strike became complete. *The Life of Thomas Cooper Written by Himself* (1886) p.206.
60. *Manchester City News* 24 Oct. 1907, letter from James Scholefield's grand-daughter.
61. Broadsheet, Jan. 1889, quoting *Manchester Guardian* 3 Oct. 1888.
62. J. Scholefield, *Remarks on the Sermon adapted to the State of the Times, preached by the Rev. John Stephens* (1819) pp.23-4.