

The Bartlett Society



NEWSLETTER - July 1997

On our visit to Whipsnade, as reported in the last newsletter, we saw how the tall bushes had been allowed to grow up in front of the Horizon Dial (presented by the Park's founder, Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell). It is pleasing to note that the Dial has now been moved a few feet to the right - into a position where the magnificent view to which it points can be properly seen.

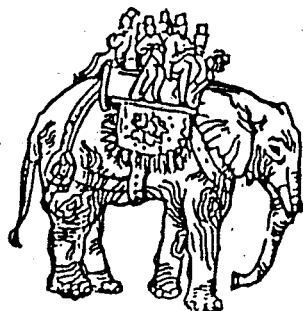
A visit to the Dudley Zoological Garden is proposed for Saturday 28th March 1998. I know it is a long time in advance to be mentioning this, but I am considering whether it would be worth-while hiring a mini-bus (from the Croydon area) as we did for our previous trip to Dudley in 1993. I believe the fare would be in the region of £20 to £25; this is allowing for price rises since 1993 and also the fact that it depends what size bus we hire - which in turn depends on how many members would prefer to travel that way. It would be most helpful if any members from the south London area who might be interested in the trip would let me know their feelings about the journey within the next few months, as an approach to the bus company would need to be made by the end of October.

Gwyn Griffiths has written (see a later page of this newsletter) in response to the report on Nick Thompson's talk about postcards. It would be particularly interesting to know if any members have managed to obtain postcards of the small and/or short-lived collections. How about writing a paragraph for the next newsletter, describing your most-prized postcard, and how you acquired it?

I look forward to seeing many of you at Zoologica on Sunday 7th September - at the Ardingly Showground, near Haywards Heath, Sussex. Don't hesitate to 'phone me if you haven't been before and would like any further information.

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*Founded by G.H. Keating on 27th October 1984,
and devoted to studying yesterday's methods
of keeping wild animals.*

Evidence of a rhinoceros at Hay-Market in 1737

'From Africa always something new': and the same applies to England and to historical studies. I have been studying rhinoceros literature for years, and the exhibition of these animals in Europe in past centuries has always interested me. The following advertisement has just struck me as a great surprise.

Now to be Seen,

At the George Inn in the Hay-Market, at 1 s. each Person,
A Great female RHINOCEROS, landed within a month from on board the Shaftesbury, from the East Indies. This extraordinary Animal is in its full Strength and Beauty, being four Years old, and in Height four Feet nine Inches, and nine Feet and three Inches round her Body; she has a large Horn on her Nose, and three Hoofs to each Foot; its Skin is scaled all over, and so hard and well folded as to secure from any Hurt by other Beasts, and not hinder its Motions.

If any Person is dispos'd to treat for it, they may deliver their Proposals at the Inn, directed to Capt. Canet, the Owner.

This is a clipping in a collection of newspaper advertisements, newspaper and date unknown. But 'Shaftesbury', the name of the ship rings a bell. There is a coloured drawing of a rhinoceros copied by George Edwards from an unknown original, with explanation: 'This Beast dy'd in the Passage from East India to England, on board the Shaftesbury, Captain Matthew Bookey commander - Anno 1737, and was drawn after Death by a Gentleman on board' (figured in T.H. Clarke, *The Rhinoceros from Dürer to Stubbs 1515-1799*, London 1986, p.42). The animal in this drawing is a male. The advertisement refers to a female, otherwise one could suggest that they were exhibiting the stuffed skin. Another rhinoceros arrived in London on first June 1739 on the ship Lyell, exhibited in Red Lyon Square and studied by James Parsons. It is strange that Parsons never said anything about a rhinoceros presumably alive in London in 1737, although there is one strange remark in his paper of 1743 (p.535) in the *Philosophical Transactions*: 'We need say no more of the female Rhinoceros, that came over since, but that she is exactly like this [male of 1739] in all respects, except the sex.' This passage has always bothered me. It is most unlikely that Parsons could have seen the Dutch Rhinoceros which arrived in Holland on 22 July 1741, because ships of the Dutch East India Company did not usually pass a British harbour, and even then, was the animal really taken on shore? On the other hand, to write in 1743 about a female rhinoceros 'that came over since' seems unlikely to refer to one on show in 1737. It is my hope that further study of the sources may reveal the truth about the newspaper advertisement presumed to date to 1737 quoted here.

Kees Rookmaaker
