



*Sophy Roberts, whose new book *A Training School for Elephants* was published in March will talk at this year's Sherborne Travel Writing Festival*

WEST DORSET-based journalist and travel writer Sophy Roberts headlines the Saturday night lineup of speakers at this year's Sherborne Travel Writing Festival. Following on from her book, *The Lost Pianos of Siberia*, she has brought history to life again with her new book, *A Training School For Elephants*. Already a Sunday Times bestseller, the book weaves together history and reportage to tell a story of folly and colonial greed.

In 1879, King Leopold II of Belgium commissioned the charismatic Irish adventurer Frederick Carter to ship four tamed Asian elephants from India to the East African coast, where they were marched inland towards Congo. The ultimate aim was to establish a training school for African elephants.

Following in the footsteps of the four elephants, Sophy pieces together the story of this long-forgotten expedition, in travels that take her to Belgium, Iraq, India, Tanzania and Congo. The storytelling brings to life a compelling cast of historic characters and modern voices, from ivory dealers to Catholic nuns, set against rich descriptions of the landscapes travelled. The author digs deep into historic records

to reckon with our broken relationship with animals, revealing an extraordinary—and enduring—story of colonial greed, ineptitude, hypocrisy and folly. She will talk about the book on Saturday 12th April at 7pm at the Sherborne Travel Writing Festival.

Travel writing takes us to places that can be exotic or intimately familiar, imaginary, historical or terrifying. For around 2,000 years, travellers have delighted, amazed and dazzled their readers with their adventures. This year, Sherborne's Travel Writing Festival, from 11th to 13th April, will take audiences from the glittering Mughal court into the mental health system, from beautiful Greek islands to the fascinating but often bloody history of North Africa and Islam.

Join Mevan Babakar, Alexander Christie-Miller, Horatio Clare, Nandini Das, Alan Edwards, Xiaolu Guo, Rosie Goldsmith, Victoria Hislop, Kapka Kassabova, Jonathan Lorie, Ann Morgan, Sophy Roberts, Barnaby Rogerson and Rory MacLean for an unforgettable weekend.

For full details pick up a festival leaflet or visit sherbornetravelwritingfestival.com.