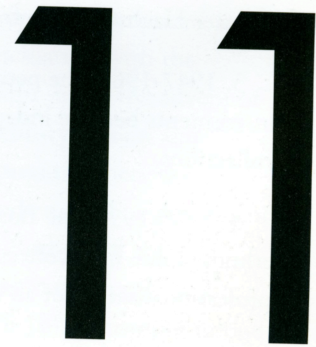
Rational Passions: Frederick John Horniman and Institutional Collectors



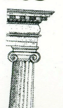
Anthony Shelton

There are few better documented examples of how a private collector and a succession of principal curators (later directors and keepers), stamped their individual predilections, tastes and styles of collecting on an ethnographic collection than that afforded by the Horniman Museum. Nicklin was able to distinguish four phases in the Museum's development based on the succession of collectors/curators/directors.[1] Successive work by Levell has vindicated such a chronological classification and demonstrated more clearly the distinctive character of each period. Despite large variations in the size of each of the Museum's regional collections, responsibility for the Ethnography Department (since 1995, anthropology) has been exercised by students of four of the five continental areas; Asianists include Frederick John Horniman (1860s-1901),[2] Richard Quick (181-1904), Otto Samson (1947-1965) and Ken Teague (1976 -present) shared an interest in Asia; Alfred Cort Haddon (1902-1915); Americanists include David Boston (1965-1993) and Anthony Shelton (1995-present); while Valerie Vowles (1976-1982) and Keith Nicklin (1982-1994), promoted an active Africanist focus. Nevertheless, not all the geographical areas represented in the collections grew at a similar rate.

This survey identifies four distinct periods in the Collection's history:

1. 1860-1901 when Frederick John Horniman (later assisted by R. Quick) exerted his personal authority over the formation of a collection consisting of antiquities, Oriental and European arts and crafts, curiosities, weapons and armour, instruments, books, and natural history specimens.

2. 1901-1946, the period when the collection and the new purpose-built museum building were presented to the London County Council and were presided over and developed by Alfred Cort Haddon, and Herbert



Spencer Harrison, later followed by L.W.G. Malcolm, Haddon's former student.

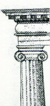
3. 1947-1965, the period of consolidation under Otto Samson, when ethnography and musical instruments became independent departments, and attempts were made to relinquish the natural history collections.

4. 1965-1998, the Boston and Houlihan directorships associated with the development of modern ethnographic field collecting, the rise of a temporary exhibition programme, and the increased professionalisation of all three curatorial departments.[3]

"A Veritable Cabinet of Curiosities of Arts and Industries of Different Nationalities." Frederick John Horniman's Founding Collection 1860-1901

Frederick Horniman harboured a fascination for things Oriental, antiquities, bygones, curiosities, and natural history specimens. Early newspaper accounts, including serialised descriptions of the collections Horniman displayed in his home, Surrey House, 100 London Road, Forest Hill, read almost like a guide to his personal tastes and interests. Although Horniman only catalogued his collection retrospectively, its early profile can be gauged from the guides to his Museum,[4] the predecessor of the present museum, and an analysis of the register entries made in March 1898 by Horniman's curator, Richard Quick (1891-1904), prior to the transfer of the material to the London County Council. In 1898, 7,920 ethnographic objects were entered into the registers. Of these 42% were Asian (16% from India); 18% were European (16.5% from the United Kingdom); 13% were African (including ancient Egypt); 5% Pacific; and 4% American.[5]

Figure 1: Ethnographical Saloon, The Horniman Museum, 1891. (Photograph: Horniman Museum).



The majority of Horniman's ethnographic collection presented to the County of London was derived from Asia and the United Kingdom. This suggests that he shared not only the Victorian fascination with the Orient, but the 19th century concern over the disappearance of rural life styles and skills under the advent of industrialisation and urbanisation. Such concerns were not uncommon in late 19th century Britain and confirm Horniman as 'a man of his times'. Despite the steep decline of the English peasantry, there was a strong movement to preserve or revive what were seen as important rural industries and crafts. The movement countered some influential members including Alexandra Princess of Wales, Maria de Rothschild and the Countess of Warwick,who established their own classes and schools to promote peasant crafts, partly as a means to improve the moral and economic condition of the population (Harrod 2000: 16). According to one advocate, craft classes "'exercised good influence' and resulted in 'happier lives and lighter hearts, tidier children, cleaner cottages, and a better moral tone all round'" (Harrod 2000: 17). Though highly idealistic, peasant art was acclaimed as a manufacture made for love, not money (Harrod 2000: 13). The movement also assembled collections, notably those now at the Charterhouse School Museum and Haslemere Museum (later Haslemere Education Museum) to help stimulate craftsmen (Shepley 2000: 7).

