



# THE KIPLING SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1927

Registered Charity No.278885

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## NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2024

### NEXT MEETING

**Wednesday 27 November. 6.00pm.** Professor Jan Montefiore, “The Finest Story in the World”: A Clerk’s Tale’. *Army & Navy Club 5.30pm for 6.00pm, and by Zoom (6.00pm)*

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83982752546?pwd=Ypk4eVjFSruK7Jo6Gh7gRg5zn97zzU.1>

Meeting ID: 839 8275 2546 Passcode: 545749

*Tea/coffee and biscuits will be served from 5.30pm for those attending in person.*

***For security purposes at the venue, please can any members intending to attend in person let me know no later than Monday 25 November (contact details at the top of this page).***

Please also note the Club’s dress code <https://therag.co.uk/club-dress-code/>. Members are welcome after the meeting to dine in the Coffee Room at the Army & Navy Club with the speaker and members of Council. If you would like to do so, please let me know.

### MEMBERS’ READING EVENING

**Thursday 12 December 2024. 8.00pm (Please note later time).** 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](mailto: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/81226698761?pwd=zvXNQn2RwFe2TgHF6xnFwykofvEEHA.1>

Meeting ID: 812 2669 8761 Passcode: 020092

### OTHER FUTURE MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- **Wednesday 5 February 2025.** Andy Williamson "Kipling and Brown's Hotel". *Army & Navy Club, 5.30pm for 6.00pm, and by Zoom.*
- **Wednesday 23 April 2025.** TBA. *Zoom-only*
- **Friday 16 - Sunday 18 May 2025.** Alliance of Literary Societies AGM and Conference. Hosted by the Kipling Society in Brighton. *All members of the Kipling Society are welcome to attend for all or part of the weekend. Application forms will be available in February 2025.*
- **Wednesday 2 July 2025 –** AGM and talk TBA. *Army & Navy Club, 4.30pm for 5.00pm, and by Zoom.*

### SEPTEMBER MEETING



The filmed tour of the wider Bateman’s grounds and Burwash village first shown at this meeting can now be viewed, on the Society’s new YouTube channel (see below) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=to9Jf9BdFoQ>

## NEW YOUTUBE CHANNEL - Ian Bell, Online Editor

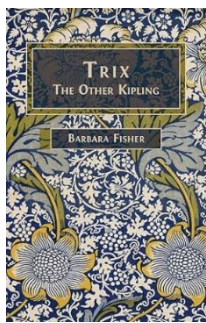
The Society has created a new YouTube channel which hosts our three recorded tours [Bateman's (2022), Rottingdean (2023) and Burwash (2024)], recordings of past Society meetings, and recordings made by members of Kipling's poems.

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheKiplingSociety>

Please do have a look at what is already there, and then consider making a recording yourself for others to enjoy. I'm happy to edit it for you and upload it to the channel. A tutorial of how to make a recording and send it to me can be found on the channel at

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

## TRIX - THE OTHER KIPLING by Barbara Fisher



Member Barbara Fisher's biography of Trix Kipling has been published. She's been working on this book for many years and is thrilled that it has finally come into print. "*This book provides the first account of Trix's life, beginning with the horrible childhood she shared with Rudyard as a Raj orphan in England.*<sup>1</sup> *The biography follows adolescent Trix as she returned to India, where her brother encouraged her to write poems and stories, which were regularly mistaken for his. Her marriage to a stiff Scottish officer is chronicled from its hopeful beginnings through its childless, cheerless middle to its calm and compromised end. Trix's bouts of mental illness are described in sympathetic detail.*" It can be bought on Amazon - and doubtless elsewhere - in hardback, paperback and Kindle versions. See also Barbara's paper KJ 357, pp. 44-57.

## THINGS KIPLING DIDN'T SAY - #8

Another quotation the internet ascribes to Kipling is "*Of all the liars in the world, sometimes the worst are our own fears.*" But as far as we know he never wrote or said it.

