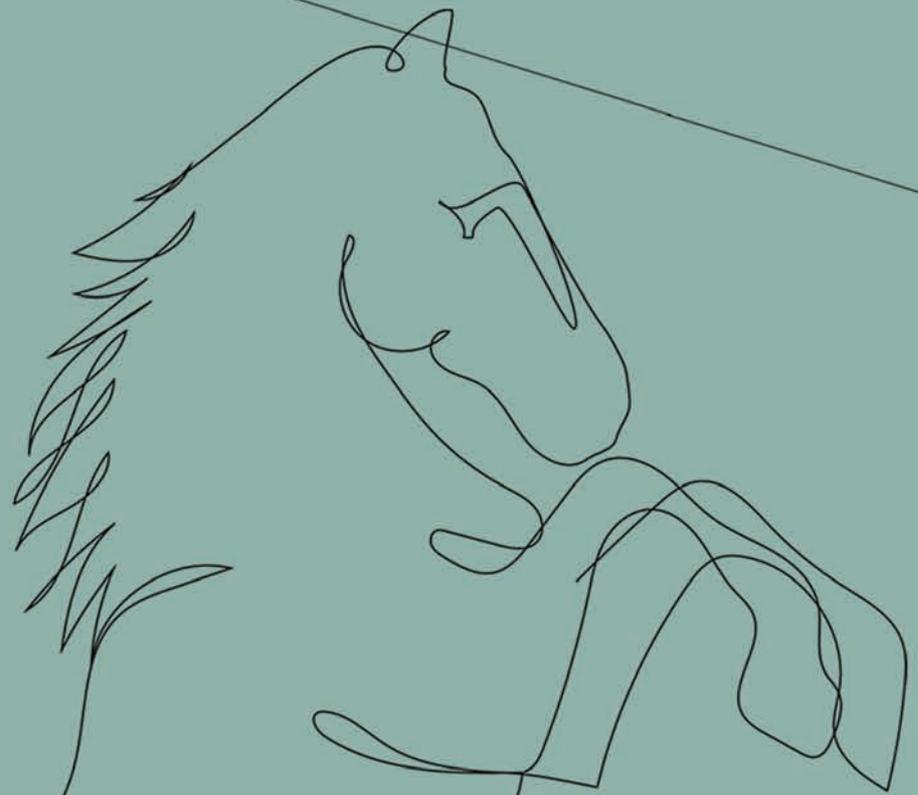




# EVALUATION REPORT

## DEVELOPMENT PHASE



THE  
**PHILIP  
ASTLEY**  
PROJECT

# EVALUATION REPORT - DEVELOPMENT PHASE

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The Philip Astley Project (development phase) has been funded and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The project team is very appreciative of the support and assistance they have received from HLF throughout the development phase of the project.

The project could not have been delivered without the hard work and commitment of the Philip Astley Steering Group, which includes:

The Civic Society,

The Brampton Museum,

The Friends of Brampton Museum,

Keele University,

Newcastle Lanterns,

Newcastle-under-Lyme Business Improvement District (BID),

Newcastle-under-Lyme College,

The New Vic Theatre,

Staffordshire Library and Information Service,

Staffordshire Film Archive,

Staffordshire University,

The Van Buren Organisation.

Rita McLean, Heritage Lottery Fund Mentor

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Particular thanks go to the artists, facilitators and citizens of Newcastle-under-Lyme, who throughout the development phase, have supported every aspect of the project. They have shared a common desire to promote the work of Philip Astley and celebrate his achievements for the benefit of everyone in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

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# 1. Executive Summary

The Philip Astley Project (development phase) engaged over 2800 people in consultation activities during the period, May- October, 2016.

The Philip Astley Steering Group came together in 2013, in recognition that despite Astley's legacy being highly regarded within the circus industry in the UK and internationally, his achievements do not form part of a collective narrative about the town's heritage and very little is known or shared about his work and achievements. Philip Astley was born in Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1742, son of a cabinet-maker. He went on to become a master equestrian, war hero, pioneer and showman. In 1768, Astley created the first 42ft diameter 'circus ring', still the standard size used in circus across the world.

A first-round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Heritage Grant to work identified the following outcomes:

- Astley's heritage will be identified, recorded and better interpreted and explained;
- People will have developed skills, learnt about Astley's heritage, had an enjoyable experience and volunteered time;
- More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with Astley's heritage.

2800 people participated in the evaluation and 89 % had no prior knowledge of Philip Astley, but felt they were informed about his status following the activities conducted during the development phase.

68% of respondents were young people and 99% of them had no prior knowledge of Astley. 30 businesses declared their support for the project in the future and 80% offered specific support for future events.

## Consultation with Community Groups

Date	Activity	No.	Evaluation Method and Findings
06/7 2016	Name and Branding	150	Voting for branding and participating in semi structured interviews about the profile of the project in the region.
20/7/16	Business Engagement	50 attendees from 30 businesses	PR Launch, Discussion, Participatory activities Businesses attended a launch event held at Keele University. For at least 90% of the attendees, it was the first time they had been involved in heritage work and considered how their businesses could support heritage work in the region.  Significant offers of support included Stanworth's Fun Fair's offer to support a main event in 2018, alongside offers of sponsorship, developing commercial opportunities and support in promoting the project.

	Ambassadors	93	<p>A community briefing and community led consultation activities at Foodfest '16 found that residents were interested in family events which were accessible and affordable and there was a genuine interest in heritage related events (even though the majority of people reported that they were unaware of Astley).</p>
	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	60	<p>Participatory activities, dialogue and interviews led to us finding out that people's participation was influenced significantly by ensuring that some of the practical barriers to participation were addressed. This included helping with transport, and food costs as well as planning alongside community coordinators.</p> <p>Respondents especially liked and appreciated the invite to attend local events and having the opportunity to meet the local community whilst learning about local heritage together.</p> <p>Respondents were excited by the possibility of Astley related events, and stressed the value in having the opportunity to engage in positive experiences during very stressful periods of their lives.</p>
	School children, University students	750	<p>Participatory evaluation activities revealed that opportunities to participate in circus activities were very popular, as well as Astley's experience of being a self-made man. Children and young people were generally unaware of Astley and whilst interested, highlighted the competing demands on their time (work, study. etc.). They were interested in experiencing Astley events as part of their existing activity schedule- such as school/ university based work or integrated into sporting or cultural events in the region.</p>
6/9/16	Industry Professionals	13	<p>Andrew Van Buren led discussions with Circus Organisations through the Association of Circus Proprietors and secured their support for the project.</p> <p>The V &amp; A have worked closely with the Brompton Museum to loan circus artefacts and explore they will support the project.</p>

## Feedback from activities

Date	Activity	No.	Evaluation Methods and Findings
20/4/16	Film Theatre	27	The feedback from the questionnaire identified that people liked the idea of a statue of Astley, and many also suggested finding ways to link future Astley work with current circus related activities in the area. There were also requests for more activities for grandparents.
18/6/16- 24/9/16	Brampton Museum Exhibition	1300	21,517 people attended the exhibition, and many engaged in surveys, interviews and participatory activities.  People were interested in his showmanship and learning through doing- such as handling objects and engaging in the arts.  People also identified that there could be opportunities to use Astley to reach new audiences- particularly those that use the park but whom may not voluntarily go into the museum.
25/6/16	Homecoming	210	During discussion and through questionnaire feedback, respondents identified the potential to work more closely with college in the next stage of the project. They also requested the project could be used as a catalyst to invest additional funds into UK circus training.
27-8/8/16	Appetite: The Big Feast	64	Through interviews and activities respondents discussed the advantage of developing drop in events and having an opportunity to work with Circus professionals.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The Philip Astley Project (development phase) is a programme of exciting events and activities championing the work of Philip Astley, Father of modern circus, who was born in Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1742. Funded by a first-round application of a Heritage Lottery Fund Heritage Grant, the funding was secured to gather data and pilot activities in order to develop plans for the delivery phase and a second stage HLF application.



Representatives from the Philip Astley Steering Group

Photo: Kim Watson

This report evidences the learning and consultation, which was gathered during the development phase and considers how this feedback can ultimately help develop future activities and the evaluation framework for the second- stage application to HLF.

The Philip Astley Project (development phase) has taken place in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Sitting in what was an industrial heartland, historically mining and ceramics were the key industries influencing the economic, social and cultural fabric of the borough. Community groups including the Friends of The Brampton Museum and The Civic Society continue to work hard to preserve local heritage and in recent years there has been significant development in the region. The establishment of the Business Improvement District (BID), the £60million investment to create a new 6<sup>th</sup> Form College which was opened in 2010 and projects such as the HLF funded St.Giles Heritage Churchyard Project, are evidence that the region is developing. Increasingly there is a local, regional and national interest in the region and its heritage. It is estimated that were nearly 2 million tourist related trips conducted in the region accounted for 4% of all employment in the area and generated £110,000 in visitor

spend (TRS, 2014)<sup>1</sup>. However, in recent years, domestic tourism has declined, but the increase in visitors to the UK from overseas reached 34.4 million in 2014. The region is keen to develop its offer to tourists and research indicates that Philip Astley's legacy could help encourage more overseas tourism in the region. Research by Tourism England (2015) indicates that overseas visitors are more likely to leave London to visit famous cultural and heritage landmarks.

