



DINOSAUR ISLE - Isle of Wight

Dinosaur Isle is a modern purpose-built Museum and Visitor Attraction. Opened in August 2001 it displays fossils from the Isle of Wight that are currently held in trust by the local authority. The collection was first started about 1810 by the Isle of Wight Philosophical Society; over time the diverse collection was taken into the care of successive curators in Newport until 1913 when the fossil component was transferred to the Isle of Wight Museum of Geology, above the Carnegie Free Library at Sandown. After a successful bid to the Millennium Commission a much larger building was constructed and the collection moved a short distance down the road to its present location. The aim of the Museum is to be pre-eminent in the conservation, acquisition, display and interpretation of the Island's dinosaurs and diverse geological heritage.

USEFUL FACTS

Component: Heritage and Culture
Sector: Public
Funding: I.W. Council (Local Government)

Staffing: General Manager
Administrator (part-time)

Curatorial/ Education Team
Curator of Geology
Assistant Curator of Geology
Community Learning Officer
Preparator
Curatorial/ Education Assistant (part-time)
A number of volunteers

Front of house Team
Senior Retail Assistant (full time)
Retail Assistant (full-time summer, part-time winter)
3 Retail Assistants (part time)

Cleaning and grounds maintenance is contracted out.

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Dinosaur Isle is the first purposebuilt Dinosaur Museum in the UK. It holds many fossils that have appeared in scientific research papers (figured specimens), or are considered the master reference (type specimens). The Isle of Wight is one of the top ten sites in the world for finding dinosaur remains.

IMPACT ON LOCALITY

The museum is seen as a key link in the redevelopment and regeneration of Sandown as a tourist destination. The building is sited next to the existing main road, and has a regular bus and a local seasonal road-train service. Direction signage is co-located with other signs. With 80% of the Island's bed spaces split between Sandown and Shanklin there is ample accommodation in the area.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

MUSEUM GALLERIES AND LABORATORY

The exhibition is split into two main galleries dealing with the geological heritage of the Isle of Wight. The first deals with the Ice-Age back to the time of the dinosaurs. A second, much larger, hall hosts fossils, full size skeletal and fleshed replicas of dinosaurs as well as other animals and plants from the time of the dinosaurs. Displays are housed in traditional cases and on large reconstructed landscapes, with a number of interactive displays for the younger visitor. Within the second gallery is a working laboratory with viewing windows and an area to talk to experts.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

The Museum has a strong commitment to providing education to schools, special interest groups, families and the general public. A programme of talks, fossil handling sessions, and field trips, led by qualified staff, are provided to visiting schools. A dedicated Education Room is available for talks and other activities. Specific activities can be provided to support the National Curriculum. Teachers' packs are available for schools. Family field trips are provided during school holidays. Adult education, in the form of field trips, occurs throughout the year. Seminars and workshops are also provided, sometimes in partnership with special interest groups.

IDENTIFICATION SERVICE

An identification service is provided free of charge.

SPECIAL EVENTS and EXHIBITIONS

A number of special events and exhibitions are held throughout the year. In 2005 the summer exhibition will be based on the centenary of the naming of *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

COLLECTION

Over 30,000 objects are held by Dinosaur Isle Museum, many of which are on permanent display. Others are held in a remote secure building. Objects are maintained in environmentally controlled conditions. The collection can be accessed by prior arrangement.

SCIENTIFIC VALUE

A broad range of specimen fossils, representing a diverse range of palaeo-environments, from the early to late Cretaceous, Eocene, Oligocene and Quaternary are on display. More specimens are housed in a remote store. Dinosaur Isle has a number of type specimens including those of the early-Cretaceous carnivorous dinosaurs *Neovenator salerii* and *Eotyrannus lengi*; and the type specimen for the herbivorous *Yaverlandia bitholus*. Also displayed is a large cervical (neck) vertebra from a sauropod dinosaur; this vertebra has come from a brachiosaurid estimated at 23 metres in length and the largest dinosaur discovered to date in the UK. At the opposite end of the scale the Museum displays the paratype for the late Eocene water spider *Vectaraneous yulei* and houses the earliest known species of spider preserved in amber, *Cretamygale chasei*. A computerised database is maintained for the core collection. Staff carry out research, and publish results in a variety of scientific journals.

