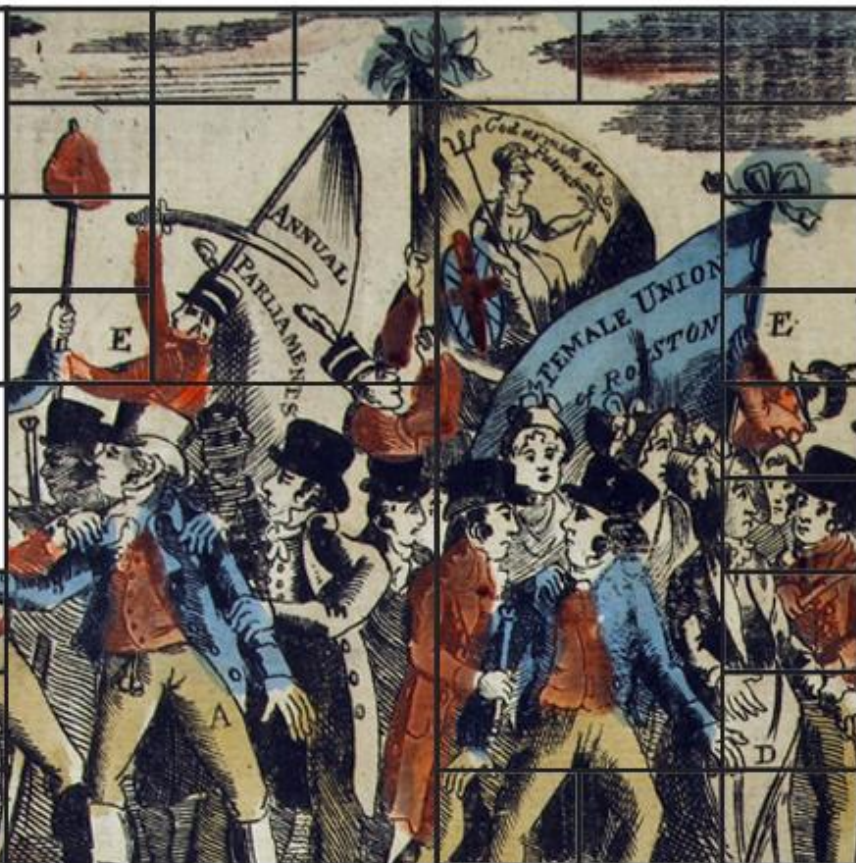


THE

NATIONAL

ARCHIVES



‘Unboxing’ St Peter’s Field – The Peterloo Massacre



Teacher's Notes

The National Archives Education Service





Catalogue ref: MPI 1/134/19 - For full image including attached text, please visit our website.

Unboxing St Peter's Field

The Video:

This resource is intended for use with the video ['Unboxing St Peter's Field'](#)¹ available on The National Archives UK YouTube channel.

The Source:

An engraving showing the forcible dispersal of a reform meeting in St Peter's Field, Manchester, 16 August 1819, (Catalogue ref: MPI 1/134/19)

Further sources on Peterloo:

You will find further documents relating to Peterloo in our themed collection called [Protest and Democracy 1918-1820, part 2: How close was Britain to Revolution?](#)²:

We have included a scrap of paper giving an account of events in Manchester which shows that few expected the Yeoman Cavalry to be used to break up the crowd. This brief, vivid, immediate account is our earliest report of Peterloo, 16 August 1819. This information was received in London the following day and sent to Lord Sidmouth's office and can be found in the folder with this print.

Connections to the curriculum:

This source can be used in the primary classroom to support the National Curriculum element 'significant events' beyond living memory. [A digital copy of it can be found here](#)³.

