

Welcome

Name: Richard Luke Fallon

Institutions: University of Leicester and Natural History Museum, London

Thesis Title: Reshaping Dinosaurs: The Popularisation of Extinct Animals in Anglo-American Culture 1877–1921

PhD Areas: Victorian Studies, English Literature, History of Science

Supervisors: Professor Gowan Dawson (University of Leicester) and Dr Will Tattersdill (University of Birmingham)

Advisor: Professor Paul Barrett (Natural History Museum, London)

Other Affiliations: Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Associate Project Member of Constructing Scientific Communities: Citizen Science in the 19th and 21st Centuries



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Thesis Description

This thesis investigates how extensive discoveries of dinosaur fossils in the late nineteenth century, primarily in the United States, were perceived and represented in British culture at various levels. It is a study of the following materials:

- **Scientific periodicals.** Key texts: *Geological Magazine* (est. 1864) and *Nature* (est. 1869).
- **Popular fiction magazines.** Key texts: *The Strand Magazine* (est. 1891) and *Pearson's Magazine* (est. 1896).
- **Popular science books.** Key texts: Henry Neville Hutchinson's *Extinct Monsters* (1892) and Henry R. Knipe's *Evolution in the Past* (1912)
- **Novels.** Key texts: Frank Savile's *Beyond the Great South Wall* (1899) and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1912).
- **Museum archives, correspondence, and exhibition material.** Key institution: the Natural History Museum, London (opened 1881).

The history of palaeontology in Britain and the United States during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth-century has seen considerable contextualisation. Most recently, innovative studies reveal that cultural developments like Romanticism, the form of the novel, and vogues for visual spectacle were sewn into the practices and writings of the earth sciences from their very birth. Turning to the end of the nineteenth century, historians of science have documented in detail the fierce disputes over bounteous fossil discoveries made in the American West, and the groundbreaking visual strategies of display developed in exhibitions at American museums.

H. N. Hutchinson, *Extinct Monsters* (1892), Plate VI

Despite this fruitful research, the study of British popular culture has not been extended to meet the American discoveries made late in the century, and systematic works on the entry of new, strange American dinosaurs into this popular culture are scarce. Although Britain was no longer the centre of dinosaur palaeontology, as it has been until the 1860s, it continued to produce major literary works in both fiction and non-fiction that were influential in the United States as well. This thesis provides the bridge between studies focusing on British culture earlier in the nineteenth century and those examining the United States at the century's end. In doing so, it reveals a vibrant transatlantic culture in which the interdependence of scientific writing, museum display, and literary production more strongly associated with the early nineteenth century evolved to fuel the mass entertainments of the early twentieth. In the literature of the time, the dinosaur—a creature living between imagination and reality—became a site upon which the relations between science and wider literary culture were renegotiated.

My primary supervisor, Professor Gowan Dawson, has published *Show Me the Bone: Reconstructing Prehistoric Monsters in Nineteenth-Century Britain and America* (2016), an in-depth study of the cultural life of the mythologised idea that nineteenth-century palaeontologists could reassemble an entire extinct animal from a single bone. My secondary supervisor, Dr Will Tattersdill of the University of Birmingham, is working on a social history of dinosaurs from the nineteenth century to the present day. I also belong to the PhD cohort at the Natural History Museum, London (NHM), home of great quantities of relevant archival materials and palaeontological expertise. At the NHM, Professor Paul Barrett, Head of Vertebrates and Anthropology Palaeobiology Research, acts as an advisor to the thesis.

Journal Articles and Reviews

"Literature Rather Than Science": Henry Neville Hutchinson (1856–1927) and the Literary Borderlines of Science Writing', *Journal of Literature and Science*, 11 (2018), 50–65

Review of *Articulating Dinosaurs: A Political Anthropology*, by Brian Noble, *Museum and Society*, 15 (2017), 264–66

Online Reviews

Review of *Discovering the Footsteps of Time: Geological Travel Writing about Scotland, 1700–1820*, by Tom Furniss, *The British Society for Literature and Science* online (2018) <<https://www.bsls.ac.uk/reviews/early-modern-and-enlightenment/tom-furniss-discovering-the-footsteps-of-time-geological-travel-writing-about-scotland-1700-1820/>>

Review of *The Alice Books and the Contested Ground of the Natural World*, by Laura White, *The British Society for Literature and Science* online (2017) <<http://www.bsls.ac.uk/reviews/romantic-and-victorian/laura-white-the-alice-books-and-the-contested-ground-of-the-natural-world/>>

Review of *Theatre and Evolution from Ibsen to Beckett*, by Kirsten E. Shepherd-Barr, *The British Society for Literature and Science* online (2016) <<http://www.bsls.ac.uk/reviews/modern-and-contemporary/kirsten-e-shepherd-barr-theatre-and-evolution-from-ibsen-to-beckett/>>

Review of *Darwin's Footprint: Cultural Perspectives on Evolution in Greece (1880–1930s)*, by Maria Zarimis, *The British Society for Literature and Science* online (2016) <<http://www.bsls.ac.uk/reviews/modern-and-contemporary/maria-zarimis-darwins-footprint-cultural-perspectives-on-evolution-in-greece-1880-1930s/>>

