



THE KIPLING SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1927

Registered Charity No.278885

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NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2021

He suffered the usual penalties for breaking out of bounds when there was cholera in the city.
(Kim, Ch. VII)

FUTURE MEETINGS

We will be continuing to hold virtual meetings for the time being.

- Wednesday 10 February, 6.00p.m. The fourth collective reading event, organised once again by our Chair, Jan Montefiore.

All 24 reading slots for this event have now been taken. However, if you would like to watch, please email Jan at J.E.Montefiore@kent.ac.uk for the Zoom link.

- Wednesday 24 February, 6.00p.m. Professor John McBratney of John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio will speak on *Kipling Studies in the 21st Century*.
- Wednesday 21 April, 6.00pm. Professor Tricia Lootens of the University of Georgia (USA) will speak on *Opening 'Kim': Kipling, Twain, Dutt*

If you'd like to attend either of the two above meetings, please e-mail John Radcliffe at johnrad@btinternet.com for the Zoom link.

- Monday 7th June. Joint event and dinner with the Honourable Artillery Company. Prof. Ian Beckett will be speaking on *Kipling's Army Revisited*.

Whether we can safely proceed with this event will be decided closer to the time.

- Wednesday 30 June. 5.00pm. Annual General Meeting; followed at 6.00pm by Adrian Munsey and Vance Goodwin speaking on their TV documentary *Rudyard Kipling: A Secret Life* (illustrated with clips). *Format to be confirmed.*
- Thursday & Friday 9 -10 September. *Kipling in the News* Conference, organised jointly by the Society and City University. *To be held partially or fully on-line. Details to be confirmed.*

VACANCIES ON COUNCIL

There will be vacancies on the Society's council following the AGM in June and any members who wish to get more involved in the running of the Society are most welcome to

put themselves forward for election. To find out more about being on council, please don't hesitate to contact the Secretary (by any of the means listed at the head of this newsletter) or any other member of council.

SUBSCRIPTIONS – Fiona Renshaw

Members who normally pay by cheque but might find this problematic during the pandemic can renew their membership quickly, safely and easily using PayPal on the Society's website ([Joining and renewal form \(kiplingsociety.co.uk\)](https://kiplingsociety.co.uk)).

SOMETHING IN COMMON Part 2– Harry Waterson

In December 1940 construction began on the Church of the Recessional, the third small Old World church in Forest Lawn. This is the architect's drawing that accompanied the announcement in the LA Times. "It will be a precise reproduction of the 12th century Norman parish church of St. Margaret in Rottingdean, Sussex. Kipling and his family worshiped there. In his home, The Elms, across the village green from the church, the great soldier-poet wrote many of his famous poems and stories, notably the Recessional and the classic Kim." The number of inaccuracies in these three sentences is awesome. They probably came from the pen of Walter K. Neill who was the PR Manager of Forest Lawn.



Drawing by Anson C. Boyd - LA Times 12/2/40 p38

Walter K. Neill (1908-2003) was more than a bit player in the saga of the Church of the Recessional. He had been dispatched to England and Rottingdean in May 1940 to complete the final details of the Church of the Recessional. He was accompanied by Fred A. Hanson, an architect who was assisting in the construction. On June 1st Anson Boyd was appointed California State Architect and he was replaced by Paul O. Davis as Chief Architect.

This was no easy trip. War was raging in Europe. Neill and Hanson took a Pan Am Clipper from New York to Lisbon on May 13th. Then went by way of Morocco to Paris and then across the channel to England. While Hanson was checking architectural details at St. Margaret's, Neill was acquiring Kiplingiana for display in a room just inside the church entrance. Michael Smith is again the source for what Neill put together (KJ183, p. 55). A complete set of the Kipling Sussex Edition; the page from *The Times* with the first publication of *Recessional*; an account by Sir Roderick Jones of the history of the poem; a bronze bust of Kipling sculpted by P. Synge-Hutchinson; a copy of Philip Burne-Jones's portrait of Kipling; and a watercolour of St. Margaret's Church. This was in addition to memorabilia parishioners of St. Margaret's had sent to Forest Lawn prior to September 1939. According to Elizabeth Birnie this included one of Kipling's favourite chairs, a pen he often used, and a cracked clay pitcher sent by a former maid. Neill and Hanson returned to New York June 10th on the *SS President Roosevelt* from Galway, Eire. The US State Department had sent the ship to Galway to pick up Americans who wanted to come home from the British Isles. Over 700 refugees returned on a ship designed to carry less than 400 passengers.

