

Transcript

[Darwin & Dinosaurs: Mary Anning... Fossil hunter extraordinaire](#)

Angus Carroll: One of the most remarkable people in the history of paleontology is Mary Anning. We have a special display on her, because her position in the discovery of prehistoric monsters is just without equal. She was born in 1799 in the small town called Lyme Regis on the south coast of England, in Dorset. When she was only 12-years-old she and her brother found the first ichthyosaur. She didn't get credit for it; however, because back then women weren't allowed to be members of scientific societies.

But she would send her finds to leading scientists, and they would write them up. And she often complained that they would add a little, and then when she read the paper that they published on it she would write to her friends. They added, they exaggerated a little bit in exactly what was found.

She was very meticulous, very scientific, and very precise. Her family was very poor. They were actually collecting fossils, because they were trying to sell them to get food. She would collect fossils along the seashore, near Lyme Regis, and she had a little stand in town where she would put the fossils out, and people would buy them. In fact, Mary Anning is the person that is the inspiration for the rhyme, "She sells sea shells by the seashore."

She lived in poverty her whole life, her father died early. She and her mother could not make ends meet. Several times the scientists, although they didn't give her credit in the scientific journals when they published her work, they often came to her aid. William Buckland went to the government and said, "You need to give Mary Anning a pension, because she has contributed more to the discovery of these animals than anyone else." And the government did, they gave her a pension.

In addition to the Ichthyosaur, which she and her brother found the first one, she has a number of firsts. She found the first plesiosaur, which is a long-necked marine animal. She also found the first pterosaur ever found in England, it's called the *Dimorphodon macronyx*. She was first to discover the plesiosaur, first to discover the ichthyosaur. She was a ground breaking, highly productive paleontologist, and one of the great early female scientists of all time.

Maria Hane: Well hopefully exhibits like this one inspire people to dive deeper into very specific subject areas like Mary Anning. We often hear feedback from some of our visitors like that, that they would have never known to want to investigate something deeper like a woman, a female scientist. Although self-taught, a female scientist that really changed the trajectory of that field, and dived deeper into it. Otherwise, if it wasn't for exhibits like this, many of the public, the general public, wouldn't have access to that and be able to dive deeper in their interests of them there.

Calypsa and She sells seashells by the seashore.
Marina McCarthy: The shells she sells are seashells, I'm sure.
So if she sells seashells on the seashore.
Then I'm sure she sells seashore shells.