Jan Montefiore comments: I think that this may be a garbled version of the Buddhist lama telling Kim, after the overworked, overwrought boy breaks down sobbing, about the advice given him 'when I was a young man ... plagued with these vapours - and some others', by an Abbot - a very holy man: 'There are many liars in the world, and not a few lies, but there are no liars like our bodies, except it be the sensations of our bodies' (*Kim* chapter XV, p. 403, Macmillan edition.)

There may also be a memory of Clough's line 'If hopes were dupes, fears may be lie' in the poem 'Say not, The struggle nought availeth': famously quoted by Churchill in one of his wartime broadcasts.

Librarian John Walker adds 'I have seen it used as a subtitle on the cover of copies of 'The Phantom Rickshaw'. Incidentally, though wiki also lists the quote only as 'attributed', Google would point us towards a poem titled 'I Can Tell You Are Lying', which is actually a book on body language, by C.A Thurston!

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note. Apart from Lorna Lee's biographical notes in 'Trix, Kipling's Forgotten Sister' (2003)

## NAULAKHA NEWS

“Looking over sweeps of emptiness,” Kipling wrote, “we saw our ‘Naulakha’ riding on its hillside like a little boat on the flank of a far wave.” A century later, the nonprofit Landmark Trust USA purchased the property in 1992, only recently to find the aging vessel taking on water from increasingly punishing precipitation. Enter the U.S. National Park Service, which has awarded the trust a \$400,000 “Save America’s Treasures” grant in support of a \$1.25 million improvement plan targeting the storm-battered roof and groundwater seeping into the basement. “It’s game-changing,” Susan McMahon, the trust’s executive director, said of a grant that will both help preserve the past and, amid climate change, “set up for a resilient future.”

When visiting students are told the house was once home to one of England’s greatest literary superstars, they often conjure up thoughts of Harry Potter — the subject of a series of fantasy novels whose first editions were printed at the now-shuttered Book Press just two miles down the still-dirt road in neighbouring Brattleboro. Downstairs, visitors can see Kipling’s study and its wall of books. Upstairs, they can eye not only his bedroom but also his claw-foot bathtub ringed by wooden armrests. And throughout, they can peer out of large sun-splashed windows designed to illuminate rooms before electrical wires made their way from Brattleboro to Dummerston.



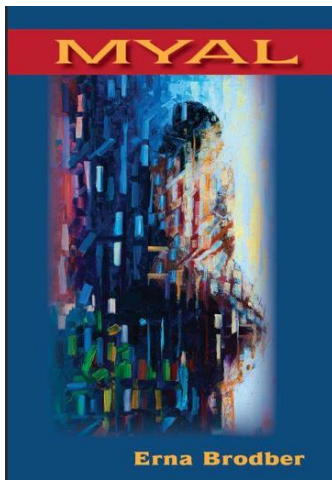
Outside, however, storm clouds loom. Caretakers point to how recent increases in rainfall have threatened the roof, basement, septic system, driveway and clay tennis court (the latter believed to be the first in the state). “There’s so much water pressure coming down that wasn’t initially here,” McMahon said. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Climate Explorer website projects that local precipitation will rise 9% by 2050. That’s why the trust is working to replace the property’s cedar shingle roofs and weatherproof a series of outbuildings and drainage systems. “Keeping water out of the building is priority No. 1,” said Jeremy Ebersole, the trust’s public outreach manager, “because that is going to ruin it quicker than anything else.”

The trust has raised about three-quarters of its \$1.25 million goal, with a final public push coming in the spring and construction starting as early as next summer. “It’s important for us to be historically accurate,” McMahon said of the project, “but we’re doing so with the understanding that rain is going to be more intense. This is a combination of historic preservation and climate resiliency.”