The Church of the Recessional was completed, and the formal dedication took place November 30, 1941. Three thousand people attended the dedication. The words of Keats were invoked. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Non-denominational platitudes were voiced. Hubert Eaton told yet another version of how St. Margaret's Church was selected.

Mrs. Elsie Bambridge, Kipling's daughter, sent this radiogram: "In England it seems wonderful to think of a new church being dedicated in these days when most of our historic ones are reduced to blackened shells. Perhaps it is a symbol of the Old World handing to the new the torch of religion to keep alight until such time as battered Europe can again worship in peace in freedom." Terry Kilburn, British child film actor read *When Earth's Last Picture Is Painted* and the Robert Mitchell Boys Choir sang *If*. Terry Kilburn is remembered for two of the most famous last lines in film history. "God bless us, everyone." and "Goodbye Mr. Chips."



Courtesy of the Forest Lawn Museum Photo Archives

Guests of Honour included Mrs. Florence Godfrey, a cousin of Kipling, Mrs. Janet Hill, President of the Kipling Society of Southern California and Jack L. James, a former organist at St. Margaret's. The ritual concluded with the singing of "Recessional" by baritone John Lambert after which visitors were invited to tour the Church of the Recessional. The first wedding took place there the following evening. Seven days later, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the US went to war.

In the Kipling Journal of June 1997 Professor Thomas Pinney asked about the existence of a Kipling Society in California. He had found two letters that he cited (KJ282, pp. 45-6) written by two of the principles in this story. He first recapped a letter from Walter K. Neill of May 9, 1941 to Malcolm Johnson of Doubleday. Neill wrote that he had organized a Kipling Society in Los Angeles in December, 1940 to create a library of books to be sold for British War Relief and to publicize Forest Lawn. Neill also stated that Kipling's daughter, Mrs. Bambridge was making contributions of 'things' to Forest Lawn for its Kipling historical room. Neill also confirmed in the letter his trip to London in 1940 and his purchase of a bronze bust of Kipling and other items. Neill went on to state he had been an employee of Forest Lawn in December 1940 when the Kipling Society of Southern California was formed but he was no longer so employed. This was a distinction without a difference. What Neill had done was resign his position with Forest Lawn and open up his own firm, Walter K. Neill, Inc. with one client - Forest Lawn. He hoped to build on that.

The second letter was written by Hubert Eaton to Elsie Bambridge on January 27, 1941. He explained that the Kipling Society of Southern California was under the guidance of Forest Lawn and had 200 members. The January meeting had been attended by Basil Rathbone and C. Aubrey Smith and addressed by the Ranees of Sarawak. The following is what additional information has turned up given Prof. Pinney's two leads.

- 12/30/1940 LA Times p23: Group to Form Kipling Unit of International Society. At a luncheon at the Jonathan Club today the first steps will be taken to organize a Kipling Society with Janet Yeoman Hill the inspirer. The event will also commemorate the 75th birthday of Rudyard Kipling. The purpose is to arouse and renew interest in

Kipling's writings and to create a collection of books which may be sold to benefit British War Relief. The speaker at the luncheon will be Walter K. Neill who visited Kipling's home in England.

