

= William Charles Osman Hill =

William Charles Osman Hill (13 July 1901 ? 25 January 1975) was a British anatomist , primatologist , and a leading authority on primate anatomy during the 20th century . He is best known for his nearly completed eight @-@ volume series , *Primates : Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy* , which covered all living and extinct primates known at the time in full detail and contained illustrations created by his wife , Yvonne . Schooled at King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys in Birmingham and University of Birmingham , he went on to publish 248 works and accumulated a vast collection of primate specimens that are now stored at the Royal College of Surgeons of England .

= = Early life and education = =

William Charles Osman Hill was born on 13 July 1901 . He was educated first at King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys in Birmingham , and later obtained his degrees from the University of Birmingham . During medical school , also at the University of Birmingham , he won three junior student prizes and the Ingleby Scholarship in Midwifery . He obtained his primary medical degrees in 1924 , and the same year took on the role of lecturer in zoology . Osman Hill earned his MD with honours in 1925 . He also earned his Ch . B while in medical school .

= = Career = =

Upon graduation , Osman Hill continued his role as a lecturer at the University of Birmingham under an apprenticeship until 1930 , but teaching anatomy instead of zoology . In 1930 , his career took shape when he moved to Sri Lanka , then known as Ceylon , to become both Chair of Anatomy and Professor of Anatomy at the Ceylon Medical College (more recently named Faculty of Medicine of the University of Colombo or Colombo Medical School) . His position allowed him to pursue anthropological studies of the indigenous Veddah people and comparative anatomy of primates . During this time , he began developing a private menagerie of exotic and native species . Consisting mostly of a variety of primates and parrots , the collection reported included several types of cockatoo (family *Cacatuidae*) , red @-@ fan parrots (*Deroptyus accipitrinus*) , eclectus parrots (*Eclectus roratus*) , star tortoises (genus *Geochelone*) , leopard tortoises (*Stigmochelys pardalis*) , Galápagos tortoises (*Chelonoidis nigra*) , and ruddy mongooses (*Herpestes smithii*) . Osman Hill held this position in Ceylon for 14 years , returning to the UK after being appointed as Reader in Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh in 1945 . Upon his departure from Ceylon , his menagerie was divided between the London Zoo and the National Zoological Gardens of Sri Lanka .

Five years later in 1950 , he became prosector for the Zoological Society of London and remained there for twelve years . When he left the London Zoo in 1962 , the old prosectorium that has been his office was closed , many preserved biological specimens were discarded , and the era of anatomists working at the London Zoo ? starting from the time of Richard Owen ? came to a close . Between 1957 and 1958 , Osman Hill also acted as a visiting scholar at Emory University in Atlanta , Georgia . Later in 1958 , primatologist Jane Goodall studied primate behaviour under him in preparation for her studies of wild chimpanzees . In 1962 , he was hired as the assistant director of the Yerkes National Primate Research Center (YNPRC) in Atlanta after being turned down for the position of director .

The Royal Society of Edinburgh honoured him as a fellow in 1955 and for his contributions to science awarded him both its Gold Medal and the Macdougall @-@ Brisbane Prize . Upon his retiring from YNPRC in 1969 , the Royal College of Surgeons of England made him a Hunterian Trustee . Following retirement , Osman Hill divided his time between his home at Folkestone and his continued work at the University of Turin . His relentless work in anatomy ended only during the final stages of his terminal illness , after he had suffered three years of increased illness as well as diabetes .

= = Publications = =

During his career , Osman Hill wrote 248 publications , all academic journal articles or chapters in books based primarily upon his own observations . His first paper , which discussed the comparative anatomy of the pancreas , was published in 1926 . In all , his works , which continued being published until the year of his death , focused on the anatomy and behaviour of humans , primates , and other mammals .

Osman Hill is best known for writing *Primates : Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy* , an eight @-@ volume series that aimed to include all living and extinct primates . Published by Edinburgh University between 1953 and 1974 , the series was the culmination of 50 years of his scientific research and thought . Each volume , starting with the strepsirrhines , covered its subjects exhaustively , including native and scientific nomenclature , anatomical structure , genetics , behaviour and palaeontology . The books were illustrated with both photographs and drawings , most of which were made by his wife , Yvonne . The series was known for its breadth and depth , however it was never completed . Projected as a nine @-@ volume set , Osman Hill died in 1975 , leaving his magnum opus unfinished . With five sections of the final volume written , including material on the taxonomy and most of the anatomy of langurs , it was hoped that his widow would be able to follow through with plans to prepare and publish them . However , she died one year later .

This monographic series often received praise for its encyclopaedic content , but was also criticised for occasional omissions , errors , and lack of specificity .

= = = Selected publications = = =

The eight volumes for which Osman Hill is best remembered were

Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy (1953 ? 1974)

Osman Hill , W. C. (1953) . *Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy I ? Strepsirhini* . Edinburgh Univ Pubs Science & Maths , No 3 . Edinburgh University Press . OCLC 500576914 .

