

Make your own...

DINOSAUR FOOTPRINTS

What happens when you step in mud? You make a footprint. When dinosaurs roamed Dorset they made dino-sized footprints, too. Some of these footprints were fossilised. These dino tracks are 'trace' fossils because they were made by the activity - walking around - of the dinosaurs. Scattered across the rock surface of Keate's Quarry in Purbeck are over 100 fossilised dinosaur tracks. They were left by giant plant eaters called sauropods that walked beside a shallow freshwater lagoon 145 million years ago.

Back then the landscape would have been very different. Dorset was covered by coastal forests, swamps, lagoons, and salt flats. In the sticky tropical heat dinosaurs, pterosaurs and primitive

crocodiles lived side by side. Over time layers of rock were laid down in those environments, trapping and burring the remains and traces of ancient life.

The tracks at Keate's Quarry were probably left by Brachiosaurus sauropods, which could grow to around 26m long and weigh between 40 and 50 tonnes. There were many different types of sauropod dinosaur, and as a group they included the largest animals that have ever walked the Earth.

You can have a go at making your own version of a trace fossil using your dinosaurs, ammonites, leaves or ferns. Flatten playdough on your table and press the object in. Which leaves the best imprint? You can leave to air dry or reuse your playdough!



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