The promotion of folk life studies also interested the Museums Association. In 1891, Hazelius (1833-1901), an enthusiastic exponent of folk life studies in Sweden met with Bather, the then President of the Museums Association, who later fermented the growth of the folk life movement in Britain; trying in 1912, though unsuccessfully, to open a folk park in the grounds of the Crystal Palace, just a few kilometres from the Horniman Museum (Teague pers. comm.). While Horniman's own voice is conspicuously missing from records and publications about his collection, there are occasional references to the fine quality and

Figure 2: The Elizabethan Bed Room, The Horniman Museum c. 1890. (Photograph: Horniman Museum).

craftsmanship of the Oriental material that he exhibited. An interest in craftsmanship is also evidenced by his visit in 1894 to the Jeypore (Jaipur) School of Art, the Art Pottery Works in Bombay and, the Kandyan Art Association,[6] where he made significant purchases for his Museum. This interest in craftsmanship may also illuminate the reasons behind his collection of European arts and crafts; massive carved bedstead, tapestries, spinning wheels, leather bottles, watches, clocks, spring guns, old swords, etc.[7] It must be more than a little noteworthy that most of the items in his small African collection, with the exception of some beadwork from Natal purchased at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition, were derived from areas which were considered to have a higher level of craftsmanship – Benin and ancient Egypt – than was commonly believed to exist elsewhere on the continent. Other areas, like the Pacific and the Americas, not usually associated with significant technological achievements, were all but ignored, strengthening the supposition that the illustration of technique and fine craftsmanship provided a significant motivation underlying his collecting activities.

At the same time, Horniman was attracted by curiosities, lured by objects associated with singular events or personalities, and fascinated by the macabre and the absurd. Like his curator, Richard Quick, Horniman appeared in public a genial, informal, knowledgeable, and curious collector, not adverse to researching objects himself.[8] In the press he was often referred to as a collector of curios and specimens, perhaps situating him at a paradoxical juncture between romanticism and scientific positivism. Like all such collectors, he possessed his fair share of metonymic objects; the pistol supposedly used by Booth to assassinate Abraham Lincoln, a comb that once belonged to Elizabeth I; 'a chip of wood cleft by the axe of Mr. Gladstone ...'. In the Long Saloon he contrasted the large with the small '... a very fine specimen of an African lion, nine feet in length, supposed to be the largest, or one of the (largest), known to exist in this country .... As a striking contrast to this, ... an embryo elephant, preserved in spirits, measuring less than a foot from trunk to tail' was exhibited.[9] Most 19th century journalists concurred that:

> *The Horniman Free Museum ... is a Treasure of priceless value to the district. Some forty years ago Mr. Fredk. John Horniman, M.P., commenced collecting curios from all parts of the world. As year followed year, his ardour in this direction increased, and when in 1890 it was dedicated to the free use of the public it was found to be a veritable cabinet of curiosities, of Arts and Industries of different Nationalities, and a Natural History Gallery on a most extensive and magnificent scale. Since it first became an open Institution the exhibits have been vastly increased, and today, it is, without the shadow of a doubt, the most attractive museum of its kind, for every room abounds with richness.*[10]

Other contemporary accounts enhanced this summary description, by either focusing on the play of contrasts in the displays, or concentrating their description on particular noteworthy galleries.

> *On my first (visit) I was surrounded by everything that was beautiful and pleasing to the eye, and which had been brought from interesting Japan, but on Monday I found myself in the midst of all that was horrible, and which carried the mind back to the 15th century when*

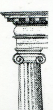


Figure 3: Evolution of Decorative Art case, South Hall, Horniman Museum 1904. (Photograph: Horniman Museum).

living, one would imagine, was not quite so pleasant as in the present age. What a dreadful sensation took possession of me when I beheld the Spanish Torture Chair and reflected for a moment on the great sufferings it had probably inflicted upon hundreds of persons in times long gone by. ... I suddenly glanced around, but only to behold a creature in full armour which at first sight, I imagined, owing no doubt to the extreme torture my nerves had suffered, was to be my executioner. ... No matter were you turn in this room you behold figures in armour, and you cannot prevent a feeling of horror creeping over you, for in every corner are deadly weapons in endless variety. The whole of one side of the room is occupied by a large wall case, and this contains hundreds of guns, swords, pistols, bills, halberds, daggers, cutlasses, guisarmes, etc. ... There is also on view an old cannon that was dredged up at Spithead. In another case are modern cuirasses, dragoon helmets, and naval swords.[11]

Another visitor complained of the gloomy surroundings conjured-up by the old English chambers: 'Visions of the Star Chamber, the Tower of London, and kindred horrors of bygone times would be recalled in an instant !'[12]

A similar bias towards mixing curios with specimens, was endemic to the multifarious sources that Horniman used to augment his collection: auction houses, dealers, trade and international exhibitions; the offices of friends, like Sir Somers Vine, one of the architects of the complex of museums and exhibition buildings that developed in South Kensington; antiquarians, like J. Corbet Anderson, Edward Lovett and Henry Willett; military men like W.J. Hider, Colonel Cochrane, and Captain Rooney who brought back pieces from campaigns in Benin (1897), Afghanistan (1898), and China; missionaries like the Rev. R. Davidson (1895), who worked in west China, and others who proved invaluable in sourcing material for Horniman's ever burgeoning collections that straddled the fast disappearing world of wonderment and the rapidly emerging and developing realms of the sciences.

