

The Kipling Society (Registered Charity No. 278885) – Annual Report 2019/20

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Trustees at 30 June 2020

Mike Kipling (Chair and Treasurer)
Angela Eyre (Deputy Chair)
Fiona Renshaw (Membership Secretary)
Alex Bubb (Meetings Secretary)
Jan Montefiore (Editor of the Kipling Journal)
John Radcliffe (Online Editor and Publicity)
Linda Burton (Bateman's Liaison Officer)
Ray Beck
Mary Hamer
Anne Harcombe
Julia Hett
Jane Keskar
Sharad Keskar

The Society is governed by its Rules, approved by the Charities Commission in 1999 and amended at the AGMs in September 2014 and July 2019.

As set out in the Rules, the objective of the Society is the advancement of public education by the promotion of the study and appreciation of the life and works of Rudyard Kipling.

The main activities in furtherance of this aim are :

- (a) to print, publish and issue quarterly (or at such other intervals as the Council of the Society may from time to time determine) a magazine entitled The Kipling Journal devoted to matters of interest to readers and students of Kipling.
- (b) to promote and hold lectures, discussions and meetings, and generally to encourage the study of Kipling's life and writings.
- (c) for the purposes of education and study, to maintain a library comprising Kipling's works, the works of writers on Kipling, and other material (in any form or medium) relating to Kipling.
- (d) to provide speakers on Kipling's life and works for suitable functions organised otherwise than by the Society
- (e) to employ any electronic or other form of information technology to store, process or provide information about Kipling, the Society and its activities.
- (f) to give assistance and advice regarding Kipling's life and works and on the organisation of any suitable function dealing with them.

In pursuing these objectives, the Trustees have had due regard to Charity Commission guidance on public benefit.

Achievements and performance

Individual members: As of 20 June, there were 383 individual members, a net increase of 4 overall since July 2019. Over the course of the year 32 new members have joined, 1 ex-member has re-joined and 29 members have left the Society for a variety of reasons.

Corporate members: The current total is 72, down 4 overall since July of last year. Over the course of the year, 1 corporate member has cancelled their free subscription and 3 universities have failed to renew their subscriptions.

A new subscription rate of £10 was introduced for students of all ages to replace the current reduced rate offered to members under 23. The Society's database of member's e-mail addresses has been 'cleaned' and is now also used for the mailing of regular Newsletters.

The Society's programme of London speaker meetings was interrupted by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and only four meetings were able to be held. For the 2020 AGM and subsequently, it is intended to hold meetings on-line until the pandemic is over.

A number of other activities of the Society were cancelled or postponed as a consequence of the pandemic, including the 'Writing with Kipling' competition for primary school children, the Annual Luncheon and the 'Kipling in the News' conference at City University.

Four excellent editions of the Journal were produced. Our regular Newsletter was increased in frequency and dispatched by post as well as e-mail to help keep members in touch during the pandemic.

Council, aware of the 'decolonising the curriculum' movement, placed a statement on the Society's website with the objective of contributing to current debates by explaining some of the contexts within which his work can be beneficially studied.

Thanks to the efforts of member Janice Lingley, a blue plaque, funded by the Society and Loughton Town Council, was placed on the wall at Goldings Farm in Epping Forest, where Kipling, Trix and Stanley Baldwin had spent an idyllic summer in 1877.

It has been a positive year for the Society's web-site, with a substantial increase in visitors. The number of visitors in the year to May 31st was just over 80,000 - some 220 a day - in comparison with 50,000 the previous year. There were 13,200 visitors to the Readers' Guide pages, as compared with just under 12,000 for 2018/19. The total number of visitors since launch in May 1999 is nearly 1.5m.

Alastair Wilson has completed the transcription of Kipling's motoring diaries, which are available to members on our website. An illustrated article about Kipling's cars has also been added by John Walker. Philip Holberton has continued to annotate the early uncollected poems.

The Society continues to have a presence on Facebook, edited by John Walker, with a 'Verse of the Week' which is often topical. This has been well received, with 537 followers, and some interesting comments/links. We have also been using Twitter and experimenting with Instagram as a way of reaching out to wider and younger audiences. There continues to be a healthy level of activity on the Kipling Mailbase.

The Society has begun to explore the potential for a revamp of its website, first identifying the different types of likely user and moving to a more modern and easier to manage platform. This work will continue into 2020/21.

The Kipling Room at Haileybury and Imperial Service College continues to be used by students at Haileybury, but once again visits by researchers and others from the rest of the world have been fewer than we might hope. The pattern has definitely become that researchers rely on a question to Council members or one of the discussion lists. Toby Parker, our Honorary Archivist, is on site to advise, but we continue to try to offer a personal escort to outside visitors – partly because the security of the

school campus must be maintained, but also as this has always been part of the service, and a pleasure for the Honorary Librarian.

Financial review

The Society's Accounts are prepared in respect of Calendar years and those for 2019 were published in the June 2020 edition of the journal.

The Society's net assets increased by a little over £1,000 in the year to December 2019. Income was boosted by additional gift aid refunds following a campaign to encourage more members to participate. There were no exceptional items of expenditure.

The Society's investments are (as of April 2020) mainly held in two charity term account with United Trust Bank, one maturing in 2021 and the other in 2022. A further amount remains in a CCLA charity account where it is instantly accessible.

There has been no material change to the Society's financial position since 31 December 2019, other than the receipt of a legacy of £1,000 from the estate of the late John McGivering, a Vice-President of the Society.

Reserving policy

As at 31 December 2019, the Society held as earmarked reserves amounts of £2,936 and £18,997 being respectively the balances of donations made by former members John Slater and Eileen Stammers-Smith. These funds are earmarked respectively for the financing of children's writing competitions and public lectures relating to Rudyard Kipling.

The Eileen Stammers-Smith Memorial Lecture Fund met the travel costs of the speaker for the 2019 annual luncheon and the John Slater Essay Competition Fund was used to provide awards associated with the Writing with Kipling competition

The Society also had general reserves of £44,834, amounting to a little over two years of expenditure at current levels. The Trustees have not specified a particular target for general reserves and are content either for them to remain around current levels or to gradually reduce should appropriate uses be found for their expenditure.