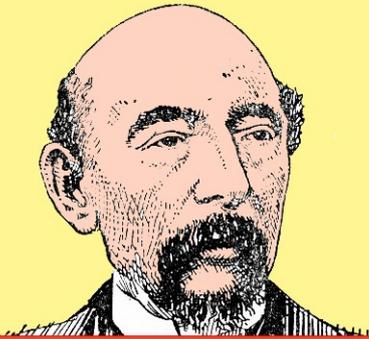


SEVENTY YEARS A SHOWMAN

The amazing story of 'Britain's Barnum'



'Lord' George Sanger

Move over, Barnum. This rediscovered gem tells the true tale of a Victorian circus showman.

Dancing off the page like real-life Dickens, this autobiography of Victorian circus pioneer 'Lord' George Sanger is dark, fun and irresistible. As befits a man who lived by his wits, he tells a great story – letting us enter the wild world of 19th century peep-shows, menageries, freaks and travelling fairs.

Written in 1910, this neglected gem of Victorian life has been wonderfully rediscovered. The new edition adds gorgeous illustrations, many from Dickens collaborator George Cruikshank, plus a useful introduction and index, and a foreword by *Wind in the Willows* author Kenneth Grahame.

While most people today know of American showman P. T. Barnum, few, even in Britain, have heard of 'Lord' George Sanger. That's odd, for Sanger was then as famous in Europe. He was also the American's equal in skill, pluck and cheek.

'While Barnum's story is often sanitised, this book is as rooted in the darkness as the spectacle of both men's lives.'

By 1871 Sanger was running twelve circuses across Britain. One show alone gathered on stage 700 actors, 13 elephants, 9 camels, and 52 horses, plus ostriches, emus, pelicans, deer, kangaroos, buffaloes, bulls and, at the centre of it all, two African lions.

But it's his early years that most enthrall. Born in 1827, George grew up in a caravan. By the age of six, he was declaiming recent murders to spellbound audiences. Life was violent and lawless for travelling showfolk.

Sanger voyages boldly through a fast-changing Britain. One minute he's bare-knuckle fighting in an East End pub, the next entertaining toffs on the Isle of Wight. He claimed to have played to every community in Britain of more than 100 inhabitants. And he was as happy recruiting a fake tribe of red Indians from Liverpool slums, dodging the fury of a Chartist riot or chatting with Queen Victoria about elephants.

SEVENTY YEARS A SHOWMAN is not just an unputdownable treatise on showmanship, but a unique insider glimpse into Victorian life.



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BIC Subjects:

BGFA Autobiography: arts & ent

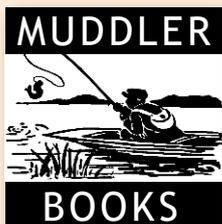
ASZW Circus

ASZG Conjuring and magic

ASZH Variety shows, music hall, cabaret

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