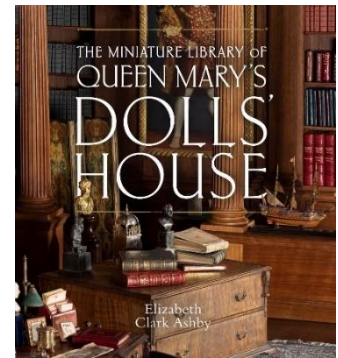


# *The Miniature Library of Queen Mary's Dolls' House by Elizabeth Clark Ashby*

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- Celebrating the 100th anniversary of Queen Mary's Dolls' House
  - Featuring a foreword by Her Majesty The Queen, new research and never-before-published extracts from the Dolls' House Library
  - Available now from Royal Collection Trust shops and all good bookshops
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The year 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of Queen Mary's Dolls' House, the largest and most famous dolls' house in the world. To mark this centenary and to celebrate one of the great wonders of the Dolls' House, Royal Collection Trust has published the first book exploring the creation and contents of the Dolls' House's miniature Library.

Queen Mary's Dolls' House was built between 1921 and 1924 as a gift from the nation to Queen Mary following the First World War. It is a perfect 1:12 scale replica of an Edwardian-style residence, complete with electricity, working lifts and running water, and features contributions from over 1,500 of the finest artists, craftspeople, and manufacturers of the day. The house went on display at Windsor Castle in 1925 and has been delighting visitors ever since.



Running the full length of the House's ground floor, the Library, filled with nearly 600 miniature books and hundreds of original works of art, captured the literary and artistic culture of the 1920s. Lining the bookshelves of this miniature library are specially produced books, handwritten by some of the finest authors of the 1920s, from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Vita Sackville-West to A. A. Milne and Aldous Huxley.

The publication includes a foreword by Her Majesty The Queen, in which she describes how 'this charming book reveals the treasures and the magic of this most unique of libraries.'

The book's first chapters chart the creation of the Dolls' House and formation of its Library, featuring correspondence between its organisers, including Princess Marie Louise and the House's architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, and the authors they commissioned. This is the first time these letters have been fully researched and presented to the public, revealing the character, thoughts, and preoccupations of Lutyens and the authors.

Excerpts from many of the miniature books are explored by Ashby in greater detail. These include closer looks at Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original Sherlock Holmes story, written especially for the Dolls' House, and A. A. Milne's *Vespers*, which was unpublished at the time of

its inclusion in the Dolls' House, but later became famous for introducing Christopher Robin to the public. Another original work explored is M. R. James's ghost story *The Haunted Dolls' House*, in which a dolls' house comes to life. Treasures by less well-known authors are also revealed, including Agnes Jekyll's *The Doll's-House Cookery-Book* of recipes for dolls and *Principles of Doll-Surgery* by John Bland-Sutton, which guides the reader through the intricacies of operating on dolls.

The beautifully produced hardback publication provides a unique insight into the care taken by those who handwrote and illustrated the postage-stamp-sized pages, as well as the difficulties some of them faced. Newly investigated correspondence reveals where some authors, such as Thomas Hardy, found the miniature nature of the work to be insurmountable, meaning calligraphers were enlisted. The joy many of the writers took in their task is also described, such as where E. F. Benson jokingly crossed out the first lines of a limerick in his tiny book *Poems*, and Max Beerbohm wrote of shrinking to doll size to live in the Dolls' House Library, only to be caught and ejected.

Along with the Library's handwritten miniature books, the publication also explores its collections of printed books, prints and drawings, and music. Among these are books, newspapers and magazines produced in miniature specially for the Dolls' House, including railway timetables, a copy of *The Times* and an atlas. Many of the Library's collection of hundreds of original miniature watercolours by British artists are published for the first time in print, including landscapes by the First World War artists Paul Nash and John Northcote Nash.

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***The Miniature Library of Queen Mary's Dolls' House* by Elizabeth Clark Ashby (Curator of Books and Manuscripts, Royal Collection Trust) is currently available at £16.95 from Royal Collection Trust shops and [www.rct.uk/shop](http://www.rct.uk/shop). It is also available from all good bookshops.**

**Hardback: ISBN 978 1 909741 57 7, 210 × 172 mm, 160 pages. With contributions from Kate Heard, Kathryn Jones, Sophie Kelly and Emma Stuart.**

**Look inside (Photographs available from [DropBox](https://www.dropbox.com)). Credit: Royal Collection Trust / © His Majesty King Charles III 2024**



For further information, imagery and to request a review copy, please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, [press@rct.uk](mailto:press@rct.uk), +44 (0)20 7839 1377.

Queen Mary's Dolls' House is included in a visit to Windsor Castle. Centenary activities throughout 2024 include a special display of items usually contained within the Dolls' House, staged in the Castle's magnificent Waterloo Chamber.

Alongside this, in an anniversary initiative championed by Her Majesty The Queen, 21 tiny manuscripts have been penned and decorated by hand by Her Majesty and by leading writers and illustrators, to establish a Modern-Day Miniature Library, once again providing a snapshot of contemporary literature in Britain.

The new books are now on display for visitors alongside the Dolls' House, shown with a selection of original miniature books by authors including A. A. Milne, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Thomas Hardy.

Both centenary displays are included with a ticket to the Castle throughout 2024.

Windsor Castle is open to visitors Thursday to Monday, remaining closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Tickets and visitor information: [www.rct.uk](http://www.rct.uk), T. +44 (0)303 123 7304.

Also available from Royal Collection Trust shops and [www.rct.uk/shop](http://www.rct.uk/shop), and from all good bookshops, is a revised and updated version of [\*The Queen's Dolls' House\*](#) by Lucinda Lambton at £14.95.

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### **Notes to Editors**

**Royal Collection Trust**, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The King. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes.

**The Royal Collection** is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some 15 royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by the Sovereign for his successors and the nation, and is not owned by The King as a private individual.