

# PETERLOO

IMAGINE A WORLD



**Polyp & Marsh**

1775 - 1848

AGE OF **REVOLUTION** - MAKING THE WORLD OVER

## PETERLOO *Imagine a World*

Copyright 2019 © by Polyp & Ben Marsh



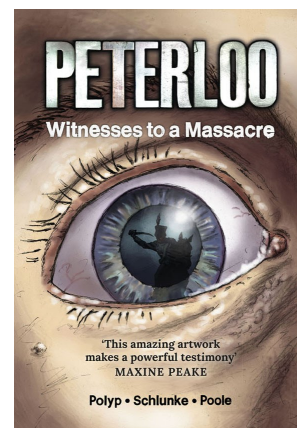
*PETERLOO Imagine a World* is an edition created for schools and fully authorised for non-profit educational use, courtesy of the Age of Revolution project and New Internationalist, who have kindly permitted limited reuse of some of the original artwork. Reproduction for commercial use or sale is strictly prohibited.

Adapted from *PETERLOO Witnesses to a Massacre*

© Polyp, Eva Schlunke and Robert Poole

(New Internationalist: Oxford, 2019)

[www.peterloo.org](http://www.peterloo.org)



*PETERLOO Imagine a World* is just one of many of the **FREE online resources** for teachers supported by the Age of Revolution project. It includes an online gallery of over 100 revolutionary objects, carefully selected from museums and galleries across the UK, with fascinating facts and information written specially for teachers. Choose from our range of tried-and-tested historical enquiries, creative challenges, activities and ideas, to bring classroom learning to life across the curriculum, for all ages. A **digital version** of this graphic novel and **additional learning materials** to support its use can be found at:

[ageofrevolution.org](http://ageofrevolution.org)

Thanks to Ben Walsh, Kesia Wills, Nathan Ilett, Will Jarvis, Robert Poole, Becky Beach, Anna Husband, & colleagues at schools & museums (particularly the People's History Museum) who helped with the project.

University of  
**Kent**

**Culture24**



**IAI**  
The  
Historical Association  
The voice for history

 **HERITAGE  
FUND**

**PETERLOO**  
PROTEST.  
DEMOCRACY.  
FREEDOM.

1775 - 1848

AGE OF **REVOLUTION** - MAKING THE WORLD OVER

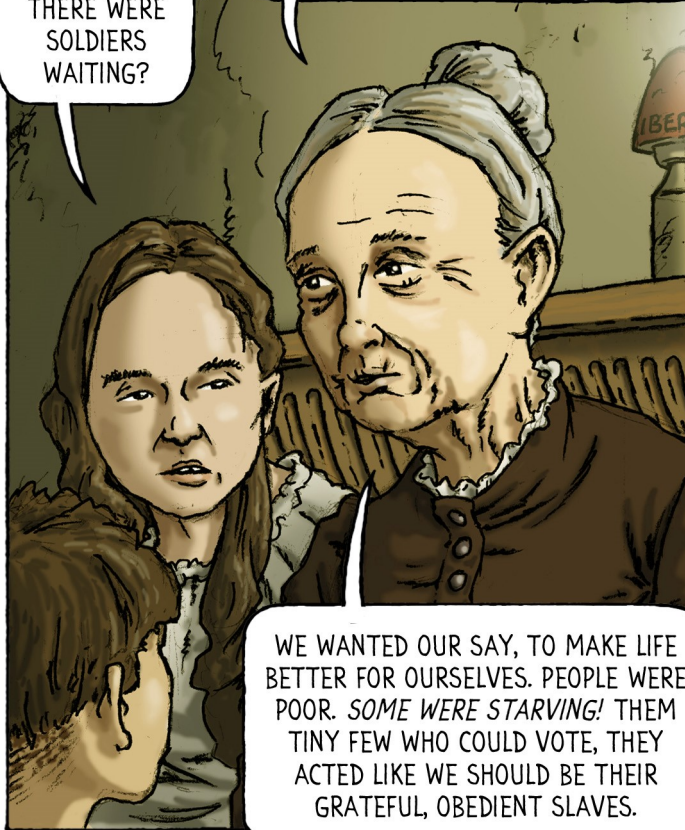
IT'S TRUE... I WAS THERE, AT 'PETERLOO'. I WAS ALMOST THE SAME AGE AS YOU! I WON'T LIE. IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST FRIGHTENING DAYS OF MY LIFE.



AFTER 65 YEARS I STILL CAN'T FORGET. I NEVER FELT I COULD TELL YOU BEFORE, BUT YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO HEAR IT NOW.

BUT WHY DID YOU GO THERE, GRANDMA? IF YOU KNEW THERE WERE SOLDIERS WAITING?

WE NEVER THOUGHT THEY'D ATTACK US. EVERYONE AGREED! WE THOUGHT IF WE WERE PEACEFUL AND UNARMED, THEY'D FINALLY LISTEN TO US.

