

## 50 Fossilised Footprints Found on Isle of Skye

### What are fossils?

- Fossils are objects which have been preserved, usually in rock.
- They give us evidence of prehistoric animals, such as the dinosaurs.

Scientists have made an incredible discovery on the Isle of Skye: they've found 50 dinosaur footprints!

A storm hit the island, off the coast of Scotland, in 2017. The winds moved some boulders. This led to [palaeontologists](#) spotting the dinosaur footprints and other fossils.

The team found them at a place called Brothers' Point. The fossils had been hidden for many years. They had also found fossils there in 2015. Edinburgh University scientists think some of the recently uncovered prints belonged to stegosaurus.

The stegosaurus was a [herbivore](#). It had two rows of bony plates running down its back.

The word 'stegosaurus' means 'roof lizard' in ancient Greek. They were huge creatures that could grow up to a whopping nine metres long.

These dinosaurs could weigh a gigantic six tonnes. The largest footprint they found was 70cm wide.

The team also found the footprints of three-toed creatures. The team think the dinosaurs which made these imprints must have walked on their hind legs. The scientists think [carnivores](#) called theropods made the prints.

Dr Steve Brusatte said the fossils will help scientists learn more about "the dinosaurs that lived in Scotland 170 million years ago."

Scientists are particularly excited about the fossils. This is because they come from a period

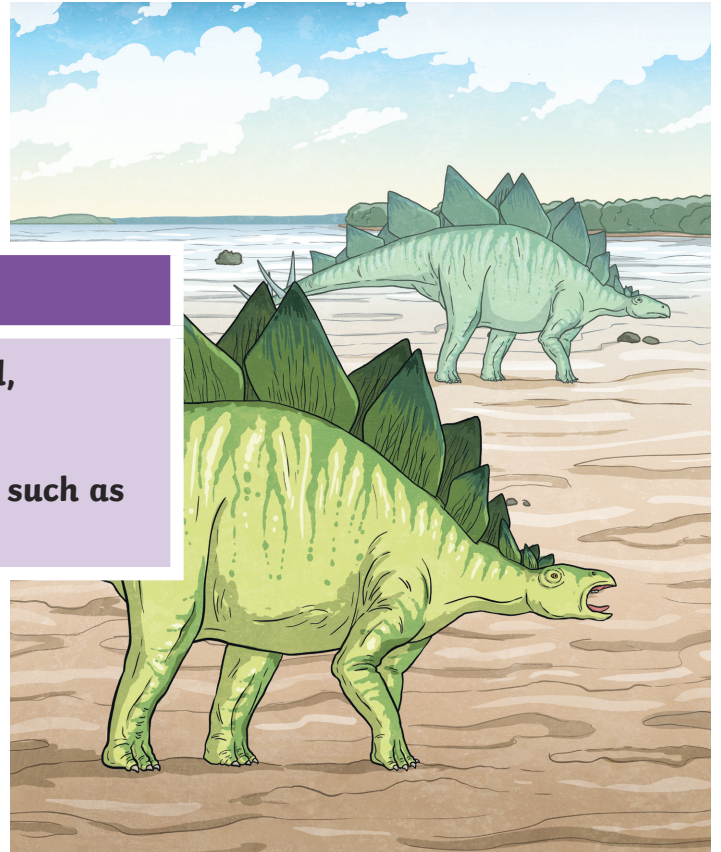


Illustration: A stegosaurus.

called the Middle Jurassic. The Middle Jurassic time occurred 174-164 million years ago. It was an important period in the [evolution](#) of lots of different dinosaurs. Fossils from this period are very rare. This makes the Isle of Skye one of the best spots in the world to study this period.

During the Jurassic period, huge dinosaurs roamed across the Earth. The diplodocus was a dinosaur that lived in this era. It could grow up to 27 metres long!

### Glossary

<b>palaeontologist</b>	Scientists who study fossils
<b>herbivore</b>	An animal that feeds on plants.
<b>carnivore</b>	An animal that feeds on other animals.
<b>evolution</b>	Changes that occur in animals over many years.

# Questions

1. 'They were huge creatures that could grow up to a whopping nine metres long.'  
Tick the word that is closest to 'whopping'.

- nice
- enormous
- many
- large

2. Put a number in the box to show the order the events happened in the story. The first one has been done for you.

- Scientists first found fossils on the Isle of Skye.
- 1 Dinosaurs roamed the Isle of Skye.
- The stegosaurus footprints were identified.
- A storm hit the Isle of Skye.

3. 'They could help them to find out more about "the dinosaurs that lived in Scotland 170 million years ago."'

This suggests that...

- currently, there is little evidence and they want to find more.
- currently, there is no evidence and they want to find more.
- scientists are only interested in dinosaurs from the Middle Jurassic.
- no dinosaurs lived in Scotland before 170 million years ago.

4. Why do you think stegosauruses are called roof lizards in Greek?

---



---

5. How do you think the scientists felt when they made the discovery?

---



---

6. Write a summary of the story in 20 words or fewer.

---



---

# Answers

- 'They were huge creatures that could grow up to a whopping nine metres long.'  
Tick the word that is closest to 'whopping'.
  - nice
  - enormous**
  - many
  - large
- Put a number in the box to show the order the events happened in the story. The first one has been done for you.
  - Scientists first found fossils on the Isle of Skye.
  - Dinosaurs roamed the Isle of Skye.
  - The stegosaurus footprints were identified.
  - A storm hit the Isle of Skye.
- They could help them to find out more about "the dinosaurs that lived in Scotland 170 million years ago."  
This suggests that...
  - currently, there is little evidence and they want to find more.**
  - currently, there is no evidence and they want to find more.
  - scientists are only interested in dinosaurs from the middle Jurassic.
  - no dinosaurs lived in Scotland before 170 million years ago.
- Why do you think stegosauruses are called roof lizards in Greek?  
**Accept any reasonable answer that refers to the story, e.g. The plates on the back of the stegosaurus would have made it look a little like a roof and a dinosaur is a big lizard**
- How do you think the scientists felt when they made the discovery?  
**Accept any answer that refers to the story, e.g. I think they were really excited because it's the first time that people have found stegosaurus footprints on the Isle of Skye.**
- Summarise the story in 20 words or fewer.  
**Accept any reasonable answer that refers to the story, e.g. Scientists have discovered 50 new, rare fossils after a storm. They come from the Middle Jurassic period.**