Piltdown Man: The Secret Life Of Charles Dawson & The World's Greatest Archaeological Hoax

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The human and animal remains discovered almost 100 years ago at Piltdown, near Lewes in Sussex were at the time hailed as the “missing link” between ape and man. It was not until 1953 that modern analysis conclusively revealed an ingenious hoax. The perpetrator was almost certainly the antiquarian excavator Charles Dawson who, as Miles Russell shows, was responsible for 16 other archaeological forgeries during his lifetime. On December 18, 1912, Great Britain announced Piltdown Man to the world. It was the first public acknowledgement of a set of bones that at first electrified the science community but then were later proved to be a hoax. The man doing the announcing that night, at meeting of the Geological Society of London, was Charles Dawson, an amateur scientist who found or was given a jawbone, several human-like teeth and other parts of a skull, and other remains found in a gravel pit in Piltdown, East Sussex, that he and others claimed was an evolutionary “missing link” between humans and apes. The bones