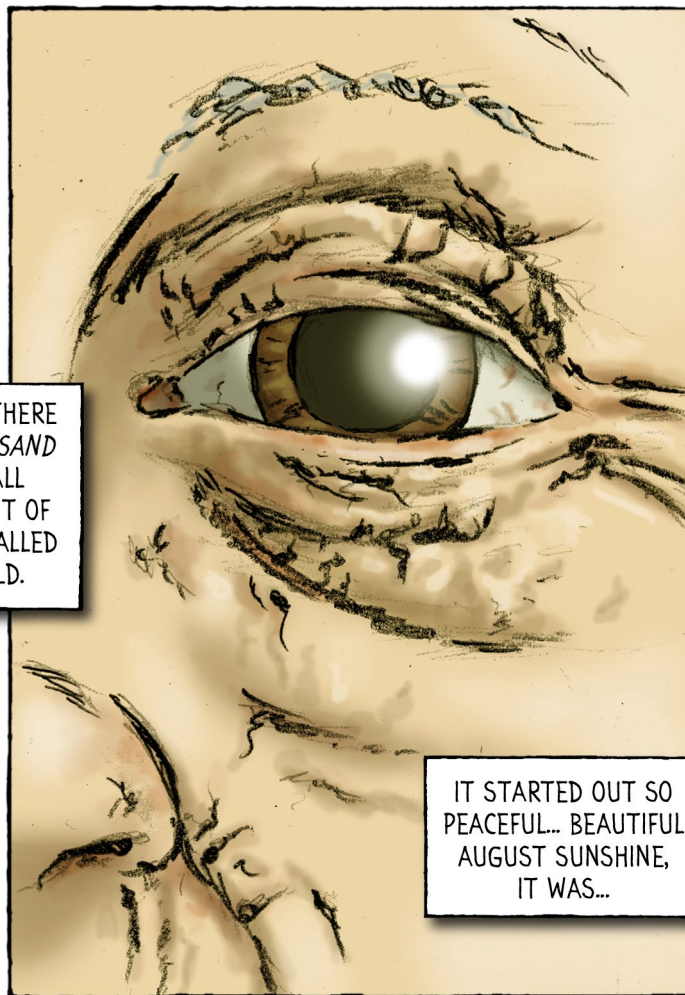


WE WANTED OUR SAY, TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR OURSELVES. PEOPLE WERE POOR. *SOME WERE STARVING!* THEM TINY FEW WHO COULD VOTE, THEY ACTED LIKE WE SHOULD BE THEIR GRATEFUL, OBEDIENT SLAVES.

PEOPLE WERE SO EXCITED THAT HENRY HUNT HIMSELF WAS COMING TO MANCHESTER! HE WAS FAMOUS FOR SAYING EVERY MAN SHOULD HAVE A VOTE. THEM IN CHARGE HATED HIM FOR IT! BUT TO US, HE WAS A CHAMPION! A HUGE RALLY, IT WAS, PEOPLE WALKED FOR MILES AROUND TO HEAR HIM SPEAK. THAT FUNNY ACCENT OF HIS... *THAT BIG BOOMING VOICE!*



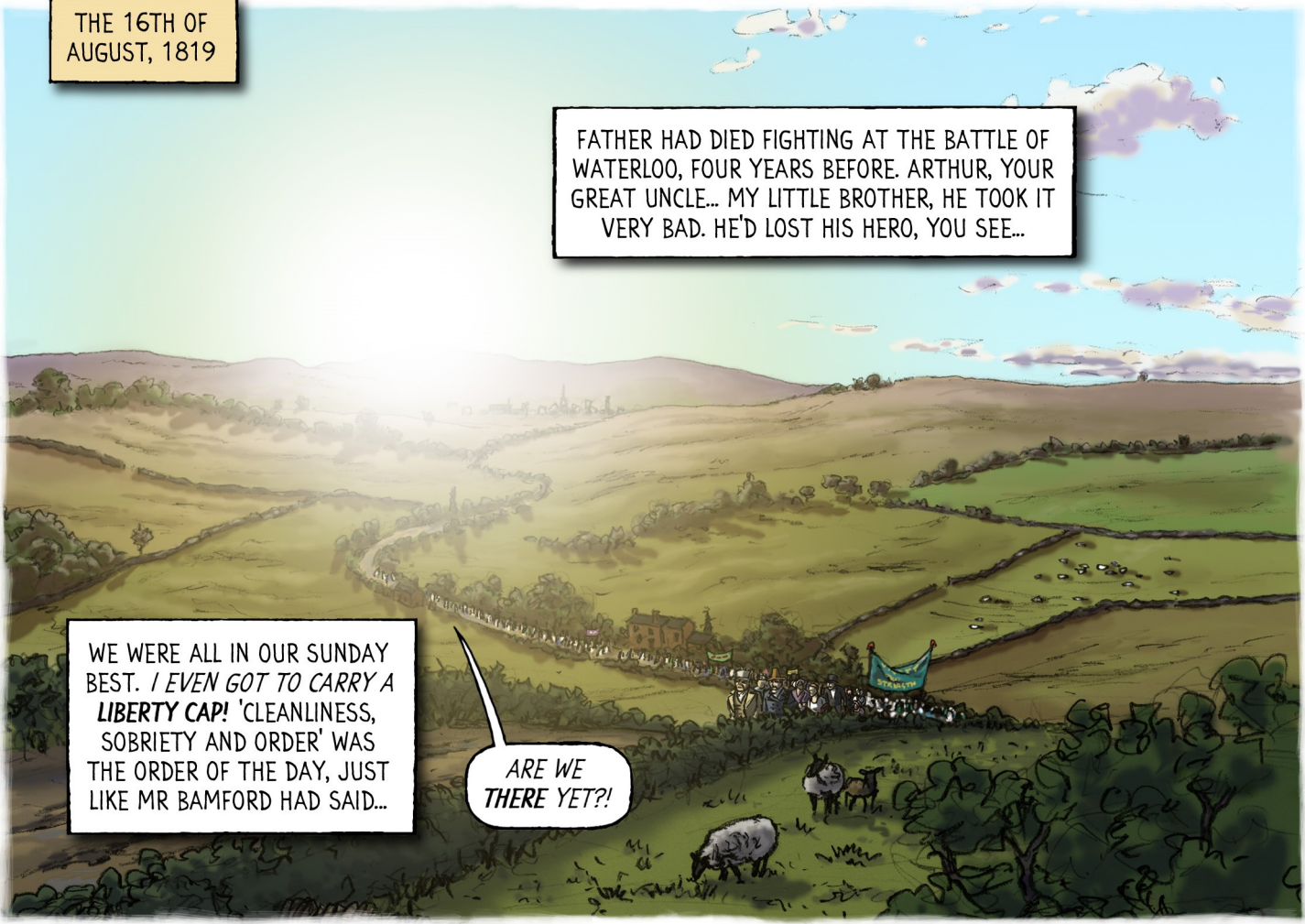
SOME FOLK SAID THERE WAS *SIXTY THOUSAND* OF US THERE, ALL PACKED INTO A BIT OF SCRUFFY GRASS CALLED ST PETER'S FIELD.