Illustrating evolution; Haddon, Harrison and Malcolm 1901-1946

After 1901, with the Horniman under public administration and the appointment of the eminent Cambridge anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon as advisory curator (1902-15), the motives underlying the

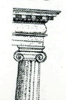
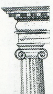


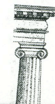
Figure 4: South Hall, Horniman Museum, 1901. (Photograph: Horniman Museum).

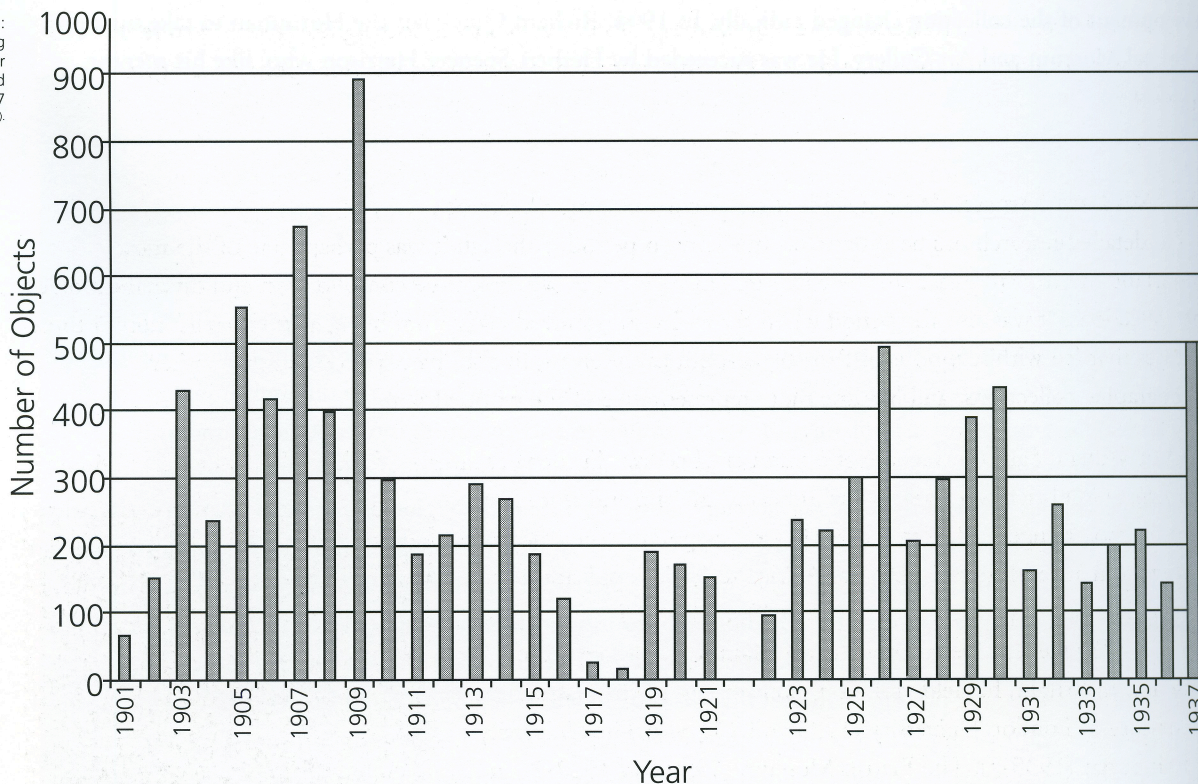


development of the collection changed radically. In 1904, Richard Quick left the Horniman to take up a post at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. He was succeeded by Herbert Spencer Harrison who, like his mentor, Haddon, had been trained as a natural scientist, and shared his interest in applying the insights of evolutionary theory to the history of art and technology. In 1937, on his retirement Harrison was replaced by L.W.G. Malcolm, the former curator of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum and a one-time student of Haddon, thus marking a forty-four year period, during which, the Horniman fell under the influence of Cambridge evolutionary anthropology.