*Thanks to Vermont-based Council member Fred Lerner for drawing this news to our attention.*

## KIPLING IN JAMAICA

Toward the beginning of Erna Brodber's novel *Myal*, the child protagonist recites Rudyard Kipling's "Big Steamers" to a visiting Anglican parson at her school in St. Thomas Parish, Jamaica. "The words were the words of Kipling," we are told, "but the voice was that of Ella O'Grady, aged 13". Ella is a mixed-race child, the daughter of an Irish policeman and his Jamaican housekeeper. Growing up in a rural area, she is bullied by her classmates for her light skin and fair hair. Finding comfort in her studies, she learns from the maps and books her school provides. "When they brought out the maps and showed Europe, it rose from the paper in three dimensions, grew big, came right down to her seat and allowed her to walk on it, feel its snow". Asked to recite "Big Steamers" to the parson, she is undaunted. "She had already been to England several times" in her imagination, and "all she was doing at Teacher's rehearsals was to open her mouth and let what was already in her heart and in her head come out".



Scenes like this give a picture of the colonial nature of literary education in the early to mid-century colonial Caribbean. The set text here, Kipling's "Big Steamers," was first published in *A School History of England*, a 1911 textbook written, as the authors claimed, "for all boys and girls who are interested in the story of Great Britain and her Empire". "Big Steamers" is a didactic, question-and-answer poem in which the child questioner learns from the adult respondent about the work of the British merchant navy, crossing the Empire and Dominions. Its message is of a vast world made tame and safe for the child by the bravery and skill of the imperial merchants. The significance of the scene in *Myal* turns not just on what Ella is reading but on how she is reading it. She has learned it verbatim and is reciting it from memory, such that by a process of "osmosis" Kipling's words have become her own.

British materials, imperial values, rote learning: these are the characteristics many Caribbean writers describe when recalling the colonial literary classroom. Ella O'Grady, attending school in 1913, reads from generic textbooks produced for readers across Britain and its colonies and dominions. Alongside Kipling, she might have encountered Nelson's series of *Royal Readers* or the McDougall Readers series. Slightly later, from the mid-1920s onward, Nelson's began to produce their successful *West Indian Readers* series, written by the colonial schoolmaster Captain J. O. Cutteridge. These later textbooks include more material specific to the West Indies, including lessons on Caribbean flora and fauna, regional agriculture, and local crops. But they also contained extracts and retellings of English literary classics and lessons in art history focused on paintings by British and European artists. Moreover, as Gail Low has shown, the West Indian history they did tell was framed in Eurocentric terms: celebrating Columbus's "discovery" of the islands and skating over the history of slavery in their celebratory story about the region's agricultural development.

[Extract from William Ghosh, 'Decolonizing English Literary Study in the Anglophone Caribbean' in Ato Quayson and Ankhi Mukherjee (eds.), *Decolonizing the English Literary Curriculum* (Cambridge, 2023), pp. 473-474. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009299985.026>]

## RUDYARD KIPLING AND ANGELA THIRKELL; OR "I THINK KIPLING'S MARVELLOUS, ROBIN, DON'T YOU?" Part 1 – Hilary Temple

*{Talk given at the Angela Thirkell Society AGM 26 September 2015 and reproduced by kind permission of the author}*

When you think back to how you first came across Kipling it was very likely the way I did: through *Just So Stories*, the *Jungle Books*, *Kim* and possibly *Puck of Pook's Hill*. Nowadays *The Jungle Book* has been permanently contaminated by Disney and none of today's youngsters will come to it fresh with its total absence of sentimentality and prettiness.

I first encountered Kipling via *Stalky & Co* which I had as a 10th birthday present from my sister and brother. It was an odd choice but my mother shared with her elder brother other school stories such as *Eric, or Little by Little* and *The Fifth Form at St Dominic's*. *Stalky* is at least partly autobiographical, with Kipling as "Beetle".

There is a bullying scene in *Stalky* that chills one even in today's fairly violent era: Stalky and his two study-mates, M'Turk and Beetle, discover that two senior boys are bullying a little one, so they trap them into being bullied in their turn. It is all the more resonant because the various tortures have a name: 'The torture of the Key - which has no key at all - hurts excessively ... "Rocking to sleep" involves three boys and two boxing-gloves.'