IT STARTED OUT SO PEACEFUL... BEAUTIFUL AUGUST SUNSHINE, IT WAS...

THE 16TH OF  
AUGUST, 1819

FATHER HAD DIED FIGHTING AT THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO, FOUR YEARS BEFORE. ARTHUR, YOUR GREAT UNCLE... MY LITTLE BROTHER, HE TOOK IT VERY BAD. HE'D LOST HIS HERO, YOU SEE...



WE WERE ALL IN OUR SUNDAY BEST. I EVEN GOT TO CARRY A LIBERTY CAP! 'CLEANLINESS, SOBRIETY AND ORDER' WAS THE ORDER OF THE DAY, JUST LIKE MR BAMFORD HAD SAID...

ARE WE THERE YET?!



DAD WOULDN'T HAVE MADE US GO TO THIS BORING THING...

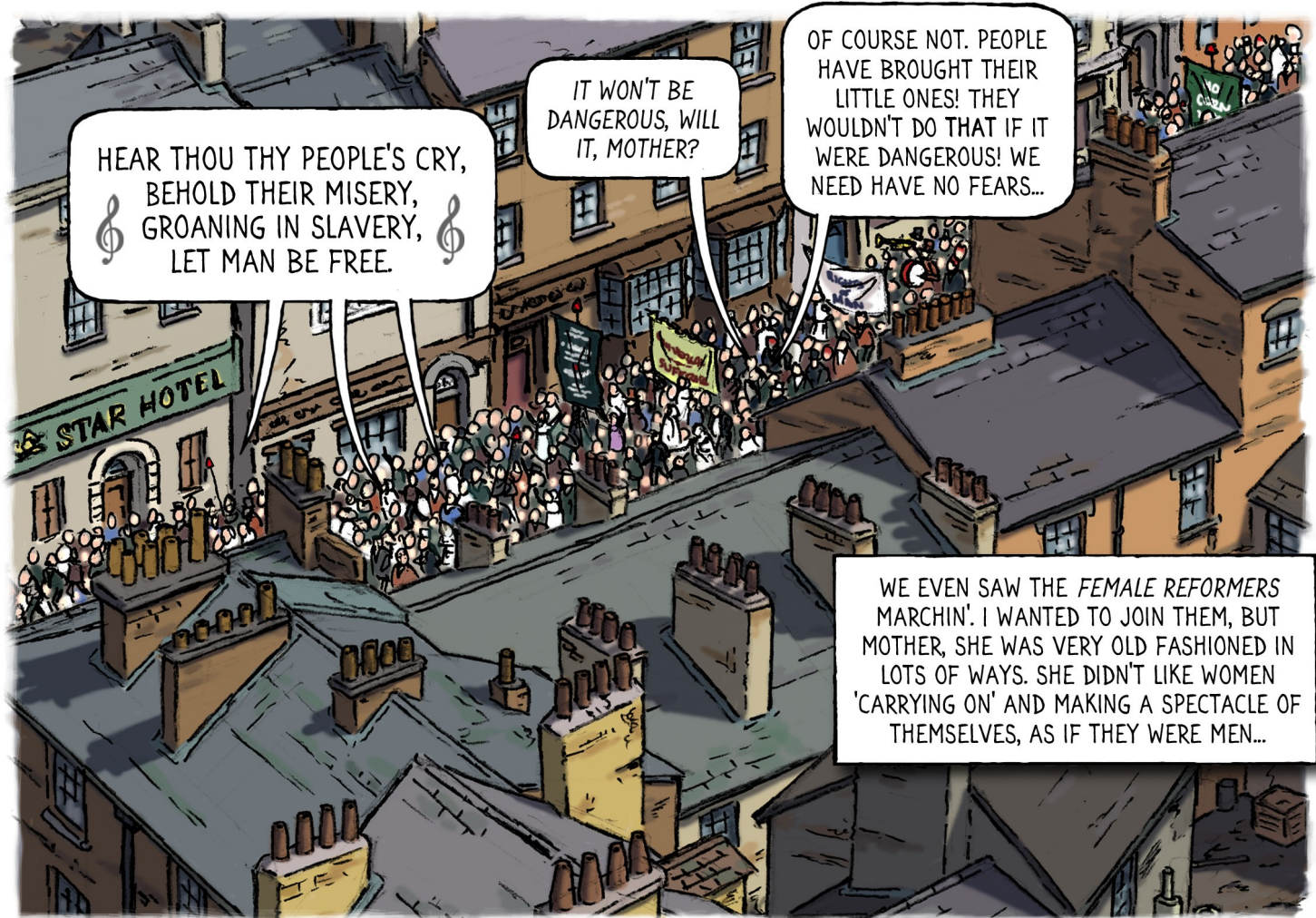
THAT'S NOT TRUE, ARTHUR.