It can also be used alongside other documents for GCSE and A Level studies such as:

AQA History A level

Breadth study: The impact of Industrialisation: Government and a changing society, 1812-1832

Edexcel History A level

Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations 1D: Britain c1785-c1870 democracy, protest and reform

Paper 3: Aspects in depth: Protest, agitation and parliamentary reform in Britain, c1780-1928: unit: Radical reformers c1790-1819 Mass protest and Agitation

OCR History A level

Unit Y110: From Pitt to Peel 1783-1853

British Period Study: British Government in the Age of Revolution 1783-1832

¹ <https://youtu.be/x6CfNi0zZhk>

² <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/protest-democracy-1818-1820/>

³ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/significant-events/peterloo-massacre-1819/>

Key Stages 1 & 2

Questions:

- What type of document is this?
- What is happening in the picture?
- Can you find soldiers on horseback; speakers at the event; men and women in the crowd; buildings
- How does the artist suggest that the crowd is a large one?
- What could be the message of the picture?
- What do the banners held by some people say? Does this explain why the crowd have gathered?
- How do the other documents we see in the video tell us more about this event? [Clue: look at the poster & map].
- Can you think why The National Archives might have this picture?

Extension:

Find out more about events at Peterloo, 1819 in Manchester. Can you explain why it is a significant event to remember in history?

Key Stage 5

First look:

- What type of document is this?
- What is generally shown to be happening in the picture?
- In particular, how are the following portrayed: Yeomanry on horseback; speakers at the event; men and women in the crowd; size of the crowd; buildings
- What do you think the artist is suggesting with this image?
- What was the demonstration was about?
- From looking at the document, can you suggest why it was created?
- Why do you think it is part of The National Archives' Home Office document collection?

Closer look:

View the document [online and read the original caption here](#)⁴.

Note on the back of this engraving [not shown] were the following words:

'Taken from the show box of John Jenkins this day 25th of November 1819 by us: Gibbs, Davis, Constables of Devon'

- Why do you think that the engraving has provided a key within the caption? Does this tell us more about the purpose or intended audience for the document?
- What does the tone of the caption suggest how these events should be viewed?
- Why do you think a caption was included with the image?

Document in context:

Now read two documents available online which help explain why the Home Office has this image among its records.

[Document One](#)⁵:

Letter from Reverend G Burrington to Lord Sidmouth at the Home Office 25th November 1819 about a man in Chudleigh in Devon who had 'a show-box containing among other prints or pictures (which by the aid of a magnifying-glass made the persons depicted on them to appear as large as life) one, which purported to be a meeting of the Radical reformers.' Burrington said the print was: 'endorsed [signed] by the said Constables on the back.'

⁴ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/protest-democracy-1818-1820/engraving-st-peters-field/>

⁵ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/protest-democracy-1818-1820/chudleigh-show-box/>

Document Two:⁶

A witness statement made by William Tuckett that a man called John Jenkins was exhibiting in Chudleigh: 'a certain print or painting giving a description of the cavalry rushing in upon a large assembly of people, and destroying the people.'

- Why would the authorities want to be informed about John Jenkins?
- How do events in Chudleigh explain why the print is a Home Office record?

Now take another look the video clip:

- What other documents might be in the document folder with the image?
- How does the poster advising people to stay away from the meeting in Manchester connect with the image?
- What does the poster show about the attitude of the authorities?
- How does the map relate to the print as evidence for events at Peterloo?

[The map and posters can also be viewed online]

⁶ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/protest-democracy-1818-1820/chudleigh-show-box-2/>



Why do our hyperlinks come with footnotes?

Our resources are designed to be printed out and used in the classroom, which means our hyperlinks aren't always accessible digitally. We include the full link at the bottom of the page so that you can type in the address without it distracting from the main text of the lesson materials.

Did you know?

The National Archives Education Service also offers free taught sessions onsite in Kew and online.

You can book a free [Virtual Classroom](#) session, an online lesson where students can use individual computers to interact with our Education Officers and explore original documents without needing to travel to The National Archives. You will need computers or tablets for your students to work on either individually or in pairs.

A free [Video Conference](#) session allows our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone to set up this web-chat with us.

Our [Onsite Workshops](#) are available for free here at The National Archives and allow students to experience genuine original documents reflecting over 1000 years of history. From Elizabeth I's signature to the telegrams of the sinking Titanic, students love the wow-factor of being able to see real history on the desk in front of them.

Find out more:

 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education

f www.facebook.com/TheNationalArchivesEducationService

✉ education@nationalarchives.gov.uk