The book ends with some of Stalky's coevals, now aged about 30, having a reunion without him. The beauty of this arrangement is that they can gossip about him and his adventures - during the 1880s and 1890s - of bravery and sheer brazen cheek in India with a unit of Sikh soldiers who love him like a brother. A group of Pathans, who watch him at work, rival them in their admiration. All the anecdotes are classics of not expecting your men to do more than you do yourself. He pledges the British Government to all kinds of action - no reference back - and one character comments 'I'd back Stalky against the Foreign Office any day'. Imperialism clearly came in many guises.

Literary criticism focuses in a much more balanced way today upon Kipling's 'You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din' and the real meaning of 'East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet' which is all about individual courage overcoming racial origin. Some of his short stories remain very powerful, though nowadays I find too many of them rather tedious and choked with pipe-smoke. His poems, some of which, unusually, he inserted amid his prose, as in *Just So Stories*, have always been highly rated. Indeed, it is only a matter of a few years since *If* was voted Britain's favourite in a poll conducted by the BBC. But just as in Angela Thirkell (AT) the Conservative Party is meant to run the country, in Kipling England has a God-given right to run other countries so long as individuals perform to a high moral standard.

'Cousin Ruddy' was, as we recall, an admired figure in the families of the four Macdonald sisters as well as among the British public generally. But you couldn't call him particularly kind or encouraging to nascent writers: remember his only comment on Angela's childhood poetry was that her handwriting was 'like sick spiders in an inkpot'? That badly hurt her feelings. Evidently he was more comfortable when giving practical help like autographs for the children to trade at school. 'Cousin' makes him sound closer to AT than he was: born in 1865, Joseph Rudyard was the son of AT's great-aunt Alice (Macdonald) and the 25-year gap between him and



Angela would have been a barrier despite Edward Burne-Jones (EB-J)'s fondness for him.<sup>2</sup> Ruddy is thought to have modelled the Lama in *Kim* on EB-J; and Angela reckoned that Ruddy owed him a lot.

His poem *We and They* epitomises the complexity of Kipling's stance. It is the more interesting to us because of Thirkell's use of the word 'They' - though for her it is a running gag, normally to refer to the post-war Labour Government:

“Father, Mother and Me, Sister and Auntie say, All the people like us are We, And everyone else is They. And They live over the sea, While We live over the way, But - would you believe it? - They look upon We, As only a sort of They!

...But if you cross over the sea, Instead of over the way, You may end by (think of it!) looking on We As only a sort of They!”

Not a conclusion that AT was ever likely to come to, unless we count her development of Sam Adams's character! For very understandable reasons, Angela's crossing of the sea did not have the effect that India had upon Kipling who, like Beetle, was found a newspaper job there. Thirkell has [*The Old Bank House*] the iniquities of Them, starting with food. Mr Adams says:

“If vittamins [note the pronunciation, widely adopted today but clearly regarded as "common" in AT's time] did all that good, why do my hands have industrial fatigue and drop things and forget things? Talk of night starvation; it's day starvation they've got, and everyday starvation too." "Quite right," said Dr. Ford, amused and interested. "I've no particular use for vitamins myself. However They are determined to break us. And when I say us I don't mean professional men like myself or big business men like you, or quiet, hard-working people like all of us here, but the English People. And I daresay They will," said Dr. Ford cheerfully.'



There is then a hubbub of *oratio obliqua*, each remark being typical of the speaker, including: 'one got quite enough to eat but it always made one feel too full and she hoped They felt too full too (Mrs. Dean, who was almost wide awake in her interest); she would tell one what, one did get enough to eat only it was all the wrong things and no wonder one felt that horrid feeling and she expected They felt it too and that was probably what made Them so beastly [*Lucy Marling*].'

