

**Press release**

**May 2019**

**Peterloo 2019 launches major summer events programme to mark**

**200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre**

***Over 150 events taking place across Greater Manchester and beyond***

A major events programme taking place from **June to August** has been announced today (9 May 2019) to mark the **200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre**. The programme features over **150 events spanning Greater Manchester and beyond**, and has been created by the cultural organisations and communities represented by **Peterloo 2019**, a project which is led by **Manchester Histories** and supported by **The National Lottery Heritage Fund, cultural partners and event hosts.**

Exhibitions, screenings, performances, conversations, takeovers, dramatisations and much more feature as part of a programme that is full of opportunities for participation, interaction and reflection and is inspired by the themes of protest, democracy and freedom of speech.

The programme leads into the anniversary itself (16 August 2019) when 200 years ago 60,000 men, women and children gathered to peacefully demand parliamentary reform. When the troops were sent in to break up the crowd, 18 people were killed and around 700 were injured.

**Karen Shannon, Chief Executive of Manchester Histories**, says, “The city of Manchester that we know today carries the legacy of the Peterloo Massacre in many different ways; as a city of progress, as a change creator and as a city that will listen and speak out. This connection between the past and present flows throughout this exciting and powerful line up of events. The Peterloo 2019 summer events invite those that know nothing about this chapter of history to discover its powerful legacy and welcome those that live in, work in or are visiting Manchester to explore its contemporary relevance.”

The programme opens with ***Billy Bragg In Conversation***and a focus on a topic at the heart of Peterloo 2019, freedom of speech. Writer and broadcaster, Dave Haslam, will join the singer-songwriter and activist, for an evening at **Manchester Central Library** on Friday 7 Junewhere threats to freedom of speech in today’s world of algorithms and social media are discussed. Tickets are pre-bookable, pay what you can.

**Billy Bragg says of being involved in Peterloo 2019**,“Peterloo was a watershed moment for ordinary people, it changed the fabric of Britain and the need for representation for all. I'm delighted to be part of the opening weekend of the Peterloo 2019 programme. To start the conversation around democracy today, who has the right to speak and what it means to be free.”

Also opening at the library on 7 June (until Saturday 28 September, free entry) is an exhibition, ***The Hidden Tableaux’s Peterloo Massacre 1819***, which includes a series of photographic artworks created by internationally acclaimed artist **Red Saunders** that capture the scenes that unfolded at the Peterloo Massacre. These are vast, colourful and visually stunning pieces that depict and illuminate the events of Peterloo in a way unseen before.

Music and song carried along those who marched for miles around from the towns and villages surrounding Manchester to protest for rights of representation on St Peter’s Field, and have featured as part of protest movements ever since. ***Protest Music****,* taking place at **Royal Northern College of Music** (RNCM) on Saturday 6 July, is a performance of brand new, original protest music created by a community of Manchester-based creative artists, including MC Fox (Levelz, Swing Ting), che3kz, Streetwise Opera, Mandy Wigby a.k.a. Architects Of Rosslyn and the Ignition Orchestra. This artist-led project has been supported by RNCM and Manchester Histories. Taking place at 3pm and 8pm, tickets for the two performances are £5 for the first 200 tickets and £12 thereafter.

The rallying cries of protest will be heard in a powerful performance, ***Rise Like Lions***, which will take place as part of **Manchester International Festival** on Saturday 6 July (from 5:30pm) in a free Festival Square event created by The Guardian and Manchester Histories. *Rise Like Lions* is also a reminder of the role that the press played in the reporting of the Peterloo Massacre, the government’s attempts to restrain the press and the emergence in the aftermath of what was known at the time as the Manchester Guardian.

Reflecting the stories of those who marched in protest into the centre of Manchester, there are events and exhibitions taking place in the ten boroughs that make up Greater Manchester. Opening on Saturday 18 May (until Saturday 2 November, free entry) is ***Protest & Peterloo*** at **Touchstones Rochdale**, which will feature a range of Peterloo artefacts including the only surviving banner, which was marched from Middleton by a group led by Sam Bamford. Made of blue silk it carries in gold the words ‘Unity and Strength 1819’ on one side and ‘Liberty and Fraternity’ on the other.

Sam Bamford’s story is proudly explored through the lives of today’s young people living in Middleton in the film ***Our Sam, The Middleton Man***, which is made by the town’s young people with film makers REELmcr, and will be shown at a free screening at **Manchester Central Library** on Thursday 27 June (5pm).

***1819 - 1981***is a fascinating pop up, free exhibition (Saturday 15 June, Thursday 18 July and Tuesday 13 August), which takes place at **Manchester Central Library**. In it the stories of the communities and memoirs of the police from the 1981 Moss Side riots are used to give a voice to the long dead Peterloo protestors and Hulme Hussars of 1819.

