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# The Bernissart Iguanodons

*A coal mine at 322 metres, more than one official month, and mounts assembled as bipeds in 1882.*

Typographic only. No photographs inside. Official wording kept unblended.

| Point | Official wording |
|---|---|
| **March 1878** | The Natural History Museum dates “a chance discovery in a Belgian coal mine in March 1878,” at “322 metres,” with bones “encrusted with pyrite.” The glance page starts “at the end of March 1878 at the Bernissart coal mine in Sainte-Barbe.” |
| **April 1878** | The glance page: “On 12 April 1878, the Belgian Royal Museum of Natural History… was informed of the discovery by telegram.” The masterpiece page: “The first Iguanodon bones were discovered in April 1878.” |
| **How many** | “Thirty relatively complete iguanodon skeletons” on the glance page. “Around thirty remarkably well-preserved Iguanodon skeletons” on the masterpiece page, after a dig lasting more than two years. |
| **To Brussels** | “Covered in plaster for protection and broken into 600 blocks, the fossils were transported to Brussels to be reassembled and fitted with iron frames.” |
| **1882** | “In 1882 the Iguanodons were assembled with a biped posture.” Louis Dollo “was convinced that the Iguanodon bernissartensis was a biped.” |
| **Later gait** | “We now know the dinosaur predominantly walked on all fours.” The mounts “are now too fragile to be repositioned.” The masterpiece page still says locomotion is “still debated.” |

## A short quiz

1. How deep were the miners, officially?
2. Is the official month only March, or only April?
3. Can the 1882 bipedal mounts be repositioned today, according to the museum?

**Answers.** 322 metres (or 322m). No: official pages use March 1878, the end of March, and April 1878, kept apart. No: they are too fragile to be repositioned, and remain a vestige of nineteenth-century thinking.

Wording from the Natural History Museum’s discovery page and from the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences glance and masterpiece pages, re-opened 18 November 2026. iguanodon.dinosaurs.im is independent of those institutions. Typographic sheet: no photographs inside.