



From *Jurassic Park* to Real Life: Palaeontology Connections

*Venture into the Lost World...One Minute
at a Time*



Your source for prehistoric knowledge!

A warm welcome to *The Palaeo Minute*!

From Fiction to Fossils: Mentorship in Motion: In this ninth edition I reflect on the mentors and collaborators that have shaped my path in palaeontology from research supervisors to consultants and creators behind the *Jurassic Park* films. Their guidance and creativity have played a defining role in my journey through both science and storytelling.

This **edition** explores:

- **Collaborating with Palaeontologists:** Reflections on research & mentorship.
- ***Jurassic Park's* Enduring Impact on Palaeontology:** My encounters with *Jurassic Park* & *Jurassic World* cast & crew.
- **From Fiction to Fossils:** How *Jurassic World's* scientific evolution has shaped public understanding of palaeontology.

Did you know?

That the [Jurassic Foundation](#) was founded in 1998 by Universal Pictures and Amblin Entertainment. A non-profit organisation dedicated to dinosaur research and fieldwork around the world.

Advancing Palaeontological Research Through Collaboration

I have had the privilege of working with esteemed palaeontologists throughout my career, particularly during my MSc in Palaeobiology at the University of Bristol. My thesis project was supervised by Professor Mike Benton, Professor Emily Rayfield, and Dr. James Logan King, whose expertise shaped my research approach.

Learning from leading palaeontologists reinforced the importance of mentorship, constructive feedback, and interdisciplinary collaboration in research. My **Vallis Vale project**, conducted before my MSc, required collaboration with Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, incorporating their collections into the final paper.



Research on display: Presenting my Vallis Vale project research with Professor Mike Benton at Mendip Rocks! at the Somerset Earth Science Centre in 2019.
Image credit: [Somerset Earth Science Centre](#), 2019.

My MSc thesis project focused on hadrosaur jaw development across the Late Cretaceous. The MSc programme provided a solid foundation in palaeobiology, significantly enhancing my knowledge and passion for the subject. The lessons learned during my internship fed into my MSc work, which subsequently influenced my written contributions in palaeontology.

Having distinguished mentors I could email for advice has been invaluable. In addition to collaborating with scientists in the field of palaeontology, I have had the unique experience of meeting individuals involved in the *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic World* films.

***Jurassic Park's* Influence on Palaeontology**

Since its release in 1993, *Jurassic Park* has inspired countless individuals to pursue careers in palaeontology, media, and science communication. Beyond entertainment, its cultural influence has increased museum visits and public engagement in fieldwork.

[Jurassic Park | Welcome to Jurassic Park In 4K HDR](#)

Explore the iconic scene where Alan Grant and Ellie Sattler see the *Brachiosaurus* for the first time in *Jurassic Park* in the video link above.



Fossils and film: Laura Dern as Dr. Ellie Sattler and Sam Neill as Dr. Alan Grant in a movie still from *Jurassic Park*. Image credit: [Jurassic Vault](#), 2024.

The film holds substantial cultural significance within both pop culture and cinema, often regarded as the best film in the *Jurassic Park/Jurassic World* franchise. In 2019, I had the opportunity to meet Sam Neill, who portrayed Dr. Alan Grant, at a Comic Convention in Wales. His iconic portrayal of Alan Grant was a major influence on my decision to pursue palaeontology. Meeting Sam was a surreal experience, reinforcing the connection between science and storytelling.



A Jurassic meeting: With *Jurassic Park* actor Sam Neill at Wales Comic Con in 2019.

The character of Dr. Alan Grant has always struck a chord with me ever since reading the characters journey in the original *Jurassic Park* novel by Michael Crichton. Sam Neill's on screen performance although slightly different

from the novel, made Dr. Alan Grant an integral and dynamic character just like in the original book.

Three decades on, the stars of *Jurassic Park* relive the magic. Explore in the video link below.

[Jurassic Park 30th Anniversary Special: Defining Moments](#)

Inside Palaeontology: Mentorship, Consulting, and Scientific Insights

Meeting Professor Steve Brusatte

In addition to research collaborations and meeting actors, I have had the opportunity to engage with pioneers in the palaeontological field.

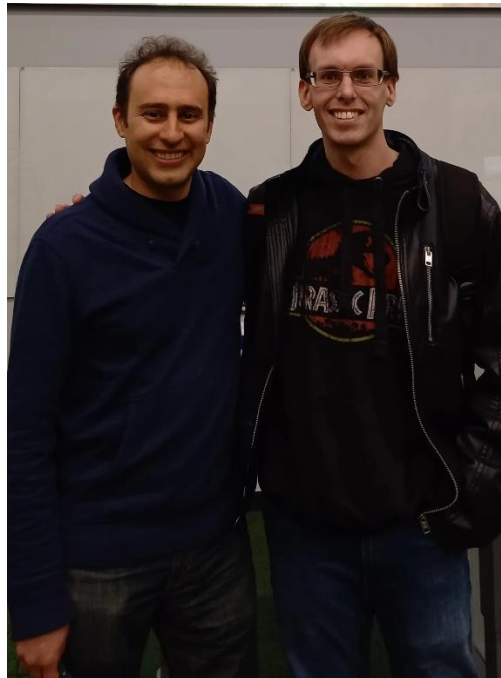
Meeting Professor Steve Brusatte in 2022, palaeo consultant for *Jurassic World: Dominion*, deepened my understanding of how scientific accuracy is integrated into cinematic depictions of dinosaurs. His lecture not only covered his fossil work from Scotland and beyond, but also explored the process of bringing that science into Hollywood, as seen in his Jurassic consulting work.



