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Author(s): Moore, S.

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snapped off (and later stuck back on with sellotape, which drew more attention to the breaks).

The mountain scene has a small two foot barrier and beyond this is a replica mountain with birds and flowers. The plant models were all made of wax and had been crushed, some taken out and lost, some left where they were. A ring ouzel was taken and has not yet been recovered.

Other areas that are low down, badly lit or out of view of the warder seem to be the most likely to experience vandalism and theft. A small diorama adjacent to the mountain scene had an adder curled up in the foreground. This was so frequently damaged that the conservator removed it from display. A rabbit from the same scene has now been moved to the very back of the display to prevent further damage.

The majority of displays are in glass cases, however the success of the galleries is undoubtedly due to the life-like and impressive dioramas. The fact that they are drawing so much attention, if not a little too much physical attention, indicates that they are at least getting a message across and firing

the curiosity. The mindless destruction is thankfully rare and does not go undetected. The damage made by the teenage group was quickly picked up on, but it did raise the question of putting security cameras in all the galleries. As a similar incident has not happened since, it was believed to be purely opportunist on the teenagers' part, acting on the fact there was only one warder present that day.

*Victoria Purewal
Botanical Conservator
NMGW*

Theft from Hampshire County Museums Service

The problem with complete strangers wandering round a site with the appearance of knowing what they're doing can often be a problem to staff who may not wish or be bothered in challenging them. Uniforms or official looking overalls can also discourage challenges until something goes missing. In this case it was a credit card of a member of staff. Since then security has tightened up considerably and even well-known visitors are not free to wander around the site and putting extra burdens on staff who do not feel the need to accompany their visitors to the loos or staff room for tea. Ah well no doubt the usual tight schedules mixed with the inevitable no incident apathy will mean that the usual laxity will soon return? I hope not but I do hope that our trustees will have a little more freedom!

Once of the problems of being situated near 'privileged housing' (council estate) is groups of children trying their luck at tossing pebbles at windows or loosening nuts on overnight-parked vehicles. About a year ago our site manager was physically threatened by a not

so young 'child' after he asked him and his followers to refrain from trespassing on the site and testing the 'breakability' of the windows. After some police involvement the matter has not re-occurred. However both instances show the need to stay alert!

*Simon Moore
Hampshire County Museums*

Lightning Strikes Twice?

In July 1990 a young woman walked into Liverpool Museum, smashed a display case on the Egyptian gallery with a cobble stone and removed an artefact. She put the item into her handbag but made no serious attempt to escape with it. The artefact was the mummified hand of a woman, thought to have been a high priestess, from Saqqara, dating from the Ptolemaic (Roman) period, 332-30 BC (M11438)(¹). The hand is covered with a brittle black bituminous resin partly coated with gold leaf and has four gold and lapis lazuli rings on the fingers. It has a high monetary value. It is unlikely, however, that the hand was targeted for