

For immediate release

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Horniman Aquarium's Beat Plastic Pollution display inspires young visitors

A pop-up display of water-polluting plastic waste has been making waves at the Horniman Aquarium in Forest Hill, south London, inspiring children to take action to protect aquatic life.

- A five-year-old boy, described by his mother as 'angry and upset' by plastic pollution after visiting the Aquarium, was moved to create his own 20-page booklet which he has taken into school and talked about in class, and also shared with his MP.
- Another young visitor told Horniman staff she was going to clean up the beach near her grandparents' house.
- Pupils in a local primary school's Museum Club created drawings and a game themed around combating plastic pollution.
- More than half of the environmental pledges made by visitors on World Oceans Day (8 June, when Beat Plastic Pollution opened) were made by children.

The Beat Plastic Pollution display has introduced more than 150 items of single-use and waste plastic into the permanent aquarium exhibits, alongside information about the impact plastic has on sea creatures, and actions visitors can take to reduce this harm.

Alongside frogs, fish, seahorses and coral reefs, visitors now see plastic bags and discarded flip-flops hanging from mangrove trees, toothpaste tubes and yogurt pots polluting the Amazon rainforest, and crisp packets and drinks bottles lining a British pond.

Even more striking is the temporary removal of the jellyfish – one of the Horniman's best-loved displays – which have been replaced by around 30 plastic bags floating in the current. Plastic bags in the ocean are commonly mistaken for jellyfish and eaten by sea turtles, causing fatal blockages in their digestive systems.

More than 6,000 visitors have seen the Beat Plastic Pollution display so far and adults have also responded positively. Twitter user @piplatimer shared a photograph of the plastic-filled jellyfish tank, saying 'Actually felt a bit emotional @HornimanMuseum today. Powerful adaptation of the aquarium. #jellyfishmissing #plastic #plastic #plastic'. And a visiting parent told the Horniman that the display had given her a starting point to talk to her toddler about the environment.

More

Michelle Davis, Deputy Aquarium Curator at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, says: 'Seeing plastic waste in the Aquarium has been shocking for some of our visitors, and we know some people were disappointed not to see any jellyfish, but on the whole the reaction has been overwhelmingly positive. It's encouraging that people have been so moved by this display, and are pledging to take actions to reduce plastic pollution.

'We've taken care to clean and position the plastics in this display so that our animals aren't harmed, and we'll be removing the waste before it begins to break down into microplastics. Sadly, in the wild none of that happens, and plastic waste is one of the biggest threats to aquatic life around the world.'

The Beat Plastic Pollution display at the Horniman Aquarium has been extended to run until 1 August. Tickets: Child £3, Adult £5, Family (2+2) £13, prices include a voluntary Gift Aid donation. Under 3s and Horniman Members are free.

Ends

Horniman Press Office - Tel: 020 8291 8166 - press@horniman.ac.uk

Pictured:

- **Beat Plastic Pollution: Plastic bags in the Horniman Aquarium jellyfish tank.** Credit: Jamie Craggs/Horniman Museum and Gardens
- **Previous display: Moon jellyfish in the Horniman Aquarium.** Credit: Ludovic des Cognets.

Notes to Editors:

- Beat Plastic Pollution and the Horniman Aquarium were free to visit on World Oceans Day (8 June) as part of the Horniman's family fun day of free activities to help visitors discover how they can become caretakers of our oceans. World Oceans Day is a global day of ocean celebration and collaboration for a better future. worldoceansday.org
- The **Beat Plastic Pollution** pop-up display has been created by the Horniman Aquarium as part of a coalition of 181 aquaria around the world supporting the European Commission's **World aquariums #readytochange to #beatplasticpollution** campaign bereadytochange.eu. The joint call is coordinated by the European Commission (DG Environment) and the United Nations Environment Programme, with the support of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, the European Union of Aquarium Curators, the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums, the US Aquarium Conservation Partnership and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO.
- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium. A new World Gallery of anthropology opened in June 2018 and a new arts space, The Studio, opened in October 2018. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from medicinal and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden, Butterfly House and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London. horniman.ac.uk
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens is core-funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its National Portfolio Organisations.
- **Opening times and admission.** The Horniman Museum is open daily 10am-5.30pm, except 24 - 26 December, when it is closed. The Gardens open at 7.15am Monday to Saturday and 8am on Sunday and Bank Holidays, and close at sunset. Entry to the Museum and Gardens is free but charges apply for the Aquarium, Butterfly House and some special exhibitions and events. Horniman Members and Benefactors go free – horniman.ac.uk/members.
- **Access.** The Museum and the Gardens are both wheelchair and pushchair friendly with accessible toilets. Limited on-site parking is available for Blue Badge holders. horniman.ac.uk/visit/disability-and-access.

- **Travel.** The Horniman is situated at 100 London Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 3PQ on the South Circular Road (A205). It can be reached easily by train to Forest Hill station (London Overground/Southern, travel time approx.15-20 minutes from east/central London or East Croydon) and by local buses (176, 185, 197, 356, P4)