

Palaeontologists – fact files



National
Museums
Scotland

Use these fact files alongside the ‘Which palaeontologist are you?’ quiz.



Which palaeontologist did you get in the quiz? Find out more about them in the fact files below. You can draw the palaeontologist or one of their fossil finds in the box next to their name.



Name: Elsa Panciroli (present)

Comes from: The Scottish Highlands.

Wears: Waterproof hiking boots and lots of layers - for all kinds of weather.

Uses: Scanners which shoot X-rays through rock to reveal fossils.

Specialises in: Fossils found in Scotland. Particularly those which were not known to be in an area before or which are more complete than those found previously.

Top find: The first dinosaur bone to be discovered on the Isle of Eigg. It belonged to a stegosaur-like dinosaur, so Elsa nicknamed it *St Eiggosaurus*.

Will be remembered for: The bone is now in the collections of National Museums Scotland where Elsa works as an affiliate researcher.

nms.ac.uk/eiggstegosaur

Fab fact: In 2017 Elsa found the *St Eiggosaurus* leg bone by stepping on it while walking along a beach.



Name: Jenny Clack (1947-2020)

Came from: Manchester, England

Wore: Thick jackets, hats and scarves to keep out the freezing cold. Jenny did a lot of work in Greenland so warm clothes were essential.

Used: Field notebooks from a geology student, which contained valuable clues about the best places to search for fossils in Greenland.

Specialised in: Animals which evolved from fish into four-legged creatures called tetrapods.

Top find: *Acanthostega (acan-tho-stega)* – an animal which lived in water but had recognisable limbs.

Will be remembered for: Helping us to understand how some fish were able to come out of the water and evolve into land animals like lizards, dinosaurs and even us!

Fab fact: Jenny loved to sing choral music while working in the field.

Name: Dong Zhiming (b. 1937-present)

Comes from: Weihai, China.

Wears: Sturdy boots, cargo trousers, a shirt with pockets and a brimmed hat.

Uses: Dynamite to blast away the hard layers of rock surrounding the fossils.

Specialises in: Sauropods – the gigantic herbivores with the very long necks and tails.

Top finds: Two of his most spectacular finds are a 10 metre long *Shunosaurus* (**SHOON-oh-SAWR-us**) and a 15 metre long *Omeisaurus* (**oh-MAY-SAWR-us**)

Will be remembered for: Discovering more than 18 new dinosaurs.

Fab fact: Likes to come up with unusual names for his dinosaurs. For example, a new species discovered at a gas and oil company construction site, was named *Gasosaurus constructus* (**gas-oh-SAWR-us con-STRUCT-us**).

Name: Barnum Brown (1873-1963)

Came from: Kansas, USA.

Wore: Generally, hard-wearing trousers and shirt with a wide-brimmed hat. He has been known to wear a fur coat while working in Canada.

Used: Dynamite to remove heavy rock covering the fossils, plus a special pick, of his own design, to dig them out.

Specialised in: Fossils of all kinds, including, dinosaurs, other reptiles and early mammals.

Top find: The first ever remains of one of the most famous dinosaurs of all – *T. rex*!

Will be remembered for: The many specimens which he collected for the American Museum of Natural History and, of course, introducing the world to *T. rex*.

Fab fact: Barnum Brown was nicknamed 'Mr Bones' because of his great skill at fossil-hunting.

Name: Mary Anning (1799-1847)

Came from: Lyme Regis, a small town in the South of England.

Wore: A long dress with petticoats underneath.

Used: A fossil-extraction tool, made by her father out of wood and metal. This was used to tap open rocks which might contain fossils.

Specialised in: Jurassic period sea reptiles and molluscs, such as ammonites.

Top finds: When Mary was only 12 years old, she and her brother found the first complete skeleton of an *ichthyosaur* (**ik-THEE-uh-SAWR**). This was a marine reptile with large eyes and a long snout.

Will be remembered for: Being one of the earliest palaeontologists, whose discoveries taught people about some amazing prehistoric animals. She was almost certainly the first female palaeontologist too.

Fab fact: Mary was really interested in mysterious fossils which contained remains of animals, such as bones and scales. These strange stones turned out to be fossilised poos!