Osman Hill , W. C. (1955) . *Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy II ? Haplorhini : Tarsioidea* . Edinburgh Univ Pubs Science & Maths , No 3b . Edinburgh University Press . OCLC 500576923 .

Osman Hill , W. C. (1957) . *Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy III ? Pithecoidea Platyrrhini* . Edinburgh Univ Pubs Science & Maths , No 3c . OCLC 500576928 .

Osman Hill , W. C. (1960) . *Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy IV ? Cebidae , Part A* . Edinburgh Univ Pubs Science & Maths , No 3d . OCLC 500576933 .

Osman Hill , W. C. (1962) . *Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy IV ? Cebidae , Part B* . Edinburgh Univ Pubs Science & Maths , No 3e . OCLC 500576939 .

Osman Hill , W. C. (1966) . *Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy VI ? Catarrhini Cercopithecoidea : Cercopithecinae* . Edinburgh Univ Pubs Science & Maths , No 3f . OCLC 500576943 .

Osman Hill , W. C. (1974) . *Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy VII ? Cynopithecinae (Cercopithecus , Macaca , Cynopithecus)* . Edinburgh Univ Pubs Science & Maths , No 3g . OCLC 613648477 .

Osman Hill , W. C. (1970) . *Primates Comparative Anatomy and Taxonomy VIII ? Cynopithecinae (Papio , Mandrillus , Theropithecus)* . Edinburgh Univ Pubs Science & Maths , No 3h . OCLC 500576950 .

The following is a list of other selected publications written by Osman Hill between 1926 and 1974 .

Osman Hill , W. C. ; Phillips , W. W. A. (1932) . " A new race of slender loris from the highlands of Ceylon " . *Ceylon Journal of Science* (B) 17 : 109 ? 122 .

Osman Hill , W. C. (1933) . " A monograph of the genus *Loris* , with an account of the external , cranial and dental characters of the genus : A revision of the known forms ; And the description of a new form from Northern Ceylon " . *Ceylon Journal of Science* (B) 18 : 89 ? 132 .

- Osman Hill , W. C. (1934) . " A monograph on the purple @-@ faced leaf @-@ monkeys (*Pithecus vetulus*) " . Ceylon Journal of Science (B) 19 : 23 ? 88 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1942) . " The slender loris of the Horton Plains , Ceylon . *Loris tardigradus nycticeboides* subsp , nov " . Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society 43 : 73 ? 78 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1942) . " The highland macaque of Ceylon " . Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society 43 : 402 ? 406 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1945) . " Notes on the Dissection of Two Dugongs " . Journal of Mammalogy 26 (2) : 153 ? 175 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 2307 / 1375092 . JSTOR 1375092 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. ; Rewell , R. E. (1948) . " The caecum of primates . ? Its appendages , mesenteries and blood supply " . The Transactions of the Zoological Society of London 26 : 199 ? 256 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 1111 / j.1096 @-@ 3642.1948.tb00223.x.
- Hill , W. C. O. (1952) . " The external and visceral anatomy of the Olive Colobus Monkey (*Procolobus verus*) " . Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London 122 : 127 ? 186 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 1111 / j.1469 @-@ 7998.1952.tb06315.x.
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1953) . " Note on the taxonomy of the genus *Tarsius* " . Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London 123 : 13 ? 16 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 1111 / j.1096 @-@ 3642.1953.tb00149.x.
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1953) . " Caudal cutaneous specializations in *Tarsius* " . Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London 123 : 17 ? 26 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 1111 / j.1096 @-@ 3642.1953.tb00150.x.
- Osman Hill , W. C. ; Davies , D. V. (1954) . " The reproductive organs in *Hapalemur* and *Lepilemur* " . Proceedings of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (B) 65 : 251 ? 270 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 1017 / s0080455x00014600 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. ; Davies , D. V. (1956) . " The heart and great vessels in the *Strepsirhini* " . Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh 63 (1) : 115 ? 127 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 1017 / s0080456800003033 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. ; Booth , A. H. (1957) . " Voice and larynx in African and Asiatic *Colobidae* " . Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society 54 : 309 ? 321 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1958) . " Pharynx , oesophagus , stomach , small and large intestine . Form and position " . In Hofer , H. ; Schultz , A. H. ; Starck , D. *Primatologia* 3 . Basel : Karger. pp. 139 ? 207 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1958) . " External genitalia " . In Hofer , H. ; Schultz , A. H. ; Starck , D. *Primatologia* 3 . Basel : Karger. pp. 630 ? 704 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1959) . " The Anatomy of *Callimico goeldii* (Thomas) : A Primitive American Primate " . Transactions of the American Philosophical Society . New Series 49 (5) : 1 ? 116 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 2307 / 1005807 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1972) . *Evolutionary Biology of Primates* . Academic Press. p . 233 . ISBN 978 @-@ 0 @-@ 12 @-@ 528750 @-@ 0 .
- Osman Hill , W. C. (1972) . " Taxonomic status of the Macaques *Macaca mulatta* Zimm. and *Macaca irus* Cuvier (= *M. fascicularis* Raffles) " . Journal of Human Evolution 1 (1) : 49 ? 72 @.@ doi : 10 @.@ 1016 / 0047 @-@ 2484 (72) 90041 @-@ 3 .

