



THE KIPLING SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1927

Registered Charity No.278885

Secretary: Mike Kipling

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NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2026

NEXT SOCIETY MEETING

Wednesday 23 September. Christian Muller, University of Pretoria. 'Changing perceptions of the Boers before, during, and after the South African War in a selection of Rudyard Kipling's works'. Zoom only. 6.00pm. Meeting ID: 869 6538 2368 Passcode: 503111

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86965382368?pwd=pv9BSjZXAYQgJHfwOJ4GgZ4sZu4Bb3.1>

FUTURE SOCIETY MEETINGS

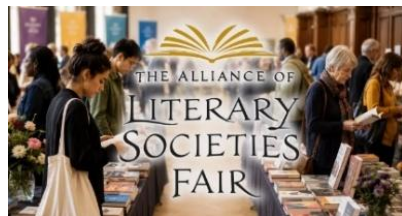
Wednesday 25 November. Mike Kipling, 'Kipling and the Cinema'. *Army & Navy Club, 5.30pm for 6.00pm, and by Zoom*

Thursday 4 February 2027 (the exact centenary of the Society's first meeting) John Walker 'The Founding of the Kipling Society' *Army & Navy Club, 5.30pm for 6.00pm, and by Zoom*

Wednesday 21 April 2027 (Zoom only). TBA
See below for additional centenary year events.

OTHER EVENTS

Saturday 3 October Alliance of Literary Societies Fair. *Birmingham & Midland Institute, 9 Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS. 10.00am - 4.00pm.*



There will be talks by Jim Naughtie, Lindsey Davis, Liz Berry, Gyles Brandreth and Frank Cottrell-Boyce. The Kipling Society will have a stall at the fair, and will give a short talk, as will representatives of other literary societies. *Everyone is welcome to attend. For further details see*

<https://allianceofliterarysocieties.wordpress.com/als-fair/>

Saturday 24 October West Sussex Archives Society Annual Conference, 'Sussex Writers'. Includes presentations on H. G. Wells, William Blake, Richard Jefferies and Rudyard Kipling; and a keynote talk from Prof. Brian Short, 'Writers and the Search for a Rural Idyll'.

10.00am - 5.00pm. Barnham Community Hall, Yapton Road, Barnham, PO22 0AY.

<https://wsas.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Oct-Conference-Sussex-Writers-v2.pdf>

WEST SUSSEX ARCHIVES SOCIETY

The Friends of West Sussex Record Office
Registered charity No 266997

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT

At the AGM on 1 July Gary Enstone, George Maher, Steve Russ, John Seriot and Andy Smith all joined Council, replacing Paolo D'Indinosante, Fred Lerner, Erin Louttit, Andrew Scragg and Rufus Vaughen Spruce, all of whom retired by rotation. Outgoing chairman Andrew thanked the other members of Council for their service on Council, and secretary Mike Kipling thanked Andrew for his wisdom and leadership during his two years in office.



Immediately after the AGM, the new Council briefly met, and elected Gary Enstone as chairman for the next two years. Gary is curator and Executive Officer of the Museum of Richmond and is a former House and Property manager at Bateman's, having had the privilege of living in Kipling's house for many years.

CENTENARY YEAR SPECIAL EVENTS



- **Wednesday 26 May.** Launch of our centenary book, including keynote address by the Rt. Rev. Lord Williams of Oystermouth, FRSL, vice-president. *Army & Navy Club, 17.00*
- **Sunday 20 June – Saturday 26 June.** The Kipling US Pilgrimage (see overleaf for programme)
- **A weekend day in July or August** – 100 Kipling readings at Bateman's
- **Autumn** – Kipling-themed wine tasting at Gordons wine bar, London
- **Saturday 16 October** – Exhibition of items from the Kipling collection, including material relating to Society's foundation, and short talk. *The Keep, Falmer. 11.00am.* Followed by lunch at a local venue.

US Pilgrimage, June 2027; provisional programme to include:

- Sunday 20 – Welcome event, Brattleboro, VT.
- Monday 21 – 'Dummerston day': tour of Naulakha; presentation on Kipling collections at the University of Vermont; Kipling's influence on science fiction literature; public panel discussion at Naulakha, 'Kipling's Legacy in the Modern World'; dinner at *Kipling's Tavern*.
- Tuesday 22 - 'Brattleboro day': Vermont of the 1890s; Brattleboro, the Cabots and Kipling; tour of Brattleboro including Morningside cemetery; musical performance; dinner at *India Masala House*.
- Wednesday 23 – depart Brattleboro for New Haven, CT, by road or rail; check into Omni hotel or other accommodation; free time in Vermont or New Haven.
- Thursday 24 – walking tour of Yale campus; first display of items from the David Allen Richards collection at the Beinecke Library; lunch at *Mory's*; second display of items from DAR collection; free time to visit Yale Centre for British Art or other museums.
- Friday 25 – travel by rail to New York City: tour, archive exhibition and lunch at the Century Association; tour of the New York Public Library, Stephen A. Schwartzman building; chance to visit the Morgan Library and Museum; return to New Haven.
- Saturday 26 – depart.