LOTS OF BRAVE MEN WHO FOUGHT AT WATERLOO'LL BE GOING, SOME, THEY EVEN KNEW YOUR FATHER, I BET! IT'LL BE A GRAND DAY OUT WITH OUR PICNIC. YOU WANT TO SEE MANCHESTER, DON'T YOU?



WILL THERE BE SOLDIERS?!

OF COURSE THERE WILL, THEY'LL BE THERE TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE, WON'T THEY.

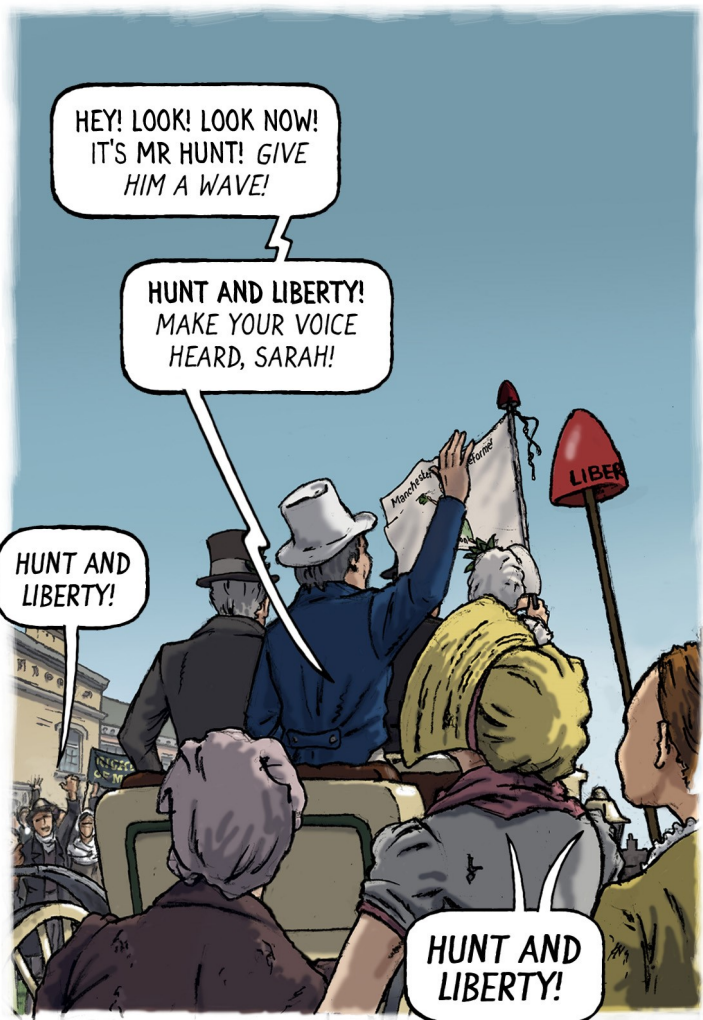


HEAR THOU THY PEOPLE'S CRY,  
BEHOLD THEIR MISERY,  
GROANING IN SLAVERY,  
LET MAN BE FREE.

IT WON'T BE DANGEROUS, WILL IT, MOTHER?

OF COURSE NOT. PEOPLE HAVE BROUGHT THEIR LITTLE ONES! THEY WOULDN'T DO THAT IF IT WERE DANGEROUS! WE NEED HAVE NO FEARS...

WE EVEN SAW THE *FEMALE REFORMERS* MARCHIN'. I WANTED TO JOIN THEM, BUT MOTHER, SHE WAS VERY OLD FASHIONED IN LOTS OF WAYS. SHE DIDN'T LIKE WOMEN 'CARRYING ON' AND MAKING A SPECTACLE OF THEMSELVES, AS IF THEY WERE MEN...

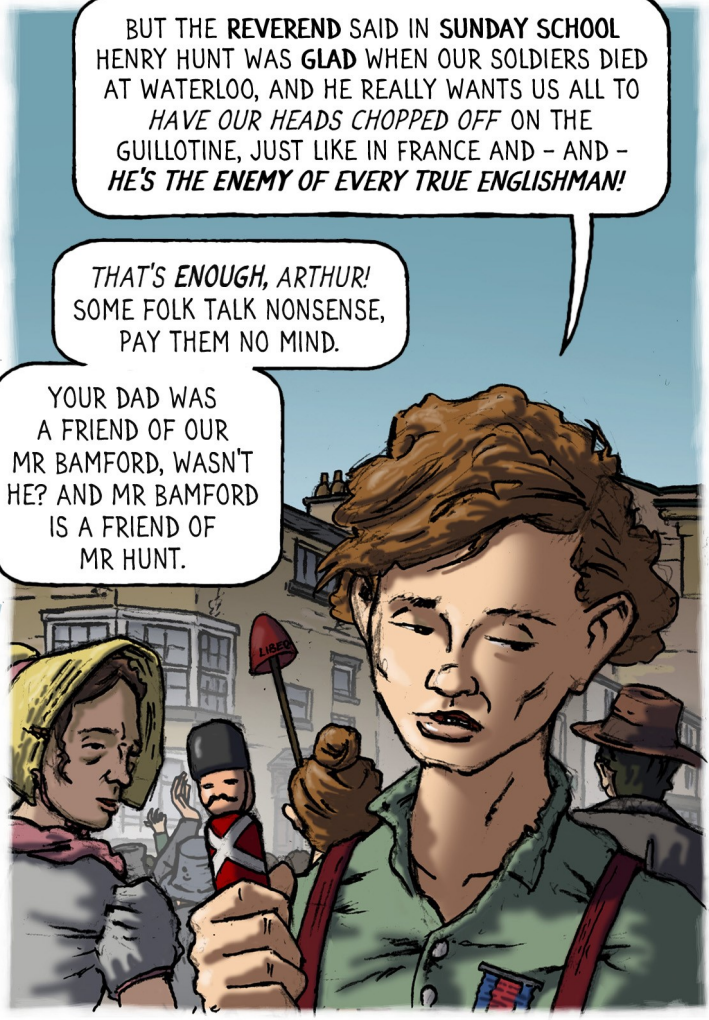


HEY! LOOK! LOOK NOW!  
IT'S MR HUNT! GIVE HIM A WAVE!