During this period, the Horniman Museum mobilised an alternative source of pedagogic authority to transform itself into an educational institution: it acquired specimens to provide a practical illustration of the working of evolution, not only in the animal and plant kingdoms, but among the different human races that early anthropological theory had distinguished.[13] Through its incorporation into local government, the Museum became aligned with the state, and assumed an agency in the cultural reproduction of the ideological relations pertaining between national and foreign polities as well as the regional and social relations internal to the country itself. Collecting was re-focused on Africa - encouraged by two decades of exploration, pacification and settlement; the Americas and the Pacific, with the objective of acquiring material to 'fill the gaps' in the evolutionary series that Haddon and Harrison sought to mount. International exhibitions, such as the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exhibition (1909), and the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition (1910), were fruitful sources of acquisition. However, the personal contacts that Horniman had relied on to build his collection, were replaced by an emerging cadre of graduates, who had usually taken some formal training in anthropology, often at Cambridge and not unusually under Haddon's tutorship. The Museum also used a corps of professional fieldworkers including Haddon's son, Ernest, as well as friends and colleagues, some of whom had been members of the important 1898 Torres Strait Expedition. Donors included Charles Hose,Charles Seligman, Cooke Daniels, Stanley Gardiner and Emil Torday, as well as students, like A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, who were completing their anthropological training at Cambridge. Nevertheless, collecting was tightly constrained and appears to have been strictly subordinated to illustrating aspects of evolutionary theory. New collections were acquired like those assembled by M. Protheroe (1908), and Radcliffe-Brown (1910) in the Andaman Islands, for example, to provide a comprehensive illustration of what was then considered one of the most primitive technologies in existence. Haddon donated some of his own Torres Strait material for use in a case intended to illustrate the evolution of decorative art, and in 1909, while on a lecture tour in the United States, he purchased Inuit and Northwest Coast artefacts, some of which were exhibited to exemplify their similarities with Palaeolithic carvings and cave painting.

Oceanic material was acquired from James Edge Partington (32 objects in 1913); Sir Everard Im Thurn (1918-20); J.K. Hutchin (1903); W.H. Abbot (1903); L.P. Robbins (1932); and Lord Moyne (1936), among others. Unlike Balfour at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Haddon sought not to illustrate the global workings of the process of cultural evolution within specific typological categories, but to concentrate instead on particular regions. This may account both for Haddon encouraging the development of new collection areas - Oceania, for example, to furnish the series necessary for his decorative art displays - as well as his stringent and discriminatory acquisitions policy.



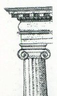


Graph 1: plotting acquisition for the period 1901-1947 (Graph: Esther Filer).

Between 1901-1947, 10,231 ethnographic items were added to the collection.[14] The period can be subdivided into 1901-1937 and 1937-1947. During the first 36 years the growth of the collection was sporadic and seldom exceeded 500 items per year; far less in most years. Only in 1907, which had seen unusually high activity in the salesrooms, and in 1909, when the Museum received the Morten Bequest of 315 ivories and related works,[15] as well as Haddon's collection of 110 Arctic and Northwest Coast objects, did the annual purchases exceed 500.

As the First World War dramatically affected the growth of the collection during the first half of the period, the Second World War had a similar impact on the second part. Yearly registers were not kept for the period 1938-1947, which corresponds to the curatorship of L.W.G. Malcolm. However, the 1968 survey of the collections estimated that no more than a total of 500 objects came into the Museum in those nine years. Furthermore, it is unclear whether these were new acquisitions or previously acquired objects that until then had not been registered. Taking these two periods together, 1901-47, the collection grew at a yearly average of 270 items, perhaps suggestive of the subordination of passion to the requirement of scientific illustration in this phase of the collection's history, but also, no doubt, to the financial limitations that the London County Council imposed on its activites.

The Second World War not only disrupted travel abroad and the art market, but also the Museum's work at home. Surrey Mount, Horniman's former residence, which stood in the gardens in close proximity to the



purpose-built iron framed Museum and was used as a store, was bombed, forcing the Museum to temporarily close. It was not until the following period that any concerted, systematic collections policy was again pursued.

Otto William Samson 1947-1965. The period of consolidation.

No detailed research has been done on the Samson period, although it was perhaps one of the most important and fruitful phases in the Museum's history which witnessed the consolidation and diversification of the collections. It was also the period when the collections moved away from being a simple reflection of those cultures that fell within regions of British geo-political interests, like so many of the country's other ethnographic collections, and became more representative of the world at large.

Otto William Samson was one of a number of central European scholars - Ladislav Holy, Leonhard Adam and Ernst Gombrich were others - who fleeing the rise and spread of Nazism, took refuge in Britain where they re-invigorated the study of non-western art and material culture.[16] Prior to Hitler's political rise, Samson had been assistant keeper (1928-30), and then Keeper (1930-33) of the Far Eastern Department at the Hamburg ethnographic museum. In Britain, he held various appointments at: the Galton Laboratory of London University (1933 and 1937-9); The University of Edinburgh (1935-7); The British Museum (1939 and 1942-7), and as Curator of the Horniman Museum (1947-1965). His influence on the Horniman, despite sometimes terse relations with its governing body, was enormous; again re-orienting and re-vitalising its established networks and its sources of acquisition, to say nothing of its focus, which now turned away from evolution to material culture studies and art. He was also responsible for establishing the education centre and a handling collection for school use although at the same time, according to the recollections of some of his colleagues, he harboured a distaste for natural history and may have been responsible for deaccessioning part of its collections. According to one assessment made by W.G. Archer, the respected Indologist and keeper at the Victoria and Albert Museum:

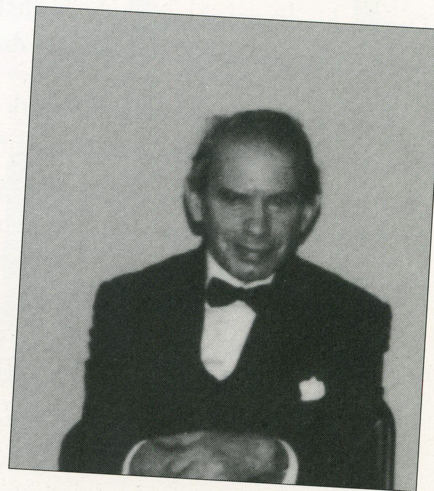


Figure 5: Dr. Otto William Samson, (1900 - 1976) (Photograph: Horniman Museum).

