

News release



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Rare Jurassic sea reptiles set for public display thanks to £90k DCMS/Wolfson funding

Plans to publicly display the remains of Jurassic marine reptiles held by the Oxford University Museum of Natural History have been given generous support today with the award of a grant from the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund. The museum is the recipient of one of 39 grants, totalling £4 million, which have been awarded to improve displays and facilities at museums and galleries across England.

The Museum of Natural History bid, titled *Out of the Deep*, presented plans to create a new display showing the UK's exceptional fossil heritage in the form of two of the museum's most important large plesiosaurs. One of these is the rare long-necked plesiosaur, now nicknamed Eve, which was discovered in a



Artist's impression of 'Eve', a Jurassic plesiosaur.
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quarry in Cambridgeshire in 2015. The fossil skeleton was donated to the museum [last year](#) by the quarry's owners Forterra. The new display will also incorporate a short-necked relative of Eve that was discovered near Oxford in the 1990s.

With new cases, dynamic artwork and digital content, the exhibit will present a picture of central England 165 million years ago: submerged 50 metres underwater in a warm, shallow sea, teeming with animals that are now long-extinct.

Commenting on the award, museum director Professor Paul Smith said: "In displays that will reinvigorate our central court, *Out of the Deep* will conserve and exhibit two internationally-significant fossil marine reptiles. We are very grateful to DCMS/Wolfson for this funding. The museum is now looking for matched funding to complete the project."

Announcing the awards, Matt Hancock, Minister for Digital and Culture, said: "Our museums and galleries are among the best in the world and we should be rightly proud of these institutions. We

want people to be able to enjoy world-leading culture wherever they live and whatever their background. These grants will make an important contribution toward increasing access to their wonderful collections and improving the visitor experience at museums right across the country. I applaud the Wolfson Foundation's generosity in once again matching the Government's investment pound for pound in this important work."



For further information and images:

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Notes to editors

About the Museum of Natural History

Founded in 1860 as the centre for scientific study at the University of Oxford, the Museum of Natural History now holds the University's internationally significant collections of entomological, geological and zoological specimens. Housed in a stunning Pre-Raphaelite-inspired example of neo-Gothic architecture, the Museum's growing collections underpin a broad programme of natural environment research, teaching and public engagement.

In 2015, the Museum was a **Finalist in the Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year**. In 2016, it won the top accolade, Best of the Best, in the **Museums + Heritage Awards**.

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www.oum.ox.ac.uk

www.morethanadodo.com

About the Wolfson Foundation

The Wolfson Foundation (www.wolfson.org.uk) is an independent charity that supports and promotes excellence in the fields of science, health, education and the arts and humanities. It has awarded over £800 million (£1.7 billion in real terms) to some 10,000 projects across the UK, all on the basis of expert peer review. Established in 1955, the Wolfson Foundation celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2015.