

ADULT FICTION

PROSE – ENGLISH HORROR

SWA-HR1 United Kingdom 1995

THE TERROR OF BLUE JOHN GAP *

SW – Fiction – Horror

Selections:

5. THE TALE (sic) OF BLUE JOHN GAP – 9:27/ 6. APRIL 22: THE FIRST EXPLORATION – 11:27/ 7. APRIL 25: AN INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE – 7:38/ 8. JUNE 10: SIX WEEKS LATER – 7:14/ 9. I REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS – 6:27

Scr: Lesley YOUNG (From the short story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle)

Mus: Edvard GRIEG

Perf: Carl RIGG (reader)
Oslo String Quartet

Prod: Perry Keenlyside

Prod. Co: Naxos AudioBooks Ltd.

Liner Notes: Lesley Young

Time: (See above)

CD: FOUR SHORT STORIES

Naxos AudioBooks NA 205012

2XCDs (Disc 1 – Tks 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9)

Notes: Conan Doyle's story starts with these memorable lines –

... On each side are the fantastic limestone hills, formed of rock so soft that you can break it away with your hands. All this country is hollow. Could you strike it with some gigantic hammer it would boom like a drum, or possibly cave in altogether and expose some huge subterranean sea. A great sea there must surely be, for on all sides the streams run into the mountain itself, never to reappear. There are gaps everywhere amid the rocks, and when you pass through them you find yourself in great caverns, which wind down into the bowels of the earth. I have a small bicycle lamp, and it is a perpetual joy to me to carry it into these weird solitudes, and to see the wonderful silver and black effect when I throw its light upon the stalactites which drape the lofty roofs. Shut off the lamp, and you are in the blackest darkness. Turn it on, and it is a scene from the Arabian Nights.



The cave-mine is located 1.5 miles west of Castleton in the Peak District of Derbyshire County. It was first mined by the Romans over 2000 years ago for its unique fluorspar. Natural caverns and calcite deposits

are found in several areas within the mine. The photos show the entrance building and mysterious shadows in the cave (photo on right by Davekav).

This is a good, straightforward dramatic reading of a slightly abridged adaptation of the original short story. Only a few sentences are omitted here and there. Very few words are changed. String quartet classic music by Grieg is used for the intro and the bridges between episodes.

Doctor Hardcastle writes in his diary how he took it upon himself to solve the local mystery of the terror of Blue John Gap. He explores the ancient Roman mine tunnel with a candle to where it breaks into a large natural cave chamber. There he finds a huge footprint in the mud. Following the cave stream he slips and falls, extinguishing his candle. His matches are wet so he tries to feel his way out in total darkness, but has to stop. While waiting, he heats up some wet matches under his armpit, and then hears the muffled tread of a creature approaching in the passage. It drinks, then passes by and returns the way it came. Once his matches are dry he lights a candle and exits the cave. Later he purchases an acetylene lantern and a sporting rifle. More sheep and a local man disappear on the moors. On a cloudy night Hardcastle leaves a note and returns with his rifle to wait at the entrance of the cave. The monster exits and on its return Hardcastle fires, and then pursues the wounded beast into the tunnel. In the central cave chamber the hairy beast turns on him and he sees that it is a bear-like creature with projecting, white and sightless eyes. It rears up and falls over on him knocking him unconscious. A search party of farmers rescues him from the cave, but no trace of the monster is found. The entrance to the mine tunnel is sealed. Later Hardcastle theorizes that since prehistoric ages the cave had "developed a fauna and flora of its own." The old cave bear was "enlarged and modified in its new environment" and lost the power of sight.

Ref: Arthur Conan Doyle, Biography, [Wikipedia](#)

Arthur Conan Doyle, Four Short Stories CD, [Amazon.fr](#)

Arthur Conan Doyle, Four Short Stories CD, [gobuz](#) (◀5 AUDIO SAMPLES)

Barnes & Holroyd 1899, La Blue-John-Mine à Castleton (Angleterre), *Mémoires de la Société de Spéléologie*, Tome IV, n. 23, Juil. 1900, p. 3-19

Bedford, Bruce 1985, *Underground Britain*, Willow Books Collins, London, p. 131-132

Blue John Cavern, Derbyshire, Official site, [bluejohn-cavern](#)

Blue John Cavern, Derbyshire, [showcaves](#)

Carl Rigg, Short Biography, [naxosaudiobooks](#)

Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur 1922, *Tales of Terror and Mystery*, (Reprinted by John Murray, London, 1968), p. 56-71

Ollerenshaw, Arthur E. n.d., *Blue John Cavern & Blue John Mine*, E.T. Dennis & Sons Ltd., Scarborough, 24p.

caveinspiredmusic.com