

# The show goes on — in war-torn Mozambique

By RYAN CRESSWELL

A SOUTH AFRICAN circus has toured war ravaged Mozambique, guarded by helicopters and armoured vehicles.

Brian's Circus spent more than two weeks in the country last month, at the invitation of the Mozambican government, and put on 34 shows in Maputo.

It is believed to be the first visit to the country by a circus in 25 years.

About 30 people, five lions, eight ponies, a horse, 10 dogs, two chimpanzees and an elephant went on the dangerous trip.

On the road to Maputo, between Namatcha and Boane, the strange entourage of green and gold trucks was guarded against Renamo rebels and bandits by two helicopters, four armoured cars and 160 heavily armed Frelimo troops.

The owner of the Maritzburg-based circus, Mr Brian Boswell, said: "That section of road is lined with soldiers. It is a war zone.

## Friendly

"Peace talks were underway but on our way back I counted 72 recently burned-out cars on the road. It was very tense and we felt like we were in a Wilbur Smith novel."

Mr Boswell said a businessman told him he had lost two trucks in the area on the same day the circus was on the road.

Mr Boswell said: "I have travelled in most parts of the world but the Mozambicans were the friendliest people I have ever met. We had no trouble on our trip.

"As far as I know we were the first circus to



**INTREPID TOURISTS . . . Dorothy the elephant with circus boss Brian Boswell** Picture: JIMMY HUTTON

visit in 25 years. It was the first time the children had seen a circus and they were entranced."

The circus boss said the show was such a success in Maputo that he kept it open for an extra week.

A Maputo promoter —

acting on behalf of the state — paid Mr Boswell in rand for the show.

"It was a very successful business venture," said Mr Boswell, adding that his circus could return to Mozambique for another show.