



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Scientists Study Complete Dinosaur Skeleton

September 06, 2020

The first complete **dinosaur** skeleton was found in southern England in 1858. The bones belonged to a creature called Scelidosaurus.

The early British paleontologist Richard Owen incompletely described its body in papers that were published in 1861 and 1863. But for years, scientists did not pay much attention to Scelidosaurus.

That has now changed. Scientists have recently finished several careful studies of the dinosaur's remains.

The findings suggest the creature had an unusual build.

University of Cambridge paleontologist David Norman recently published his fourth study on the Scelidosaurus. It appeared in the Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society of London.

Norman wrote that "this animal was discovered at a **crucial** time in the history of dinosaur research." He added that until the discovery, "dinosaurs had only been known from **scraps** of bone and some teeth."

Scelidosaurus lived about 193 million years ago. It was an early member of the **evolutionary** family that led to the dinosaur group called ankylosaurs. Ankylosaurs were armored dinosaurs. Their bodies were so strong that they are sometimes called the tank dinosaurs.

Scelidosaurus was about 4-meters-long. It had four legs and ate plants. It was covered in bony plates with hard, pointy spikes.

The one that died near what is now West Dorset, England was probably the victim of a flood. It probably drowned in the sea, with its body becoming buried in sand and dirt.

“It has lain in the collection of the Natural History Museum in London - researchers knew of it by name but it was not at all well understood,” Norman said.

I’m John Russell.

Will Dunham reported on this story for Reuters news agency. John Russell adapted it for VOA Learning English. George Grow was the editor.

Words in This Story

dinosaur – *n.* one of many creatures that lived on Earth millions of years ago

crucial – *adj.* extremely important

scrap – *n.* a small piece of something that is left after you have used the main part; a very small amount

evolutionary – *adj.* relating to the process by which organisms are believed to have developed from earlier forms

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