Further details will be sent shortly to all those members who have already expressed interest in participating. If you have not yet contacted me and would like to join part or all of the pilgrimage, please let me know as soon as possible at michaelrkipling@gmail.com.

JULY MEETING REPORT - Alex Bubb, Meetings Secretary

July's well-attended AGM at the "Rag" was followed by an excellent lecture from a young scholar who, though he joined the Society and Council just a few years ago, has become a much-loved member of our community. Paolo d'Indinosante recently completed his PhD thesis on Victorian imperial poetry, which included extensive discussion of Kipling, but as a bilingual (English-Italian) scholar he also possesses rare insight into Kipling's reception and

longstanding popularity in Italy. Paolo's lecture, "Kipling in/and Italy: Representations, Readings, Rewrites" covered Kipling's early Italian translators, critical responses to Kipling in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Italian press, and most interestingly Kipling's strong influence on several Italian writers, notably the Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci.

I already knew a little of Gramsci's fondness for Kipling but I had no idea about the extent of his reading, and nor had I noticed that Gramsci's well-known phrase "a great and terrible world" (it titles a volume of his published letters) was originally spoken by the Lama in *Kim*. Paolo's talk was followed by animated discussion and a very enjoyable dinner in the Club dining room. We all wish our speaker the best of luck this year as he navigates academia post-PhD.



A recording of the meeting can be viewed on the Society's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICglTHg1N1I>

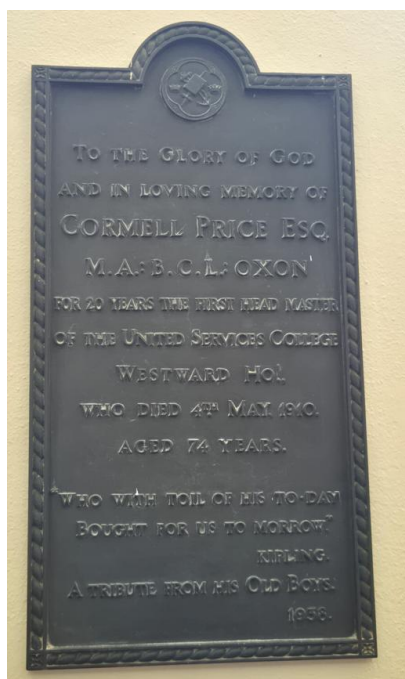
VISIT TO HAILEYBURY

After an enjoyable canal-side pub lunch, the Kipling Society party made its way to Haileybury to be met by the Society's librarian, John Walker, and Dr Sam Koon, the school's head of classics and archivist. Sam first led us on a tour around the campus, explaining about the origins of the school in the buildings of the former East India Company college, its growth and merger with Imperial Services College, which had itself absorbed Kipling's United Services College (USC).



The chapel was of particular interest, as it contained some memorials relocated from USC, two of which included quotations from Kipling. One remembered Cornell Price, Kipling's headmaster at USC and a former master at Haileybury itself.



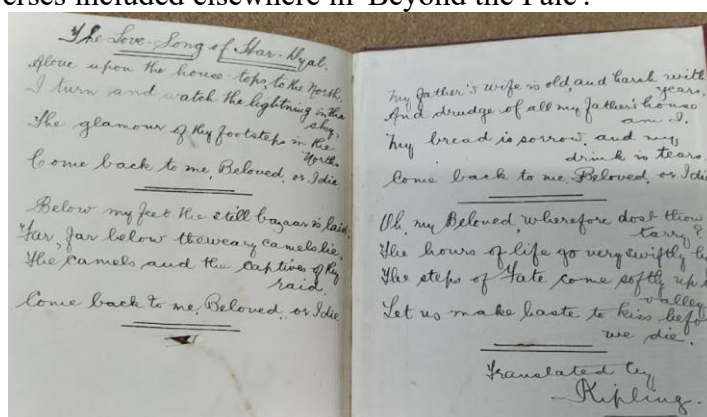


Kipling himself is not forgotten; not only is one of the boarding houses named after him, but he features in one of a set of blue plaques dotted around the school, each commemorating famous old boys, and each with a QR-code to provide more information.