HUNT AND LIBERTY!  
MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD, SARAH!

HUNT AND LIBERTY!

HUNT AND LIBERTY!



BUT THE REVEREND SAID IN SUNDAY SCHOOL HENRY HUNT WAS **GLAD** WHEN OUR SOLDIERS DIED AT WATERLOO, AND HE REALLY WANTS US ALL TO HAVE OUR HEADS CHOPPED OFF ON THE GUILLOTINE, JUST LIKE IN FRANCE AND - AND - HE'S THE ENEMY OF EVERY TRUE ENGLISHMAN!

THAT'S ENOUGH, ARTHUR!  
SOME FOLK TALK NONSENSE,  
PAY THEM NO MIND.

YOUR DAD WAS A FRIEND OF OUR MR BAMFORD, WASN'T HE? AND MR BAMFORD IS A FRIEND OF MR HUNT.

NO-ONE HERE IS OUR ENEMY, ARTHUR. IT'S NOT FAIR FOLK ARE SO POOR AFTER THEY FOUGHT IN THE WAR. YOUR DAD WOULD SAY THE SAME IF HE WAS STILL ALIVE.

'REFORM OF PARLIAMENT' JUST MEANS GIVING EVERYONE A SAY IN WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM. GUILLOTINES AND THE REST IS JUST DAFT TALK TO SCARE YOU. STICKS AND STONES.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW COUNTRYMEN, I MUST BEG YOUR INDULGENCE FOR A SHORT TIME, AND BEG THAT YOU WILL KEEP SILENCE. I HOPE THAT YOU WILL EXERCISE THE ALL-POWERFUL RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE IN AN ORDERLY MANNER.

WE DIDN'T KNOW IT THEN, BUT THE MAGISTRATES, WATCHING FROM A WINDOW, THEY'D ALL TOLD THEMSELVES WE WERE A DIRTY MOB, THAT WE WERE DRUNKEN SCUM WHO WERE GOING TO RIOT AND SMASH UP THE TOWN.

THEY DECIDED TO ARREST MISTER HUNT, THERE AND THEN. THEY HATED US FOR DEMANDING OUR RIGHTS, I RECKON... BUT THEY SEEMED AFRAID OF US AS WELL I DON'T KNOW WHY.

SO THEY CALLED IN THE YEOMANRY TO HELP. **THE YEOMANRY!** IMAGINE! IT WERE LIKE SENDING IN THE SCHOOL BULLY TO STOP A FIGHT. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THEN THAT THE YEOMANRY WEREN'T PROPER, TRAINED MILITARY MEN.

THEY WERE JUST A GANG OF RICH MEN PLAYING SOLDIERS, WHO ALWAYS **HATED** US REFORMERS, AND MAD WITH DRINK OR DRUNK WITH RAGE. THEM IN CHARGE **MUST HAVE KNOWN** WHAT WAS GOIN' TO HAPPEN!



MUM? MUM? I'M SCARED. WHY ARE THEY LINING UP LIKE THAT? WHERE ARE THEY FROM? WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO?

I READ ABOUT IT IN THE PAPER, YEARS AFTER. 'THE PETERLOO MASSACRE' THEY STARTED CALLING IT...

SURROUND THE HUSTINGS!

BE FIRM!







DAMN YOU, I'LL REFORM YOU! I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHO I AM TODAY!

SOON AS THEY'D GOT MR HUNT AND THE OTHERS OFF THE HUSTINGS, THEY WENT WILD. THEY STARTED CUTTING AT OUR FLAGS AND OUR BANNERS AND PEOPLE LIKE WE WAS THEIR MORTAL ENEMIES.



BUT IT WASN'T OVER YET. SOME SAY MAGISTRATE HULTON WAS IN A PANIC, HIM AND HIS LIKE COULD HARDLY SEE FROM THEIR WINDOW WHAT WERE REALLY GOING ON, FOR ALL THE DUST.

MUM!  
ARTHUR!

THAT'S WHEN THEY ORDERED THE HUSSARS - THE PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS - TO CHARGE AND 'CLEAR THE FIELD'.

