

Recreating the Past: In LEGO®

By Christine Taylor, Keeper of Natural Sciences, Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service (HCCAMS)



(<https://naturalsciencecollections.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/cdsvasd.jpg>)

An Ice Age animal, a sabre-toothed cat, made from LEGO bricks. (C) Julian Wright (HCCAMS)

Reaching new audiences for natural science collections is always a challenge, especially if the museum concerned is a network of recreated Victorian and 1930s streets.

However, the opportunity of working with artists from British company 'Bright Bricks' has enabled the creation of extinct animals made from LEGO, based on the Natural Science collections of the Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service (HCCAMS).



(<https://naturalsciencecollections.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/giantmoa1.jpg>)

Leg bones, gizzard stones and a replica egg of a giant moa. (C) Julian Wright (HCCAMS)

The Natural Science collections provided the inspiration for many of the specially commissioned builds for 'Lost World Zoo', a menagerie of animals built using LEGO bricks from different periods in time. Original specimens from the collections have been displayed alongside these model animals. The Victorian street settings at Milestones Museum, Basingstoke, enabled a 'back story' of a Victorian explorer discovering an uncharted island where the animals still lived.

The railway station at Milestones has been transformed into an aquarium filled with aquatic animals, which provided the opportunity to display Cretaceous marine fossils in bubbles (perspex domes) in the 'ticket office'. Lamp posts decorated with *Meganeura*, the giant dragonflies of the Carboniferous and large butterflies and other insects provide an introduction to the origins of insects and an opportunity to display some of the large foreign insect material from the collections.



(<https://naturalsciencecollections.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/iceageanimals2.jpg>).

Bones and teeth of Ice Age animals. (C) Julian Wright (HCCAMS)

Dodo bones, collected by George Clarke in the mid 19th century, inspired a flock of dodos and the advance marketing campaign featured a dodo made from LEGO, visiting various places around Hampshire and beyond. Other visits included a trip to see the Oxford dodo and a hot air balloon factory in Bristol to investigate flying!

Other models included a sabre-toothed cat, a giant moa bird (full height!), a huge turtle called *Archelon* made from DUPLO®, a neanderthal, a *Megalosaurus* head and a woolly mammoth built during the exhibition, as well as displays of smaller models and a spotter trail.



(<https://naturalsciencecollections.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/moa.jpg>).

Giant moa made from LEGO. (C) Julian Wright (HCCAMS)

Each of the models have habitat, locality, size and extinction details on banners, with many of the banners displaying a QR code to video podcasts about the Natural Science collections. Throughout the exhibition, which runs until 27th April, and then splits to tour some of the smaller HCCAMS museums, sessions based on fossils, mammoths, giant dragonflies and neanderthals provide visitors with the opportunities to handle collections and to discover more about the collections.

The exhibition has provided a wonderful opportunity for the Keeper of Natural Sciences to exhibit areas of the collections which have rarely been seen on display, to devote time to researching the specimens, enable conservation work to take place and the great excitement of un-wrapping the models made from LEGO!!

March 24, 2014 by [emmalouisenicholls](#) Categories: [Using Collections](#) | Tags: [Archelon](#), [Basingstoke Exhibition](#), [LEGO](#), [Megalosaurus](#), [Milestones Museum](#), [Moa](#), [Neanderthal](#), [Prehistoric animals](#), [Temporary Exhibition](#), [Turtle](#), [What's on](#) | [Leave a comment](#)