Nevertheless, the industrial decline and economic challenges have inevitably made an impact on standards of living in the borough. Deprivation in the city is lower than average and life expectancy is less than the UK average (Public Health England, 2015)<sup>2</sup>. With a population of 125,000 and high rates of violent crime and low educational attainment at GCSE level, the Borough faces many challenges. Subsequently, analysis into levels of participation in culture and heritage by the local population suggests that it is low. Appetite (an Arts Council Funded Creative People and Places initiative to develop audiences in areas of low participation), has worked in local communities for three years to learn more about their cultural habits and preferences. In 2015, White British Audiences constituted for 89% of attendees and this is reflective of the lack of ethnic diversity in the region, with the majority of people identifying themselves to being White British (Tanner et al, 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Appetite's study<sup>4</sup> also revealed that slightly more women (59%) attended events, with the majority of audiences being aged 25-44. There is evidence from this study that a programme of diverse cultural events has helped develop more regular attendance and the use of a strong brand and diverse programming, targeted at specific audiences, has a positive impact in terms of creating a loyal following of followers (many of whom previously had low engagement in the arts). Appetite's work with community researchers highlighted some important factors to consider as the development phase was being developed. Their findings into the barriers to participation- as reported by communities, such as the cost, advertising, accessibility and reassurance that the events were relevant and suitable for different targeted audiences; were all important factors for consideration for the Philip Astley Project.

Our baseline assessment for understanding how to implement and assess the impact of the Philip Astley Project development phase (and the future rollout of the project), has predominantly been based on this existing research. The existing data and research has helped target the involvement of specific communities. In the Philip Astley Project (development phase), activities which were piloted as part of existing programming (such as at the work at the Brampton Museum and as part of The Homecoming), enabled the project to assess the relevance of local cultural research in relation to the plans for the future of the Philip Astley Project.

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<sup>1</sup> TRS / The Research Solution.2014. Economic Impact of Tourism. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough.

<sup>2</sup> Public Health England. 2015. Newcastle-under-Lyme Health Profile 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Tanner, J. Kaur, Balwinder. 2013. Equality and Inclusion Data Analysis Report. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Partnership NHS Trust.

<sup>4</sup> Gratton, N. 2016. Appetite Evaluation Report. 2013-16

## 3.1 Context

Philip Astley was born in Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1742, son of a cabinet-maker. He went on to become a master equestrian, war hero, pioneer and showman. In 1768, Astley created the first 42ft diameter 'circus

ring', still the standard size used in circus across the world. At the age of 17 he joined the Royal Dragoons and went on to become a master equestrian and war hero. Upon leaving the army, Astley built a riding school as well as writing books on the art of equestrianism. In 1768, Astley created the first 42ft diameter 'circus ring', still the standard size used in circus across the world. Five years later he opened his first Amphitheatre building in London. For the first time, Astley introduced Merry-men (clowns) into the circus ring as well as jugglers, rope walkers and acrobats. Astley went on to become a pioneer and showman opening Amphitheatres across the UK and on the continent. He was well known by his contemporaries and is mentioned in the works of Charles Dickens & Jane Austen.

More information on Astley and examples of items the V&A hold in relation to his work, can be found on their website:

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-first-circus/>

## 3.2 Making it happen: the origins of the Philip Astley Project

Prior to HLF's investment in the development phase of the Philip Astley Project, there was a series of ad hoc, but well supported events championing the connection between Philip Astley and Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The Philip Astley Steering Group came together in 2013, in recognition that despite Astley's legacy being highly regarded within the circus industry in the UK and internationally, his achievements do not form part of a collective narrative about the town's heritage and very little is known or shared about his work and achievements.

The Steering Group initially met to discuss how to raise Astley's profile in his home borough. There had previously been some initiatives to raise an interest in his work and in 1992, the Van Buren family (a family who are based in the Newcastle-under-Lyme area and operate the Van Buren Organisation - an international show business company) commissioned a statue of Philip Astley to commemorate his legacy. The statue has been displayed at Wembley Arena, Sheffield University and the Edinburgh Festival and in October 2015 the statue was unveiled to 120 people by Sandra Hambleton, the Mayor of Newcastle-under-Lyme at the Performing Arts Centre of Newcastle-under-Lyme College. The positive response from students at the College confirmed the importance of this target audience and their ability to use their own creative skills to share Astley's story with their peers.

In addition, the steering group initiated some small-scale consultation within the circus community as well as with library users and members of the public.

Through this process, the steering group immediately identified that there was a real hunger and interest within the Borough to find out more about Philip Astley. Events such 'The Homecoming', an Arts Council England funded event (attended by 2950 people), evidenced that local people were interested to know more about circus. The initial engagement work by the steering group suggested that there was a genuine interest amongst local people to find out more about Philip Astley's achievements. More importantly, there was an interest in understanding how this significant public figure associated with the Borough could help

develop a big heritage story, which would be of national interest.

Furthermore, during 2016, the Steering Group initiated a series of small-scale interventions including a small exhibition at the Brampton Museum and workshops at the New Vic Theatre and public events. The Museum had been part of ongoing negotiations with Senior Curators at the V&A. Andrew Van Buren consulted and gained support from the following key stakeholders in the circus industry including Philip Gandey, Norman Barrett MBE, Charlie Cairoli jnr, Michael Austin and Chris Baltrop and over 7 people offered to talk at public events.

The Civic Society applied to the Borough Council for a small Cultural Grant (£1,200) to support the delivery of a small circus-themed exhibition.

As the programme of activities developed the group identified the need to centrally coordinate these activities and support their development, and approached Staffordshire University to coordinate an application to HLF. Staffordshire University brought together the individual development work taken by each organisation on the Philip Astley Steering Group and coordinated the activities to develop overarching project outcomes, which informed the development of the application. As part of this process the group collectively identified opportunities, which would bring Astley's legacy to life and attract diverse audiences and encourage a sense of pride in the local population.

2018 is the anniversary of the birth of the modern circus and the steering group saw this as a perfect opportunity to develop the Philip Astley work. The V & A intends to celebrate Astley in 2018, and public interest is growing. Subject to a successful development phase second stage application to HLF, the group will develop work in 2017-2018, to celebrate the 250th anniversary. This will include an exhibition, performances, talks and a large-scale heritage-learning event.

## 3.3 Methodology

This evaluation focuses on the review and consultation activities carried out in association with the piloted activities which took place during the development phase of the Philip Astley Project from May- October 2016. It examines this phase of the project and considers how these HLF funded piloted activities impacted whether people in the borough became more aware of Philip Astley, his significance to the borough, the circus and related arts.

A first-round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Heritage Grant to work identified the following outcomes:

- Astley's heritage will be identified, recorded and better interpreted and explained;
- People will have developed skills, learnt about Astley's heritage, had an enjoyable experience and volunteered time;
- More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with Astley's heritage.

The steering group initially designed and identified a range of opportunities, which could incorporate evaluation activities to gather data and feedback to assess the need, and interest in developing a Philip Astley related project. A pilot programme featuring different interventions and targeting different audiences was designed by the Steering Group. Each pilot activity was designed to include consultation activities and whenever possible, local people were also involved in helping plan the pilot activities, providing additional opportunities to gain feedback about what local people want to learn about Philip Astley.

The piloted activities were designed for the entire local population however certain activities and evaluation activities focused on specific groups, including:

- School age children
- Older people (65+)
- College students
- Children with learning disabilities
- Local businesses

To ensure the evaluation was appropriately governed and delivered to a high standard, the evaluation process obtained ethical clearance from Staffordshire University. Each pilot activity has undertaken evaluation activities designed to complement the Philip Astley activity and which are appropriate for the needs and interests of the participants. The participatory methods and analysis has been developed in collaboration with the Philip Astley Steering Group and evaluation updates have been regularly communicated with the Project Manager.

The evaluation is based on the 'Get Talking' model of Participatory Action Research, developed by the Creative Communities Unit at Staffordshire University. Based upon the principles of honesty, listening, participation and respect the process of consultation is designed around fun and inclusive methods which value existing knowledge and experiences of participants and involves them in the development of evaluation activities and the review

process.<sup>5</sup>

All evaluation participants have been informed that their feedback will be used to help shape the design of the next phase of the project and that future activities such as talks about Astley and his legacy and Astley-themed circus-skills workshops are designed with the interests and needs of the community at the centre.

## 4.1 Evaluation plan

The evaluation was based around 3 phases, which were designed to ensure that evaluation feedback could be fed into the development of the project. The full plan can be found in the appendices.

- **Phase 1 Evaluation Activities**

Develop baseline data on the project's HLF outcomes, including:

- Newcastle-under-Lyme residents who know who Philip Astley is.
- Levels of pride in Newcastle-under-Lyme and its heritage.
- Who currently engages with Newcastle-under-Lyme's heritage, and how (including how people learn about heritage).
- Experiences of engaging with Newcastle-under-Lyme's heritage (how enjoyable it is)
- Newcastle-under-Lyme's residents who would like to find out about Philip Astley and get involved in the project.
- A Breakdown of baseline data according to different demographics (age, ethnicity, disability, postcode etc.).
- Provide recommendations to the steering group on the project's need, as set out in the first round application and on the activity plan.

- **Phase 2 Evaluation Activities**

Working with members of the steering group, carry out audience consultation to inform the detailed planning of delivery phase activities, finding out if and how different audiences want to engage with the project and find out about Philip Astley.