- 1/29/1941 LA Times p26: Kipling Unit to Pick Staff. Following receipt of a cable of authorization from Maj. Gen. L. C. Dunsterville, the newly formed Kipling Society will elect permanent officers tomorrow night at The Bryson. (The Bryson Apartment Hotel on Wilshire) The Ranee of Sarawak will make her final public speaking appearance at the meeting before returning to London. There will also be a talk on "Immediate Aid for the British War Relief Association" by Walter K. Neill.
- 3/25/1941 LA Times p21: By The Way with Bill Henry, Odds and Ends. Raine Bennett addresses the Kipling Society Thursday on "Kipling and Other Great Islanders."
- 5/28/1941 LA Times p15: Retired Officer to Speak. Capt. Harold Roche, British Army, retired, will address the Kipling Society of Southern California at 8 PM tomorrow in the Unitarian Church, 2936 W. Eighth St.

Other than the previously mentioned reference to Janet Hill, President of the Kipling Society of Southern California being an honoured guest at the dedication, the Southern California Kipling Society does not surface again in any guise. This Kipling Society was a PR effort by Walter Neill to keep the name of Kipling in front of the public while the Church of the Recessional was under construction. If the Society went on to have a life of its own, great. If not, so be it. The onslaught of WWII in the US probably extinguished any light that might still have flickered in the fledgling Society.

To be continued

LISTENING TO POEMS ON THE WEBSITE - John Radcliffe

Courtesy of John Walker, "A Diversity of Kipling", and a modest amount of coding, we have started to put soundtracks of the poems up on the website. For the following poems you will find a link to the soundtrack after the last verse.

The Absent-minded Beggar
Alnaschar and the Oxen
The Ballad of East and West
Blue Roses
Boots
Cities and Thrones and Powers
Bridge Guard in the Karroo
The Craftsman
Danny Deever
The Deep Sea Cables
Edgehill Fight

En-Dor
The Explanation
Fifty North and Forty West
Harp Song of the Dane Women
Mandalay
Mesopotamia
The Sergeant's Wedding
Soldier an' Sailor Too
That Day
This Uninhabited Island

More will follow.

COINCIDENCES IN THE CAREERS OF RUDYARD KIPLING AND BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER Part 1 – Tonie and Valmai Holt

We have written the biographies of two interesting subjects who both had a significant role in the First World War. One is about Rudyard Kipling's son, John, although the major part of the book concerns Rudyard himself. It is entitled *My Boy Jack?*, the important question mark referring to our doubt that the Commonwealth War Graves' announcement of 1992 that they had identified John Kipling's grave, was valid. The use of the name 'Jack' refers to Rudyard's yearning poem, *My Boy Jack*, the first line of which is 'Have you news of my boy Jack?' John was, as far as we can establish, never known to the family as 'Jack', but there is no doubt that the poem referred to Rudyard's desperate search for the body of his son who was declared missing in the Battle of Loos on 27 September 1915.

The other book is about WW1's most famous cartoonist, Bruce Bairnsfather, entitled *In Search of the Better 'Ole*. This refers to his most famous image, *Well if you knows of a better 'ole, go to it*, still used by many of today's cartoonists, often with current politicians in difficult situations in the 'Ole'.



Illus 1. Rudyard and Carrie Kipling in Dud Corner CWGC Cemetery, where their son John is listed on the Memorial Wall to the Missing.



Illus 2. Bairnsfather's most famous cartoon 'The Better 'Ole.'

In this article we examine the many coincidences that occurred in their personal lives and in their careers. Firstly, we explain what triggered this comparison.

Rudyard Kipling and Bruce Bairnsfather at the Italian front, 1917.

