

DINOSAURS FROM OTHER PARTS OF BRITAIN

The sixth and final article in the series (thank god I hear you cry) deals with dinosaurs from other parts of Britain not yet dealt with. The areas so far covered are Kent, Sussex, The Isle of Wight, The Oxford area and Triassic dinosaurs. But fossils of dinosaurs have been found in many other places though, no where as abundantly, usually as odd finds.

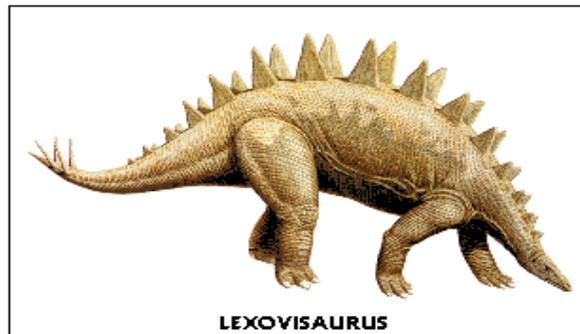
Along the Yorkshire coast between Scarborough and Whitby beds of Middle Jurassic 'Esturine' age can be found. These were laid down in lagoonal conditions and yield abundant plant remains. In addition many dinosaur footprints can be seen in the rocks, though to date, no actual bones have been found. In recent years researchers from Sheffield university have established that the footprints are so abundant that the area has been dubbed 'The Dinosaur Coast'.

At the other end of the country at Lyme Regis in Dorset a very important early dinosaur called *Scelidosaurus harrisoni* "Limb lizard" was first found in 1861. This is probably the oldest known armoured dinosaur. It was a low sturdy animal about 13ft long, with a long tail and a body protected by many bony studs and is thought to be ancestral to both the later Ankylosaurs and Stegosaurs.

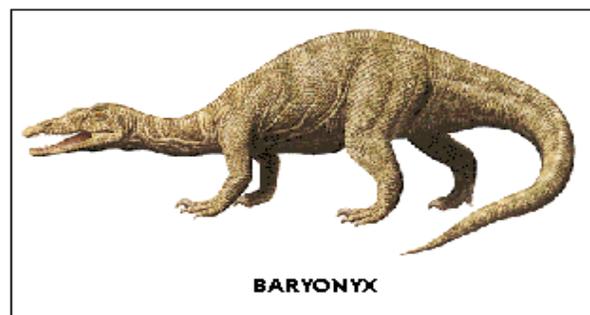
Further along the Dorset coast, and millions of years later timewise, many dinosaur footprints have been found in the rocks of the Isle of Purbeck. Like the Yorkshire coast this area has not yielded any actual bones but the quality of the footprints more than makes up for this. In the quarries at Worth Matravers complete trackways are often exposed while nearby in the early 1990's a Sauropod trackway (the only one known in Britain) was unearthed. This is still on view at 'Sunnydown Farm' as is the very famous trackway exposed in Worbarrow Bay.

In the Peterborough and Cambridge area many pits have been dug to extract clay. These pits are famous for the remains of Ichthyosaurs and Plesiosaurs but over the years a number of true dinosaur fossils have been unearthed. Remains of *Anatosaurus "Duck lizard"*, a common North American Hadrosaur, consisting of a tooth and some foot bones were found at Cambridge. *Callosaurus leedsii* "Callovian lizard" was a type of Camptosaur found in the Lower Oxford Clay of Northampton and Peterborough. *Cetiosauriscus stewarti* "Whale lizard" a Diplodocid sauropod about 49ft long, whose remains consisting of the pelvic girdle, hind limb, fore limb, caudal and some dorsal vertebrae have been collected from the Lower Oxford Clay at Peterborough. *Sarcolestes leedsii* meaning "flesh robber" was a small Nodosaurid Ankylosaur from the Lower Oxford Clay of Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire. This makes it the worlds oldest known Ankylosaur and *Lexovisaurus durobrivensis* meaning "Lexovii lizard". This was a Stegosaur whose remains have been found in

the Lower Oxford Clay of Peterborough. It is thought to be similar to the African *Kentrosaurus* and was around 17ft long.



The last area of note, which has over the years yielded fine dinosaur specimens is neighbouring Surrey. Here in the clay pits dug in the Weald Clay have been found many isolated bones and teeth of dinosaurs. In recent years many fieldtrips have been run to these pits by the G.A. to look for fossil insects and during these trips there is a real chance of finding dinosaur fossils. However you are unlikely to be as fortunate as Bill Walker who at Smokejacks brickworks in 1983 found the claw of a large dinosaur. The British Museum launched a full excavation resulting in the collection of the large majority of the skeleton, possibly the most complete Theropod yet discovered in Britain. This was later named *Baryonyx walkeri* meaning "Walkers heavy claw" and represented a type of dinosaur previously unknown, now called the Baryonychidae. It had a very long snout, like a crocodile, and very powerful forelimbs.



In this series of articles I have hopefully highlighted to you the importance of Britain as a source of dinosaurs. While America, Africa and Asia may have the most abundant remains it is often overlooked that some of the most important and historical specimens have been discovered here.

By Gary Woodall