



Beneath the Big Top: A Social History of the Circus in Britain

Steve Ward

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Beneath the Big Top is a social history of the circus, from its ancient roots to the rise of the 'modern' tented traveling shows. A performer and founder of a circus group, Steve Ward draws on eyewitness accounts and contemporary interviews to explore the triumphs and disasters of the circus world. He reveals the stories beneath the big top during the golden age of the circus and the lives of circus folk, which were equally colorful outside the ring:

- Pablo Fanque, Britain's first black circus proprietor
- The Chipperfield dynasty, who started out in 1684 on the frozen Thames
- Katie Sandwina, world's strongest woman and part-time crime-fighter
- The Sylvain brothers, who fell in love with the same woman in the ring

REVIEWS

As a former circus performer and now teacher and circus professional I thoroughly enjoyed this book!! The Circus has such a rich history and Steve does an amazing job at not only chronicling it but also telling entertaining and wonderful stories throughout. The photos are also amazing!! I recommend this book for both circus professionals and also for everyone else...it is a fabulous read for all!!

Carrie Heller, Circus Arts Institute, Atlanta, GA

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