



THE KIPLING SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1927

Registered Charity No.278885

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NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2023

NEXT MAIN MEETING

Wednesday 22 November. John Walker, the Society's librarian, will give a talk entitled 'Kipling and masculinity: "But a good cigar is a smoke"'. *Royal Over-Seas League, London.* 5.30pm for 6.00pm, and by Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82981905618?pwd=R3pab1dSRUJLclI3NEhReFM1U2lSQ09>

Meeting ID: 829 8190 5618 Passcode: 434137

FUTURE MEETINGS

- **Wednesday 7 February 2024.** Dr Charlotte Boyce (University of Portsmouth) will speak on 'Managing Colonial Famine in Rudyard Kipling's "William the Conqueror"'. *Army and Navy Club, 36 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5JN. NEW VENUE.* 5.30pm for 6.00pm, and by Zoom.
- **Wednesday 17 April** TBA. 6.00pm. Zoom-only.
- **Wednesday 3 July.** AGM, after which Dr Howard Booth will give a talk entitled TBA. *Army & Navy Club, 4.30pm for 5.00pm, and by Zoom.*

BOOK DISCUSSION MEETING

Join us on **Wednesday 15th November** at 6pm on Zoom to discuss Kipling's *The Mark of the Beast*. Led by MA English Literature student, Siobhan Smith, we will question the idea of



narrative punishment, the gothic and Kipling's relationship with India - along with any other aspects raised on the night. The meeting will last approximately one hour and for anyone who doesn't have a copy of the book, it is available online via the society

website: <https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/tale/the-mark-of-the-beast.htm>

Meeting Etiquette:

- *If you would like to speak, please use the 'hand raise' option or indicate in the chat function and the host will call on you.*
- *Please keep your initial contribution to around three minutes to allow others the chance to speak. For speakers with more to say, we can return to you after others have had their say.*

We look forward to seeing you there.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85671074084?pwd=U3p5dnN3cTJvYnRDclc0Rmkvby9EZz09>

Meeting ID: 856 7107 4084 Passcode: 305331

READING EVENING

On **Wednesday 6 December** at 6.00pm, Jan Montefiore will lead another Zoom session of members' short readings (maximum three minutes) from Kipling's poetry or prose.

If you would like to read, please email J.E.Montefiore@kent.ac.uk giving details of your choice. If you would prefer to listen, just join the meeting using the link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88405214369?pwd=dGpxVWc5U3lnMlc2QURyRUUpEVm9yQT09>

Meeting ID: 884 0521 4369 Passcode: 773485

INCREASE IN SUBSCRIPTION RATES – Fiona Renshaw, Membership Secretary

As previously advised, subscriptions will increase on 1 January 2024. Full details can be found in the flyer with the September edition of The Kipling Journal – and can also be found in the August 2023 Newsletter at

<https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Newsletter-Aug23.pdf>

Please can members who pay by standing order contact their bank to amend their standing order. For many banks, this can be done by on-line banking. Alternatively, you may request a form from me at kmemsec@outlook.com to complete and send to your bank.

REPORT OF SEPTEMBER MEETING

At the last meeting, a filmed tour of Rottingdean led by Richard Howell was shown, followed by a short discussion. The film can be viewed again on the society's YouTube channel at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIJVwApwUTk>



VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

On-line Co-ordinator. Following the launch of the new website last year, many of the pages can be edited by officers or other volunteers, removing a considerable part of the workload formerly borne by the On-line Editor. However, Council has identified that it still needs someone to do some generic editing and updating, liaise with our external consultant, report to Council on usage, and generally oversee the site. If any member with some familiarity with websites, especially WordPress ones, would like to contribute in this way, please contact John Radcliffe for further information johnradcliffe_abroad@hotmail.com

Editorial Assistant. Jan Montefiore has edited the Kipling Journal for over ten years. Whilst she is not immediately wanting to retire, she would appreciate some editorial assistance with future editions. Such an assistant would be in a prime position to take over from Jan in due course. If you might be interested in this role, please contact Jan for an initial discussion at J.E.Montefiore@kent.ac.uk

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES – AUTUMN NEWSLETTER



The latest edition of the ALS Newsletter can be read at [ALS-autumn newsletter-2023 \(wordpress.com\)](https://www.als-societies.org.uk/newsletter-2023). It includes:

- An account of the 2023 ALS AGM weekend at Winchester, hosted by the Charlotte M Yonge Fellowship
- Now we are 50: Best-selling/most popular books in the year that the ALS was formed
- The 2024 AGM in the Lake District
- Q & A with Jim Naughtie, the new ALS President
- New memorial to Lewis Carroll in Oxford.