> *In spite of its sparse financial resources, he (Samson) changed an old-fashioned institution into one of the best ethnographic museums in Europe and in particular built up its famous collection of musical instruments* (1976: 93).

Samson established close links with other European museums that facilitated the opening up of new collection areas. He worked with the National Folk Art Museum of Romania to assemble a large and important collection of the country's rural crafts. He obtained examples of Swiss costumes and Carnival masquerades through contacts at the Museum für Völkerkunde, Basle (1953), and the Ethnography

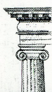
Department of the University of Zürich (1951); and Polish material from the Polish Cultural Institute in London (1956). He instigated an exchange with the Musée de l'Homme in Paris which, in 1958, resulted in another 36 articles from all over the European continent. Zambian material was acquired from the Rhodes Livingstone Museum (1959 and 1962), and he started to gather important photographic archives on such diverse regions as Bali and Romania. He also maintained an astute eye on museums and other organisations with ethnographic holdings in the United Kingdom which, he suspected might want to relinquish their collections in response to calls for rationalisation. In this way, he acquired collections from the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum (1949); the Imperial Institute (1950); Reading Museum (1952); Leicester Museum and Art Gallery (1953); the Whitechapel Museum (1954); the Victoria and Albert Museum (1956 and later); the Woodlands Museum, Gillingham, Kent (1957); the Royal Botanic Gardens (1958 and 1961); the Royal Museum, Canterbury (1961); the Church Missionary Society (1961 and 1965); the London Missionary Society (1962); the Commonwealth Institute (1962); and the Bethnal Green Museum (1963). Despite his restricted budget, he further augmented these collections with purchases from the Berkeley Gallery and H.F. Reiser, both London-based dealers, as well as Sotheby's.

Samson himself had done fieldwork in China (1931-2), and made field collections in the Shan area of Burma and Orissa for the Cambridge Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology (1935-7). It is not surprising that given his German background, he saw material culture as providing evidence for the diffusion of ideas and cultural complexes from one region of the globe to another. His own collecting trips to Orissa, Kashmir and Tibet had been made to increase his understanding of the cultural and historical relationships between India and China. Describing Samson's passion for Oriental art, Archer noted:

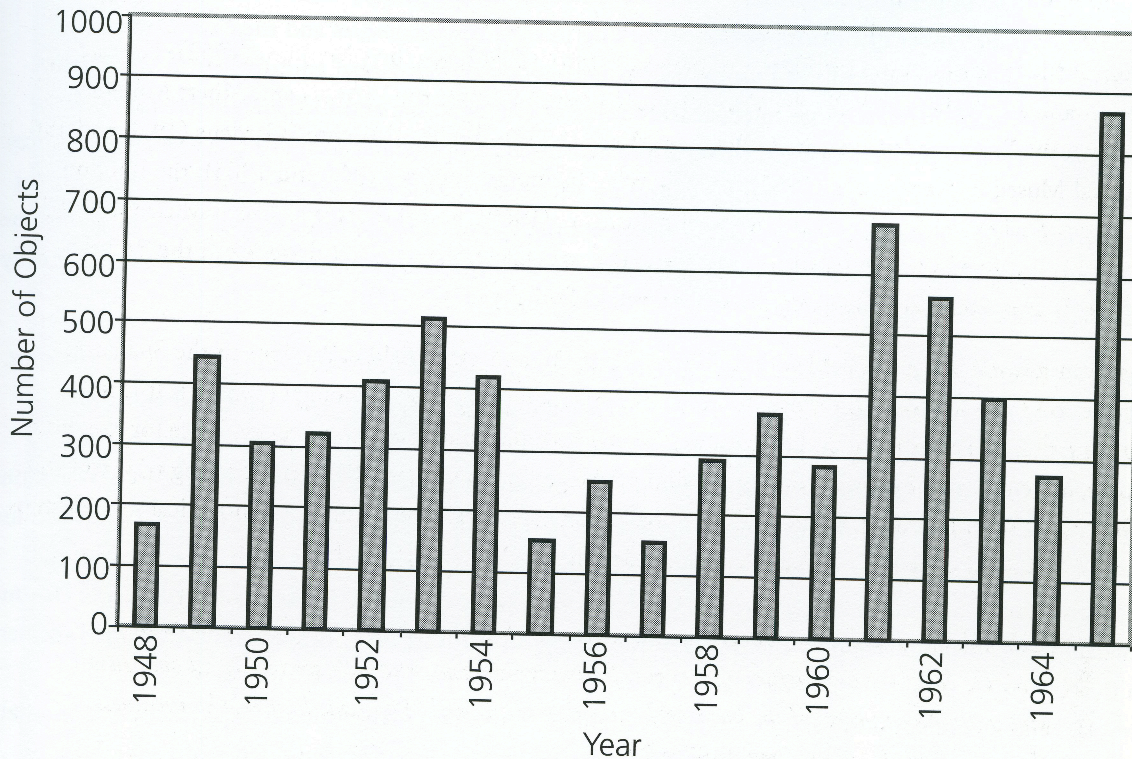
> *Although he valued their aesthetic qualities, it was their roots in popular fancy that excited him. He could see similarities of thought, feeling, symbolism, and style stretching all over Asia and with the eagerness of the born explorer, adventurer, and "big-game hunter", he included them all in his fabulous "bag"* (1976: 94).

