Henry De la Beche and Mary Anning became friends as teenagers following his move to Lyme Regis. They went fossil-hunting together and kept in touch as he became one of Britain’s leading geologists. With amazing inspiration De la Beche painted a watercolour ‘Duria Antiquior’ (meaning ‘A More Ancient Dorset’) in 1830.

It was the first picture to reconstruct Jurassic Life of Dorset and was based on the evidence from fossils found by Mary Anning. This painting opened people’s imagination to new visions, thoughts, and beliefs and showed a battle for survival.

The creatures it illustrates were all discovered by Mary, and include an ichthyosaur, plesiosaur, pterosaur, belemnite, ammonite and crinoid. Prints of the original painting were sold to raise much needed funds for Mary. This art form is now known as ‘palaeoart’ which is any original artistic work that attempts to depict prehistoric life according to scientific evidence. Could you paint or draw anything as amazing as this?