= = Cryptozoology studies = =

In 1945 , Osman Hill published an article entitled " Nittaevo ? An unsolved problem of Ceylon " , in which he speculated that a traditional Vedda story on Sri Lanka about savage dwarf @-@ like humanoids , called Nittaevo , might have referred to an isolated species of *Homo erectus* , then referred to as Java Man or *Pithecanthropus* . He went further to suggest that *Homo erectus* may also fit the description of the elusive and more well @-@ known cryptid called Orang Pendek from Sumatra . He supported his now @-@ defunct hypothesis by pointing out several shared similarities between the two islands , including comparable wildlife .

In the 1950s , he studied photographs of a relic from the Pangboche monastery in Nepal called the Pangboche Hand , which was claimed to be the hand of a Yeti , and decided that it belonged to an

unknown anthropoid . However , after the a few bones from the relic were smuggled out of Nepal and brought to him for examination , he concluded that the bones had belonged to a human . He reportedly changed his mind later and declared the bones belonged to a Neanderthal . In 1961 , Osman Hill published an article entitled " Abominable snowmen : The present position " . After examining the evidence available at the time , he and other researchers decided that although the Yeti might still exist , the evidence was not conclusive . In time , he lost interest in the matter due to a lack of new evidence .

Based on his studies of the results of a March 1960 expedition , Osman Hill concluded that " ufiti " , or Bili ape , was a remarkable chimpanzee . Citing older reports of chimpanzees from the dense forests of Malawi , he suggested that the Bili ape represented an undiscovered subspecies of chimpanzee , more similar to the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) , despite being located nearer the eastern chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii*) .

= = Legacy = =

Osman Hill is remembered as a " distinguished anatomist " , " eminent primatologist " , and the foremost authority on primate anatomy of his time . However , he did not consider himself a primatologist , but instead related best to old @-@ school anatomists and naturalists , who studied the entire biological world and considered their own observations and recordings as sufficient . To these ends , he used his curiosity and broad knowledge of natural history .

Osman Hill was remembered for his skill at dissection , and was noted for his ability to make quick , but accurate sketches of the anatomical features his scalpel revealed . He is also remembered for his work as a " painstaking investigator " , physician , and anthropologist . In his honour , two species have been named after him : Osman Hill 's mangabey (*Lophocebus osmani*) and the Colombo wolf snake (*Lycodon osmanhilli*) . The Primate Society of Great Britain named their Osman Hill Medal award after him . The award is given every two years for distinguished contributions to primatology .

He is responsible for describing one subspecies of black @-@ and @-@ white ruffed lemur (*Varecia variegata*) , the southern black @-@ and @-@ white ruffed lemur (*V. v. editorum*) in 1952 ; one subspecies of toque macaque (*Macaca sinica*) , the highland toque macaque (*M. s. opisthomelas*) in 1942 ; one subspecies of red slender loris (*Loris tardigradus*) , the Horton Plains slender loris (*L. t. nycticeboides*) in 1942 ; and two subspecies of grey slender loris (*Loris lydekkerianus*) , the highland slender loris (*L. l. grandis*) in 1932 and the dry zone slender loris (*L. l. nordicus*) in 1933 .

His extensive collection of biological primate specimens , which included tissues and skeletons , is preserved at the Royal College of Surgeons of England .

= = Personal life = =

Osman Hill married his wife , Yvonne Stranger , in 1947 . Yvonne , the only daughter of Harold Stranger KC , MP , was not only his devoted wife , but also a collaborator and illustrator of his works . The couple preferred a small , close @-@ knit circle of friends , and the dinners they hosted for their friends included the best wines and exotic dishes , such as python stew . Yvonne died close to a year after her husband .

Osman Hill was described in a memorial published in the International Journal of Primatology (1981) as being " short and rotund , with twinkling blue eyes , a quiet manner , and a strong sense of humor . " He was particularly remembered for his eagerness to help young researchers . In the Journal of Medical Primatology he was described as an " entertaining companion with a quick and ready wit . " In another memorial , published in the Journal of Anatomy in 1975 , he was described as friendly and tolerant , as well as " a merry man , vigorous , of humane culture , having the humour and good sense natural to those bred in the Provinces : a good Englishman . " He was known to value simple citizenship and academics , and held small regard for people who " aspired to monarchy . " At Yerkes in Atlanta , some staff members viewed him as " the archetypical English

scholar @-@ gentleman who viewed those from the ' colonies ' as a step below the British . "

In the British Who 's Who , Osman Hill named field ornithology , botany , photography , and travel as his recreations . Other casual interests included drugstore ice cream , good eating , old buildings , and gardening with his wife .