During the September 2020 Kipling Society's enjoyable international Zoom, Howard Booth's reading was from *The War in the Mountains*. This is a collection of articles Kipling wrote at the invitation of British Ambassador Sir Rennell Rodd, who wished to draw British attention to the real effort of the Italians during WW1. The six articles were written during Kipling's visit, with his South African journalist friend Percival Landon, to the Italian front in May 1917 and five were published between 6 and 20 June in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The New York Tribune*. The first one, which described Rome in Wartime, was censored by the War Office and was not published. In Rome Kipling and Landon had been treated like VIPs, attending a Beatification at the Vatican, lunching with Cardinal Gasquet, meeting eminent politicians and military officers. During his following tour Kipling visited Udine, Gradisca, the Isonzo River, Gorizia, the Dolomites and the Trentino Fronts. The Italian tour and the ensuing articles and

several collections in book form, receive scant mentions in most, or are totally ignored by others, of the many Kipling biographies. The first book was published in 1917 by Doubleday in 5 parts. An Italian translation appeared in the same year. Most recently a '150th Anniversary of Kipling's Birth' edition was produced in April 2015 which seems to have re-awakened interest. On the final page of the last (Trentino Army) article, Kipling shows his admiration for the Italian forces fighting in such harsh conditions. 'Their difficulties, general and particular, are many. But Italy accepts these burdens and others in just the same spirit as she accepts the cave-riddled plateaux, the mountains, the unstable snows and rocks and the inconceivable toil that they impose upon her arms. They are hard, but she is harder.'

Howard's reading vividly reminded us that, coincidentally, Bairnsfather (who by this time had attained international fame) was also asked by the Italian Army to tour their front near Udine close to the Austro-Hungarian border and to make some drawings. He arrived a couple of weeks after Rudyard in June 1917, was billeted at the British Military Mission and his guide for the tour was the Duke of Milan.

The Italian objective in fighting the Austrians was the port of Trieste and the opposing armies faced each other along a line that ran due north from the Gulf of Trieste, following the line of the River Isonzo through the Alps to Caporetto. Bruce was struck by the differences between the Western and Italian Fronts. 'What a different landscape to fight in from our front', he wrote. 'Instead of the mass of sloppy sandbags along the edge of a narrow canal, which constitute the normal trench on the western front, these men had nothing but rocks and sand to deal with'. The first part of his tour was made in the Duke's car around the hairpin bends on narrow roads with the horrific drops to one side that so impressed Kipling on his tour. 'Now and again,' continued Bruce, 'we would nearly collide with an Italian staff car which was doing its usual ninety miles an hour around impossible corners'. Eventually they were forced to continue the journey by mule to reach the forward position of the Alpini.

The result of the trip was a series of cartoons, published in 1918 in *Fragments From All the Fronts. Number Six*, by *The Bystander* and "*Fragments from France Part Six*" published by Putnam's in the USA. The order of the cartoons differs slightly in the two editions. The images were approved by General Cadorna, the Italian Chief of Staff.



On the Italian Front
 Illus 3. 'On the Italian Front'.
 "There are the Austrians!" "I see."



A Visit to the Alpini
 Illus 4. 'A Visit to the Alpini'.
 "The chauffeur tells me that a car fell over here last week."

To be continued

BATEMAN'S - CLOSURE AND FLOODS

The third coronavirus lockdown in England has once again meant that the house at Bateman's has had to be closed to visitors that and the ground can only be accessed by those living locally. This has, however, given National Trust staff time to carry out cleaning and maintenance work, whilst protecting the contents, as the unusual view (right) of Kipling's study illustrates.



Len Bernamont, Head Gardener, reports that the last couple of months have been particularly challenging with three separate flood events to deal with. He writes: 'It's always very dramatic when the flooding happens; the water rises so quickly in the river as well as surface water running off the lane and fields. There is a



constant worry about the impact to visitor access and the clean-up operation to remove silt from the paths and debris from the lawns, which have often been submerged by water. There is also the worry around the long-term impact to our hedges and rose garden. As well as the usual clean up, this winter we have also had to retrieve several benches that had been carried away by the force of the water, one even ended up downstream on our tenant farmer's land.'

'The last flood was the highest level recorded for over 10 years, covering the ground floor of the mill in over 5" water, and depositing a fine layer of river silt over everything. If you walk down through the formal garden, you can see a 'tide line'

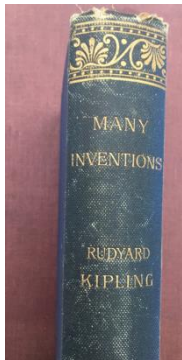
on the yew hedges showing the level the water rose to; at the lowest point of the garden, it was over 3ft.'

