



THE KIPLING SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1927

Registered Charity No.278885

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NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2024

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 17 April David Alan Richards, President of the Kipling Society, will relate ‘The Story of my Kipling collection’. Dave amassed one of the most comprehensive modern-day collections of rare Kipling books, letters, and other material. These he subsequently donated to Yale University, his *alma mater*. This meeting is a joint meeting with the American Trust for the British Library (ATBL), of which Dave sits on the Executive Committee. 6.00pm. Zoom-only. Meeting ID: 892 4525 9525 Passcode: 321264

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89245259525?pwd=Sy81ckVINXQvVzNENzIIYSs3V01kQT09>

FUTURE MEETINGS

- **Wednesday 3 July.** AGM, after which Dr Howard Booth will speak on Kipling and E.M. Forster. *Army & Navy Club, 4.30pm for 5.00pm, and by Zoom.*
- **Wednesday 18 September.** ‘Kipling’s Burwash’ Filmed presentation and discussion 6.00pm Zoom-only
- **Wednesday 27 November.** Professor Janet Montefiore speaking on “‘The Finest Story in the World’: A Clerk’s Tale’. *Army & Navy Club, 5.30pm for 6.00pm, and by Zoom.*

READING EVENING

Thursday 20 June - Jan Montefiore will lead a Zoom session of members’ short readings (maximum three minutes) from Kipling’s poetry or prose. Further details will be given in the next newsletter.

SUMMER EVENT

Sunday 23 June 2.00pm Walking tour of Burwash, taking in the wider grounds of the Bateman’s estate (including the mill), the parish church and war memorial, and the Kipling statue in the main street. If you would like to attend, please contact David Forsyth, the Society’s Bateman’s Liaison Officer, for further details davidforsyth5@hotmail.com
*Those who are not members of the National Trust will need to pay for entry to Bateman’s and, if travelling by car, parking. The tour will **not** include the inside of the house. If you wish to visit this, please do so before the tour begins (the house usually opens at 11.00am, the grounds at 10.00am). For those who would prefer to avoid the steepish uphill walk to the village, it will be possible to drive and meet the rest of the party there.*

NEW ONLINE CO-ORDINATOR

The Society is pleased to announce that **Ian Bell** has volunteered to be the new On-Line Co-ordinator. Over the next few months, he will be taking over the role from Vice-President John Radcliffe, who had continued in the role *pro tem* after retiring from Council last year. Please refer any website matters to Ian from now on, including errors identified and suggestions for improvement. His e-mail address is iansambell@me.com

