

New dino-book highlights Britain's 'Three-rex'

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This is a scene reconstruction during the Early Cretaceous, represented by fossils found on the Isle of Wight, England. Credit: James McKay

Jurassic Britain was a "dinosaur paradise" with more than 100 different species – including three tyrannosaurs – described in the scientific literature to date, says the author of a new book, *Dinosaurs of the British Isles*.

But despite this diverse Dino-heritage, palaeontologist Dean Lomax, a visiting scientist at the University of Manchester's School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, claims the UK's rich reptilian past has been somewhat neglected by the popular media and literature... until now.

"The term Dinosauria, meaning 'terrible lizard', was conceived by the British palaeontologist Sir Richard Owen almost 200 years ago for fossils found in England," says 24-year-old Lomax. "Sadly, when most people are asked to name a dinosaur, the chances are they would give a foreign example, such as *Tyrannosaurus rex*, even though the British Isles was a veritable dinosaur paradise."

Many British dinosaur remains are known from fragmentary and isolated bones, though several complete to near-complete skeletons have also been discovered. They include stegosaurs, ankylosaurs, ornithopods, gigantic sauropods – one of which is possibly the largest dinosaur found in Europe – and the carnivorous theropods, including at least three different types of tyrannosaurs.



This is a life reconstruction of Juratyrant. Credit: Nobumichi Tamura

"The three British tyrannosaurs would have resembled their infamous cousin, T. rex, but were smaller – between three and five metres in length – possessed longer forelimbs, were more agile and, geologically speaking, a lot older," explained Lomax.

"Dinosaur remains in the British Isles are recorded from rocks within the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods, although the majority of UK dinosaur remains come from Middle Jurassic and Early Cretaceous rocks."

Most [dinosaurs](#) have been discovered in England – the majority around Oxfordshire and on the Isle of Wight – but some significant finds have also been made in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The first ever

dinosaur to be described was Megalosaurus, which was discovered in Oxfordshire and described in 1824.

Dinosaurs of the British Isles, co-authored by Physicist and talented artist Nobumichi Tamura, is more than 400 pages long and contains 800 plus images, including photographs of the actual fossils and scene reconstructions depicting how the animals may have appeared in life. There are also individual descriptions of each [dinosaur species](#) and details of the age and the discovery site where specimens were found.

The book is aimed at a broad audience but also those with an academic interest. There is a foreword by leading British dinosaur palaeontologist Dr Paul Barrett, of the Natural History Museum in London.

Lomax added: "I had long hoped for such a book. Growing up in Yorkshire I had always wanted to learn about the dinosaurs discovered here, yet all of the books I read, or programmes I watched on TV, made only passing comments to some of the remains discovered in the British Isles.

"The book covers every major dinosaur discovery in this country and lists all the locations where the remains have been found and are currently stored, including one-of-a-kind species.

"I hope the book, which has involved collaboration with more than 40 institutions worldwide, will inspire and encourage a new wave of future palaeontologists with a real passion for British dinosaurs."

Provided by University of Manchester

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