If necessary, carry out targeted consultation activities with specific groups not reached through broader research (due to barriers experienced by members of these groups).

Provide recommendations to the steering group on recommended adaptations to the project's activity plan.

- **Phase 3 Evaluation Activities**

Recruit and train 4-5 Newcastle-under-Lyme residents to work as volunteers, using their community links and networks to get in depth feedback from specific groups in the community, and to support them to undertake their own community research. Initially this was planned for the onset of the project, but given the existing level of interest amongst

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<sup>5</sup> Emadi-Coffin, B. (2008) 'Get Talking: community participation and neighbourhood learning', Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning, vol 10:3, December.

volunteers and the steering group to collate the initial data in phase one, then the group decided that more bespoke consultation would be useful in the final phase of the project to get more in depth data in response to emerging ideas.

## **4.2 Methods**

Working in collaboration with the steering group and event organisers an evaluation resource pack was created for use during the Philip Astley Project (development phase). The pack intended to offer a range of creative engagement techniques to consult with the intended audiences, but also offered guidance regarding how to use creative methods to encourage dialogue and listen to participant stories, as well as undertake their own research.

The evaluator supported the evaluation activity at targeted events, and provided tools to support members of the steering group to collect data, coordinated the analysis of the data and compiled this report.

The complete resource pack can be found in the appendix A

The evaluation set out to collect the following information:

<b>Event and Person/ Org responsibility for delivery</b>  <b>TBC in liason with each event organiser</b>	<b>Outcome</b> <b>(The changes we are aiming to bring about)</b>	<b>Targets of Outputs</b> <b>(Keeping on track)</b>	<b>Targets of Outcomes</b> <b>(Change we will bring about)</b>	<b>Measurement</b> <b>(How will we know if we have reached the targets)</b>
	Astley's heritage will be identified, recorded and better interpreted and explained	Details regarding people's experiences of specific events are recorded and documented.	People will acquire knowledge about Philip Astley	People will be able to share about what they have learned about Philip Astley  People will have engaged in activities about Philip Astley  People will be aware that they have learnt something new about Philip Astley or understand a specific aspect of his life better.
	People will have developed skills, learnt about Astley's heritage, had an enjoyable experience and volunteered time	Details regarding skills, knowledge acquisition and levels of enjoyment  Volunteering data	People will volunteer time to participate in the project.  People will have increased knowledge about Philip Astley.  People will feel positive about their experience of	People will be volunteering and data will indicate that people enjoy learning about Philip Astley and people learn new things.

			Philip Astley.	
	More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with Astley’s heritage.	Details regarding who the demographics of who participates in the activities in the development phase.	An increase in the numbers of people who know about Astley’s heritage. New audiences of people will have an opportunity to engage in work associated with Astley’s heritage.	Data about participant numbers and the demographics of the people the project has researched.

## 5.1 Findings

This section presents the key statistics associated with the project, and then provides a summary relating to the feedback at each event. It then proposes overall recommendations for the development of the Philip Astley project (some of which will have already been integrated into the project during the development phase) and finally it reviews the evaluation plan.

## 5.2 Key Statistics

Specific details about participant demographics were collected at events where there was enough time to obtain this data without it impacting people's participation in the event. Therefore, the overall number of participants in the project is significantly higher compared to the number of people who responded to the evaluation. However, this demographic data is broadly representative of the project as a whole and represents feedback from over 2800 people (participation of 300 people was the target in the initial evaluation plan). Additional consultation with event organisers where this data was not obtainable, enabled us to get a general overview of the profile of the participants at these events. The main challenge related to obtaining post code information, as there was limited opportunity at events for people to record this information. Therefore, when staffing and practicalities allowed, then event organisers collected this information, however, we had to accept that on occasions this information could not be obtained.

- 2800 people participated in face to face evaluation activities
- 11% of people reported they were aware of Philip Astley prior to taking part in the project (we anticipate this is higher than normal, as many of the projects were targeted at groups and people with an interest in heritage)
- 89% of people who were not aware, said they understood who he was following their engagement in one of the piloted activities or consultation sessions
- 100% of people reported an increased understanding of Philip Astley following their involvement in a piloted activity.
- Young People accounted for 68% of respondents, and 99% had no prior knowledge of Astley.
- 50 businesses declared their support for the project in the future and 80% offered specific support for future events.
- 97% of people who participated in online surveys, reported that learning about Astley had made them more interested in general about Newcastle-under-Lyme's heritage.
- 35% of museum respondents engaged in further consultation activities indicating that the project encouraged them to become more engaged in local decision making concerning heritage projects.
- During the development phase, the project created paid work opportunities for people working in the creative sector (for example, local filmmakers Junction15) and involved local volunteers (for example volunteers at the Brampton Museum and Appetite who collected evaluation data that informed this report).
- 100% of people consulted supported the idea of developing the project further in the future.
- Below is a summary of the feedback from specific consultation with community groups, followed by feedback from events.

## 5.3 Consultation with Community Groups

In the following section, we present the key findings, which emerged from targeted consultation activities with different groups.

- Name and Branding

100 residents and 40 college students were consulted in June and July about the branding of the Philip Astley Project. The final designs were chosen through a voting selection process open to the general public (at Brampton Museum and Art Gallery) and at Newcastle-under-Lyme College.

Key Findings included:

- The vast majority of people clearly stated that they felt Astley was not very well known in Newcastle-under-Lyme and it was important that any publicity included details about who he is. The phrase “Father of Modern Circus” emerged from these discussions; people were very keen to make the link to circus explicit in all publicity.
- All consultation groups focused on imagery connected to Circus and it was this aspect of Astley’s heritage, which people most engaged with. In terms of publicity, every respondent indicated that circus imagery was preferable to portraiture and military. In addition, these discussions revealed people had an interest in finding out about Circus and why this was generally important in the region.
- There was a lot of curiosity amongst younger participants about what constituted circus in Astley’s era and whether it included mistreatment of animals or whether it was something which they recognised, and if so people felt this should be reflected in imagery.
- All consultation groups preferred a more contemporary approach to any promotional materials but organisations and steering group members identified the need for flexibility in terms of adapting the branding to suit different audiences. Members of the steering group commented that people’s perceptions of the man might change over the course of the project and it was important for the brand to be able to do this, as well as identifying the need to create branding suitable for a wide range of audiences.
- In all consultation activities, the line drawing ( the one which was chosen as the final design) was the overwhelming favourite as it was an adaptable design and could suit a range of purposes and it also prompted people to continue the line drawings and immediately start participating in the project.

### **Business Engagement and Business Boost Event**

**20 July, 2016**

**Delivered by PlinkFizz and hosted by Keele University.**

Working in collaboration with the Business Improvement Manager and PlinkFizz, 50 representatives from over 30 businesses from Newcastle-under-Lyme attended the event. As part of the event they heard about the PR pack and had an overview of the project. The steering group conducted interviews with attendees throughout the event. Integrated into the event were a range of circus themed creative consultation methods designed to get feedback on their thoughts on the project as well as their pledges of support for Astley related work.

Key findings include:

- 50 businesses engaged the event, hosted by Keele University, whereby 100% said they supported the project and 80% offered support. For at least 90% of the attendees, it was the first time they had been involved in heritage work and considered how their business could support heritage work in the region. Businesses included representatives from local government, cultural organisations, small businesses, the voluntary sector (The Prince's Trust), Circus and performers (Gandey world class productions, Ricasi Magic, Leopold's Equestrian Productions, PH Production Services), Tourism (Foodfest 16, Enjoy Staffordshire).
- Businesses reported:
  - a. 30 offers of specific support,
  - b. 11 offers of sponsorship
  - c. 7 expressions of interest in developing commercial opportunities
  - d. 14 supporters of the promotion of competitions and trails
  - e. 8 expressions of interest in hosting Circus entertainment
  - f. 19 offers to promote the project
- Stanworth's Fun Fair's offered to support the main event in 2018.
- Many of the businesses interviewed expressed an interest in developing branded products and ensuring there was a social media strategy associated with the launch of the Philip Astley project.
- The business community also stressed the importance of involving children and schools in future projects. The majority felt that involving the future was vital to help ensure Philip Astley's legacy is sustained following the HLF project.
- People thought it was important for activities to be branded and to ensure events have distinct consistent branding and care is taken to ensure each event signposts people towards the next Philip Astley related event. They felt it was important to generate momentum and to maximise the impact of the project it was important to encourage participants to engage in the project throughout the year rather than at one specific event.
- The issue of sustainability was an area of concern for some respondents, and discussions were had about the importance of developing a project plan which took into consideration ways for Philip Astley to be celebrated beyond the lifespan of a funded project. A common theme in terms of how to respond to this was to try and ensure some of the activities which emerge during a funded project could be explored to see if they could become annual events.

### Ambassadors

All the Small Things CIC were appointed to help engage community leaders, community workers and local arts workers in the project, and to deliver some community consultation work to disseminate information about the project directly to communities.

All The Small things led two events, firstly an open event to encourage local people to be ambassadors for the project. Secondly, they conducted a community consultation activity, as part of a local food Festival, Foodfest 16.

As part of the launch of Philip Astley Ambassadors, 11 people attended the inaugural meeting and an additional 20 sent expressions of interest. As part of the introduction to the project they received basic evaluation guidance concerning opportunities for them to lead further research and evaluation concerning the development of the Philip Astley project. They themselves participated in a range of creative consultation activities reviewing their own knowledge of Astley and what they wanted from the project. They then led a specific piece of community consultation as part of Newcastle-Under-Lyme's FoodFest 16.