**Oldham’s Parliament Square** will be transformed by ***Soapbox***into a Speaker’s Corner as a line-up of poets, writers, musicians and young people step up to share their thoughts on Saturday 22 June (from 12pm). Having taken part in creative workshops, this is a project that has combined groups from Oldham Youth Council, Oldham Theatre Workshop and Mahdlo.

From hearing young voices to family friendly activities, the programme comprises lots to inspire the younger generation. On Wednesday 3 July ***Radical Read***will take place at **Manchester Central Library** (from 6pm, free entry) as young people from schools, colleges, youth groups and arts organisations present an evening of poetry, music, theatre performances, stories and more.

On each Wednesday (1pm to 3pm) of the summer holidays (24 July to 28 August) families are invited to take part in a workshop at **People’s History Museum** in which a different print technique will be explored in each session. This activity compliments the museum’s headline exhibition ***Disrupt! Peterloo & Protest*** (until 23 February 2020), which features original Peterloo artefacts and a Protest Lab; an experimental area where ideas can be developed for collective action. The exhibition is free entry and the workshops are pay what you feel.

On Friday 16 August the story of Peterloo will be embraced and remembered across Manchester and the world. ***From the Crowd*** will be a moving, interactive outdoor event in which voices of today are united by the spirit of Peterloo. This immersive experience, full details of which will be released in July, will incorporate the **Peterloo memorial**, which has been commissioned by **Manchester City Council** and is being created by artist **Jeremy Deller** as a permanent tribute to the Peterloo Massacre. A ***Peterloo Picnic*** taking place at **HOME** from 2pm will be a free event for all the family featuring food, music and a line up of performances. The evening is when ***Art Battle* *Mcr*** takes place for a Peterloo special, as painters, illustrators, tattooists and street artists go head to head in an art spectacular that will take place at **Manchester Art Gallery** from 7pm, tickets £15.

Other events taking place over the Peterloo Weekend include ***David Olusoga in Conversation***. The historian, film-maker and broadcaster will headline this free event at **Manchester Art Gallery** on Saturday 17 August, with David discussing his recent book *Black and British: A Forgotten History,* and drawing upon the themes of protest and freedom.

**David Olusoga OBE, Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester**, says, ”Our local, national, global history is significant to us all. We all play our part. Often hidden histories like the Peterloo Massacre or the history of Black people in Britain is lost, forgotten or written out of history books. The Peterloo 2019 programme led by Manchester Histories will give us the opportunity to change this, to shine a light on these stories, but more importantly to explore where we are today. I'm honoured to support such an innovative programme."

For more information, the full programme of events and booking details (for all the events where booking is required) visit [Peterloo1819.co.uk](http://www.peterloo1819.co.uk), which also features interactive story telling around the events of the Peterloo Massacre itself.

**ENDS**

**For further information please contact Fido PR:**

laura.sullivan@fidopr.co.uk / clare.short@fidopr.co.uk 0161 832 3588

**Here’s a link to a selection of images and the Peterloo 2019 Press Pack:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fo52kloicgdtmec/AACoTZ9q_9hFpxotlqKLJTeHa?dl=0>

**Notes to editors**

The Peterloo Massacre was a watershed moment that would mark Manchester as a radical city like no other and become a defining moment for Britain’s democracy. On Monday 16 August 1819, a 60,000-strong crowd walked to the meeting point at St Peter’s Field in Central Manchester from as far afield as Wigan, Rochdale, Saddleworth and Altrincham to call for parliamentary representation. Shortly after the meeting began and whilst the orator Henry Hunt was making his address, local government forces charged into the crowd on horseback and with swords drawn, injuring around 700 and killing 18 men, women and children.

**About Peterloo 2019**

Peterloo 2019 is led by Manchester Histories, with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Working with key cultural organisations and communities across Greater Manchester it is delivering a programme of activity that combines public events, learning opportunities and creative exploration to mark the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo Massacre. An interactive website leads the story-telling experience and from June to August a vast public events programme will unfold exploring the themes of protest, democracy and freedom of speech.

For further information: [Peterloo1819.co.uk](http://www.Peterloo1819.co.uk)

**About Manchester Histories**

Manchester Histories is a growing and dynamic charity. We work collaboratively with people, organisations and partners to reveal and celebrate the stories of the people and places that make up Greater Manchester. We connect people together to explore the past and shape the future through histories and heritage. Manchester Histories runs a yearlong programme of work as well as the magnificent Manchester Histories Festival.

For further information: [ManchesterHistories.co.uk](http://www.ManchesterHistories.co.uk)

**The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)**

Thanks to National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about – from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. [heritagefund.org.uk](https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/).  Follow NLHF on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/HeritageFundUK), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HeritageFundUK/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/HeritageFundUK/?hl=en) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund.

**Peterloo 2019 partners**

****