SHOP

The large gift shop sells dinosaur related toys, books, videos, DVDs and souvenirs. Selected items are listed on the website; these, and others, can be ordered via email.

ACCESS

There is access throughout for wheelchairs and a lift to the first floor.

REFRESHMENTS

No catering is available on site, however food is available at Browns Café next to the Museum.

TOILETS

Toilets are available on site, accessible to wheelchair users.

CAR-PARKING

Parking is shared with the neighbouring attraction Brown's, and is also used by beach users. There are approximately 300 spaces available for cars and room for 4 coaches. Car-parking charges are in force, from April 1st to October 31st, seven days a week, with £2.50 redeemable against admission on production of the voucher provided.

ADMISSION

Adults £4.60, Concessions/Students £3.50, Children £2.60, School parties £2.20 (For every 10 paying children one adult comes in free), Families £12.00, other rates for field trips.

Combined tickets are available from the ferry operators Wightlink and Red Funnel. Discounted admission is available on a number of promotions.

LOCATION

On the seafront at Culver Parade, Sandown. Between the former Canoe Lake, Brown's Golf Course and Sandown Zoo. One mile from Sandown Railway Station. OS Grid Reference SZ607848

REASONS FOR LOCATION

The museum is close to the dinosaur beds of Yaverland, in a prime tourist development within the major tourist area of the Island. The Museum was built on a vacant plot of land owned by the I.W. Council.

HOW TO GET THERE

Road:

A3055 from Ryde, A3056 from Newport, A3020 Cowes to Newport, A3054 Yarmouth to Newport.

Bus:

Various Southern Vectis buses travel to Sandown, in the summer there is an open top bus running from Shanklin. Wave Bus 104 links the Museum with Sandown Railway station.

Train:

Stagecoach, Ryde to Shanklin, alight at Sandown

Car Ferry:

Wightlink; Lymington to Yarmouth, Portsmouth to Fishbourne.

Red Funnel; Southampton to Cowes.

VISITOR FIGURES

In the first year after opening we welcomed 112,696 visitors. The breakdown so far is;

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
January		1,035	784	612	
February		3,460	2,773	2,164	
March		5,417	2,132	1,959	
April		6,339	6,762	6,682	
May		7,692	7,967	6,066	
June		11,471	7,387	7,514	
July		13,670	11,188	8,830	
August	35,159	20,476	16,970	17,300	
September	10,991	5,331	4,320	3,790	
October	10,638	5,605	4,676	5,902	
November	3,277	2,540	2,918	1,978	
December	3,547	2,673	1,162	1,342	
total	63,612	85,709	69,039	64,139	

The Museum closes for one week in January for maintenance.

VISITOR TYPES

The general public

Families

Educational student groups

Palaeontologists and collectors

Special interest groups

Visitors with special needs and disabilities

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Attraction Leaflet. Website www.dinosaurisle.com. Advertisements supporting I.W. features in holiday magazines. Stand partners at major shows throughout the UK and regional 'Days Out Fairs' with I.W. Tourism and other tourism operators. Own stand at local shows on the I.W. News coverage, in local, national and international press and TV, Local promotional events.

MEMBERSHIPS

Isle of Wight Tourism
I.W. Visitor Attraction Association
I.W. Places of interest and leisure activities
Southern Tourist Board

CAPITAL FUNDING

Phase 1 - £2.7 million supported by the Millennium Commission, the Isle of Wight Council and Wightlink.

REVENUE FUNDING

Developed by the local authority the museum charges admission and is expected to be self-financing.

THE WORK OF THE MUSEUM SERVICE

Dinosaur Isle is one of four council museums within the Museums Service, under the direction of the Museums Officer. The role of the Museum Service is to provide the highest standards of care, acquisition, display and interpretation of the Island's material and cultural heritage for the present and future generations. The Museums Service has interests in a number of other museums and heritage centres on the Island.

CONTACT DETAILS

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