A Full Report of the ambassador event and Foodfest 16 feedback can be found in Appendix B. Key findings include:

- Potential Ambassadors advised that it was important to commission and use local cultural and heritage professional in the delivery of future work. The Development Phase of the Project had already inspired local writers to use Philip Astley as a theme for their holiday workshops for children, and this was reported to be a great success.
- Ambassadors felt it was important to engage local community groups in helping design aspects of the proposed project, as they advised that local people are able to advise on how to target groups with low participation in heritage opportunities.
- Ambassadors who had experience of developing community events advised that it was important to schedule activities in collaboration with community organisers. They proposed that there could be opportunities for communities to incorporate Philip Astley into their own community events and activities, and practically this will help ensure Astley related activities are not competing against local programming.

In relation to the research undertaken by Ambassadors at Foodfest16, a Community Food Festival in Newcastle-under-Lyme, the key findings include:

- People attending the festival knew very little about Philip Astley, but were interested in knowing more, and in particular were proud that Newcastle-under-Lyme was his birthplace. However, many people indicated that they did not use social media, so it was important to incorporate posters and printed materials about the event alongside any media campaigns.
- Activities and events for families were especially important and people wanted more family based heritage opportunities. The idea of an event, with circus attractions was very well received and a wide range of suggestions were submitted concerning possible activities, many of which were participatory.
- People were concerned about the practicalities such as cost and location in regards to considering whether they will participate in future events.
- People had limited time to engage in evaluation or discussion about Philip Astley and for some people, the option to discuss the project potentially restricted their engagement in the project. Therefore, any evaluation or participatory activities need to be delivered quickly and they need to be unobtrusive to the main activity. Ambassadors suggested this makes communities feel more comfortable, and if people have the time and are interested in what is happening then communities are then more likely to choose to participate in further evaluation or participatory activities.

#### Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Two local organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers were consulted about the project. As part of this work they discussed their experiences of culture and heritage in the area and proposed ideas for how they felt the project could deliver work which would be of benefit to refugees and asylum seekers.

Key findings include:

- Refugees and Asylum seekers appreciated opportunities to get involved in community events, especially those which are enjoyable, family occasions. Many respondents said that free, cultural events, where they could learn more about Newcastle, helped them integrate and understand more about their new home.
- Organisers explained that people from these communities often faced significant barriers in attending community events – ranging from transport to cost issues.

Therefore, sending these groups specific invites, and consideration given to these issues, are important to ensure attendance.

- Many people spoke about how engagement in the arts helped them learn about the region more easily than reading about the area. Obviously for many people there are language issues, and many reported that participation in the arts, culture and heritage helps transcend some of these barriers and enables them to integrate more easily with the local community.
- People had experience of circus from all over the world, and there is potential to draw upon the groups' knowledge to get a global perspective on how Astley's work reached other countries and was subsequently developed.
- Respondents stressed how important it was to feel a sense of pride towards their new home, and interest was high concerning who Philip Astley was. Respondent welcomed the idea of celebratory events, and organisers explained how stressful many of their lives were, so therefore positive, community events were one way of managing their stress.

## Young People

A specific focus of the Philip Astley Project (Development Phase) was concerned with the engagement of young people. Three strands of evaluation work were undertaken focusing on different groups of young people. Year 6 students at St Mary's Primary School took part in a creative consultation class where they learned about Astley and proposed ideas for future projects, 40 students at Staffordshire University engaged in creative consultation activities and students at the college were engaged through bespoke projects. Anna Li, an international student at Keele University, undertook a further piece of research.

Key findings include:

- Children and young people expressed a keen interest in learning more about Circus activities. Young people reflected that they were unsure of where they could learn circus skills in the borough- despite it being something many of them reported that they wanted to do. The feedback included requests to learn forms of circus skills ranging from ribbon dancing to aerial work.
- Young people were generally intrigued by Astley's personal story of being a self-made man, and older adolescents felt this story might be of inspiration to young people making career choices in the region.
- Younger children were very aware of their exposure to Circus and most reported having been to the circus or having participated in workshops either at school or in the community. They and teachers suggested that Astley projects need to take into consideration how circus is currently integrated into the curriculum in local skills.

## Consultation with Industry Professionals including the circus industry and the V & A, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2014

Andrew Van Buren negotiated with 15 industry professionals to ensure the Philip Astley project is supported by the main Circus organisations in the UK and within Europe. Following negotiations and dissemination about the plans for the development and delivery phases of the project, the project received written confirmation declaring their support for the project.

Further details can be found in Appendix D.

In addition, discussions with the V & A Museum have led to developing a relationship between the V & A and the Brampton Museum. The V & A have agreed the loan of specific circus

artefacts for the museum and have initiated discussions concerning how they could support the development of work in schools and a conference.

## 6. Formative Feedback from Pilot Activities

### Film Theatre Event, 20 April 2016

Following this popular film night hosted by Ray Johnson at the Film Theatre at Staffordshire University, the audience were invited to complete a questionnaire.

This engaged group, regular attendees at the film theatre, showed high levels of interest in the project.

- The respondents interest in Philip Astley was predominantly focused upon his links with circus and theatre but a substantial amount were also interested in his local connection.
- A few people expressed the need for caution on how his army career is portrayed
- 11 people felt that it would be appropriate to have a statue of Philip Astley in the Borough.
- People were very aware of the local links to circus and were curious with how the project linked to other circus attractions. Respondents referred to having experienced Circus related activities and performances at the New Vic, No Fit State, Angelos Circus, Bertram Hills Circus (demonstrating an awareness of the history of circus in the region)
- Enthusiasm and support amongst the respondents towards developing a Philip Astley project was positive, “There seem to be lots of exciting things planned for the next few years”.
- Respondents requested that they wanted opportunities for people of different ages to do things together as part of the project. Many of the respondents had grandchildren and they valued opportunities to share the local heritage with their grandchildren, and felt Philip Astley’s story was an excellent way to engage younger generations in learning about their local heritage.
- The majority of people felt it was important to promote the project using local media including radio and TV.

“Without him would we have the circus we know today?”

“Taking excellent horsemanship and developing versatile live entertainment”

### **The Brampton Museum Exhibition–based heritage learning opportunities including summer holiday activity packs and 4 circus themed workshops (June 18<sup>th</sup>- September 24<sup>th</sup>)**

The Brampton integrated a bespoke consultation activity into the activity where visitors of all ages could record their feedback about the exhibition as well as indicate their awareness of Philip Astley prior to visiting. In addition, The Brampton implemented a museum wide evaluation activity using luggage tags and volunteer led semi structured interviews, and whilst used for general feedback, visitors could also respond to the Philip Astley Exhibition. A survey monkey questionnaire was also advertised on social media, and The Brampton also analysed MOSAIC profiles of attendees. On 15th August 2016, Steering Group representatives

and museum volunteers conducted a takeover day where evaluation activities were conducted throughout the museum including family interviews.

The Brampton Museum undertook an ongoing evaluation for the duration of the summer holidays. 21, 517 people visited the Philip Astley exhibition and there was high attendance (34%) by people of all ages on low incomes. The online survey revealed that showmanship followed by Astley's legacy were what people were most interested in. Respondents indicated that the most popular ways of learning were through objects and film and music. The survey also revealed the importance of ensuring Newcastle-under-Lyme continued to develop family friendly spaces to host Astley events with the vast majority of respondents indicating that they would like access to a café when visiting the museum as well as supporting the idea that theatre should be volunteer opportunities. Over half of the respondents requested that there should be more opportunities to do activities.

Key themes emerged from the triangulated evidence from the Consultation Takeover Day, the Online Survey, and the interviews with visitors.

## **Family learning**

Many of the summer holiday visitors included grandparents, many of whom felt the museum was an ideal place to bring their grandchildren and everyone expressed a positive interest in the development of Astley related activities. Grandparents that were interviewed felt it was important for children to learn about local heritage and the museum was a place they felt comfortable bringing their grandchildren. Many grandparents (as well as families and other carers) supported the idea that there could be more Astley related family programming at the Museum. Feedback on the exhibition space was overwhelmingly positive, with the vast majority of respondents commenting on how play based learning about Astley helped facilitate family learning and engagement about Astley.

*‘First visit and we have loved everything we have seen. It was recommended by a local friend’*

## **Local environment and tourism**

Consultation in the park adjacent to the museum revealed that many families access green spaces and parks in the region, but do not necessarily visit heritage and cultural sites, which are nearby. In the case of the Brampton Museum there is a model railway, nature area and park in the grounds of the museum. All of the families interviewed in these settings expressed an interest (and no prior knowledge of Philip Astley) but preferred to be in outside spaces with their children. They suggested that there could be an opportunity to bring things out of the Museum into the park area, and possibly into green spaces and parks in local neighbourhoods. Other popular suggestions included erecting Blue plaques in neighbourhoods and places of relevance to Philip Astley and to showcase more public art depicting aspects of Astley's life.

*“Something in Brampton Park connected to the Van Burens. It's a great venue, brings in all generations”.*

*“It's good to have something local to celebrate- we always have to go somewhere else to do this”*

## **Facilities and practicalities**

Families advised that it was important to ensure that practical issues were considered as part of future Philip Astley projects. Many families said that it consideration into practical issues

such as parking, advance publicity, posters, cafes and toilets were essential to engage with family audiences.

