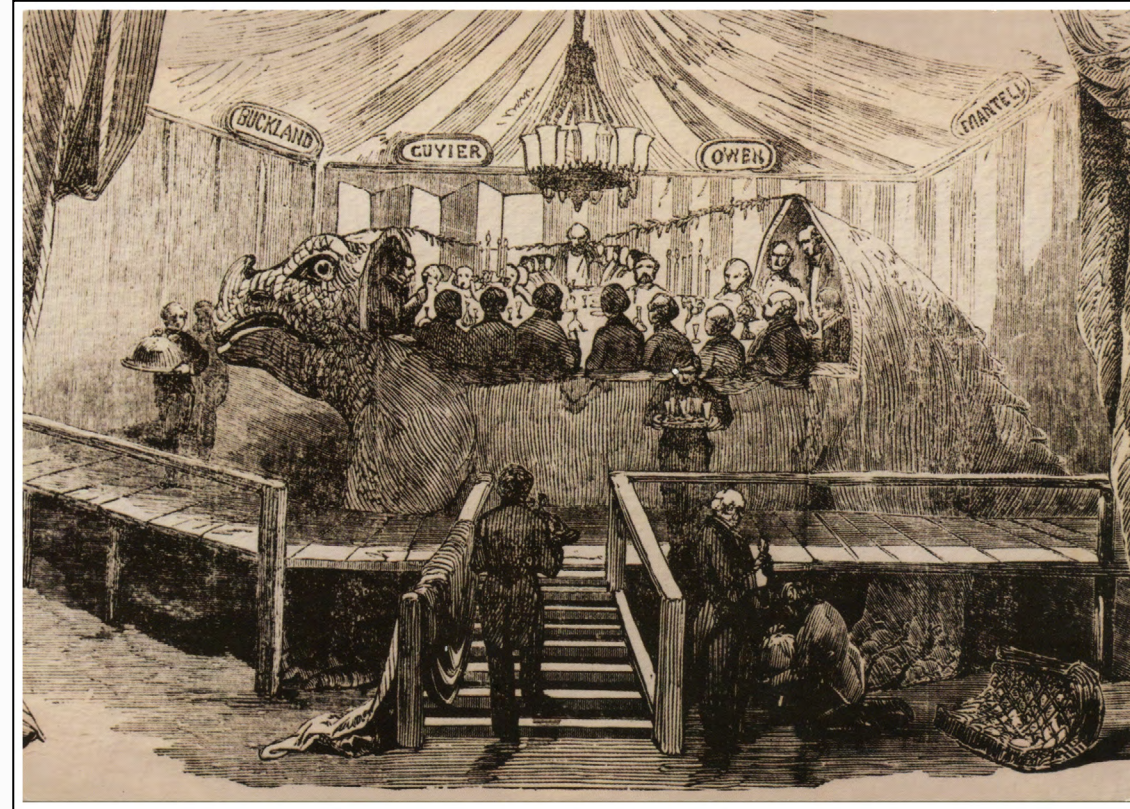


New Year's Dinner with a Dinosaur



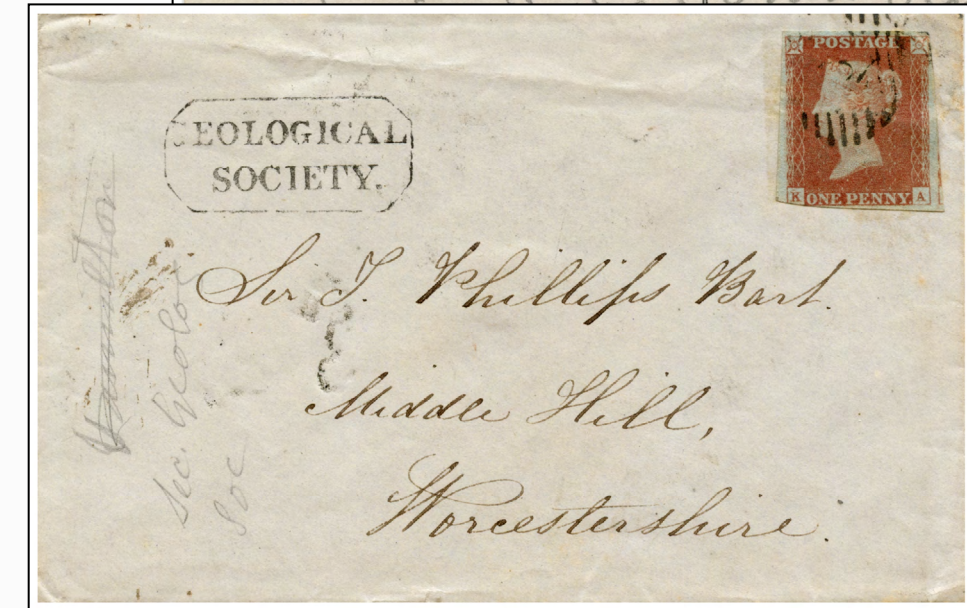
Crystal Palace building 1851
Festival label benefitting the blind

The Crystal Palace was host to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park, London. Built of iron and glass, it accommodated over 14,000 exhibitors. After the exhibition, the Palace was relocated to Sydenham Hill. Sculptor Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins (1807-1894), was commissioned to build prehistoric animals in the gardens with paleontologist Sir Richard Owen (1804-1892).



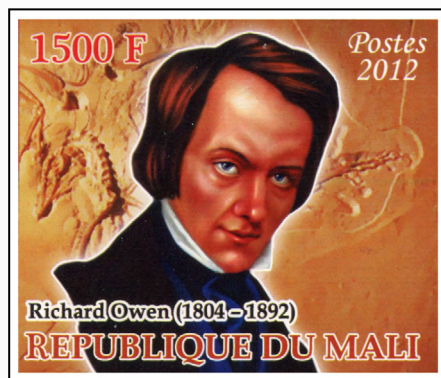
Post card depicting Iguanodon model within tent enclosure to host the dinner party

Fran Adams



London to Worcestershire, England, undated, 1 penny letter rate
Handstamped octagonal origin cachet of the Geological Society

Crystal Palace (post office I)
London to Selborne, England
27 June 1911
Machine dater device on Empire Festival post card



Sir Richard Owen, Paleontologist and member of the Geological Society

Hawkins, creator of the sculptures for the Crystal Palace Park, then invited 21 guests, mostly members of the Geological Society of Great Britain, to celebrate on the evening of 31 December 1853. It was a surprise dinner, served inside the model of the Iguanodon he'd built.



Private cachet on government postal card depicting Iguanodon as described by Owen

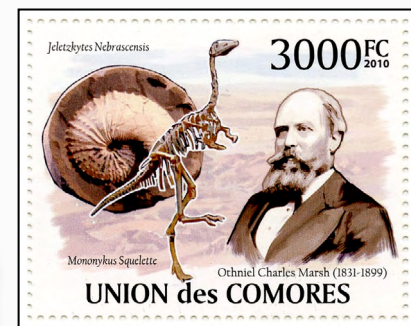
Later examination of fossils proved the animal's posture to be much different than Owen suggested as evidenced by Charles Marsh's (1831-1899) research.



Iguanodon fossil in proper stance



Sir Arthur Conan Doyle



Othniel Charles Marsh

The Iguanodon inspired discussion outside the scientific community and was the subject of visiting artists. The science fiction writing field also introduced them in 1912 in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's (1859-1930) novel, 'The Lost World'.



Scene from 'The Lost World'
Image : Wikimedia Public Domain