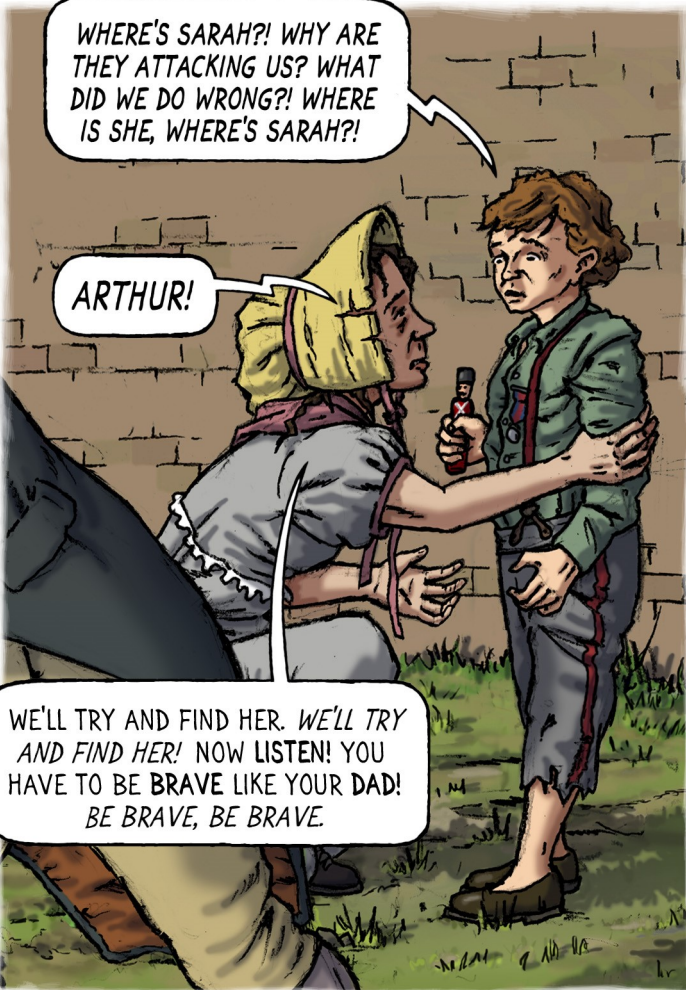
SARAH!



WHERE'S SARAH?! WHY ARE THEY ATTACKING US? WHAT DID WE DO WRONG?! WHERE IS SHE, WHERE'S SARAH?!

ARTHUR!

WE'LL TRY AND FIND HER. WE'LL TRY AND FIND HER! NOW LISTEN! YOU HAVE TO BE BRAVE LIKE YOUR DAD! BE BRAVE, BE BRAVE.



IF WE GET SEPARATED, THEN YOU MUST TRY AND FIND YOUR WAY HOME! ASK PEOPLE TO HELP YOU!

AND STAY AWAY FROM THE SOLDIERS, UNDERSTAND ME? STAY AWAY FROM-



IT'S ALRIGHT ARTHUR CROMPTON, I KNOW YOU, I FOUGHT WITH YOUR DAD. SHE'S JUST KNOCKED OUT, YOU HEAR? YOU STICK WITH ME, NOW, SON, AND I'LL TRY AND GET US ALL BACK HOME. STAY CLOSE!







IT WERE TERRIFYING, LOST ON MY OWN IN THE PANIC LIKE THAT, FOLK FLEEING IN ALL DIRECTIONS, FALLING OVER EACH OTHER. **HOW** COULD FOLK GET AWAY WHEN THEY HAD LINES OF SOLDIERS WITH BAYONETS BLOCKING THE STREETS?!

I COULD HAVE ENDED UP AS ANOTHER OF THOSE FALLEN BODIES, IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR A CAVALRYMAN IN THE KING'S HUSSARS, WHO RAISED HIS SWORD TO PROTECT ME.

DAMN YOU, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THIS WORK?! FOR SHAME, WHAT ARE YOU ABOUT? THE PEOPLE CANNOT GET AWAY!

YOU FIND HEROES IN THE STRANGEST PLACES. I'VE OFTEN THOUGHT HE MIGHT HAVE RAISED THAT SAME SWORD AT WATERLOO AS WELL, FOR ALL I KNOW, ON THE FIELD WHERE FATHER WAS KILLED.



THIS IS WATERLOO FOR YOU! THIS IS WATERLOO!

THEN, AT LAST, I ESCAPED.

I READ SAMUEL BAMFORD'S ACCOUNT OF THE WHOLE THING, WHAT HE WROTE AFTER, SO NO-ONE WOULD EVER FORGET. IT'S STILL THERE, UP ON THE SHELF. HE SAID-

THE SUN LOOKED DOWN THROUGH A SULTRY AND MOTIONLESS AIR. THE CURTAINS AND BLINDS OF THE WINDOWS WITHIN VIEW WERE ALL CLOSED. OVER THE WHOLE FIELD WERE STREWED CAPS, BONNETS, HATS, SHAWLS AND SHOES, AND OTHER PARTS OF MALE AND FEMALE DRESS, TRAMPLED, TORN, AND BLOODY.



SEVERAL MOUNDS OF HUMAN BEINGS STILL REMAINED WHERE THEY HAD FALLEN, CRUSHED DOWN AND SMOTHERED. SOME OF THESE, STILL GROANING, OTHERS WITH STARING EYES, WERE GASPING FOR BREATH, AND OTHERS WOULD NEVER BREATHE MORE.

THE NEXT HOURS WERE JUST AWFUL, NOT KNOWING IF MUM AND ARTHUR WERE EVEN ALIVE... UNTIL, ON THE ROAD HOME-

MUM!  
ARTHUR!



WE'D ALL MADE IT HOME FROM PETERLOO, BY SOME MIRACLE.



