



# **Saving Anne the Elephant: The True Story of the Last British Circus Elephant**

*Claire Ellicott*

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When shocking images emerged of Anne, Britain's last circus elephant, being beaten by one of her keepers, it sparked a national outcry. Undercover footage showed the gentle creature cowering in fear as the youth repeatedly inflicted violent attacks on her, making her wince in pain. The public was appalled and demanded that Anne be freed from the circus where she had spent nearly 55 years performing and be allowed to live out her final years in peace. Claire Ellicott, a reporter at the *Daily Mail*, broke the story after the campaign group Animal Defenders International passed to the newspaper the footage they had secretly shot. From then on, the paper, animal charities, and experts worked tirelessly behind the scenes to save Anne and deliver her to safety. But there were fears for her health due to her crippling arthritis and old age, and at one stage it was thought that she might have to be put down to ease her suffering. Thankfully the vets decided that they could treat her, and she officially retired in 2011. It was agreed that Longleat Safari Park would be her new home and she settled in nicely. Meanwhile, her keeper is believed to have fled to his native Romania and her owner Bobby Roberts was prosecuted for animal cruelty the following year. The *Daily Mail* ran a funding appeal to build her a refuge at the park specifically designed for her needs, and she moved in to Anne's Haven a year ago. Since she was rescued, she has gone from strength to strength and the arthritis which caused her to drag her back legs has dramatically improved. Having recovered her mobility, she is able to play and go for walks with newfound energy. Now, at last, she has the chance to live out her final years in a happy and safe place.

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