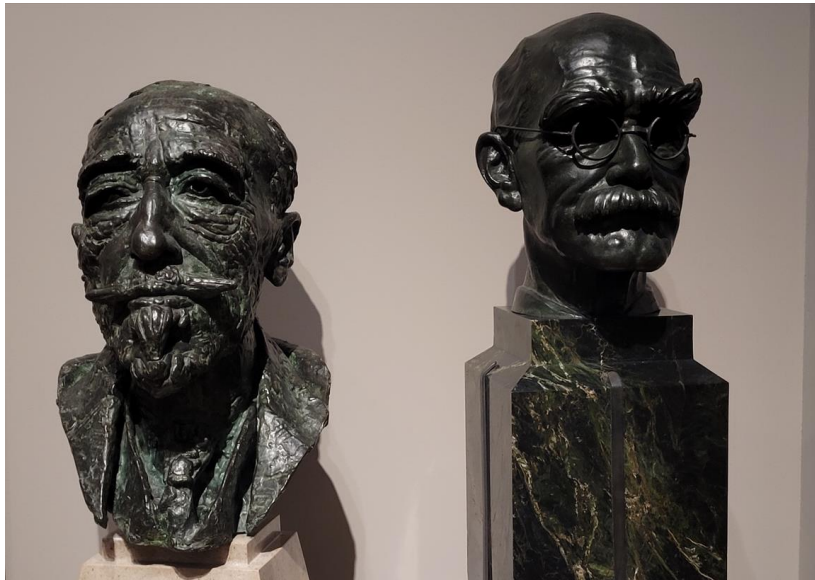
REPORT OF FEBRUARY MEETING – Alex Bubb

February saw our first full meeting in our new venue, the Army & Navy Club on Pall Mall, and it proved a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Our guest was Dr Charlotte Boyce from the University of Portsmouth, who spoke about Kipling's 1895 story "William the Conqueror" in relation to several specific nineteenth-century Indian famines that Kipling would have been informed about. Charlotte gave a superb talk covering the story's historical context, characterization, the role of infrastructure and the operation of gender in the story. The Q&A afterwards was some of the most interesting and enthusiastic that I have experienced during my time at the Society. At 7.15 we drew to a reluctant close, and although some collective guilt was expressed by those sitting down to a sumptuous meal after a serious discussion of famine, the "Rag" should be commended for their level of service: a large circular table in the club's quiet panelled dining room are perfectly suited to our needs, and the evening turned out as socially rewarding as it was intellectually stimulating.

I would encourage any members attending future meetings in person to stay on afterwards for reasonably priced food and great conversation.

KIPLING AT NPG

Visiting the revitalised National Portrait Gallery recently, I was pleased to see that Kipling still featured, albeit only in the form of a bust by Ginette Bingguely-Lejeune. He was side by side with Joseph Conrad. I was disappointed that the portrait by Philip Burne-Jones was not on display.



LIBRARY NEWS - John Walker

The Society's Council has recently concluded an agreement gifting the Society's library to Haileybury College. The collection has now become the responsibility of Haileybury College, in terms of safety, security, conservation and development.

Members can still visit the collection for research purposes in the same way as before, by application to the Society's Honorary Librarian (currently John Walker), who can also arrange



for scans of unique items to be viewed online, and forward applications to use materials for display purposes. The Society will continue to contribute towards maintenance and development of stock held in the Kipling Room, and work to add to that stock with new publications and ephemera.

We look forward to closer liaison with Dr Toby Parker, Director of Learning and Research at Haileybury, who is our Honorary Archivist. Projects already in progress include a range of scans of precious photographic and textual stock to be available through a link on the Society's website. We will also be preparing for the Society's centenary, in 2027.

Together with Haileybury's own Kipling material, and the collection of the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, the Archive at Haileybury will form a resource of great importance to enthusiasts and scholars across the world.

WHY WE READ KIPLING – Part 9

We asked 'Do you have a favourite scene or line from Kipling?'

Diarmid Lucey responded "There are too many to count! Considering this question sends my mind off to wander down endless corridors of memory and delight." Alastair Wilson similarly said "No single one - my favourite piece of verse is 'M'Andrew's Hymn', which I used to be able to recite from memory in its entirety - I can only do about the first 80 lines now."

John Seriot's favourite by far is the opening and closing stanza in 'The Ballad of East and West'. Those two compass points also feature in Rodney Attwood's favourite, the description of Parnesius' first sight of Hadrian's wall – "Just when you think you are at the world's end, you see a smoke from East to West as far as the eye can turn..." Amazingly, they also feature in Andrew Scragg's choice from 'Outsong of the Jungle',

"East and West and North and South,
Wash thy hide and close thy mouth".

He adds "if only I could!"

Maggie Washington favourite lines are, "Who hath desired the sea. - the sight of salt water unbounded / The heave and the halt and the hurl and the crash of the comber wind-hounded?" She adds that they're an accurate description of a wave breaking - She recites it each time she goes to the sea. Finally, Jan Montefiore has several bites at the cherry. Her favourite scene is Kim giving quinine and meat lozenges to the Jat farmer's little boy while the lama watches proudly. Her favourite lines are:

"Shall we only threaten and be angry for an hour?
When the storm is ended shall we find
How softly but how swiftly they have sidled back to power
By the favour and contrivance of their kind?"

and

“They shut the way through the woods
Seventy years ago.”

THE RETURN OF THE BUFFALO HERD

The original Edward Julius Detmold watercolour which was acquired last year by the National Trust has now been put on display at Bateman’s in the Jungle Book Room (a.k.a. the Powder Closet) . The Society contributed £750 towards its restoration and reframing.