NB: The ALS has decided to cease production of its annual magazine 'ALSo...'. The call for contributions for the 2024 edition made in our August newsletter may therefore be ignored,

BATEMAN'S RE-IMAGINED

Experience for yourself the magical beauty of book artist Su Blackwell's bespoke art installation created from copies of Rudyard Kipling's original handwritten manuscript of *The Jungle Book*, commissioned especially for Bateman's for 2023.



Peer inside miniature paper sculptures of *The Jungle Book* characters created by Bateman's volunteers and marvel at the extraordinary ethereal quality of Su Blackwell's intricate creation.

Su Blackwell's artwork will be displayed in Carrie's Office, which is a small room off the entrance hall in the house at Bateman's, not usually open to the public. The room accessible up 5 stairs.

15 September 2023 – 1 January 2024 (closed 24 & 25 December) 11am–3:30pm.



WHY WE READ KIPLING – Part 7

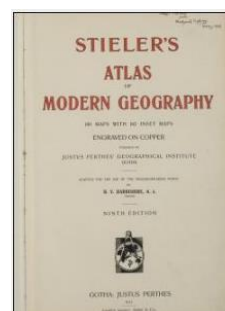
We asked 'If you could take one work of Kipling's to a desert island which would it be?'

Perhaps slightly ducking the question, the majority of respondents said that they would take an edition of his collected verses. Andrew Scragg commented '*the range and the mix of familiar and unexpected verse would keep me going*'. Alastair Wilson added that his copy of the Definitive Edition of the verses '*is the 1940 edition on India paper, so it's quite lightweight. It had belonged to my father, and went to war with him in 1940, accompanying him overseas in 1942, to Persia (as it was then) and Iraq, Egypt, Sicily and Italy.*'

Diarmid Lucy differed. '*This question is far too tough for a simple answer. I suppose it would have to be Kim*'. Jan Montefiore also loves *Kim*, but said '*Not Kim, because I know it too well, almost by heart. Probably the collected poems.*' Finally, John Seriot had a different opinion. '*Again, a very difficult choice. Possibly The Day's Work (?)*'

KIPLING'S ATLAS

When Max Aitken, the future Lord Beaverbrook, came to England from Canada in 1910, one of the first people he made friends with was Rudyard Kipling, the most widely read author in the English-speaking world. The Kiplings were invited to his house for Christmas in 1912 and Kipling made a present to his host of a magnificent atlas of the world. On many of its pages, Kipling, an inveterate traveller, inscribed lines from his poems which express his feelings for different countries and regions on the eve of the Great War. A copiously illustrated article



describing the atlas, by our president David Alan Richards, can be found on our website at <https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/readers-guide/kiplings-atlas.htm>

THINGS AS THEY ARE – Part 2 - Sandra Janzen

A Quite Different Meaning to the Phrase?

It's useful to make a few whistle-stops at a few others use of the phrase, starting with the first literary use of it. Kipling's use does connect in a sense to William Godwin's use of the phrase in his novel titled *Things As They Are* (and subtitled: *or The Adventures of Caleb Williams*). Godwin's preface to his novel states his purpose:

“The following narrative is intended to answer a purpose, more general and important than immediately appears upon the face of it. The question now afloat in the world respecting THINGS AS THEY ARE, is the most interesting that can be presented to the human mind. While one party pleads for reformation and change, the other extols, in the warmest terms, the existing constitution of society. It seemed as if something would be gained for the decision of his question, if that constitution were faithfully developed in its practical effects. What is not presented to the public, is no refined and abstract speculation; it is a study and delineation of things passing in the moral world. It is now known to philosophers, that the spirit and character of government intrudes itself into every rank of society. But this is a truth highly worthy to be communicated to persons whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach. Accordingly, it was proposed, in the invention of the following work, to comprehend, as far as the progressive nature of a single story would allow, a general view of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man. If the author shall have taught a valuable lesson, without subtracting from the interest and passion, by which a performance of this sort ought to be characterized, he will have reason to congratulate himself upon the vehicle he has chosen.” – May 12, 1794



