

CHARTIST REBELLION IN SHEFFIELD

[from the Friends of the Old Town Hall Newsletter Number 12](#)
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The Old Town Hall saw action, so to speak, during the Chartist uprising of 1839-40. [Joy Bullivant](#) draws together the newspaper accounts of the time, notably from the Northern Star - a Chartist newspaper....

On Saturday 11th January 1840 in the evening night half the dragoons from the Barracks were stationed across the road from the Town Hall at the Tontine Inn (on the corner of Dixon Lane), while a party of Infantry was stationed within the Town Hall. The police and watchmen went out on their usual rounds. During the whole of the Sunday there was great excitement round the Town Hall where a company of First Dragoons were on duty and at five o'clock the Yeomanry were called out and continued to patrol the Haymarket and area for the whole of Sunday night. News came that several arrests had been made.

On the Monday the magistrates sat in the Sessions Room to examine the prisoners. The table of the Court was literally covered with pikes, daggers, fire-arms, combustibles, and other destructive materials. In the dock were 6 prisoners: Samuel Holberry, "a very tall, well formed, muscular young man, with much of the appearance and manner of an itinerant showman", Mary Holberry, his wife, Thomas Booker, William Booker his son, Samuel Foxall, and Samuel Thompson. After examination charges were dropped against Mrs Holberry, Samuel Foxall and Samuel Thompson. The remainder were committed for trial to York.

"You are committed on the charge of High Treason: the depositions will be sent to the law officers of the Crown, and it will be for them to adopt them, or take such other proceedings as they think proper. I can only add that as soon as you are removed from the bar, you will be conveyed to York Castle. We cannot suffer the present excitement to be kept up, or the safety of the town endangered by your remaining here longer than has been necessary for your examination. Your schemes were of a most diabolical kind; the first act was to have been at this place at two o'clock, then an attack was to have been made on this building, then on the Tontine, and the town was to have been fired in several places. Men were also engaged to

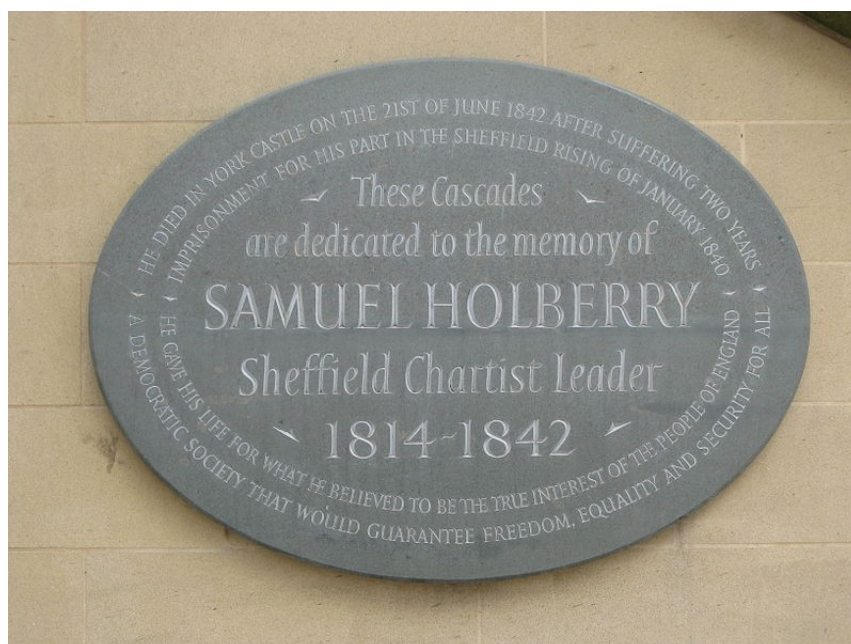
fire the Barracks, after that Mr. Albert Smith's house, and then the houses of the magistrates around. The watchmen and police were to have been assassinated; and cats thrown in the streets to obstruct the cavalry, and shops attacked which contained arms. This was the means you intended to go on with your conspiracy in that general and public way; and there can be no doubt, in any person's mind, that the offence contemplated was high treason. The scheme was really too dreadful, too awful, to be contemplated. Thank God, by the interposition of his Divine Providence, the town has been saved, which would not have been had not their designs been happily forestalled."

At the end of the committal the authorities grew nervous and it was decided to bring in a small military presence into the lobby of the court, so twenty-five dragoons and an officer with drawn sabres entered the room on the removal of the prisoners. The prisoners were removed from the Town Hall, at twenty minutes past four, and conveyed to York in a chaise and four, accompanied by Mr. Bland, constable, and escorted by a troop of the Royal Dragoons.

Joy Bullivant

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The Cascades in the Peace Gardens dedication to Samuel Holberry



His grave is in Sheffield General Cemetery

