

# PHILIP ASTLEY

PHILIP ASTLEY IS CONSIDERED THE CREATOR OF THE MODERN CIRCUS. HE WAS BORN ON JANUARY 8, 1742 IN NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME, IN THE WEST MIDLANDS, ENGLAND, HE IS THE SON OF EDWARD ASTLEY.

IT HAS UNTIL RECENTLY BEEN THOUGHT THAT ASTLEY INVENTED THE IDEA OF THE CIRCUS RING BY BEING THE FIRST TRICK-RIDER TO RIDE IN A CIRCLE. HE WAS A SERGEANT MAJOR IN THE FIFTEENTH LIGHT DRAGOONS. ASTLEY'S FIRST DISPLAYS OF TRICK HORSE-RIDING WERE IN THE OPEN AIR AT HALF PENNY HATCH JUST SOUTH OF WESTMINSTER BRIDGE IN LONDON. HIS WIFE PATTY PROVIDED MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT ON A DRUM AND ALSO PERFORMED ON HORSEBACK. THEIR FIRST PERFORMANCE WAS ON EASTER MONDAY, 4 APRIL, 1768. ASTLEY'S CIRCUS PERFORMERS INCLUDED A STRONGMAN CALLED SIGNOR COLPI AND A CLOWN CALLED MR MERRYMAN. ASTLEY NEVER CALLED HIS ENTERTAINMENT A CIRCUS. THE WORD WAS COINED BY CHARLES DIBDIN AND



CHARLES HUGHES WHO ESTABLISHED THE RIVAL ROYAL CIRCUS. ASTLEY DIED ON 27 JANUARY 1814 AND WAS BURIED IN PERE LACHAISE CEMETERY, PARIS.