

SAUROPOD DINOSAUR VERTEBRA

Discoverer: Jessie Boon, Hughenden. May 2nd 2003

Place: 2 km from Hughenden's Flinders Discovery Centre

Age:

Lower Cretaceous, between 100 to 105 million years old. The bone was discovered in mixed gravel with some of the same kinds of shelly marine fossils found close to Hughenden. They were a very minor part of the gravel, which was mainly angular pieces of a much younger deposit formed by surface weathering, probably in the Quaternary, and reworked recently, for the matrix is clay soil with patches of pebbly sand. These pebbles are several kinds of silica and ironstone.

What Dinosaur is it?:

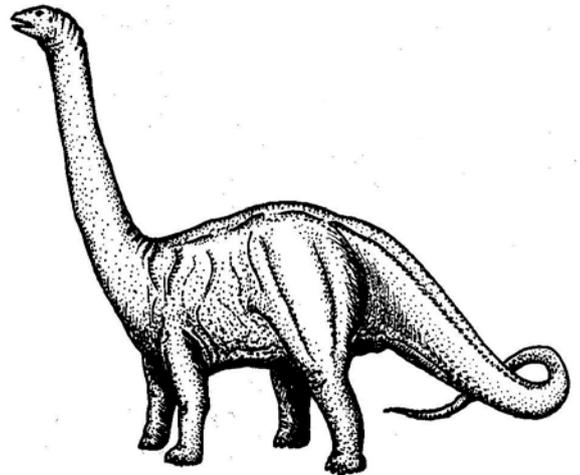
It is an example of the dinosaur nicknamed Mick after it's discoverer and donor (Australian Age of Dinosaurs, 1, 7, 2 figures, 2003). Mick had been moved from drum to drum for years after collection, and is undergoing reconstruction mainly by Judy Elliot, who has the gift for the job. Mick will be displayed in Winton.

Jessie's find is a dorsal (body or thoracic) vertebra, while Mick's illustrated vertebra is from the base of the neck. Neck and tail were used as defensive weapons, so their vertebrae are much stouter and together more flexible than the higher, more delicate vertebra here. Dorsals were sheltered from impacts by their large ribs. These divided in two as they approached the vertebra and attached low and high on its sides and combined into stout "fences" to each side of the body vertebrae.

Jessie's find may also be a "Hughenden Sauropod", known since the 1950's, from 1/3 of a neck (cervical) vertebra – not thought characteristic enough to name, on its own.

History:

There is no way such a delicate bone could wash from the Cretaceous Coast (of the day) to Hughenden. It must represent either a dinosaur that swam the wrong way, like the cattle seen swimming out into the Gulf of Carpentaria in the 1974 flood, or a dead one that washed, floated and sank in the second of four successive inland seas. The rainfall was over 1 metre a year, according to palaeobotanists; so big floods were probably quite frequent.

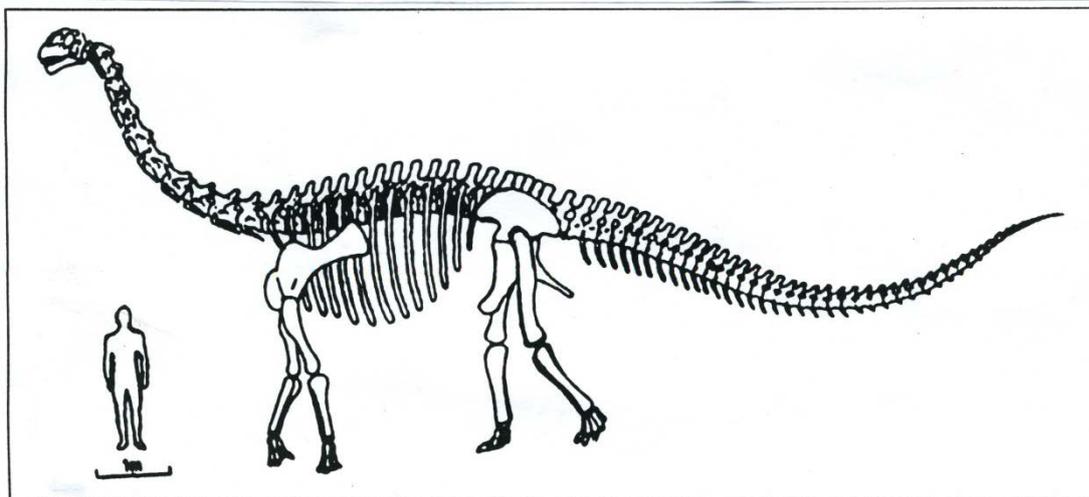


HUGHENDEN SAUROPOD

Sauropods are very large plant-eating dinosaurs with long necks and tails. They have been found in this part of Queensland since 1932. Fossil bones have been found from several individual sauropods. They probably belonged to *Austrosaurus*.

The remains of an *Austrosaurus mckillopi* were discovered by Henry Burgoyne Wade on Clutha Station (near Richmond) in 1932, and were found to be 100 million years old.

In 2003, half of a cervical (neck) vertebra from another sauropod was found near Hughenden by local woman, Jesse Boon. It is similar to the vertebra of *Brachiosaurus*, a huge sauropod with long fore-legs found in Africa and North America. The Queensland animal is known as the 'Hughenden Sauropod'. The size of the bones found suggests an animal 20–22 metres long and perhaps weighing up to 50 tonnes. It used its long neck to reach the lower branches of the trees.



Austrosaurus mckillopi

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By Zara Margolis and Elaine Ford

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<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-25/new-fossils-found-of-aust-dinosaur-dig-near-richmond-ql/6803470>

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By Julianne Roman Tech Times

28 September 2015, 4:04am

<https://www.techtimes.com/articles/88674/20150928/fossils-of-100-million-year-old-plant-eating-dinosaur-unearthed-in-australia.htm>