Some families during the holiday also discussed the value of promoting a package of activities, which families can do on one day- even if not all of the activities related to Philip Astley. Families explained that sometimes they felt the travel and expenditure to attend events sometimes did not seem worth it ( for example, if they were just attending one-hour event). Families had practical solutions for this and suggested Astley related events could be packaged with suggestions about where to go for a walk, play, eat (including having picnics), explore other heritage opportunities and events taking place nearby.

*“Put more information in pack- we found out about it because we saw the donkeys. If you just come to the park you wouldn’t have known about it”.*

*“I come regularly to use the park but I don’t go in the museum”.*

*“I come here because it is free and there is less pressure to buy things. The kids are better outside- they learn by playing and doing stuff outside”.*

## **Creativity**

Visitors at the museum responded positively to the poster exhibition and there were many suggestions about creative ways in which the Astley story could be depicted and shared with wider audiences. Visitors made a correlation between the performance and creativity that was at the core of Philip Astley’s work, and there was an proposition made by many visitors that that future Astley projects could explore the use of creativity in all aspects of Circus.

*“Be innovative in how it tours schools “create a carousel that tours schools -like Blackpool’s, Cabinet of Curiosities. Each section can contain Astley related materials which people can find for themselves”.*

## **Skills and Activities**

The exhibition prompted some expressions of interest from the local community about incorporating Astley themed circus skills workshops and training into future project plans, ranging from early year’s workshops to degree level courses. Feedback from the workshops at the Museum were consistently positive throughout the summer holidays. Participants overwhelmingly reported that they felt the activities represented a wide range of experiences, were pitched at the right age level and served to engage an audience segment which traditionally did not attend the museum nor engage in heritage work in the Borough. Interviews with some of these participants revealed that they appreciated free, participatory activities and engaging in such activities inspired them to visit the rest of the museum and well as encourage younger children to become more creative. On the evaluation takeover day, 100% of respondents said they like the clown.

*“It was pitched at the right age group and everyone enjoyed it”*

*“I loved seeing the kids get dressed up in circus clothes, it was dead surreal!”*

Observational evidence suggested that the workshop encouraged families to stayed in the museum for a longer period and families took this opportunity to look at the exhibition and visit the rest of the museum.

*“I’ve never heard of him before. You learn something new every day”.*

- **Homecoming festival and New Vic Workshop, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 (Hosted by Gemma Thomas and Matt Taylor)**

Following each workshop, the artist facilitator undertook formative assessment and families could complete a paper-based questionnaire or in some cases take part in a filmed interview. The festival delivered 3 drop-in workshops lasting 2 hours. Each workshop could involve up to 30 people and receive an audience of 30 people and one workshop was specifically targeting young people.

During the festival, local film company Junction 15 interviewed local people about their experiences on the day and their knowledge of Philip Astley prior to the event. The feedback from the interviews from the public reflected common themes: generally, people enjoyed the workshop and performance experience of the event, and overwhelmingly felt that public events were the right way to attract a diverse audience into learning more about Astley. Specific feedback from local college tutors indicated that they felt public events could collaborate more with local colleges, as they were keen to use local heritage stories, such as Astley to inspire young people and encourage them to see the potential in developing careers in the arts. Families from Stoke also reported that they would travel to Newcastle-under-Lyme more if there were events such as the festival, and they especially liked day long activities as these were easier to attend as a family.

Interestingly, some interviews were conducted with performers with circus experience and they said they wholeheartedly supported the development of the Astley project and saw it as an opportunity to bring Circus back to the region. They felt Astley’s story could be used to advocate for and develop more specialist Circus training opportunities in the Borough.

- **Appetite: The Big Feast, 27/28<sup>th</sup> August, 2016**

The facilitators completed a report of each event and an analysis of their experiences including any feedback or observations made. In addition, audiences could share feedback using Appetite’s standard evaluation process or through semi structured interviews with Appetite volunteers.

The New Vic identified that:

- Drop-in workshops on the streets are a quick way to get people involved, as the depth of engagement with the subject of Philip Astley is a tricky balance.
- Whilst children are engaging the monitoring form and discussion with parents/guardians is most useful for context, however, the level of knowledge of those hosting the workshop is of utmost importance.
- Whilst, having drop-ins as part of a bigger event means you achieve higher footfall the competing timings with the other schedule has an impact on trying to interview the participants on-site.
- The New Vic Theatre Youth Theatre enjoyed engagement on-stage in a professional environment with a professional leader and added value activities including seeing a show.
- The confidence of the professionals leading workshops in talking to drop-in participants and managing the health and safety aspects of warm-up and training is a difficult one to manage and is something we improved on each workshop following

our first.

- The workshops were a great way to inspire engagement from the beginning and develop a mailing list for the future project.

## 7. A Review of the Evaluation Process

The evaluation process highlighted that people in Newcastle-under-Lyme value an opportunity to be asked about local heritage and have a voice in shaping future work. In terms of some of the practicalities concerning how we might conduct Philip Astley related evaluation activities in the future, then we learned that firstly consideration needs to be given to how to best develop evaluation methodologies that suit families and which complete family programming. The summer holiday period- when a lot of the project took place, meant that the evaluation activities were very dependent upon numbers and if events went ahead. Generally everything did happen but with far greater numbers and this therefore can present challenges in terms of devising methods which allows everyone a voice.

Despite efforts to engage communities and people who are seldom heard such as BAME communities and people with disabilities, in the future more evaluation and planning work could be developed in partnership with targeted organisations representing these communities. For example, initial negotiations have begun with the local theatre access group to involved them in making sure activities are accessible and promoted widely in the region. In addition, we became aware that the emphasis on evaluation is often targeted at people who are not aware of Philip Astley, and during the evaluation we identified that there was a small but active group of heritage enthusiasts and it is important that future programming has something to offer people who know more about Astley.

Responses indicate that people are very conscious of gender in relation to the project and tend to subscribe to gender stereotypes in terms of who does what in a circus. However, this also relates to Philip Astley- for example, young boys expressed an interest in his work and their ideas tended to focus exploring Circus themes and the opportunity to engage in risky circus activities. Whereas answers from girls tended to suggest less extreme activities, and generally the answers suggest girls were unsure about the role and status of women in the circus. For future work, images and stories associated with promotional materials and evaluation activities could be used to help promote the role of women in the Circus.

There are some small practical issues, which need addressing such as developing more capacity at events to enable more people and staff to deliver evaluation activities. Whilst all the institutions involved in the project were supportive and responsive to the evaluation process, it was apparent that staffing within most organisations was stretched and ultimately this influenced the extent to which they got involved in the evaluation process. The evaluator only has a certain amount of days allocated to the project, thus future projects need to develop methods based upon the SMART framework.

Running the evaluation as an integral part of the diary of piloted events presented some logistical challenges but overall worked well. Therefore, it is recommended that any future Astley work should adopt this approach. In terms of logistical challenges the processes of recruiting community evaluators/ researcher happened throughout the project rather than the evaluation being a three-stage process. The scheduling of events and the opportunities to involve community members varied from what was first planned but the evaluator was able to respond to this.

## Recommendations

Overwhelmingly, the level of interest in developing work associated with Philip Astley was well received by the clear majority of the people who engaged in the consultation activities. In a region which is often associated with low aspiration and economic disadvantage, it was welcoming to see how local people were not only interested in getting involved in more Philip Astley heritage activities, but they could also see what benefit it could have on the economic and social fabric of the Borough. In particular, our consultation identified that heritage projects had a positive impact on local tourism and during our consultation we identified that Philip Astley related events encouraged tourism in the area. In 2014, tourism in the area supported 2,599 jobs<sup>6</sup>; and over 2 million day trips were taken in the area with over £102 million spent by tourists during their visit to the area. The consultation findings indicated that local people identified the scope and potential in using the Philip Astley Project to engage people in local heritage as well to boost morale and pride in the region, whilst also having a positive impact in terms of tourism and investment in the region.

This final section of the report pulls together the findings and proposes specific ideas and recommendation for future projects associated with Philip Astley. It goes on to use the findings from the development phase of the project to propose a new evaluation framework and methodology to gather the evidence and monitor the impact of the second stage of the project. The evaluation is based on the principles of participatory action research; therefore, the Steering Group have endeavoured to incorporate as many of the ideas as possible into future plans, whilst maintaining scope and flexibility in the project design to allow for continuous community development.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

- **Learning Preferences**

## **How do people feel they learn most effectively about local heritage, in particular Philip Astley?**

People were interested in how Philip Astley might relate to them and their family in Newcastle-under-Lyme, whether that be through family lines, similarities in life experience or simply wanting to know if they lived and played in the same places as themselves. Therefore, it was important that people could engage in activities whereby they could make a personal connection to Philip Astley's story. Whether that is by taking activities directly to local neighbourhoods and streets associated with Astley or simply having opportunities to explore Astley's experiences alongside learning and sharing more about the stories of local people alive today.

