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Brief History of a Department : Natural History
at Birmingham City Museums and Art Gallery.

- April 1977 Natural History Branch Museum (Cannon Hill)
CLOSED in reaction to cuts in local authority
funding.
- December
1978 Plans for a British Wildlife Gallery drawn up
and case specifications considered.
- March 1979 City Architect's still preparing specification
of works (alterations, re-decoration, etc.)
but finance not available as the scheme was
listed in "Desirable Additional Works extra to
Recurrent Budget". Capital funds also failed.
- September
1980 Human Biology Gallery dismantled as refurbishment
overdue. Temporary exhibitions substituted.
- December
1980 Old Taxidermy Laboratory handed over to Museum's
Design and Display Unit as workroom.
- December
1980 Director asked for plans to replace Human Biology:
Draft layout prepared for new Invertebrate Gallery
incorporating space from old offices.
- December
1980 Proposed Scheme for re-opening the Branch Museum
prepared for Leisure Services Committee, but not
included on Agenda and not discussed.
- February/
April 1981 Modelmaking Consultant investigating feasibility *and*
costs.
- June 1981 No budget available: BOTH PROJECTS SHELVED.
- April 1981 Director toured NHD Galleries making specific
comment on displays where changes are required.
- June 1981 Museum Education Dept. moved into old NHD Offices
(effectively excluding that space from redevelopment
as gallery).
- May 1982 Cannon Hill Branch Museum completely refurbished
and requisitioned for storage of Applied Art
collections.
- October 1982 Director instructs NHD to prepare a scheme for a
major gallery renewal on Capital Funds.
- May 1983 Consultant Designer's cost estimate received.
- July 1983 New Zoology Gallery Feasibility Report presented.
PROJECT RE-SCHEDULED by Director for April 1985
(depending on sufficient funds in Museum's allocation)
giving first priority to construction of new workshops
and storage for Art Dept.

The preceding report is a purely factual record and discloses nothing that is professionally confidential. Although these issues and events have involved considerable staff time and efforts, none of them has ever reached the Committee whose elected members therefore have no knowledge of the activities of the Natural History Department in their City Museum. With the help of this Newsletter, I should like to inform our colleagues in other local authority museums that it is not due to apathy or inability on our part that we are not seen to be doing more.

B. A. Seddon
Keeper of Natural History
Birmingham City Museums (etc.)

PREVENTIVE AGAINST MADNESS IN ELEPHANTS. BY CARL FREIHERR
VON HUGEL.

The announcement in the Berlin papers of the tragical end of M. Tourniaire's Elephant*, certainly renders it desirable to know some means of preventing similar misfortunes, which have already occurred so frequently in Europe. The state of the Elephant which drives it to madness is termed by the Indians *Mosti*, literally, intoxicated by sexual stimulus or by spirituous liquors, and as soon as the keeper of the Elephants observes the symptoms of the *mosti* coming on, he has a never-failing means of restoring the animal confided to his care immediately to his senses. He places before it a vessel with three seers (a seer is somewhat more than a pound) of fluid butter, called *Ghie*, which the Elephant swallows and again becomes sober. When on great festivals Elephants are intoxicated with brandy for the purpose of fighting them, they are rendered sober as soon as desired by the same means. *Ghie* has moreover the same effect on Dromedaries and Camels when they are *mosti*. A portion of *Ghie* poured down their throats soon restores them to their usual state.—*Wiegmann's Archiv*.

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* Poisoned with hydrocyanic acid. Our readers will also remember the fate of Mr. Cross's Elephant, which it became necessary to shoot from the same cause.