Luckily, it was not quite as worrying as the flood Kipling experienced, which he described in letter to John of 28 October 1909:

At 8 o'clock it [the Dudwell] was out over the banks. By nine our square pond had backed up and was all across the lower lawn. The tennis court had been flooded long ago. By eleven o'clock the water was over a foot deep by the Limes. I went out in my rubber boots to see. By midnight the water was at the south door of Bateman's – lying in one level sheet right across the garden. Then mother and I rolled up the carpets in the hall and the drawingroom for fear it should come in to the house. It was very odd to see only half of the yew hedges sticking up in the moonlight. At 1 o'clock I went into the kitchen to get something to eat I opened the cellar door and this is what I saw! Bottles and eggs and apples floating about in a foot of water. Well, it didn't seem to be much good hanging about so we went to bed...

The damage Kipling discovered the following morning, included all of his beehives swept away with the tables they stood on, and the dynamo which generated electricity for the house rendered useless.

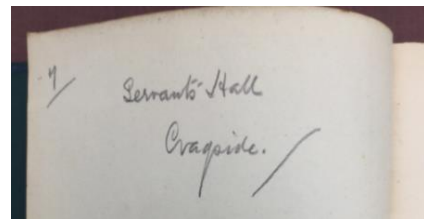
WHAT THE BUTLER READ - Ray Beck.



Just before Christmas, while checking one of John Radcliffe's regular quotation challenges, I noticed that in one of my copies of *Many Inventions* the fly leaf had the words 'Servant's Hall, Cragside' written. I contacted Cragside and asked if there had been a library in their servant's hall. Cragside is now a National Trust property and Clara Woolford their Property Curator replied. She said that there was still indeed a library in a large glass fronted book case, and sent me a seven-page article that had recently been written on it. The article researched the books that the servants had been given to read and also stated that it was believed about thirty of the books were missing.

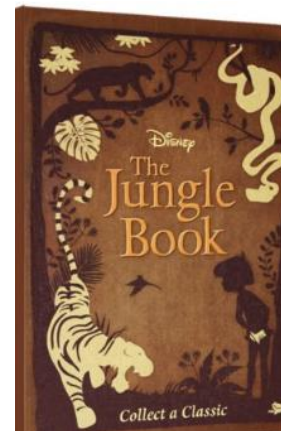
After checking with our Chair, Jan Montefiore, I told Clara that I would like to donate the book to Cragside on behalf of the Society as a mark of appreciation for goodwill that is always shown to us by her colleagues at Bateman's.

It is no easy matter to donate things to the National Trust, but after many emails back and forth, and signing forms in triplicate *Many Inventions* is now in its rightful place at Cragside, and Clara says that they are delighted with it. She also told me that they are hoping to publish a small piece in their media about the donation.



DID YOU OVERLOOK

... the 125th anniversary of *The Jungle Book* in 2019? Well, The Bradford Exchange and Disney didn't. There's even a quote from Kipling in the 'collector's pack'!



AND FINALLY

A red face – or a red nose – for one journalist!

"I have been reading a very bright little collection of Anglo-Indian stories, by Mr. Rudolph Kipling, of Lahore, entitled "Plain Tales from the Hills." In one of them Patrick Mulvaney, private soldier of Hibernian extraction, expresses himself very quaintly on men and things. Mr. Mulvaney shows a keen insight into the character of our only general. "Ach, to the divil wid yer Wolseley!" he observes; "he's a ramblin', incoherent sort av a beggar, wid wan oi on the Quane an' the Coort, an' the other on his blissid silf, everlastin'ly playin' Saysar and Alexandrier rolled into a lump."

Weekly Dispatch (London) - Sunday 20 January 1889