THINGS AS THEY ARE – Part 4 - Sandra Janzen

The writers and painters mentioned earlier seem to define ‘things as they are’ differently, but they are making a distinction between either reality and some sort of romanticizing things or between subjective and objective visions of realities. Kipling’s criteria might be to paint “the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They Are!” It is possible Kipling wrote the poem in response to some particular negative criticism of his work, and it is difficult to guess whether the dictum of “things as they are” was a God Kipling wished to serve. In “Land of Our Birth,” Kipling does make clear that only the judgment of one God ought to concern us:

“Teach us to look in all our ends
On thee for Judge and not our friends;
That we, with thee, may walk uncowed
By fear or favour of the crowd.”

Given his ironic approach to many subjects, and if it is true, that he was, as Kermode et al write: “one who steadfastly preferred action and machinery to the prevalent Art for Art’s Sake, (Oxford Anthology, p. 2039),” it is possible the entire poem, “L’Envoi,” is ironic, and that Kipling’s shift in the poem from “The Master” to “the God of things as they are” suggests a criticism of that aim. But it is clear that Kipling, a writer who criticized many of his country’s imperial policies (as in ‘White Man’s Burden’) and who understood the motivations for the best and worst of human behaviour (as in ‘Mary Postgate’ with Mary’s unthinking revenge) and the need for artists to churn out work for money or those who did so in a desire for fame, wished to “call ‘em as he sees ‘em.”

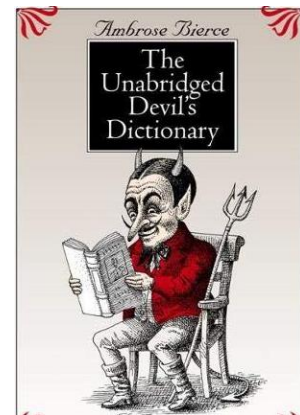


We can be sure that Kipling despised artists or anyone else whose God was money. Lines from a speech he gave to students at McGill honour a man who can't be bought. Kipling also rejected honours, so fame was not his God. Edmund Wilson notes that, in 1907, "the height of his popularity was passed." Perhaps Kipling had been or was enduring criticism, as he did for his 'Mary Postgate' of which George Moore complained that it was too systematic and too technical, making it "Portugal laurels" where another writer would have simply written "shrubbery". Perhaps the poem is merely a reaction to criticism of his 'vengeful' stories, stories Wilson calls "hateful." Possibly the God of things as they are, is simply Kipling's feelings--nasty or not. ('Mary Postgate' is very likely a wish- fulfilling story given that Kipling's son was MIA in WWI in the year it was written.)

What did Stein and Picasso and D. H. Lawrence mean by this phrase? What does Paul Gray mean, more precisely, when he writes, "Successful art satisfies another human need than rationality -- the desire not to calculate but to know in the heart how things are." I would need both to review a great deal of art history and do a thorough scholarly study of a good deal more of Kipling's 35 volumes of collected works to make a case for whether this poem is meant to be taken seriously (that the God of things as they are is the God or goal an artist must seek to satisfy) or whether the entire poem is ironic. But I know the two high school texts (see part 1) do the poem a disservice.

Ambrose Bierce has overtones that may apply to Kipling's work, more or less:

- **CYNIC**, n. A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be. Hence the custom among the Scythians of plucking out a cynic's eyes to improve his vision.
- **ZIGZAG**, v.t. To move forward uncertainly, from side to side, as one carrying the white man's burden. (From zed, z, and jag, an Icelandic word of unknown meaning.)
- **ROMANCE**, n. Fiction that owes no allegiance to the God of Things as They Are. In the novel the writer's thought is tethered to probability, as a domestic horse to the hitching-post, but in romance it ranges at will over the entire region of the imagination -- free, lawless, immune to bit and rein. Your novelist is a poor creature, as Carlyle might say -- a mere reporter. He may invent his characters and plot, but he must not imagine anything taking place that might not occur, albeit his entire narrative is candidly a lie. Why he imposes this hard condition on himself, and "drags at each remove a lengthening chain" of his own forging he can explain in ten thick volumes without illuminating by so much as a candle's ray the black profound of his own ignorance of the matter. There are great novels, for great writers have "laid waste their powers" to write them, but it remains true that far and away the most fascinating fiction that we have is "The Thousand and One Nights."



