

## T rex to greet museum visitors

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THAT most ferocious of dinosaurs, T rex, took up residence in the centre of Newcastle yesterday. The skeletal model of Tyrannosaurus rex will be a major attraction in the £26m Great North Museum: Hancock, which opens in April.

At 12m long and 4.2m at the hip, T rex is so big that it had to be the first installation in the new Fossils Stories gallery, which will be built around the beast. The dinosaur is a custom-built, exact replica of one of the most complete T rex ever found in the world.

It was discovered in Montana in the United States 10 years ago.

A cast was taken from the original skeleton by Canadian specialist company Research Casting International.

The skeleton was shipped in a dozen parts in a 40ft container from Canada to Liverpool and was trucked to Newcastle, where it was assembled yesterday.

The £65,000 exhibit is expected to be a crowd pleaser. Steve McLean, project manager for the Great North Museum: Hancock, said: "Tyrannosaurus rex is everyone's favourite dinosaur and this full-scale skeletal model is really impressive. It is set to be one of the star attractions in the new museum and is one of the first display items to be put in place.

"It is absolutely accurate and you never get a true impression of what this dinosaur was really like unless you get up-close to a real life-size model.

"Then people can see how really big they were. It will be one of the most dramatic exhibits in the Great North Museum."

The Fossils Stories gallery will tell the geological tale of the world's evolution and T rex will stand alongside the museum's own fossil dinosaur collections.

Tyrannosaurus rex, meaning Tyrant lizard, was one of the largest land-dwelling meat-eaters that has ever lived.

It could move at a maximum of 22 miles an hour, although it probably didn't have the endurance to run for long distances. It lived 65-70 million years ago and T rex fossils have been found in Canada, North America and China.

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