

55. コティングリー妖精事件(1)：構造理解

Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, was once tricked by two young girls in a way Sherlock himself would never have imagined. In 1917, two girls from Cottingley, a village in the English countryside, took photographs of what appeared to be fairies flying about in nature. When the photographs became public, many adults thought that they were real. Conan Doyle, who was interested in supernatural phenomena, also believed they were genuine. The photographs, however, turned out to be fake.

In Britain and Ireland, fairies and other imaginary creatures are popular among both children and adults. In the early modern era, William Shakespeare and other prominent poets featured playful and sometimes dangerous fairies in their works. They were similar to Japanese yōkai in that they would grant good or bad luck to humans, depending on their mood. After the Romantic period, fairies in the British Isles were increasingly drawn in an ideal way. Painters began to portray fairies as beautiful women and that image of fairies dominated people's imaginations. The Cottingley girls' fairy photographs fit into this trend because they also featured lovely female fairies.