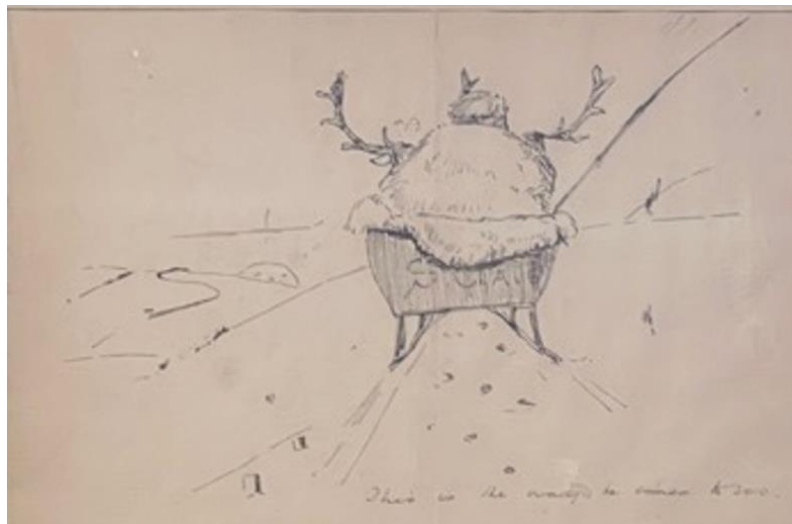
'Things as they are' may mean 'Things as they now stand' (implying acceptance of a nasty lot) or 'Things as we see them not as we wish to see them', or maybe abstract art's leeway to represent feelings. It's not hard to imagine Kipling sneering through a monocle at artists giving

themselves an excuse to smear paint about with no rhyme or reason—and he hadn't seen work by Jackson Pollock. But I am pretty sure Kipling's poem is not about reaping one's reward for one's artistic work by earning a place in heaven—though it well may be about how grand it will be to work in heaven, with no critic but God. If someone can set me straight on whether Kipling was wrinkling his nose at or paying homage to the 'God of things as they are', please enlighten me.

End

ADDITIONS TO THE DAVID ALAN RICHARDS COLLECTION - Part 3

Autograph letter signed "Rudyard Kipling", 3 pages [Naulakba,] Brattleboro, VT, blindstamped two-leaf notepaper, dated December 4, 1893, to an unnamed recipient. Written to a young boy in Kentucky who had written the author in praise of the story 'Rikki-Tik-tavi', which had appeared in *St. Nicholas* magazine for November 1893.



“ ... I am always pleased to know when any one likes a story of mine. Kentucky is a long way from Vermont and this letter will not reach you in time for your birthday but I wish you many happy returns all the same. My birthday is in December too just after Christmas and that is not a good time because people make Christmas and New Year presents count for birthdays too. That is me~ don't you think? I do not know what Santa Claus means to do this year but we have a great deal of snow so he ought to be able to get about very quickly between the houses. I live in the country but he never forgets to come. We are on the regular road from the North Pole and they say that he changes his reindeer after they have come through Canada and gets a fresh team somewhere in Maine; as well as two spare moose on account of the New York presents being so heavy to carry south. Now I must stop because I am writing another wild animal story and it takes time and ink & things. You will find two or three more tales in *St. Nicholas* in the next two months and I hope you will like them as well as Rikki Tikki. Wishing you the best of many Christmases and the happiest of New Years believe me [signature].”

Kipling has also added a full-page drawing on the blank leaf, showing a rear-view of Santa on a sleigh with the legend “S. Claus” on the sleigh's rear panel, and the antlers of his reindeer visible before him; with the caption: “This is the way he comes to us.”

This letter is not in Thomas Pinney's 'The Letters of Rudyard Kipling' for this decade, and the first two volumes of the Letters (covering 1872-1899) contain only four illustrated letters, so such illustrated letters are extremely rare.

DOWN BY THE QUARRY GARDEN

The Quarry Garden lies on the Bateman's estate just across Bateman's Lane from the house. It's a location often missed by visitors, as it can only be reached by leaving the main site either via the main entrance or the mill exit. The garden contains a garden pavilion, restored in memory of Kipling's younger daughter, Elsie.



We will be visiting the Quarry Garden *en route* to Burwash town on our tour on June (see above).

... AND FINALLY