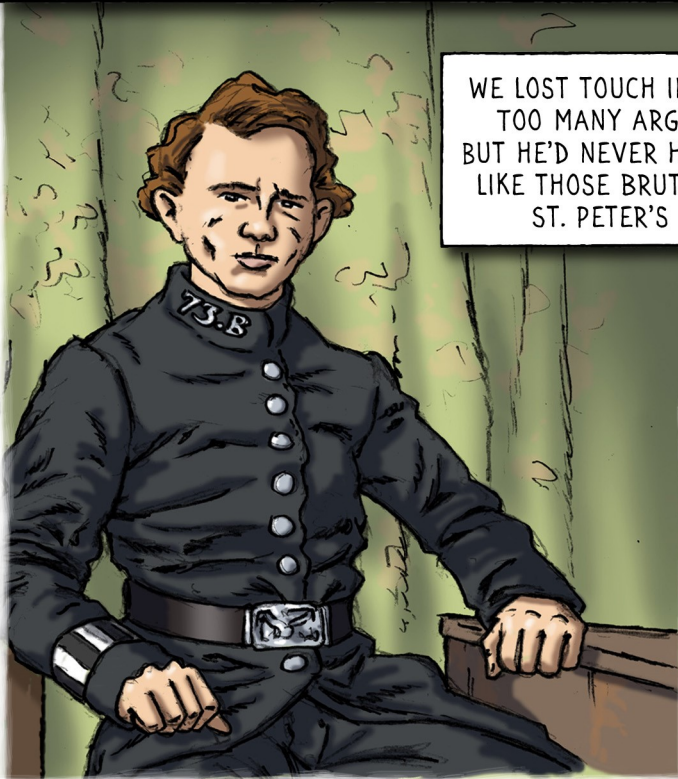
BUT IT WERE A LONG TIME BEFORE THINGS *FINALLY* CHANGED.



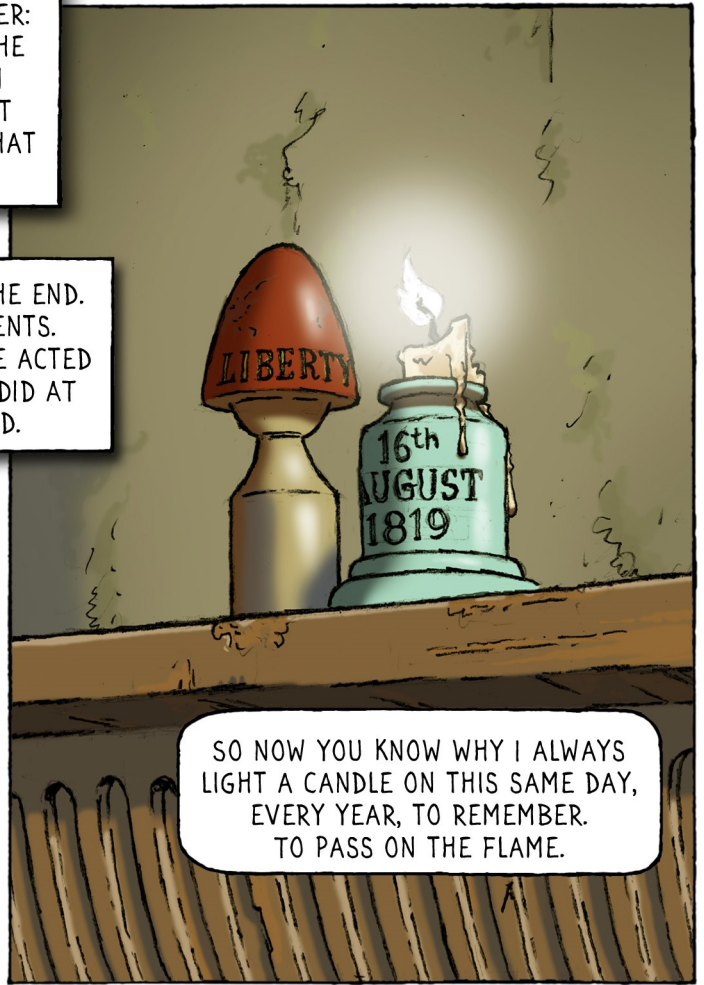
THERE WERE THE BIG CHARTIST MARCHES, FULL OF HOPE, DEMANDING EVERY MAN SHOULD GET THE VOTE. THAT WERE BEFORE YOUR TIME.



ARTHUR SORT OF GOT HIS WAY, ABOUT BECOMING A SOLDIER: HE BECAME A CONSTABLE, AND WAS THERE DURING ALL THE HUGE CHARTIST RALLIES. I USED TO TELL HIM HE WAS ON THE WRONG SIDE OF HISTORY, BUT HE DIDN'T SEE IT THAT WAY - HE KEPT SAYING WE NEEDED PROPER ORDER, AND THAT THE PEOPLE COULD BE THEIR OWN WORST ENEMY.



WE LOST TOUCH IN THE END. TOO MANY ARGUMENTS. BUT HE'D NEVER HAVE ACTED LIKE THOSE BRUTES DID AT ST. PETER'S FIELD.

