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Editorial

This will be my last newsletter. I am handing over (at last!) to Donna Hughes who is co-editing this issue. I offer many thanks to past and present contributors, may they continue so doing and I offer good fortune to Donna, hoping she will be able to iron out those little creases that sometimes occur around production time! In the meantime, as always, don't forget to send her any useful bits of information, comments, articles, criticisms, announcements and advertisements.

On a darker note, I hope that most of you read the horror article in the *Sunday Times*, 11 May by John Harlow and how he mentioned that the National Lottery and Arts Council are more likely to give grants to museums whose natural history collections/displays are politically correct, i.e. without 'stuffed animals' and that twitchy museum curators are bundling their taxidermy collections into the nearest skip/incinerator!! A Cornish Museum apparently burned an 18th century mounted monkey - how many of those are there in the UK/World?? What was that museum's mission statement about?

I totally agree that poor-quality taxidermy and neglected and deteriorated specimens will harm a museum's image but these specimens can usually be conserved. That the Natural History Museum apparently started this PC trend is incredible and yet it shrugs off the 'Theme Park' term which is still bandied about where many of their displays are concerned. Do they really know what visitors want to see, or do they only take notice of the 1% who vocalise that they find 'stuffed animals' creepy? I know for a fact that our award-winning and hands-on SEARCH unit in Gosport keeps records of visitor comments and that stuffed animals are top of the list in popularity, giving factual weight to Sue Tunnicliffe's letter (*Museums Journal*, April p.18). Perhaps this is because the young visitors are allowed to touch and gently stroke the exhibits. Perhaps the NHM and other so-called modernisers could learn a lesson here?

Simon Moore

Any articles for inclusion in the newsletter should now be sent to Donna at: Liverpool Museum, William Brown St, Liverpool, L3 8EN., preferably on disk (any format), plus hard copy or you can email articles to her on 100145.554@compuserve.com

Articles for the next newsletter needed by 05.12.97.

Apologies are given for the delay in the distribution of this newsletter. A change in production software and a couple of computer crashes are partly to blame. Hopefully, things can only get better!