

Flying Reptiles and Dinosaur Poo found in 'Cambridge Greensand'

Back in the mid 19th Century coprolite mining took place on Coldham's Common, it was discovered that flying reptiles used to live around Coldham's Common millions of years ago! The coprolite itself is fossilised faeces which, when ground up, can be mixed with acid or water to make fertiliser. The fertiliser was discovered when a brick kiln using local clay exploded!

The fossils of flying reptile and dinosaur poo were found in the 'Cambridge Greensand' and date from about 110 million years ago. The fossils that were found were mostly from Pterosaurs (Greek for flying lizard); fish-eating reptiles, including the *Ornithocherius* species and also Ichthyosaurs (Greek for fish lizard); large marine reptiles, fish specimens and a variety of poorly preserved dinosaurs.

The remains from the *Ornithocherius* showed them to have a wing span of approximately 2.5 meters (8.2 ft.), an unusual curved snout and straight jaw that narrowed towards the tip. It had fewer teeth than other related species and its teeth were mainly vertical rather than pointing outwards.

Although many people would generally categorise all these species as dinosaurs, Ptersaurs and Ichthyosaurs are not actually dinosaurs as technically they do not have the correct attributes to fit into this category of pre-historic animal. They did however exist at the same time as dinosaurs and they would all have been living in this same area of Cambridge Greensands, where Coldham's Common is now!

You can see these remains at the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences:
www.sedgwickmuseum.org

Ornithocherius



Examples of coprolite (faeces showing lots of fish bones)

