

Ap 20th In the last three days I have made several expeditions to the Blue Gap John Gap, and have even penetrated some short distance, but my bicycle lantern is so small that I dare not trust myself very far. I shall get candles to the thing more systematically. I have heard no sound at all & could almost believe that I have been the victim of some hallucination, suggested perhaps by Armitage's conversation. Of course the whole idea is absurd, and yet I must confess that those bushes at the entrance of the cave do present an appearance as if some heavy creature had forced its way through them. I begin to be keenly interested.

are quite
candles,

For a sharper version of this image,
please visit the website of
"The Terror of Blue John Gap" Project
at www.acdsociety.com/bjg/a/bjga.html.

... numerous
... for they
... brought some
... numerous
tufts of sheep wool which lay among the trunks near the cavern
there was one which was smeared with blood. Of course my
reason tells me that if sheep wanders into such rocky places
they are likely to injure themselves, and yet somehow that
smeas of crimson gave me a sudden shock and for a moment
I found myself shrinking back in horror from the old Roman arch.
A fetid breath seemed to ooze from the black depths into which I peered.
Could it indeed be possible that some nameless thing, some dreadful gnomish
was lurking down there yonder. I should have been incapable of such
feelings in the days of my strength but one grows more nervous & fearful
when one's health is shaken. In the moment I wavered in my resolution
and was ready to leave the secret of the old mine, if one exists, for ever
undiscovered. But tonight my interest has returned and my nerves grow
more steady. Tomorrow I trust that I will have gone more deeply
into their matter.

Ap. 22. ^{as usually on 3 can} Before lying and set down my extraordinary experience of yesterday.
I started in the afternoon and made my way to the Blue John Gap.
I confess that my uneasiness of yesterday returned as I gazed into
its depths, and I wished that I had brought a companion to share my
exploration. Finally with a return of resolution I lit my candle,
pushed my way through the briars & descended into the rocky shaft.

DR. DOYLE'S DOUBLES

The Victorians were obsessed with doubles, whether the literal evil twin brother of the doppelgänger popularised by E.T.A. Hoffman, Edgar Allan Poe, and Oscar Wilde, or the figural pairing of the civilised and the savage in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Edward Prendick and Dr. Moreau, and Charles Marlow and Mr. Kurtz. Conan Doyle was no exception to the rule. Doubles appear in two of his Sherlock Holmes stories, *The Final*

Problem (1893) and *The Adventure of the Creeping Man* (1923), in the pairing of Holmes and Professor Moriarty and Professor Presbury and Presbury-onserum respectively, and the fact that Dr. Watson never sees Moriarty raises the intriguing possibility that he is actually a doppelgänger. Doyle also deployed doubling in his horror fiction, most notably in *A Pastoral Horror* (1890) — Father Verhagen ... (continued on other side)

A COMMON NEWSLETTER

— with a nod to Micah Clarke —

BRINGING TIDINGS FROM THE ACD SOCIETY

— a community dedicated to studying and enjoying the works of Arthur Conan Doyle —

via Ross Davies (editor pro tem, and publisher)

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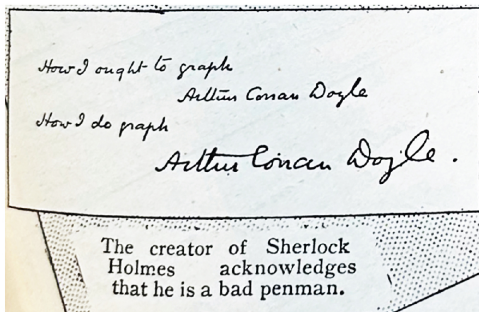
EDITOR'S NOTES

The third issue of *The Doylean Sporting Times* (otherwise known as *The "New Pink 'Un"*) will be out soon. Visit our website (acdsociety.com) once in a while for updates, and for the newest news about the Wessex Cup and other Doylean events.

ChatGPT is not yet an ACD expert. After posing a question about *The Lost World* and seeing the answer (at the bottom of this page), we opted not to ask the AI about Sherlockian canonical chronology or Doylean spiritual geography.

THE PAST

In their May 28 show, Paul Chapman and Mark Jones of *Doings of Doyle* (doingsofdoyle.com) quoted a resonant line from *The Love Affair of George Vincent Parker* (1901): "As Professor Owen would reconstruct an entire animal out of a single bone, so from this one little letter the man stands flagrantly revealed."



Modern commentators often extol the clarity — the beauty! — of ACD's handwriting. He seems to have had a different view, expressed playfully on page 585 of the April 1905 issue of *The Royal Magazine* (and reproduced above).

The Portsmouth Library, home of the Conan Doyle Collection Lancelyn Green Bequest (visitportsmouth.co.uk/conan-doyle) hosted its annual "Worldwide Doyle" speaker series from June 26 to July 4. Recordings of all four presentations are available on the *Doings of Doyle* YouTube channel (youtube.com/@doingsofdoyle).

At the July 11 "All of Doyle" meeting of the Bimetallic Question of Montreal (on Zoom), meeting chair Edith Pouden led a discussion of four of ACD's more unnerving stories: *The Case of Lady Sannox* (1893), *The Third Generation* (1894), *The Surgeon Talks* (1894), and *The Curse of Eve* (1894).

On July 21, the *Stratford Observer* (stratfordobserver.co.uk) covered a fine cricket match won by King Edward VI

School over the Authors' XI, on which ACD used to play and ACD biographer Andrew Lycett now plays (authorscc.co.uk).

(continued from other side)

... and diseased-Verhagen — and *The Terror of Blue John Gap* (1910).

The Terror of Blue John Gap is an epistolary novelette of just over seven thousand words, divided into seven diary entries from April 17, 1907 to June 10, 1907, which are bookended by a foreword and a single-sentence conclusion narrated by an implied author. The most obvious doubling comes early in the manuscript: page 4 proceeds directly from April 17 to April 22 before a reversion to April 20 on page 5, which concludes with a duplication of the last six lines of page 4. The doubling in the story is more subtle, achieved by means of another literary device, the unreliable narrator. Although Dr. James Hardcastle is introduced as a "sober and scientific" man, he was terminally ill with tuberculosis at the time of the events chronicled and the narrative is replete with suggestions that he is experiencing both physical and psychological symptoms of his disease. On page 5, he even reflects on the relation between the two, musing that "one grows more nervous and more fanciful when one's health is shaken." ...

— Rafe McGregor ©2023

Rafe's complete essay is on the *Blue John Gap* website (acdsociety.com/bjg/5/bjg5), where you will also find S.T. Joshi's overview of Doyle's "Dabbling in the Weird," and our own thoughts as to the possibilities and probabilities of auditory hallucinations.

— Margie Deck and Nancy Holder



RD

Where is The Lost World?



"The Lost World" refers to a novel written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, published in 1912. It is an adventure story and a sequel to his earlier work, "The Lost World" is set in the Amazon rainforest in South America. The fictional plateau called Maple White Land, where prehistoric creatures still exist, is the main focus of the story.