Recent Academic Papers

2018

> 31.08.18 at British Association for Victorian Studies Annual Conference (**University of Exeter**):

'"The Derndest Animal You Ever Heard Tell Of": Fiction, Mass-Circulation Media, and the Transatlantic Brontosaurus in 1899'

> 07.04.18 at British Society for Literature and Science Annual Conference (**Oxford Brookes University**) and 14.03.18 at **Natural History Museum** Students' Association Annual Conference:

'"The Thing You Can't Quite See": Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* and the New Romance of Palaeontology'

2017

> 14.12.17 at Popularising Palaeontology Workshop II (**King's College, London**):

'"A New Little Alice in Prehistoric Wonderland": Popularisers of Palaeontology and the Works of Lewis Carroll'

> 08.7.17 at British Society for the History of Science Annual Conference (**University of York**):

'"Kindergarten Science": Illustrators of Extinct Animals and Wonderlands of Popularisation 1892–1921'

> 25.05.17 at Research Relay (**Midlands3Cities Research Festival, Leicester**):

'Illustrators of Extinct Animals and Palaeontologist Politics, 1892–1912'

> 7.04.17 at British Society for the History of Science Postgraduate Conference (**European University Institute, Florence**), 8.03.17 at Victorian Studies Spring Seminar (**University of Leicester**), 7.03.17 at **Natural History Museum** Students' Association Annual Conference, and 15.02.17 at English Postgraduate Research Seminar (**University of Leicester**):

'"A Work of Literature Rather than Science": Henry Neville Hutchinson (1856–1927) and Literary Controversy in Science Popularisation'

Placement

From January through March 2017 I was on a placement with **Nottingham City Museums and Galleries** working with **Wollaton Hall Natural History Museum** and the **University of Nottingham Lakeside Arts** on the 'Dinosaurs of China' exhibition. This exhibition brought, for the first time, exciting new Chinese dinosaurs to the UK, where they were displayed in Wollaton Hall.

Several specimens were also displayed at Lakeside Arts as part of an exhibition on illustrations of prehistoric life. I worked together with Dr Adam Smith of Wollaton Hall and Dr Wang Qi of the University of Nottingham on the narrative of these exhibitions. We also hope to investigate the effectiveness of the exhibitions in communicating ideas about feathered dinosaurs and role of art in dinosaur palaeontology.

I have given the following talks in relation to this placement:

> 29.09.17 at The Dino Secret Science Show (**Wollaton Hall**)

'Dinosaurs in Wonderland: The First Palaeo-Art'

> 08.08.17 public talk at Lakeside Arts Centre (**University of Nottingham**):

'Dinosaurs in Wonderland: Victorian Artists and the Depiction of Extinct Animals'

> 26.01.17 at internal promotion event for 'Dinosaurs of China' Exhibition (**University of Nottingham**):

'Palaeoart, Past and Present'

> 24.11.16 at School of Architecture and Built Environment Seminar (**University of Nottingham**):

'Restoring Extinct Animals: Palaeontologists and Artists from Romanticism to Modernism'

Exhibitions and Events

> Co-organised academic workshop 'Self-Fashioning Scientific Identities in the Long Nineteenth Century' at **University of Leicester**, funded by Constructing Scientific Communities project (15.06.18).

> Co-curated exhibition 'The Victorian Studies Centre at 50' at **University of Leicester David Wilson Library** (open 22.11.17 to 09.03.18).

> Co-curated exhibition 'The Art of Dinosaur Science' at **University of Nottingham Lakeside Arts** (open 01.07.17 to 29.10.17).

Other Public Engagement Activities

> Co-presented workshops on nineteenth-century palaeontology at **South London primary schools** alongside **Emerald Ant** artistic community engagement group (18.06.18 to 21.06.18).

> Magic lantern performance at **Natural History Museum** Late (27.10.17).

> Ongoing work with **Friends of the Crystal Palace Dinosaurs** charity, including general interest paper 'The Bone Wars Hit London: How Wild West Dinosaurs brought "Dinomania" back to Victorian London' at **Lyme Regis Fossil Festival** (30.04.16) and **Yorkshire Fossil Festival** (16.09.2016). I have also written a blog post, 'The Transatlantic Connection: Dinosaurs after the Crystal Palace' (<http://cpdinosaurs.org/library/1873>), for the charity's website, and carried out guided tours of the Crystal Palace dinosaur island (5.11.15).

> Readings at **Literary Leicester 2016** for 'Charlotte Brontë and Her Readers with Joanne Shattock and Julian North' (17.11.16) and 'Science and the Victorian Public: A Magic Lantern Performance' (18.11.16).

> Readings at 'The Tables Turned: A Magic Lantern Performance' at the **Royal Society** Twilight Science (29.06.15).

General Research Interests

> Literature and science in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

> The earth sciences in the popular culture of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

> The New Romance in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

> Palaeontology in museum exhibitions.