

Crystal Palace Dinosaurs

Contained on a series of islands in our local park lurks a set of thirty prehistoric 'monsters', created by Victorian scientists to open the hearts and minds of the public to the astonishing lost worlds then being discovered in fossils. Recently, the Friends of Crystal Palace Dinosaurs crowdfunded to build a secure, lockable bridge to allow guided access onto the main set of



islands; this is where the true Jurassic dinosaurs and marine reptiles from deeper geologic time can be encountered. You will be able to book a tour to walk alongside the sculptures and learn all about them once the bridge is completed. Since work was done on the weir and the original bridge removed, these tours have only been available once a year. Tours will still be restricted to those making a booking, but will be more regular and can be offered for groups such as schools. Another benefit is that conservators will be



able to access the sculptures to help them survive effects of severe weather and other problems that come with being 165 years old. Lately, this has not been possible due to the limited access given with the temporary bridge, and the Friends hope that with demonstrable access to the islands, they can make serious applications for the type of funding needed to maintain the crumbling sculptures properly.

Palaeontological history was made on this site in 1854 and with loving attention the Dinosaurs can continue to delight generations of children and adults for many years to come. Alongside the DinoBridge project, the Friends have also been creating a new landscape on the island with their Palaeo Planting Project. Lots of volunteers have been helping to clear the island of overgrowth, and to establish plants that help tell the story of change through geological time. A new bridge will create the opportunity for proper maintenance of this gardening project, and careful conservation of the island's environment for wildlife. Children and adults will be able to access the tours to learn about the historical development of scientific knowledge, in the ever-exciting context of dinosaurs! Experiences to remember and cherish, and a local attraction that is truly loved and cared for, will enhance the area for its local residents.

Sarah Slaughter Trustee Friends of Crystal Palace Dinosaurs