Thirkell refers this back to Kipling [*County Chronicle*] when Mr Shergold the housemaster comments, "One might write a book about how awful the government are and call it *They*, sir." Everard Carter as headmaster says, "One might ...So might Kipling." We are presumably meant to take this allusion. Mr Traill tries to score by pointing out that using material from Kipling will incur copyright problems. Mrs Morland says virtually the same thing [*Never Too Late*]. "THEY ... I don't mean Kipling ... because I'd have to pay royalties if I did. I mean Whoever They Are." Here, however, she means those unseen powers that make you lose things. Could all this have been a family joke as well as a real issue? Kipling would obviously have had ideas

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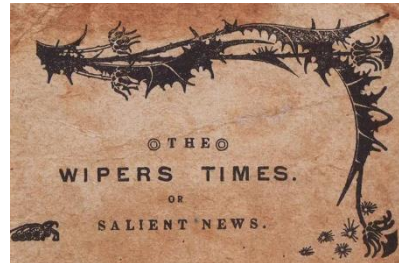
<sup>2</sup> Angela Thirkell was a granddaughter of EB-J

and expressions pinched from his works and there are references elsewhere to his sensitivity to plagiarism.

*To be continued*

### ‘WIPERS TIMES’ *IF* PARODY

If you can drink the beer the Belgians sell you,  
And pay the price they ask with ne'er a grouse,  
If you believe the tales that some will tell you,  
And live in mud with ground sheet for a house,  
If you can live on bully and a biscuit,  
And thank your stars that you've a tot of rum,  
Dodge whizzbangs with a grin, and as you risk it  
Talk glibly of the pretty way they hum,  
If you can flounder through a C.T. nightly  
That's three-parts full of mud and filth and slime,  
Bite back the oaths and keep your jaw shut tightly,  
While inwardly you're cursing all the-time,  
If you can crawl through wire and crump-holes reeking  
With feet of liquid mud, and keep your head  
Turned always to the place which you are seeking,  
Through dread of crying you will laugh instead,  
If you can fight a week in Hell's own image,  
And at the end just throw you down and grin,  
When every bone you've got starts on a scrimmage,  
And for a sleep you'd sell your soul within,  
If you can clamber up with pick and shovel,  
And turn your filthy crump hole to a trench,  
When all inside you makes you itch to grovel,  
And all you've had to feed on is a stench,  
If you can hang on just because you're thinking  
You haven't got one chance in ten to live,  
So you will see it through, no use in blinking  
And you're not going to take more than you give,  
If you can grin at last when handing over,  
And finish well what you had well begun,  
And think a muddy ditch a bed of clover,  
You'll be a soldier one day, then, my son.



### KIPLING WAS A GRIMM



*Grimm* is an American fantasy police television series which follows Portland homicide detective Nicholas Burkhardt who discovers he is a Grimm, the latest in a line of guardians who is sworn to keep the balance between humanity and mythological creatures, known as Wesen. Kipling features briefly in an episode from 2014.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5nYUrYiF7Q> (skip the add, then 30s in).

*Thanks to Debra Wynn for drawing this to our attention*

## THE TWAIN SHALL MEET

And Jim said ... if a man owned a beehive and that man died, the bees must be told about it before sun-up next morning, or else the bees would all weaken down and quit work and die. Jim said bees wouldn't sting idiots; but I didn't believe that, because I had tried them lots of times myself, and they wouldn't sting me.

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Chapter 8 (1884)*

Bees! Bees! Hark to your bees!

"Hide from your neighbours as much as you please,  
But all that has happened, to us you must tell,  
Or else we will give you no honey to sell!"

...

Marriage, birth or buryin',  
News across the seas,  
All you're sad or merry in,  
You must tell the Bees.

*The Bee Boy's Song (1906)*

## JOIN THE POWER OF THE PACK

The Washington National opera performs *Jungle Book* at the Kennedy Center in D.C. from 13 to 15 December 2024. 'In a new take on the Kipling classic, the beloved story gets a contemporary twist with music from South Asian and Western music traditions and mesmerizing Bollywood dance from Indian classical dance company **Taal**. Join Mowgli, Baloo, Bagheera, and more animal characters for a heartwarming tale about friendship, compassion, and forgiveness. The jungle may be filled with dangers but there is strength in chosen family'.



