

IN 1837, EDWARD CHARLESWORTH took over as editor of the scientific journal the *Magazine of Natural History*. As a geologist, he made numerous contributions under his own name, but in his editorial role, he would also pass comments on external events or others' work. His opinionated nature, lack of tact and the means in which to freely express his views in print inevitably led to problems.

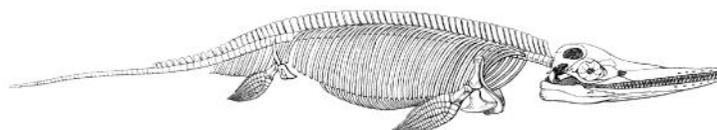


SPECIAL APPENDIX

The *Appendix to the 39th Number* of the magazine was issued by Charlesworth in 1840. Over its 72 pages, Charlesworth was to give his side in three rather public disputes. The first was somewhat innocuous, being a rather trivial argument with a rival publisher. However the account of the other two battles saw Charlesworth questioning the integrity of William Buckland, Charles Lyell and Richard Owen, all eminent public figures and Fellows of the Society.

JUST PUBLISHED!
SPECIAL APPENDIX TO THE

Magazine of NATURAL HISTORY



Conducted by

EDWARD CHARLESWORTH, Esq., F.G.S.,
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THOMAS HAWKINS' GREAT SEA MONSTERS

The most serious was his dispute with the fossil collector Thomas Hawkins who had offered his stunning collection of seemingly complete Jurassic saurian fossils to the nation in 1833. William Buckland and Gideon Mantell were charged with valuing the collection, and in 1835 the British Museum took possession of the collection for the sum of £1250.

Unfortunately once the purchases were studied more closely, it was found that the fossils were not as complete as first presumed. Many were missing bones, but the gaps had been filled in with plaster substitutes painted to look authentic. Indeed it was found at least one plesiosaur specimen was almost entirely made of plaster.



FAST BOAT TO CENTRAL AMERICA

At a private dinner party, Charlesworth had expressed his view that something underhand had gone on. Hawkins got wind of this and threatened to sue for criminal libel. The *Appendix* could have been Charlesworth's opportunity to publicly back down, instead he published Hawkins' and Buckland's legal threats to him juxtaposed with extracts from a critical public inquiry which investigated the matter. This only inflamed the situation, and Charlesworth was forced to flee abroad to Mexico to escape Hawkin's creditors.