We learned that people were proud of their local cultural heritage, ranging from the Potteries to having a sense of pride in their local cultural facilities including the Brampton Museum and the New Vic. People trusted these institutions and whilst people enjoyed open access street based activities, a majority of people said that they trusted local cultural institutions and would be more likely to attend Philip Astley activities if they were endorsed by local cultural institutions, and which also featured as part of existing heritage and community programming. Many people said it was difficult to know what was going on in the area, so therefore they would prefer Philip Astley events to be advertised using existing channels of communication and promotion. However, there was a consistent request for a 'one stop' online information resource about Philip Astley (which could also include the project programming) but which also could demonstrate why his story is important to the Heritage Development agenda in Newcastle-under-Lyme and the potential his role could play in the future identity of Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Adults, children and young people all talked about how they liked to explore Newcastle-under-Lyme, and that exploration and physical activity were often great ways to engage with culture, ranging from Pokemon Go to more conventional trails, feedback suggested that people would like to learn about Philip Astley through trail based activities. People felt that a Philip Astley trail could also be used as a platform to engage people in other heritage work being undertaken in the Borough.

Adults with professional experience in the heritage and circus sectors spoke of their desire to use the Philip Astley project to work more closely with heritage experts and professional circus tutors, to help them develop their knowledge and skills. The evaluation revealed that whilst fully supportive of public programming, these groups often feel that heritage project activities can often focus on family based activities, and it was evident in Newcastle-under-Lyme that there was a great level of interest and engagement in heritage work- including Philip Astley, as well as an emerging contemporary circus scene, both whom wanted opportunities to develop their Philip Astley knowledge. Likewise, feedback from educators (schools, FE and HE) reported that they were very interested in having specific programmes of work developed, which would fit into their curriculum, especially in regards to PE, Art, Performing Arts and History.

Meanwhile, families were inspired to ask for more inter-generational family learning opportunities. Low cost or free activities, which were widely advertised, were important to ensure high participation from a diverse range of communities- and they were especially popular with grandparents. During the pilot phase, we observed that the Philip Astley project

attracted a lot of grandparent-led activities, and feedback suggests that people wanted activities, which the whole family could participate in.

Once they found out about the existence of other artefacts related to Philip Astley, then respondents were interested in opportunities to see, touch, feel and use paraphernalia (circus posters, costumes, images, circus props, etc.) connected the development of modern circus. People were interested in the social history concerning how circus developed, and included stories concerning lifestyle issues applicable during Astley's lifestyle and in contemporary society such as what it is like to be a young entrepreneur, how people managed family and personal relationships

- Ensure all heritage-learning activities provide opportunities for the public to make a personal connection to Astley's story.
- Use existing forms of communication- including community led/ online forms of communication to keep people up to date about the project and events.
- Encourage local organisations, which people trust and are familiar with to champion and promote Philip Astley activities.
- Make links between Philip Astley activities and other heritage work being undertaken in the region.
- Incorporate Philip Astley activities with activities, which encourage people to be more active and explore their local environment.
- Develop aspects of the programme based upon school, college and universities curriculums and develop bespoke learning materials that can be used in an educational context.
- Create bespoke opportunities for circus experts and professionals to get involved.
- Ensure future activities use all aspects of circus paraphernalia, especially costumes and posters, to engage people in Philip Astley events.
- Create family learning opportunities, including grandparent participation.
- Ensure that activities make links with contemporary issues such as entrepreneurship and performance.

- **Activities**

### **What Philip Astley activities do people want to participate in?**

In some respects, the information associate with how people wanted to learn helps illuminate some possible ideas for Phase 2 of the Philip Astley project. However, there were also some clear ideas for specific aspects of future Philip Astley project programming.

### **A permanent structure and public space**

There was a consistent request for a permanent structure to be constructed to celebrate his achievements, and the evidence from the response to the Philip Astley Subway Art work positively demonstrated how Public Art is well received and an effective form of communication in the region. Respondents spoke with great civic pride and the idea of a

statue or a structure depicting a circus ring or circus paraphernalia was an extremely popular idea. In terms of location, people supported the idea that a memorial might be centrally located, but quite a few respondents suggested that it might be more effective to include some public art in local neighbourhoods.

*“It would be lovely if our town could provide a memorial to Philip Astley in order that his great work is remembered by generations to come”.*

People consistently referred to the geographical links with Philip Astley- where was the Circus? Where did he live? There were many requests to have blue plaques and a visual trail highlighting the key landmarks associated with Philip Astley.

## Formal learning

The development phase activities inspired people to participate in learning about Philip Astley (and often this prompted people to become more engaged in learning about the local area) and people enjoyed learning about heritage through performance related activities. Proposals were made for informal learning opportunities to be included- especially at festivals and events where people could choose how and what they learned, and formal learning opportunities such as skill based courses for performers, local heritage courses and professional circus skills tuition for both amateurs and professionals. Some people also spoke about accrediting these learning opportunities, and that by ensuring they have links to local educational providers, people felt people would trust them more. People felt that engagement in learning in Philip Astley could encourage people to generally become more engaged in education.

- Create work in the public realm to honour Astley’s achievements (for example, a sculpture) as well as identify key landmarks or notable places linked to Philip Astley.
- Ensure that activities and events have opportunities for everyone to participate regardless of knowledge or experience of Philip Astley or circus.
- Develop opportunities for people to become ‘deep learners’ and discuss what they have learned about Philip Astley as well as have opportunities to participate in accredited learning.
- Provide opportunities to learn circus skills for all levels of ability.
- Use informal learning opportunities at every event to encourage people to engage in Astley’s story.

## Festivals and open access activities

People reported a genuine sense of pride in their local community following open access events during the development phase. People frequently commented that open events brought people together and having an opportunity for young and old, and people from different neighbourhoods to come together was an extremely positive thing for the region. People often said they felt that they travelled to other places for such events but Philip Astley events gave them pride in their region.

People were very encouraging towards the idea of a festival, and people suggested that a fringe festival could be developed to target specific groups including a schools programme (and maybe link this to existing schools links with circus performers), activities specifically targeting teenagers, and workshops which children could independently participate in (as many families said they often shared childcare and often did not participate in activities requiring adult supervision as this was difficult if you were responsible for a larger group of

children, this was also true in families where there was a large gap between the ages of the children. Families also felt there was an opportunity to have a handling box which toured schools and communities (one suggestion was for a cabinet of curiosities), as they felt this could help engage people who perhaps felt the project was not relevant to their interests.

People wanted performance based heritage learning based on Astley's heritage and performance skills heritage and wanted to develop their competence in specific aspects of circus including unicycling, trapeze, hooping and ribbon swirling. People were interested in having professionals, and delivering the activities, and once they learned about other aspects of circus during the development phases (e.g. Circus Poster design, Costume design, Circus Management) were very interested in learning more about these affiliated topics.

Having heard the Philip Astley story, people were keen to see it documented in a way that would attract more audiences. Ideas included a film (using local actors and which included not just his story but how Philip Astley was perceived by his peers and historians), a theatrical performance, circus themed talent shows showcasing and local contemporary circus performers.

The vast majority of people felt that the Philip Astley project raised the profile of the local area and were keen that his story but also his success were used to boost Newcastle-under-Lyme's profile as a place where people wanted to live, work and visit. Suggestions included trying to theme different aspects of the town in Philip Astley relate paraphernalia (based upon the success of the shop window) and using this to develop an offer to tourists based around Philip Astley but also to also encourage people to visit cafes and other local attractions. They also saw an opportunity to develop Philip Astley inspired merchandise such as branded goods as well as things like magic kits and circus apparatus.

People were particularly interested in how Philip Astley was a self-made man, and a frequent suggestion was to develop activities which used Philip Astley's story to inspire local entrepreneurs- especially young people, to support formal learning and mentoring in relation to develop new businesses locally. Alongside formal guidance, people also felt there was an opportunity to encourage people to use Philip Astley's story to encourage investment into the region, such as the establishment of a charity to support local circus performers.

- Create city wide family events encouraging people from different communities to come together
- Develop entrepreneurship, particularly amongst young people through the promotion of Astley's stories and experiences.
- Use the creative arts to tell the Philip Astley story (especially through the medium of film).
- Use the Philip Astley Brand to make links between commercial, council and statutory services in the region, and regularly change the focus and style of the branding to keep people engaged and to encourage people to explore the borough.

- **Philip Astley**

## **What do people want to know about Philip Astley?**

Generally, most people were interested in developing their knowledge concerning 'the bigger story' about Philip Astley- who did he work with, who were his family, who helped him achieve his goals, what local influences might have inspired him and the practicalities concerning how he started a circus.

Respondents were interested in how Astley's story fits into the historical landscape of the region and were curious about areas of overlap with other historical facts they knew about Newcastle-under-Lyme. In addition, many young people were interested in learning about how Astley inspired the development of circus, and expressed a keen interest in learning more about how circus developed and how it impacted other circus performers in the region.

There was a high level of interest in learning more about how Philip Astley made a success of himself against the odds, and understanding more about his heritage from a social class perspective.

On hearing Philip Astley's story, many people wanted to verify what his relationship with animals was- as they associated circus with the mistreatment of animals. Those that learned about Astley's use of horses felt it was important that it was important that future Astley related work promoted animal welfare.

- Ensure that future projects clearly reference how Philip Astley treated animals
- Focus on the social history and personal circumstances that Astley experienced and relate these to current issues.
- Ensure future heritage work contextualises the Philip Astley story amidst other historical facts affecting Newcastle-under-Lyme during his lifetime.

