

ran across my path and I walked for some little distance along the bank to find a spot where I could cross dry shod. Finally I came to a place where a single flat stone lay near the centre which I could reach in a stride. As it chanced however the rock had been cut away and made top heavy by the rush of the ^{stream} water, so that it tilted over as I landed on it, and shot me into the ice cold water. My candle went out, and I found myself floundering about in an utter and absolute darkness.

I staggered to my feet again, more amused ^{was} than alarmed by my adventure. The candle had fallen from my hand and ^{was} lost in the stream, but I had two others in my pocket so that it was of no importance. I got one of them ready, and drew out my box of matches to light it. Only then did I realise my position. The box had been soaked in my fall into the river. It was impossible to strike the matches.

A cold hand seemed to close round my heart as I realised my position. The darkness was opaque & horrible. It was so utter that one put one's hand up to one's face as if to press off something solid. I stood still and by an effort I steadied myself. I tried to reconstruct in my mind a map of the floor of the cavern as I had last seen it. Alas, the bearings which had impressed themselves upon my mind were high on the wall, and not to be found by touch. Still I remembered in a general way how the sides were situated, and I hoped that by groping my way along them I would come at last to the opening of the Roman tunnel. Moving very slowly, and continually striking against the rocks, I set out on this desperate quest.

But I very soon realised how impossible it was. In that black velvety darkness one lost all one's bearings in an instant. Before I had made a dozen paces I was utterly bewildered as to my whereabouts. The rippling of the stream which was the one sound audible, showed me where it lay, but the moment that I left its bank, I was utterly lost. The idea

THE TERROR OF VICTORIAN MATCH MAKING

Matches were mentioned as early as 1366 in China, referred to as "fire inch sticks." They went through many iterations before becoming a long overdue and much appreciated convenience in the early 1900's, when our story takes place. Once they had been refined for dependable ignitability and were minimally safe, demand soared. (You could say "it caught fire.") In 1850, matches were being produced in Great Britain

at the rate of over 250 million per day. From 1830 into the early 1900's the formula changed very little, and contained enough white phosphorous in one packet of matches to kill an adult. This danger was unknown by most and those who had the knowledge weren't anxious to share it, because their pockets were getting fatter by leaps and bounds on a daily basis.

Young women between ... (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)

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2, JULY 2024

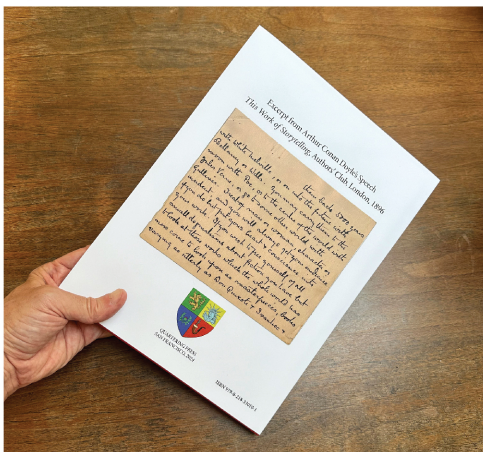
EDITOR'S NOTES

As longtime members may recall, the first ACD Society membership card (2021) featured a tiny

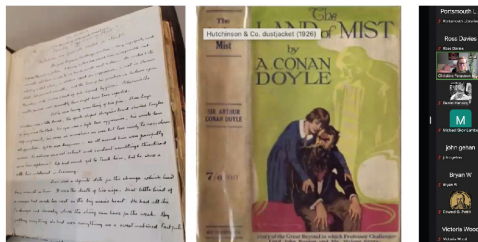


excerpt from the handwritten text of a speech ACD gave at the Authors' Club in 1896. A facsimile of the full text (with commentary) is now in print

in a book titled *this work of storytelling*, edited by Cathy and Glen Miranker. It is a handsome companion to their 2022 book, *Sherlock Holmes in 221 Objects from the Collection of Glen S. Miranker*.



Even the back jacket of the Mirankers' new book is pretty.



Images from Christine Ferguson's lecture on *The Land of Mist*: the manuscript and the first edition dust jacket.

THE PAST

The Portsmouth Library, home of the Conan Doyle Collection Lancelyn Green Bequest, opened its annual "Worldwide Doyle" speaker series on July 2 with a talk by Professor Christine Ferguson of the University of Stirling. Her thought-provoking (and entertaining!) lecture — about ACD's spiritualism-infused Professor Challenger novel, *The Land of Mist* — is available, as are all three of this year's other "Worldwide Doyle" talks, on the *Doings of Doyle* YouTube channel (youtube.com/@doingsofdoyle). Professor Ferguson's edition of *The Land of Mist* will be published by the Edinburgh University Press, probably in late 2025 or early 2026.

This year's Worldwide Doyle program also includes a small and intriguingly Sherlockian publishing fundraiser for the Library. Details here: www.visitportsmouth.co.uk/conan-doyle/blog/read/2024/07/sherlock-snapped-b117.

A copy of ACD's novel *The Refugees* became overdue long ago, when it was not returned to its home — a Finnish library — on December 26, 1939. According to *The Guardian* (May 29, 2024), it was finally returned this past May 27.

In its May 19 issue, *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, asked artist Tony Oursler to identify the most precious part of his collection of thousands of pieces of spiritual ephemera:

"A few things related to my grandfather. Arthur Conan Doyle sent him an image of ectoplasm with a handwritten note. ... My grandfather and Houdini, who were friends, were both debunkers of psychics."

(continued from other side)

... between the ages of 14 and 18 made up a large percentage of the workforce in the match factories in Great Britain. We've heard a lot about factories where the workforce was in a dangerous job, but this must have been one of the worst. In one 10-to-14-hour shift, a match girl could create the basic match base that would result in 10 million matches. The workers toiled in very harsh environments, which included being fined for an untidy workbench, a burnt matchstick at their station, and coming to work with dirty feet, even though shoes were considered a luxury for this class. They were lucky to take home enough pay to barely squeak out a meager existence. Many were also expected to pay for their own working supplies. Lunches were eaten on the factory floor, which meant that their food was also being exposed to the phosphorous. ...

— Cynthia K. Brown

Please see page 8 of our website (acdsociety.com/bjg/8/bjg8), where Cindy's commentary continues, accompanied by our thoughts about the sublime. And revisit page 1 for Steve Mason's new essay on mutton and Dr. Hardcastle's health.

— Margie Deck and Nancy Holder