<https://www.kennedy-center.org/wno/home/2024-2025/jungle-book/>

Thanks to Shelley Friedman & Virginia Phillips who told us of this

## VERSE 2 MELODY

Retired English teacher Richard Chalmers has devised a technique by which poems are



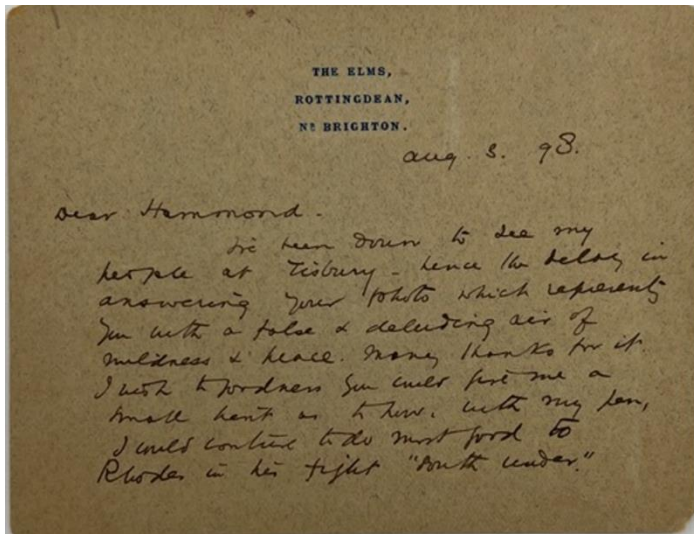
vocalised and set to music by Artificial Intelligence (AI) 'creating unique compositions and illustrations that evoke each poem's atmosphere while honouring the original author's intent.' He has included versions of *Tommy* and *If* amongst his early selections, to which he is adding a poem every day. Each poem is illustrated with an AI-generated illustration. The results are quite remarkable. You can have free access to Richard's website for two weeks, after which a small subscription is payable if you wish to continue to listen. Coming soon are two less well-known Kipling poems, *An Astrologer's Song* and *The Explanation*.

<https://v2melody.com/index.php>



## ADDITIONS TO THE DAVID ALAN RICHARDS COLLECTION - Part 4

**Letter to John Hays Hammond.** "Dear Hammond I've been down to see my people at Tisbury - hence the delay in answering your photo which represents you with a false &



deluding air of mildness and peace. Many thanks for it. I wish to goodness you could give me a small hint as to how, with my pen, I could continue to do the most good to Rhodes in his fight 'South under.' Sometimes I think an interview-and sometimes a poem would be best but I'm blown if I precisely know. Please enlighten me. The Pater wants you to comed down to Tisbury. I said I [ ] you'd come like a little bird he'd like to see you here, also, if the Czar and Kruger and the [ ] was leave you any time. C[arrie] sends

particular love and with best regards to you and Mrs. Hammond. I am always Yours sincerely"

Hammond (1855-1936) was an American mining engineer who went to work for Cecil Rhodes; his report in 1896 that there was no gold in Mashonaland or Matabeleland played a role in encouraging the Jameson Raid on the Transvaal (Rhodes needed to ramp up the depressed price of his shares in his British South Africa Company by reports of new gold strikes), and Hammond was imprisoned with Jameson and others, then mercifully freed by Kruger (the U.S. government had sought his release). Hammond had met Kipling on the S.S. *Dunvegan Castle* on 8 January 1898 when both were traveling from Southampton to Cape Town, and he no doubt informed Kipling about the latest developments "South under".

*The Autobiography of John Hays Hammond* tells how, in London in 1897, even after the Jameson Raid: "Of an evening in London one would find oneself in the midst of a thoroughly cosmopolitan assemblage. Under the same roof one might meet Viscount Grey, the statesman, Lecky the historian, Kipling, the writer..."

### KIPLING IN PUNCH - #1

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#### TO THE NEW SCRIBE AND POET.

AIR—"O Ruddier than the Cherry!"

O RUDYARD, in this sherry,  
I drink your very, very  
Good health. I would  
That write I could  
Like KIPLING, sad or merry.  
(Signed) INVIDIUS NASO.

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*Punch*, 10 May 1890