At the Horniman, Samson established the tradition of curatorial fieldwork which has become one of the hall marks of the Museum's distinct identity. Not only did he himself make collecting trips to different regions of Europe, as well as Kashmir and Tibet (1948),[17] but he encouraged others, like the ethnomusicologist Jean Jenkins, to undertake trips to Bulgaria (1958), Ethiopia (1965), and elsewhere.[18] In 1956, he acquired the first material culture archive from Colin Turnbull thus instigating the series of mono-cultural collections which over the following decades would add to the Museum's unique resources. Samson was also a generous benefactor to the Museum, inaugurating his directorship with the gift of 437 items and adding to these throughout his term of office. Seldom did Samson travel abroad without bringing items back both as gifts for the Museum, and for himself. His private collection was described as little short of spectacular:

> *Here, in stimulating juxtaposition, were objects from the entire eastern world - pots, textiles, paintings, sculptures, bronzes, masks. My eye was caught by two examples of medieval Orissan*



sculpture showing lovers in wild embraces, a tall wooden female, also Orissan, and fondly termed "Radha", a framed picture of Srinathji, a Kalighat painting of a top-hatted English judge presiding at a murder trial, a unique Nepalese tanka displaying with superlative elegance the miniature style of Pala painting on a grandly enlarged scale. There was seemingly no end to Otto's compulsive zest for salvaging and hoarding anything that had a whiff of the primitive, popular, or Oriental (Archer 1976: 93).



Graph 2: plotting the development of the collection, 1948-1965. (Graph: Esther Filer).

Samson retired from the Museum in 1965, and died on the 12th March 1976. On the death of his wife, Elizabeth, their collection, together with his "enormous library" and personal papers, appears to have disappeared without trace.[19] Otto Samson's relentless collecting over a period of seventeen years brought an estimated 10,000 ethnographic items into the Museum and established its international reputation.

For most of the years during this period, the growth of the collection rarely exceeded 500 items per annum. Nevertheless, the acquisition of a number of large collections; part of the collections of the Church Missionary Society and Canterbury's Royal Museum in 1961, followed by some of the London Missionary Society in the following year, and a further consignment from the Church Missionary Society at the end of his tenure in office in 1965, contributed towards the highest yearly average growth in acquisitions (588 items), that the Museum has experienced.

The Museum in the field. Boston and Houlihan 1965-1998

It was during the next period (1965-1998), with its unprecedented global political, market, and institutional changes, that witnessed the seeds of field ethnography and the consolidation and institutionalisation ideal of the Museum as an archive of material culture.

In this period, the number of institutional donations became fewer,[20] followed, from 1970, by an ever decreasing number of personal donations. The fall in personal donations may have resulted from the sharp contraction in the number of British personnel working in the former colonies and the closure of some sources of foreign items as a result of European de-colonisation and geo-global adjustments. It was further exacerbated by the dramatic increase in the market value of ethnographic and Oriental materials which gradually trickled into public awareness through popular television programmes and magazines. New sources of acquisitions and politically more sensitive collecting strategies needed to be formulated to compensate for these changes of circumstances,[21] as well as for the new situation of the Museum which first became subsumed under the London Residuary Body and then, after failed attempts to make it into a borough museum, finally came of age under central government.

