

The Kipling Society (Registered Charity No. 278885) – Annual Report 2022/23

Address: Bay Tree House, Doomsday Garden, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6LB

Trustees at 30 June 2023

Alex Bubb (Chair and Meetings Secretary)

Jan Montefiore (Deputy Chair and Journal Editor)

Mike Kipling (Secretary and Treasurer)

David Forsyth (Bateman's Liaison Officer)

John Radcliffe (Online Editor)

Fiona Renshaw (Membership Secretary)

John Walker (Librarian)

Mary Hamer

Richard Howell

Sarah LeFanu

Christopher Morrison

Kaori Nagai

Andrew Scragg

Alastair Wilson

The Society is governed by its Rules, approved by the Charities Commission in 1999 and amended at the AGMs in September 2014, July 2019 and July 2023.

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 24 June, there were 392 individual members, a net decrease of 12 overall since last year. In the intervening 12 months, we have welcomed 49 new members and a total of 61 existing members have left the Society for a variety of reasons or been removed from our list of members for non-payment of subscriptions. Since the new student membership category was introduced in July 2020, we have welcomed 21 student members, most of them located in the UK. We currently have 15 student members.

Corporate members: The current total is 60, three North American universities having failed to renew their subscriptions for 2023.

Gary Enstone, who for many years was the National Trust's house manager at Bateman's, and a good friend of the Society, accepted our invitation to become an honorary member of the Society.

In July 2022, we held our first in-person AGM for three years at the Royal Over-Seas League (ROSL), after which Dr Sarah Shaw posed the question 'Is Kipling Oral Literature?', highlighting the parallels between Kipling's storytelling and narrative patterns in Buddhist jataka tradition. Our autumn programme began in September with an online video tour of Bateman's featuring David Forsyth, John Walker and Mike Kipling, among other Society members and National Trust staff. In November we were back at ROSL and welcomed Christopher Kreuzer, who delivered a highly informative lecture on "The King's Pilgrimage" — that is, the visit of King George V to the battlefields of Flanders in May 1922, the poem Kipling wrote to commemorate the occasion, and the speech he composed for the King to deliver at Terlincthun Cemetery, near Boulogne, at the end of his tour. February's meeting was scheduled to take place at ROSL too, but a nationwide rail strike obliged us to be online only. The speaker was Rufus Vaughan-Spruce, who is currently writing his thesis on the development of *Departmental Ditties* within the context of their original publication in the 1880s. But rather than speaking on this topic, Rufus enlightened us as to the underappreciated achievements of Stephen Wheeler, Kipling's boss and early mentor at the *Civil and Military Gazette*. Finally, at the second scheduled online meeting of the year in April, Professor Harish Trivedi from Delhi University delivered his long-awaited Eileen Stammers-Smith Memorial Lecture postponed from 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The topic was 'Kipling, the Rajas, and the Raj', examining Kipling's experience of, and attitudes towards, the princely states—notably those that he visited on the tour of Rajputana that became the basis for his *Letters of Marque* sketches.

In addition to our usual programme of five meetings, Council member Richard Howell led a walking tour of Rottingdean in June, which was attended by 20 members and guests. We have commissioned the same film crew that produced last year's Bateman's video to record a version of Richard's tour, which will be shown at our September 2023 meeting. Jan Montefiore also organised and curated two online evening sessions at which members read their favourite extracts from Kipling's works.

Four editions of *The Kipling Journal* were produced, as were five editions of the e-mail newsletter.

The third John McGivering competition for writers of any age was held. The brief was poetry on the theme of war which also engaged with Kipling. We received entries, some multiple, from forty adults and six children. It was no easy matter for the judges to select the winners, and some prizes were awarded jointly. The winning entries will be published in the September 2023 edition of the Journal, after which we will put them up on our website.

In May, the Society was represented by the Secretary and the Librarian at the AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies, an organisation with which we are becoming increasingly involved, especially in exchanges of ideas. They have requested to adopt our policy on offensive terminology, and we featured as their 'society of the month' in March. We will ourselves be hosting their AGM in Sussex in May 2025, a gathering which we hope will be attended by as many of our members as possible.

Our revamped website continues to flourish and provide a valuable service to many thousands of users each month. Thanks are, as always, due to John Radcliffe, Online Editor, and to Alastair Wilson, Council member, who maintain and continue to upload content to the site, most recently starting to upload an annotated version of the Bateman's visitor's book on the members' only pages. John and

Alastair retired from Council in July 2023 and we were pleased that both have agreed to become Vice-Presidents, so remaining involved with the society.

Financial review

The Society's Accounts are prepared in respect of calendar years. Those for 2022 were published in the June 2023 edition of the Kipling Journal. The Society's net assets reduced by around £3,500 in the year to December 2022. This was largely due to the production of an extra edition of *The Kipling Journal* containing papers presented at the 2021 'Kipling in the News' conference.

The Society's investments are mainly held in two charity term accounts with United Trust Bank, maturing in 2023 and 2024. 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 2022.

Reserving policy

At 31 December 2022, the Society held as earmarked reserves amounts of £2,854 and £17,940 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 was not used in 2022. The John Slater Essay Competition Fund was used to fund a prize for children's essays in our writing competition.

The Society also had general reserves of £35,870 amounting to more than two years of expenditure at normal 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.