This preface was withdrawn in the original edition, in compliance with the alarms of booksellers, as Godwin notes in his preface to the second edition. This sense of the phrase seems to be concerned with a present condition or circumstance and the acceptance or not of that condition. Several artists and writers commented on the need to see and portray the essence of things. Oscar Wilde, in his preface to *Dorian Gray*, offers his manifesto for artists. The editors of *The Oxford Anthology*, Kermode et al, note that for Wilde, the “worshipper of artifice and elegance”, his manifesto “represents a dominant tendency in the artistic theory of that time and of some decades to come, derived in essence from, among other French writers, Baudelaire and Flaubert, and perhaps ultimately from William Blake, or so he leads us to think in the last paragraph of *De Profundis*.

“Time and space, succession and extension are merely accidental conditions of Thought. The Imagination can transcend them, and move in a free sphere of ideal existences. Things, also, are in their essence what we choose to make them. A thing is, according to the mode in which one looks at it. ‘Where others,’ says Blake, ‘see but the Dawn coming over the hill, I see the sons of God shouting for joy’ (*A Vision of the Last Judgment*. Wilde quotes from memory and

approximately). Here we seem to be onto a third meaning of the phrase, things as they are means as we see them.

Wallace Stevens, too, plays with the phrase. His poem *The Man With the Blue Guitar* (1936-7) is a meditation on Plato's shadows, and on art as superior to religion, and on the reality of thought and imagination. He refers to the song the guitarist is playing as a serenade and as a rhapsody (perhaps an allusion to Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*) No one could write a poem in the late 30s about a blue guitar without Picasso's blue guitar painting coming to mind—or Picasso's blue guitarist and the blues making their way up from the Southern US:

VI

... *The blue guitar*

*Becomes the place of things as they are,
A composing of senses of the guitar.*

XIV

A candle is enough to light the world.

*It makes it clear. Even at noon
It glistens in essential dark.*

*At night, it lights the fruit and wine,
The book and bread, things as they are,*

*In a chiaroscuro where
One sits and plays the blue guitar.*

XV

*Is this picture of Picasso's, this "hoard
Of destructions," a picture of ourselves,*

Now, an image of society?

....

Things as they are have been destroyed.

XXVIII

*And things are as I think they are
And say they are on the blue guitar.*

XX

What is there in life except one's ideas?



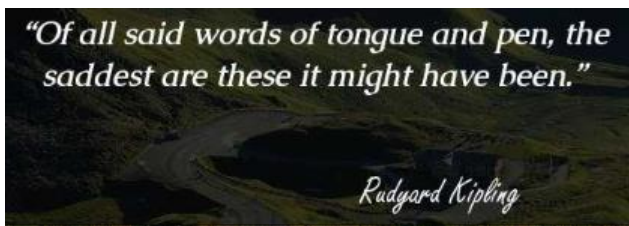
Of this poem, Stevens wrote: "In . . . *Owl's Clover*, while the poems reflect what was then going on in the world, that reflection is merely for the purpose of seizing and stating what makes life intelligible and desirable in the midst of great change and great confusion. The effect of *Owl's Clover* is to emphasize the opposition between things as they are and things imagined; in short, to isolate poetry. Since this is of significance, if we are entering a period in which poetry may be of first importance to the spirit, I have been making notes on the subject in the form of short poems . . . These short poems, some thirty of them, form. . . *The Man With the*

Blue Guitar. . . This group deals with the incessant conjunctions between things as they are and things imagined. Although the blue guitar is a symbol of the imagination, it is used most often simply as a reference to the individuality of the poet, meaning by the poet any man of imagination.”

The phrase was not only a dictum with the cubists and other artists, it was also, slyly, a part of the Imagist poets’ manifesto. They agreed they could all subscribe to poetry which was ‘hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite’ and which presented an image adding, ‘We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous. It is for this reason that we oppose the cosmic poet, who seems to us to shirk the real difficulties of his art.’”

To be continued

THINGS THAT KIPLING DIDN'T WRITE - #6



This quotation, which is included on the website page ‘97 Rudyard Kipling quotes that will inspire you to think’, is actually a (mis)quotation from the poem *Maud Muller* by the American Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier, which the rest of the internet at least seems to have correct.

The Newsletter would be happy to publish any further incorrect attributions to Kipling that members can find on this website <https://quotes.thefamouspeople.com/rudyard-kipling-40.php>, especially if the correct source is identified.

... AND FINALLY