Samson had already divided music from ethnography and instigated field collecting for both departments. His lead was greatly encouraged by David Boston who maintained the stable, systematic and consistent growth of the collections using similar strategies to those of his predecessor. Using outside researchers, to supplement the Museum's curators, to undertake fieldwork, and actively campaigning to encourage donations and transfers from other institutions, Boston imposed a new maturity on the institution's activities. It was his untiring commitment and that of his curators which brought the Museum no less than 13 mono-cultural collections. Boston adopted a strategy to use, when possible, some of the beneficiaries of the Emslie Horniman Scholarship Fund, administered by the Royal Anthropological Institute, to collect for the Museum. Together with the support of outside fieldworkers collecting material on behalf of the Museum, Boston and his successor, Mike Houlihan, were able to develop a highly effective and forward looking acquisitions policy, at a time of unprecedented change. Marilyn Strathern collected in the Mount Hagen district of Papua New Guinea (1966); James Woodburn collected among the Hadza of Tanzania (1966); Jean Jenkins in Ethiopia (1966); C.J. Edmonds among the Kurds and Lur of Iraq/Iran (1968); Valerie Vowles among the San of Botswana (1970-1); P. Andrews among the Shah Sevan of Iran (1971); Jeremy Keenan among the Tuareg, Algeria (1971); Erik Bigalke in Transkei, Transvaal and Lesotho (1972); Jean Brown and Cordelia Rose among the Samburu of Kenya (1972); A.G. van Beek among the Bedamuni, Papua New Guinea (1978-9); Marion Wood among the Navajo (1981); Anna Lewington in Ecuador (1987); Keith Nicklin in Kenya (1987), Nigeria and Cameroon (1980s), the Yoruba of Nigeria (1990), in the Republic of Benin (1998), and Jill Salmons, among the Ogoni of Nigeria (1992), and in northeast Brazil (1998); Ken Teague in Mongolia (1979) and Nepal (1984, 1986, 1987, 1992); Natalie Tobert in the southwest U.S.A (1993); Anthony Shelton in the Southwest U.S.A (1996 and 1998); Phil Cope in Haiti (1998); and Kathryn Chan in Trinidad (1998).

With the position of 'curator' re-titled 'director' and the consolidation of the professional organisational structure, management and curatorial functions became divorced. Samson had previously created three

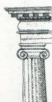
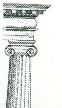


Figure 6: African Worlds, South Hall, Horniman Museum, 1999. (Photograph: Jasper Jacobs Associates).



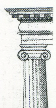
curatorial departments, each under the direction of a Keeper. George Jarvis (1958-1976) became the first Keeper of Ethnography, followed by Valerie Vowles (1976-1982), Keith Nicklin (1982-1994) and Anthony Shelton (1995-present). Under Boston, the Ethnography Department was enlarged to include two further full-time curatorial positions to permit the geographical area specialisation necessary to develop and interpret the collections, as well as provide adequate curatorial services to the public at large (enquiries, lectures, consultancy work and exhibitions). Collections management responsibilities were transferred to a new department in 1994, under the supervision of Kirsten Walker.

The African collections assumed prominence from 1976 to 1999, during the keeperships of Vowles, Nicklin and Shelton. Vowles conducted fieldwork in south and east Africa. Nicklin continued his long term studies in Nigeria and Cameroon and built important contemporary collections from the Yoruba (1990), various southeast Nigerian groups (1980s), and the Ogoni (1992). In 1987, he collected among diverse groups in Kenya and, in 1998, as a freelance researcher, he collected shrine material from the Republic of Benin and Brazil to illustrate similarities in belief between the two areas. The work of Vowles, Nicklin and others in building this part of the collection was crucial in enabling the establishment of a new gallery dedicated to the visual cultures of Africa and the Caribbean which was opened by Sir David Attenborough on 22nd March, 1999.

Anthony Shelton continued his long term interest in the cultural similarities between Uto-Aztecan groups in central and North-west Mexico and the American South-west by focusing on the Hopi (1996 and 1998), and acquiring for the Museum a collection of katsinam and Pueblo musical instruments. His attendance at conferences also allowed for some opportunistic collecting of, for example, saint carvings from Puerto Rico, and masks from the Huasteca region of Mexico.

Mike Hitchcock (1984–1989), assistant keeper for the Americas and Europe carried out fieldwork in South China and Eastern Europe. His successor, Natalie Tobert (1990–1996) worked on pottery production in the the American South-west (1993), and India (1993), as well as on the religious practices of Hindu populations in London and Leicester (1993, 1994). Ken Teague, the Asian curator, has conducted intensive fieldwork in Nepal (1981, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1991, 1994), Mongolia (1979, 1990, 1992), Turkey (1989, 1990, 1993, 1994), and India (1995), and his current four year project in former Soviet Central Asia, is creating important collections which document the changes in material culture since the region's independence.

The number of outside fieldworkers contributing to the growth of the ethnographic collections in the last three years has increased significantly. Since 1995 the Anthropology Department has sought to build on Samson's legacy by focusing its acquisition policy on cultural areas not well represented in other museums in the United Kingdom. For Africa, important collections are being made of contemporary Dogon mask styles and musical instruments (Polly Richards 1998-2001); Bedu masquerades (Karel Arnaut 1997-1999), Lobi carvings and musical instruments (Michael Pennie 1997-2000). However, more traditional collection areas have also been developed, most notably through the work of Emmanuel Arinze who commissioned on the Museum's behalf, an Ijele masquerade, and display figures from the Nigerian Igbo (1997-1999).