## Appendices

A	Evaluation Resource Pack
B	Ambassador's Report
C	Letter of Support from the Circus industry

## **Philip Astley**

### **HLF Project: Development Phase**

### **Resource Pack**

## Introduction

This pack is a resource to support with the evaluation of the HLF funded Philip Astley Project in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The purpose of the pack is to collate examples of consultation methods designed by the evaluator, Janet Hetherington and the members of the project. It should be used in tandem with the evaluation plan.

The pack includes:

- Standardised Reporting forms for each event
- Consultation text for online resources
- Ideas for consultation activities

This pack provides some basic ideas for evaluation. It is s expected that some methods of consultation and data gathering will be devised in collaboration with event organisers and the targeted community researcher groups. The evaluator will also be working with targeted groups to conduct their own research and to develop their own evaluation methods to suit the needs and interests of the people who they are targeting.

The ideas in this pack include some initial practical ideas are very much initial idea and are there to be developed and played with!

## Planned Activities

	Date	Activity	Lead	Existing monitoring	Astley Consultation and collection of baseline data
1	20th April 2016	Film screening	Ray Johnson	Ticket sales?	Andrew Van Buren collected short feedback forms.

4	25th June 2016	Homecoming festival, including New Vic workshop	Gemma Thomas and Matt Taylor	Footfall	Additional vox pops edited. Theatre workshop participants - tbc method
5	20th July	Business Engagement event	Matt Taylor, Trudi Barnard, Plinkfizz	Eventbrite	Janet Hetherington to collect qual and quant data
6	23rd July	Family event at Brampton	Teresa Mason / Delyth Copp	Footfall, 'luggage tags' for comments	Adapt 'luggage tags' for circus theme. And/or feedback on 'circus audience'
7	August	Exhibition at museum	Teresa Mason / Delyth Copp	As above	As above
8	August	Mid-week circus workshop at museum	Andrew Van Buren	As above	Census day
9	27th and 28th August	Big Feast	Gemma Thomas	Appetite evaluation	Feedback from workshop participants and leaders. Participant observation.

13	3rd November	Business Boost event (Astley award for Entrepreneurial spirit)	Trudi Barnard	Attendee no's	Consult with businesses – awareness of and support for the project
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## **Text for Webpage**

### **Tell us more!**

Thanks for visiting our web page and taking time to learn about Philip Astley. To help us develop more Philip Astley related activities in the future, we would appreciate if you could give us a couple minutes to answer 4 simple questions.

- About you:
- Sex
- Age
- Postcode

Before visiting this website did you know anything about Philip Astley?

- I knew nothing about him
- I knew a little about him
- I knew lots about him

What interests you about Philip Astley?

- Links to Circus
- Local connection to Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Self made entrepreneur
- Other (please explain)

What Philip Astley related activities and events would you like to see in Newcastle-under-Lyme?

- Education events
- Community Celebrations
- Heritage Trails

- Permanent features about his life and work
- Other ( please explain)

### **Standardised Reporting forms for each event**

#### **Philip Astley HLF Project Development Phase**

Following your event, please complete this form with as much information as possible and submit it to Janet Hetherington, Project evaluator with any relevant supporting evidence (including images).

**Name of Event and Location:**

**Date and time:**

**Brief description of the event / programme**

**Evaluation methods used:**

<b>Wherever possible please include details concerning the age, ethnicity and postcodes of the participants</b>					
<b>Participants</b>		<b>Staff</b>		<b>Volunteers</b>	
<b>Postcodes</b>		<b>Postcodes</b>		<b>Postcodes</b>	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female

**Please share any evidence you have (statistical data, case studies, findings) that suggests that prior to your event:**

**Participants did not know about Philip Astley:**

**Participants knew a little bit about Philip Astley:**

**Participants knew a lot about Philip Astley:**

**Please share any evidence you have about how participants currently engage with Newcastle’s heritage:**

**Participants do not normally get involved in heritage activities:**

**Participants occasionally get involved in heritage activities:**

**Participants are very involved in heritage activities:**

**To what extent did participants involved in your activity enjoy themselves ( please include statistical data and feedback)**

<b>Not at all</b>	<b>A bit</b>	<b>A lot</b>

**Identify any recommendations people made about what Philip Astley activities participants would like to do in the future**

Please return this form to Janet Hetherington, [J.Hetherington@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:J.Hetherington@staffs.ac.uk) or post to Janet Hetherington, Senior Lecturer, Staffordshire University, Creative Communities Unit, Flaxman Building, ST4 2DE

### **Ideas for consultation activities**

I am more than happy for each event organiser to contact me to discuss methods to engage participants with the evaluation. I anticipate that many venues will already have methods in place to evaluate events.

I appreciate that it will not be suitable for every event to address every aspect of the evaluation. The initial emphasis of the evaluation will be ensuring we have sufficient statistical data to demonstrate we have baseline data from 300 people and have more in depth consultation feedback from 100 people, so I would appreciate if some of the early events could submit this data as soon as possible, as then we can place a greater emphasis on qualitative data.

Below are some simple suggestions for participatory activities- they are designed to be suitable for all ages and abilities and I am not precious- they can be adapted, ignored or developed! I appreciate that on paper they may look more like children's activities, however I am more than happy to discuss individual techniques in more detail to explore how they can be suitable for all ages ( for example a photo album could serve as a table accessory at a business engagement event).

### **Vox pox**

The ideas below are all participatory activities, and I envisage that some events will focus more on recording and documenting people's feedback using audio and film recordings. Some groups may find it helpful to collate a Philip Astley memory book, postcards, or display- including images of Newcastle, heritage events, Philip Astley facts to encourage people to think creatively about their responses to the project.

## **Quick Event feedback**

- **Luggage tags**

A basic luggage tag with simple questions on one side:

Name, Age, Postcode

What do you know about Philip Astley?

On the other side, draw and write ideas about what future activities they would like to do

Connect the tags to old suitcases, chests or circus related memorabilia- so that people can read each other's responses

- **Paper Plate Big Tops**

On one side of the plate draw an opening curtain and stage , and invite people to draw/ write what heritage events they would like to see

On the other side ask for a picture of them, including age and postcode

Peg them up or stand them on sticks like spinning plates

- **Cameo pictures**

Distribute small cameo pictures of Philip Astley, and invite people to write what they know or think they know on the cameo using chalk pens. This activity can be extended to encourage people to draw each other cameos and on these write/ draw what they want to engage in.

They could be temporarily displayed as a gallery of cameos.

## **Group activities**

- **Ball with questions**

Using a large ball write key questions related to the Philip Astley consultation ( e.g. Share one fact about Philip Astley, what have you enjoyed today, etc).

The ball gets thrown around in a circle – as you catch it you respond to whatever question is on top of the ball. Once person scribes your response and then you throw the ball to someone else in the circle and they answer whatever question they can see.

An alternative is having a lucky dip of balls with Philip Astley related questions written on them (Plastic balls with sharpies work well) and people take a ball and answer the question. This can then lead into juggling activities!

- **Paint or water bombs ( or use a water pistol with paint in)**

Identify a large outdoor wall, and on it write a question with 2 clear answers- eg how much do you know about Philip Astley? Lots/ nothing

Participants are invited to throw a paint or water bomb at their response. A scribe keeps a track on where people are squirting!

- **Sign in sheet**

A giant doodle wall with images and questions is placed in a public space. Participants are invited to draw or write their responses as doodles. For a professional image, posca pens work well for this purpose ( graffiti pens).

It can help to have part of the wall as a sign in area where people sign their name and indicate their age and sex.

## **Ongoing Participatory Activities suitable for events**

- **Suitcase**

An old suitcase or travelling chest with some questions written inside it. Small tags, pictures, blank boxes are left for people to write their responses on and people leave these in the case.

- **Big top discovery**

Create a sensory space or installation using a tent ( adults) or an ikea big top tent ( children), inside include artefacts relating to Philip Astley such as circus props, a map of Newcastle, an old circus programme, etc.

Participants are given a treasure map to share what they have learned and what ideas they have for their next Philip Astley adventure.

- **Scrap book**

A half completed scrapbook is shared with participants containing images of the project, information about Philip Astley and circus memorabilia. Included with this are scrapbook materials such as blank postcards, small blank picture frames, small blank descriptor cards- some with targeted evaluation questions. Participants are encouraged to complete the scrap book with their feedback and ideas.

Alternatively, scrap book materials are left out for people to complete and engage with and a facilitator collects these and adds these to a scrapbook.

## **B- Local Ambassadors (All the Small Things)**

### **PHILIP ASTLEY CONSULTATION**

I attended Foodfest 2016 in Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre on September 17<sup>th</sup> and spoke to 52 people from all generations. 50% of them didn't know about Philip Astley and they asked as to how they would get to know about the events/exhibitions about Philip Astley.

24 of them didn't use Twitter/Facebook. They felt that lots of posters should be put up in public places eg library, museums and the hospital as they read noticeboards to see what is happening in the community.

10 people said that they wouldn't come to a circus as they are scared of clowns.

8 people said that they loved coming to the circus and they went as a family.

