



A bull elephant Anne saw at a water hole in the Tsavo national Park in Kenya

# Art of Africa

A midwife-turned-artist from St Annes uses photographs she took as a child to inspire her paintings, as Paul Mackenzie reports

**F**or Anne Corless, travel hasn't just broadened the mind, it has expanded her artistic horizons.

Photographs she took and sketches she made during a childhood spent on three continents have provided the inspiration for many of the works in her first solo exhibition.

The paintings, many of them the featuring African landscapes and wildlife she knew as a youngster, are now in the studio at her St Annes home but next month they will fill three floors of a

London gallery when she opens her first solo exhibition.

But Anne is an artist who defies pigeonholing. Alongside the oil paintings of elephants on the plains in the shadow of Kilimanjaro and leopards stalking through long grass are infinitely detailed pen and ink drawings of medical procedures.

Anne, who worked for many years as a nurse and midwife, said: 'I always enjoyed dabbling and I knew I had a bit of talent but you need tuition so I did a course in natural history and scientific illustration. During that course people suggested I should link my medical background and my art and I ended up doing a course in medical art while I was still working.'

Her father's engineering job took the family to Nigeria when Anne was five and she lived in Australia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia and South Africa before she settled in St Annes. 'I met my husband in South Africa,' she said. 'He's an

“From the earliest days out there I was always drawing and taking photos on my Box Brownie and I loved seeing the wildlife”



Archie, who Anne saw at the Penny Farm horse rescue centre near Blackpool

engineer from Lancaster.

‘From the earliest days out there I was always drawing and taking photos on my Box Brownie and I loved seeing the wildlife and I still use the same drawings and the faded yellow photos I was doing then. I have a huge photo collection which I use as a reference.

‘I always carry a portfolio of my work and when I was in London my eye was caught by a photograph of an African scene in the window of a gallery on Pall Mall. I got talking to the people at the gallery and they looked through my work and offered me an exhibition. I could hardly believe it.’

The exhibition will run at the Royal Opera Arcade Gallery from September 7-19 with preview evenings to raise money for the Born Free Foundation and Feet First Worldwide, charities which help people and animals in Africa. Part of the proceeds from the sale of each piece of artwork will be donated to these two charities and one piece of artwork will be auctioned by silent auction for each of the charities.

And closer to home, Anne’s work will also be on show at Samlesbury Hall in September, alongside pieces by other members of the north west based Association of Animal Artists. 🌸

**For more information on the exhibition go to [www.roa-galleria.com](http://www.roa-galleria.com) and to find out more about the charities Anne will be supporting visit [www.bornfree.org.uk](http://www.bornfree.org.uk) and [www.feetfirstworldwide.com](http://www.feetfirstworldwide.com).**