The Rise and fall: Professor Steve Brusatte gives his lecture on the Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs at Cardiff University in 2022.

His presentation on the Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs was exceptional, providing a comprehensive summary of the fossil discoveries he had been

involved in, both in Scotland and elsewhere, alongside information about his new book publication.



Dinosaur discussions: With Professor Steve Brusatte at his Rise and Fall of the Dinosaurs talk at Cardiff University, April 5th, 2022.

As a fellow Bristol MSc alumni, Steve's insights into palaeontology and science communication were invaluable. His role as a palaeontological consultant for *Jurassic World: Dominion* and *Jurassic World: Rebirth* has helped bring dinosaur depictions closer to scientific accuracy. In 2025, Steve kindly took part in an interview with me exploring [palaeontology and Jurassic World](#). It was fascinating to learn more about his connection to the Jurassic franchise and the role it has played in shaping modern science communication.

Meeting Jack Horner

In 2024, an unexpected encounter in Montana gave me the chance to speak with Jack Horner. As a child, I watched all of his behind-the-scenes interviews for the *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic World* films, where he served as palaeontological consultant. Jack's expertise significantly influenced the design and behaviour of the creatures seen across the *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic World* films.



A rare meeting in the field: Meeting palaeontologist Jack Horner on the 9th June 2024 in Montana.

Jack Horner talks about fieldwork in Montana in this behind-the-scenes interview for *Jurassic Park 3* (2001) in the video link below.

[Jurassic Park 3: Montana - Dr. Jack Horner](#)

From Fiction to Fossils: *Jurassic World's* Scientific Evolution

The *Jurassic World* films have progressively embraced more accurate palaeontological concepts, thanks to consulting experts like Jack Horner and Steve Brusatte. Jack Horner talks about the palaeontology of the dinosaurs in *Jurassic World* (2015) and the palaeontological depiction of the *Indominus Rex* in the video link below.

[Jurassic World - Featurette: "Jack Horner on *Jurassic World*"](#)

Steve has helped to provide advice on a number of dinosaur features, including dinosaur sizes, behaviour and of course, feathers. While *Jurassic World: Dominion* made headlines for debuting fully feathered dinosaurs, the decision was more than aesthetic, reflecting decades of research into dromaeosaurid integument. Feather impressions from sites like Liaoning in

China have radically reshaped our understanding of these animals, confirming their evolutionary ties to modern birds.

Why this Matters

These palaeontological developments have pushed the latest science into the cinematic spotlight, grounding dinosaur anatomies in real fossil data and showing how palaeontology advances through debate, evidence, and reinterpretation.

Professor Steve Brusatte talks about his palaeontological consulting work on the 2022 Jurassic film *Jurassic World: Dominion* in the video link below.

[Dr. Steve Brusatte's talk "My Travels in Jurassic World"](#)

The Intersection of Science & Storytelling

Whether consulting for filmmakers or publishing peer-reviewed work, these insights continue to ripple through both science and storytelling. Understanding the cinematic representation of prehistoric life remains crucial in science communication. Engaging with directors, screenwriters, and palaeontological advisors have provided fascinating insights into how scientific discoveries have shaped and continue to shape pop culture narratives.

From ground-breaking research collaborations to the cinematic influence of *Jurassic Park* and *Jurassic World*, palaeontology continues to shape our understanding of natural history. The dedication of palaeontologists, educators, and science communicators ensures that fossil discoveries remain relevant and accessible, bridging the gap between scientific inquiry and public fascination.

I hope this edition has provided valuable insights into palaeontology's impact on both scientific research and popular culture. Make sure to check out the palaeontology fact of the month below and social media channels.

Palaeontology Fact of the Month



A juvenile *Maiasaura* specimen on display at the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois. Image credit: [Field Museum](#), 2020.

This fossilized skeleton of *Maiasaurua*, recovered in Montana, is 78 million years old from the Late Cretaceous. *Maiasaura* is a saurolophine hadrosaur, and its name means "Good mother reptile." The dinosaur is the state fossil of Montana and was described in 1979 by palaeontologists Jack Horner and Robert Makela. Multiple fossilized nesting sites of *Maiasaura* with post-nestling juveniles have been found within the Two Medicine Formation, showing that *Maiasaura* parents cared for their young for an extended period.

Thanks for venturing into the Mesozoic with me—see you next edition!



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