### **Events/Activities that they would like to see**

- Strongwoman competitions
- Acrobats
- Fun activities that would make people laugh
- Events to be held at weekends that are fun and educational but not expensive
- Street theatre
- Music
- Blue badge trail
- Storytelling
- Get Mervyn Edwards to write a book on Philip Astley
- Dressing up in Olde England Costume like they would have done in Philip Astley's lifetime
- Beer Festivals
- Drive in cinema with a film all about Philip Astley to get the young people interested

### **Ambassadors**

2 people said that would like to see and do a short film/talk in their local community and North Staffs Allotment Network who has stalls at events said that they would have a leaflet hub on their stalls and would incorporate some educating/informing people about Philip Astley whilst at different events eg making masks and colouring. This would extend the knowledge of Philip Astley throughout Newcastle-under-Lyme and the surrounding area. Most people said that they were far too busy to think about helping in any way.

### **Views of the general public**

Most of the people whom I spoke to said that the project was a great idea as they felt that in Newcastle-under-Lyme there wasn't a lot of community spirit and that different communities

are doing great things but need to join together to celebrate what they are doing and that perhaps Philip Astley could give them a common purpose.

A lot of people also felt that anything that happened needed to be free or cost very little to enable people to be able to afford it

Lots of people actually prefer the circus now that they don't use animals and love the trapeze and acrobats.

50% of the people who I spoke to had heard some promotion about Philip Astley and said he was a circus man but didn't know about his importance to Newcastle-under-Lyme.

I think that the way forward is for people who are active in their communities to take a lead on getting information about Philip Astley into their neighbourhoods. Contact all the community centres within the area and see if the resident's associations would put on events as they already have the rooms available and will be insured to do events.

Foodfest was a great family day out at the weekend and there was a good footfall. Perhaps something like that could be created in a Philip Astley theme. There were also lots of stewards who loved the experience of helping and would become Ambassadors for a Philip Astley event. Jayne Fair organised the event achieved what she wanted to and it was a great day out for everyone.

## **Recommendations**

I would recommend that you could use the stewards at Foodfest as Ambassadors as they made the day run smoothly for Jayne Fair who organised the event. Jayne also has the appropriate insurance to put on events and knows all the risks assessments for a big event

## **PHILIP ASTLEY AND HIS LEGACY EVENT AT BRAMPTON MUSEUM ON FRIDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**

**Attendance** - There was 11 people who attended the event and 10 people who were on list to attend but didn't. There was a further 20 that was really interested but due to work/family commitments couldn't participate.

### **Knowledge of Philip Astley on arrival**

Three people knew absolutely nothing about Philip Astley

Facts that other people knew

- Newcastle-under-Lyme born and founder of the circus
- He was a soldier, master of the king's horse and soldier
- Decorated war hero, saved George III, brilliant horseman and performer, started as a trick rider and founded the circus as we know it

### **Knowledge afterwards**

- Founder of the modern circus, born in Newcastle-under-Lyme and needs to be recognised locally and nationally as a Newcastle-under-Lyme legacy
- He was in the military, had a huge personality, royal patronage, went to prison, was decorated war hero, buried in France and his family was estranged
- Went on to develop the Moscow State Circus and more circus's throughout the world and was in competition with his father with whom he had a turbulent relationship
- Felt that Andrew Van Buren gave me a really solid insight into Astley's life, gave me great background on the circus and was highly informative on heritage and Astley's character and left you wanting to find out more

Everyone at the event agreed to tell at least one person about Ashley and his life and at the end they left with a booklet telling them the key facts about Philip Astley and the project, information on the steering group and website links and books to read to obtain more information.

**Andrew Van Buren** - Everyone was engaged and inspired during his talk whilst he retold the history of Philip Astley and the Circus. They didn't just sit there but asked lots of questions. They were more interested in the heritage of Philip Astley and his relevance to Newcastle-under-Lyme asking about his family tree and trying to discover if they knew people who maybe ascendants of Philip Astley and asking if the Astley family still lived within the Borough. They empathised that this project could be bigger than Astley and could give Newcastle-under-Lyme something to be proud of and could connect the different communities and generations across the whole of Newcastle-under-Lyme. They wanted the project to be planned and delivered by local people. Some people felt that it was important that it was sustainable past the end of the project and that the project was a pilot that could be built upon and bring a lot of tourists to the area and that it should not be seen in isolation but be connected with other heritage sites across the Borough.

### **Heritage**

Some of the participants had already commissioned a heritage trail in Newcastle-under-Lyme and over the break talked about how inspirational it was and that Philip Astley could be connected to that along with the St Giles project that is currently being developed within the

town. They were disappointed about there no longer being a Newcastle-under-Lyme Carnival and felt that in the past this gave people a sense of pride about Newcastle-under-Lyme. The Philip Astley connection could replace the carnival and would be enjoyed by everyone. It could be made into a yearly event which could take place in October half term which was around the time that Philip Astley died. It could be a big circus event

### **What can you do as an Ambassador for the project.....**

- One attendee has a company called Unleash and he writes/organises workshops for school age children. They have trialled some workshops over the summer on Philip Astley and the Circus which have left the children and parents enthused to find out more. He is currently developing workshops for older children
- Another felt that he could lend his storytelling and writing skills to promote Philip Astley but he would prefer to be paid but could do a little volunteering
- One person couldn't do a lot but could tell everyone that they knew about Philip Astley, therefore getting the information out into their community
- Another was interested in collecting feedback at future events.
- A few people were prepared to share posts via social media to all of their contacts via Facebook, Twitter etc

### **What would help you to fulfil your role as an Ambassador**

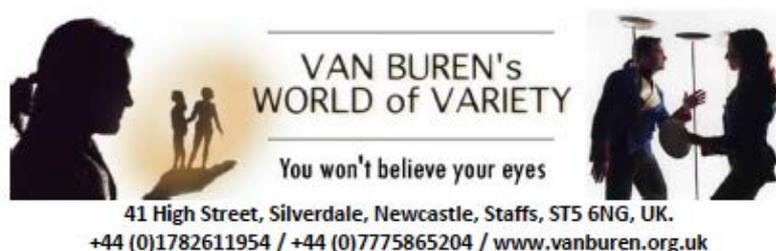
- Training into animal rights and the circus
- Health and safety training
- Employing an Ambassador Co-Ordinator to whom I could go to if I am unsure of anything
- Plenty of notice of events
- Clear guidance as my role and responsibilities as an Ambassador of the project
- Giving talks within places where I could be covered by their insurance
- To be able to use my skill set eg Storytelling

### **What type of events would you like to see or participate in**

- Statue of Philip Astley in the town
- Footprints in the pavement leading to the statue
- Poetry about Philip Astley projecting onto the side of buildings
- Smaller events in the build up to the big event at the end of the project to maintain excitement and aspiration
- Another statue of Philip Astley on horseback
- Events done in conjunction with Stoke on Trent
- Recreate the Circus's in Paris
- Link between London/Paris and Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Have a flag so that it goes onto tourist information
- Do events together with other organisations eg Apetit and not work in isolation as this would minimise the audience if there is too much on in the area

- All school age children should learn about Philip Astley and his legacy and then they would go home and tell their carers/parents
- Circus skills workshops that are inclusive
- Lease a shop which could be the place to go to find out more about Philip Astley. Make it accessible. Put up exhibitions and pictures and have films playing. Like the Art Stop in Stoke was when the London Road Festival was taking place
- Look at what is already happening within the town and see if you can extend them to the Philip Astley project
- Have different circus's on the old Sainsburys site throughout the project to celebrate the life and death of Philip Astley
- A Philip Astley Facebook page
- Small community events to bring local communities together
- A short two person play about the life of Philip Astley staged at The New Vic
- Develop a Philip Astley Circus School in Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Performances in character around the market cross of different individuals in his life or as a trail
- A book put together about Philip Astley from the knowledge and thoughts of local people

## C Industry Support



### Report

Andrew Van Buren meeting with the Association of Circus Proprietors.

Venue: Westmead Hotel, Hopewood, Birmingham, B48 7AL

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

#### Attendees:

Visitor - Andrew Van Buren (Representing the Philip Astley Project).

ACP Members - President Martin Burton (Zippos Circus). Secretary Paul Archer (Moscow State Circus). Willie Ramsey (Wookey Hole). Gerry Cottle (Gerry Cottles Wow Circus). Russ Randell (Happy's Circus). Pat Holmes (Happy's Circus). Laci Endresz (Tip Top Productions & The Blackpool Tower Circus). Anthony Anderson (European Events Corporation). Pip Amett (Amett Productions). Paul Freer (Circus Wonderland). Brian Austen (Austen Tents / Austen Bros Circus / Moscow State). Rusty Russell (Russell's Circus). John Haze (Circus of Horrors).

ACP Legal Advisers & Minutes Secretary also in attendance.

AVB spoke about Philip Astley's life history. The history of the Philip Astley Project. Plans for the future. Possibilities for furthering & increases in public awareness of not only Philip Astley, his legacy but also Newcastle under Lyme. Generating a sense of pride. Hopes that shows would regularly visit the area. Possibilities for publicity & investment.

As a result The Association members by the end had a better understanding of our plans & also Philip Astley's story – (I was amazed how little some knew about the man). It generated a verbal wish – backing up their letter - to offer support in publicity, advice, possible visiting shows & also a wish to aid the link between Newcastle under Lyme & other key places within the Astley story - London, Dublin, Paris, etc - this hopefully will generate greater interest in Newcastle & lead to future investment & awareness from further afield.

After the meeting further questions were asked / interest in Astley's life, legacy & the possibility of in the future making Newcastle a centre piece area for the Astley / circus industry – somewhere that the story is told & kept.

Andrew Van Buren