Fluoride testing

One method used to determine the age of fossils is fluoride testing, first tried on a number of ancient fossils in 1949 by Kenneth Oakley of the British Museum's Paleontology Department. Using this technique, an experiment was performed on the Piltdown Man fossil and showed that the "fossil" jawbone contained no fluoride—thus revealing that it had been in the earth for no more than a few years.

The skull, which contained a small amount of fluoride, however, could have been only a few thousand years old.

Subsequent research conducted on the basis of fluoride testing revealed that the skull was indeed only a few thousand years old. It was also determined that the teeth in the jawbone were those of an orangutan and had been artificially abraded, and that the primitive tools found near the fossil were replicas that had been created using steel tools.170 Detailed analysis by Joseph Weiner definitively revealed the fossil's fraudulent nature in 1953. The skull was human, but only 500 years old, whereas the jawbone belonged to a newly deceased orangutan! (See **Piltdown Man**.)

170 "Piltdown," *Meydan Larousse*, Vol. 10, p. 133.