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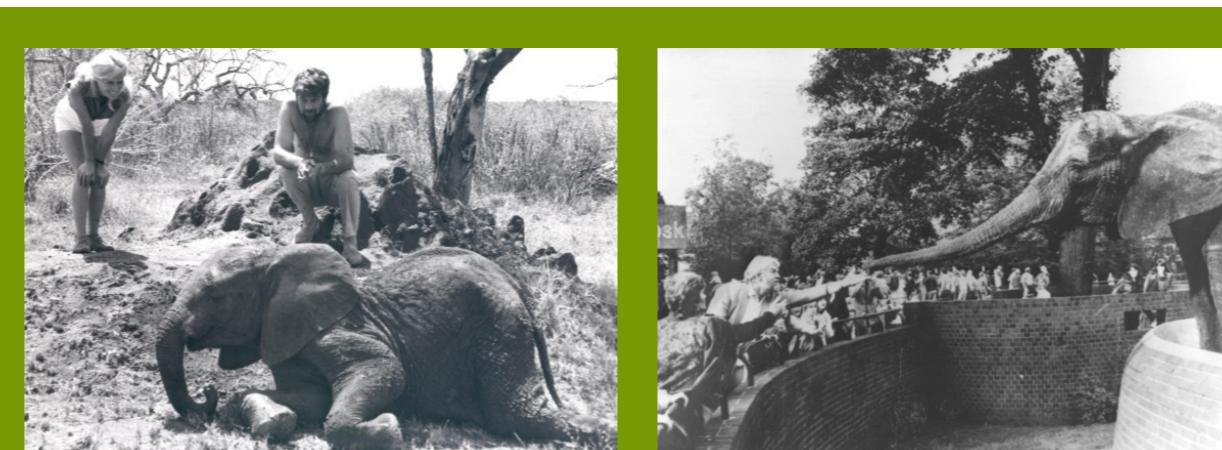
Dear Patricia

This is an important time in Born Free's history – we're 35 years old! Our charity began in March 1984, with the dream to protect wild animals in need. But do you know why we started? It was all because of one young elephant who lived at London Zoo. You can read her story below.

That's why our campaign for an [Elephant-Free UK](#) has been launched this month. We want to phase out keeping this jumbo species in UK zoos, and you can help! Here at Born Free, we believe that every single animal matters, and every single person can make the world a better place for wildlife.

From

Laura
Laura Gosset
Wild Crew



Pole Pole's Story

In 1969, Born Free's Co-Founders Bill Travers MBE and Virginia McKenna OBE starred in a film called *An Elephant Called Swayly*. Set in Kenya, the film featured a two-year-old elephant calf called Pole Pole (pronounced 'Po-lee Po-lee'), which means 'slowly' in Swahili. She had been taken from her wild family as a gift to London Zoo. After the filming, she was sent to the UK, despite Bill and Virginia's efforts to stop the move.

In 1982, they went to see Pole Pole at the zoo. She was only 17, but looked much older, and repeatedly swayed and paced. Yet when Bill and Virginia called her name, she came immediately, her trunk outstretched. Even in her distress she remembered them. Tragically, Pole Pole died the next year and Bill, Virginia and their son Will Travers OBE started our charity to make sure she would never be forgotten.

"It is terrible for an elephant – this wise, clever and sensitive animal – to be kept in captivity," said Virginia. "Pole Pole lit a flame in our hearts. It must never go out." Elephants, like all wild creatures, do not belong in zoos. Thankfully, there are now no more elephants at London Zoo, but now we want to make the whole of the UK an elephant-free zone!



Elephant-Free UK

[Elephants](#) are huge! Measuring up to three metres high and six tonnes in weight (as much as six cars), they are the largest living land animal, are deeply intelligent and, like us, live in loving families. So you can imagine how hard it is for this immense species to live in a zoo or safari park enclosure. The UK has 52 elephants living in 12 zoos, some kept alone or in small groups.

A zoo is no place for an elephant, especially here in the UK with our long, cold dark winters. Elephants can suffer physically and mentally, have reduced lifespans and rarely breed successfully. Born Free would like UK zoos to be elephant free. You can watch a film about our campaign [here](#).

Can you help us?

Please encourage your family and friends to think before visiting a zoo. And could you send a letter to the government? We want them to stop trying to breed baby elephants and ban importing new elephants into the UK. Check first with your parent or guardian, then click [here](#) to send a letter to the politician Michael Gove, who is Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, or you could write your own letter and send it to:

Michael Gove MP
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

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