



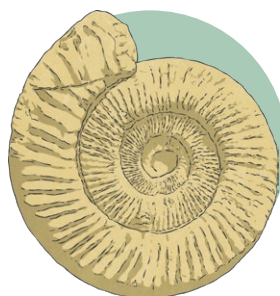
Mary Anning

Mary Anning was a famous fossil hunter. She was the first to discover many dinosaur fossils.



Early Life

Mary was born in 1799 in the seaside town of Lyme Regis, Dorset. Her father was a keen fossil hunter and he taught Mary how to look for fossils along the beach. They called these 'curiosities'. Mary was fascinated by these finds but she did not know exactly what they were. It was when she met fossil collector Elizabeth Philpot that she learnt that they were the remains of plants or animals that lived long ago.



Legacy

Mary died in 1847. Although she wasn't taken seriously as a scientist when she was alive, some of the fossils she found are now on show at the at the Natural History Museum in London. Her discoveries provided fossil evidence for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

Fascinating Fact

A statue of Mary was unveiled on what would have been her 223rd birthday to celebrate and recognise her work in the world of fossils.

Disclaimer: We hope you find the information on our website useful. Please be aware that aspects of an individual's life may be controversial to some. Due to this, we highly recommend that you carefully research the individual before teaching about them to children. If your children do independent research about an individual, we advise using only pre-selected, child appropriate sources of information and websites appropriate to their age.

Discoveries

Mary made her first important discovery at the age of 12. With her brother, she found a long creature which she called a 'fish lizard'. Scientists eventually discovered that this was an Ichthyosaurus, an ancient marine reptile.

In 1823, Mary discovered the first complete Plesiosaur skeleton. Five years later, she discovered the remains of a creature with a long tail and wings. This was later named a Pterodactyl.

She found many examples of coprolite (fossilised poo). This helped scientists to understand what dinosaurs ate.

Mary was not always credited for her work and the Royal Geological Society refused to admit her.

