

The first disturbances on the fringes of Banburyshire appear to have taken place on Thursday 25 November when a threshing machine was burned at Steeple Barton, and on the following day when another threshing machine was destroyed at Chalford near Chipping Norton and a haymaking machine at Heythrop. Some special constables were sworn in at Banbury on Monday 22 November, and a small detachment of the county yeomanry was moved to the town.

The principal disturbance in Banbury took place on Monday 29 December, when a crowd in what is now High Street assembled outside the *Red Lion*, where the yeomanry had established their headquarters. They were throwing stones to break windows, and making threats to Lord Norreys, who at the age of 22 in the summer of 1830 had been elected Member of Parliament, but for the Oxfordshire constituency, not for the borough of Banbury.⁵ An effigy of Lord Norreys was paraded round the Market Place, burned, and taken back to High Street.

At about 9 pm the yeomanry left High Street for Neithrop, where rioters, according to various estimates between 200 and 500 in number, were burning a threshing machine belonging to Joseph Pain, timber merchant and farmer, in a field near the site now occupied by St Paul's Church. It appears that the mayor, with about 100 recently sworn special constables remained in North Bar since their authority did not extend beyond the borough boundary.

The yeomanry faced a hostile reception at Neithrop: brands from the fire were hurled towards their horses, and their commander, Major Stratton, was knocked from his mount by a stone. Some of the yeomanry dismounted and drove the rioters away from the fire on foot. According to George Herbert, rumours circulated that the yeomanry would be firing on the crowd, but when the part-time soldiers made another advance on foot they were repulsed by showers of stones from the recently macadamised turnpike road to Warwick. The yeomanry re-mounted and retreated into the town, under a hail of stones and derision. William Thompson recalled that they galloped up South Bar as far as the *Case-is-Altered*, before they could stop their horses. There were tussles in North Bar between special constables and the crowd following the yeomanry, but it seems that around or before midnight all those involved, rioters,

⁵ Montagu Bertie, Lord Norreys (1808-84), MP for Oxfordshire 1830-31 and 1832-52. He succeeded his father as 6th Earl of Abingdon in 1854. In 1830 he claimed to support moderate reform.