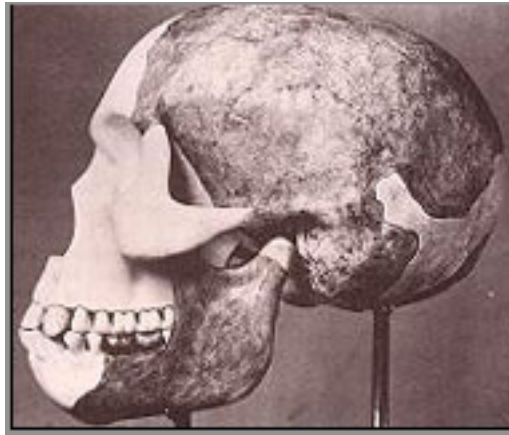


**Otago Medical School Alumnus Association
2013 History of Medicine Series
Room G30, Hunter Centre, Great King Street, Dunedin
Thursday 31st October 2013 at 5.15pm**

Dr Elizabeth Whitcombe will present

“Piltdown Revisited”



On December 18, 1912, an extraordinary discovery was presented by Charles Dawson, FSA, FGS, a country solicitor and eminent amateur antiquarian and Arthur Smith Woodward, FRS, FGS, Keeper of Geology at the Natural History Museum, London, to a packed meeting of eminent scientists at the Geological Society of London: fragments of a cranium and mandible dated by association with ancient Sussex gravel-beds near Piltdown, Sussex, to the Pleistocene. These relics of so ancient an ape-man -- the earliest such known, in fulfilling an evolutionary prediction of a 'missing link', were given the distinction of a new species: *Eoanthropus dawsonii* ('Dawn man') after their discoverer. The circumstances of the discovery, detailed descriptions and reconstructions of the fragments and a brief summary of the discussion which followed the presentation were published in the Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society, London, January 1913 while *Eoanthropus dawsonii* took up residence in the Main Hall of the Natural History Museum – and remained there until 1953, when he was removed to the basement.

The ascent – and descent - of Piltdown man, reconstructed in detail from contemporary records, has much to teach us, in this centenary year.

***This is a public lecture. All interested are
welcome***