

A sceptical look at the Dino-Bird controversy.

To most interested lay-people and even most vertebrate palaeontologists the theory that birds arose from a group of Theropod dinosaurs is now regarded as an incontestable fact. However there are a handful of dissenters from this supposed certainty. The speaker is one.

Mike will start by outlining the position of Archaeopteryx as the quintessential example of an intermediate between two classes of organisms – reptiles and birds, before considering the various theories which have been put forward to explain which group of reptiles could best be considered the direct ancestor of the avian lineage.

We will then look at the work of Professor John Ostrom who posited *Deinonychus antirrhopus*, the prototype 'Raptor', as the putative bird-ancestor by comparing its osteology with that of Archaeopteryx. However, there are many more differences than similarities.

The final half of the talk will concentrate on two alleged dino-birds which featured prominently in the recent exhibition 'Dinosaurs of China' in Nottingham. *Sinosauropteryx prima*, a compsognathid dinosaur which is supposed to exhibit PROTOFEATHERS and *Microraptor gui* the alleged four winged flying dinosaur which is an archaeopterygiform bird and not a dinosaur. A more parsimonious ancestor for the avian lineage will be suggested.