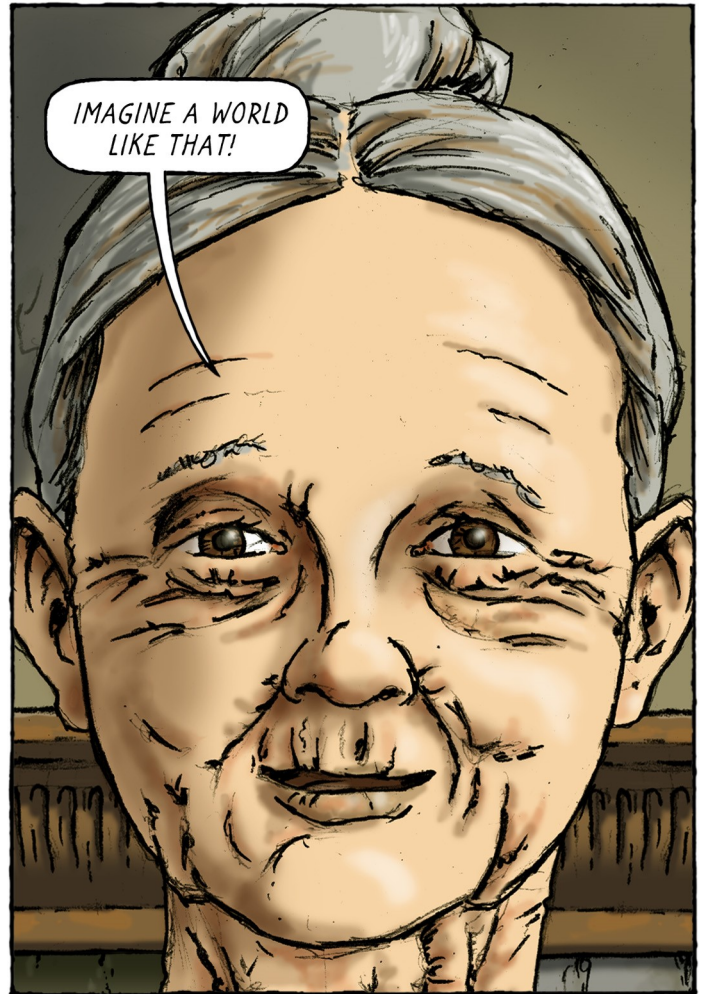


SO NOW YOU KNOW WHY I ALWAYS LIGHT A CANDLE ON THIS SAME DAY, EVERY YEAR, TO REMEMBER. TO PASS ON THE FLAME.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SEE IN YOUR LIFETIMES, I WONDER? IT'LL BE CHILDREN LIKE YOU CHANGING THE WORLD NEXT, WITH GRAND IDEAS... THERE'S SOME SAYING NOW THAT IT'S NOT JUST MEN WHO SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE. **WOMEN, TOO!**



IMAGINE A WORLD LIKE THAT!



# QUESTIONS & REFLECTIONS

a. What did the protesters want or expect?

---



b. Why did the attack happen?

---



c. How and why might people have viewed it differently at the time?

---



d. How do artists influence our understanding of history?

---



e. Can you make any links between this event and the world today?

---

# SOURCES FROM THE TIME



Print by illustrator George Cruikshank (issued in London in 1819)

© The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 licence.

“That the Soldier himself did not touch the Woman or the Child, their fall was accidental, and solely occasioned by her crossing the Street so suddenly in the face of the Horse, and that no blame could attach to the Rider, as it was impossible to draw up in time to prevent his going against the Woman”

- testimony of Robert H. Wilson to a magistrate on 12 November 1819

“Some of our gentlemen who shall be nameless not only struck the quickest but the heaviest on those who were the most defenceless. The women seemed to be the special objects of the rage.”

- account in newspaper *The Manchester Observer*, 21 August 1819

“I had the pleasure of seeing Hunt etc secured & sent off, the Colors & Cap of liberty in the hands of our troops, the hustings torn to pieces, & I must not say the pleasure of seeing the field of Battle covered with Hats, Sticks, Shoes, Laurel Branches, Drum Heads &c &c in short the field was as complete as I had ever seen one after an action.”

- report of events at St Peter's Field by Major Dyneley of the Hussars, 16 August 1819



# Glossary

## Explanations of terms used in story

<b>Chartists</b>	A national protest movement (1838-1857) which called for all men to have the vote, for fairer elections to Parliament, and for voting secretly. Chartists organised their campaigns through big marches and petitions in which millions signed "The People's Charter."
<b>Constables</b>	Officers who patrolled streets, made arrests, and kept order in the days before police forces.
<b>Corn Laws</b>	After the long wars which ended in 1815, these laws passed by Parliament made food very expensive which was good for rich farmers but hard for other workers.
<b>Female Reformers</b>	Female Reform societies were new groups formed by women in the northwest in the summer of 1819, which gave them more of a voice in society and helped push for political change.
<b>Guillotine</b>	A machine invented during the French Revolution to chop people's heads off!
<b>Henry Hunt</b>	One of the most famous speakers of his day (1773-1835), who wore a famous white hat, spoke passionately, and argued that more people should be given the vote at a time when less than 3 out of every 100 people were allowed to vote.
<b>Hustings</b>	The platform that speakers shouted from (in days before microphones).
<b>King's Hussars</b>	A Hussar was a professional soldier on a fast horse, typically armed with a sabre.
<b>Liberty Cap</b>	Well-known international symbols (in the form of rounded hats or tops) representing freedom from slavery, but also linked to revolution.
<b>Magistrates</b>	Local wealthy landowners who acted as judges in local courts, warned the government of riots or unrest, and could call on troops to help.
<b>"Peterloo"</b>	The made-up name given to the attack on the unarmed crowd at St. Peter's Field on 16 August 1819, linking it to Waterloo – but as the opposite of the British triumph.
<b>Samuel Bamford</b>	An educated weaver from Middleton near Manchester (1788-1872), who wanted to push the government to help working people, but was arrested for being a rioter. Led a large group of marchers on the six-mile journey, who he insisted were well behaved and well dressed.
<b>Songs</b>	Marchers sang songs to make their point and keep together. These words were created to fit the last half of the National Anthem ("God Save the King"). They also sang <i>Rule, Britannia!</i>
<b>Suffrage</b>	The right to vote - for instance for Members of Parliament who pass laws.
<b>Waterloo</b>	The Battle of Waterloo took place on 18 June 1815 in modern day Belgium. British and allied forces under the Duke of Wellington finally defeated Napoleon and his French army, ending a long period of wars in Europe and overseas.
<b>Yeomanry</b>	Volunteers who acted as a kind of citizen military police in times of trouble. Made up of wealthy locals who could afford horses and fancy uniforms.

1775 - 1848

AGE OF **REVOLUTION** - MAKING THE WORLD OVER