

Sir Arthur Keith

Perpetrator or Victim?

In December 1912, the **Geological Society of London** was presented unusual remains found by **Charles Dawson** (1864-1916) in a roadside gravel pit at **Barkham Manor** in 1908.



Sales advertisement for the manor home and grounds

Barkham manor is located near **Piltdown** in **East Sussex**.



Bromley and Beckenham, (Downe) Kent to Poughkeepsie, New York, 12 February 1945
Sir Arthur Keith (manuscript address in his hand)

Debate within clergy and scientific circles raged, some suggesting remains were victims of the **Flood** or **wild men**.

After discovery of **Neanderthal**, European scientists searched feverishly for more examples of fossil man and **Piltdown** seemed to fit in as a transitional form.



Sir Arthur Keith (white coat) examining Piltdown skull

Sir Arthur Keith
Famous Scots Series
Cigarette card #19



Original
Neanderthal
fossil skullcap

Sir Arthur Keith reconstructed the fragments into a partial skull with jaw. The skull's features reflected both archaic and modern traits and was believed to be the **'Missing Link'**, older and more prestigious than Germany's Neanderthal. Analysis of this new discovery shook the international natural history world. Keith named the find **Eoanthropus dawsoni** (Dawson's dawn-man).



Piltdown Skull
Fancy Cancel

Noah's Arc



Wild man and woman



More than forty years later these ancient **'fossil remains'** were exposed as a **hoax!**



Orang-Utan
'people of the forest'



Chimpanzee
Bantu for 'ape'

The **'fossil remains'** were artificially stained fragments of a overly thick **human skull**, an **orangutan jaw** and a **chimpanzee tooth**.



Commemorative souvenir sheet

Arthur Keith is often named as the person most capable of preparing fakes. Far from proven, he may have been duped by Dawson or his own lab technician, **Martin Hinton**. The mystery remains as to **"Who really done it?"**