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undoubtedly be a period for experimentation and change, to which I hope BCG and its membership will contribute.

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Hounded to extinction and beyond?

A few years ago I wrote a short note in the Newsletter pointing out that the market in rhino horn had placed a value on museum specimens that might warrant more stringent security. The Guardian (16.9.1992) recently reported that thieves had broken into Oslo Museum smashed an elephant skull and taken the tusks. While this may be a freak occurrence it is worth noting that Oslo is no nearer the centre of the ivory trade than Cleethorpes. With the dehorning of rhinos in the wild, a continuing decline in their numbers, military protection for many of those that survive and an implied death sentence for poachers, museum collections which are protected by relatively weak laws may increasingly be seen as a soft option for those desperate to acquire this material.

Simon Knell

People and Places

Scunthorpe shrinks!

Scunthorpe Museums Service is the latest in a long list of British museums to be affected by cuts in local government funding. After five years of expansion the Museums Service looks set to shrink back to its former self. Cash shortages have meant that some redundancies were likely but in response the museum staff have left like lemmings – Keeper of Natural Science post is temporarily frozen, Curator (deleted (in effect)), Exhibition Officer (frozen), Conservation Technician (deleted), Museum Assistant (deleted)... the list goes on. Of these posts it is expected that the natural science post will be filled in the new financial year provided the British economy doesn't plummet any further – and who can predict that! The Natural Science Department

remains for the time being the responsibility of Kevin Leahy, the Principal Keeper, with temporary trainee Museum Assistant (Natural Science) Sue Rainton keeping things ticking over. (Now the good news, this important post was advertised in December – Ed)

Peter Davis has been appointed Lecturer in Museum Studies attached to the Department of Archeology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. A Masters Degree in Museum Studies will be launched next year and there will be a marked increase in the museological content of current undergraduate teaching. If anyone has promotional materials etc that may be of interest to Peter he will make good use of them.

Congratulations to John Mathias who is (as of 21.9.92) Assistant Director of Leicester Museums.

Please note that Jane Mee's correct address is Ludlow Museum, Old Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1NW, tel 0584 873857 and not as published in the last newsletter.

Ann Nicol, late graduate trainee in biology at Leicester Museums has been appointed to a one year post at the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow working principally on the wet collections and osteological material. Her post was jointly funded by the Scottish Museums Council, the Pilgrim Trust and the D'Oyly Carte Trust.

News from Sheffield – from Derek Whiteley

A combination of poll-capping and financial legacies of the World Student Games has created a desperate financial situation here.

My old post, Assistant Keeper (Zoology) which had existed since the early 1960's has been deleted. Some duties will be taken over by Paul Richards and myself. We are promoting self-service access to collections and operating a basic enquiry service. Many other functions will disappear with the post.

The City Museum and the Natural History Section both have severe income targets. We are resisting the imposition of admission charges, bench charges for access to collections, and meeting targets by lectures, commercial enquiries, consultancy work and mini-blockbusters such as the 'Big Butterfly Show' and the 'Big Rock and