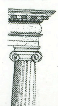
science itself. Furthermore, scientific paradigms change, they become more or less comprehensive, sometimes they decline, or like cultural evolution, diffusionism, and functionalism, on which the idea of a material culture archive is partly predicated, they become discredited. These tendencies generate an incessant re-assertion and commitment to the renewal and redirection of the labour of collecting. Unlike art galleries, museums occupy a more invidious position which severely curtails their ability to de-accession collections, even when these have been made to illustrate non-current scientific paradigms. When a paradigm fails, the objects previously used in its elaboration or illustration revert to their past enigmatic status, becoming again sources for new research and evaluation in the continual and exhaustive games of knowledge creation. It would be no exaggeration to see such knowledge quests, whether informed by the rationalist or empirical motivations attributed to systematic collecting, as lacking none of the passion, furore and personal commitment, usually attributable only to private collectors.

Acknowledgement

This paper would not have been written without the encouragement and support of Nicky Levell, and her generosity in sharing the findings of her own research, including her survey of the Horniman's collections. I am particularly grateful to Esther Filer for her untiring work in making the bar charts that accompany this article. David Allen and Anne James, of the Horniman Library, helped track down various obscure or difficult references, and Ken Teague, Robbin Kenward (née Place), and Shelagh Weir, kindly shared their personal recollections of Otto Samson. I should also like to thank Nicky Levell and Ken Teague for their incisive readings of earlier drafts of this paper.

Notes

1. Nicklin ignored the period 1937-1947 and ended his survey in 1993 on the retirement of David Boston as director. Otherwise his chronology is similar to that I use here.
2. Dates refer to the period of active collecting for the Museum.
3. Boston and Houlihan have been bracketed together on the basis of their shared collection strategy. However, this ignores the tremendous institutional changes that occurred during their directorships as a result of the Horniman first being incorporated into the Inner London Education Authority, and later being subsumed with the large national museums under central government control. These changes inevitably had wide consequences on the operation of the Museum, its collections policy and research programmes.
4. In 1890, Surrey House was opened to the public and renamed the Horniman Museum.
5. These figures are based on the statistical survey of early register entries carried out by Nicky Levell in 1997. An earlier survey dated 9th October, 1968, notes 6,174 ethnographic items listed in the registers (Dept. of Anthropology Archive).
6. Nicky Levell, personal communication.



7. *Surrey House Museum* Guide 1890: 5.

8. Horniman also pursued his own research on his collection. In 1882, while visiting Regensburg, Horniman made investigations concerning Joseph Schweiger, an instrument maker who had made a lyre-guitar belonging to him.

9. L.W. 1887. *A Second Visit to Surrey House Museum.* Horniman Museum Archive.

10. Forest Hill's Popular Institution. *Forest Hill and Sydenham Examiner and Crystal Palace Intelligencer.* April. 1897: 3.

11. Through the Horniman Museum By a Visitor II. *Forest Hill and Sydenham Examiner and Crystal Palace Intelligencer.* Sept. 1896: 3.

12. L.W. 1887. *A Second Visit to Surrey House Museum.* Horniman Museum Archive.

13. Nicky Levell, Alfred Cort Haddon: *Illustrating Evolution at the Horniman Museum* (forthcoming).

14. Based on estimates from the 1968 survey.

15. The majority of which was later returned to the family who previously owned them..

16. Samson was a good friend of Arthur Waley who probably introduced him to Beryl de Zoete who donated her superb photographs of Bali to the Museum. Waley was also well acquainted with the Seligmans, who had been involved in helping fund an underground network to help scholars and artists, in danger of being persecuted by the Nazi's to flee to Germany. It has been suggested (Levell. personal communication), that the Seligman's may have helped Samson settle in Britain.

17. He later developed an interest in Mexico, possibly stimulated by Rodney Gallup, who in 1960, and again in 1967, donated a collection of 65 Mexican masks to the Museum. Samson applied to the General Purposes Sub-Committee of the London County Council's Education Committee to fund to the sum of £480 a collecting trip to Mexico. Unfortunately, because he proposed to make the trip after his official retirement, the application was deferred and later refused (Report of the General Purposes Sub-committee dated 24.11.1964). Given Samon's often frictious relations with the London's County Council it is difficult not to see their decision to withold funding as an expression of peevishness.

18. Later Jenkins made fieldtrips to Malaysia and Indonesia (1972, 1973), as well as returning to Ethiopia (see Birley, thi volume). Jean Jenkin's private collections were divided between the Horniman and the Royal Museums of Scotland.

19. After Samson's death, his wife's flat on Taymount Rise, almost opposite the Museum, was burgled several times and material stolen (Ken Teague personal communication).

20. Though a number of large collections from the National Museum of Wales; the Wellcome Museum, Bognor and the Cuming entered the Museum in the successive period.

21. Field collecting was first undertaken by individual curators during vacations, without the support of the Museum's management. Ken Teague, personal communication.

22. 1965 and 1966; Jean Jenkins Ethiopian fieldtrip resulted in 88 ethnographic objects; James Woodburn's work among the Hadza of Tanzania brought a further 74 items; and Nancy Stanfield's Yoruba research added 110 pieces to the collections. In 1967 the Museum acquired the Navajo textile collection of J.W.F Morton amounting to 86 items, and 165 European pieces belonging to Lady Vaughan- Morgan. In 1968, Boston obtained Leroux's central African collection numbering 188 pieces.