After seeing a small exhibition about another old boy, Clement Atlee, our visit concluded in the Kipling Society library, where John Walker had prepared a display of some of the rarer items. We were then free to browse the rest of the collection, it proving hard to wrench members and guests away when the time came to depart. Our thanks are due to John and Sam for arranging such a magnificent visit.

THE LOVE-SONG OF HAR DYAL

Andrew Hardie contacted the Society recently, having come across a copy of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* inscribed with a copy of Kipling's 'The Love-song of Har Dyal'. It has four verses rather than the familiar three ([The Love-song of Har Dyal](#)), the final verse not being any of the additional verses included elsewhere in 'Beyond the Pale'.



As the poem is now considered to have been written by Kipling rather than translated from an older Indian text, it is not clear where this verse originated. The three standard verses were frequently set to music and regularly performed in public, so it may be that a version with a

non-Kipling fourth verse was circulating. Any contribution readers can make to resolving this mystery would be most welcome.

‘ARE KOKO’ LULLABY

Phil Gibbons wrote: I have a family-preserved version of the Indian/Anglo-Indian cradle song known from Kipling references as ‘Are Koko’. The song was sung to me by my late father, Daniel Lovel Gibbons, born 18 October 1940. The family were Anglo-Indian and lived in West Bengal. The paternal family line includes Robert William Gibbons, Frederick Stanhope Gibbons/D’Souza, and Thomas William D’Souza. I never forgot the lyrics and melody and have notated the latter. This may be the only currently documented, family-preserved version of the tune known to survive.

What the Ayah Sang

ā r’ā kau-kau

Trad. transcribed from family memory over three generations ‘c. 1902-1904’ by Philip Gibbons

♩ = 95
To Piano

ā r’ā kau-kau, jā r’ā kau-kau, jan-glī pak-kā bé - rā; me-rā bé-bī so-né māng ta do dam di kā do sé - rā—

5

āo jān na mā - no, bé - bī ko lé jā, āo jān na mā - no, bé - bī ko lé jā.

Kipling calls the verse *Aré koko, Faré koko!* in ‘Without Benefit of Clergy’, and translates it as:

Oh, crow, go, crow!
Baby’s sleeping sound
And the wild plums grow in the jungle,
only a penny a pound.
Only a penny a pound, *baba*,
only a penny a pound ...¹

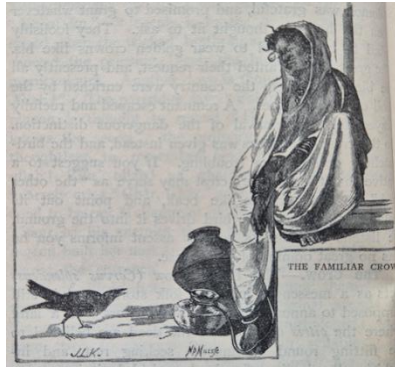
John Lockwood Kipling gave a version of the song in *Beast and Man in India* (1891), which begins:

Crow, crow! Silence keep,
Plums are ripe in jungle deep;
Fetch a bushel fresh and cheap
For a babe that wants to sleep.

The two lullabies contain the same key imagery — a bird or “kuku/koko”, ripe jungle plums or berries, a sleeping baby, and cheap fruit measured by old currency and weight. While there is no proof that the lullaby directly inspired *The Jungle Book*, the song clearly belongs to the same Indian nursery, animal, and jungle folklore world that shaped the Kipling family’s Indian writings.

¹ The verse is discussed at https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/readers-guide/rg_withoutbenefit1.htm.

Mr Sanjay Sircar helped and supported me with the translation and correct Hindi spelling which



is greatly appreciated as it means a lot to me and my family. He is also very interested in this lullaby and can also provide information of his background researching this cradle song, for example "*The words were written down by Sir Richard Temple in 18-something (sung by servants to white children, he says)*".

Alex Bubb added: I suppose when Lockwood and Rudyard heard this song in the 1880s, the Indian woman singing it wouldn't have sung "mera bebi". To use the English word "baby" sounds too modern to me. Probably she would have

said "mera bacca" instead, but it makes no great difference to the song.

Sanjay Sircar added: Not 'Are' or 'A r'a' but 'Aa r'ha'. The bird is probably here called by a truncation into baby language (?) of the Hindi kau-wa into kau-kau. The words of this AFAIK were first recorded by the late Sally Stewart of Perth; I was going to pass them and this music on to the Folklore Society. I think Richard Temple had the much more well-known 'Neeni baba neeni', and others, but still cannot recall where I saw his item.

BATEMAN'S MULBERRY GARDEN UPDATE – David Forsyth

This is a summary of a recent presentation given by Len Bernamont, Garden & Outdoors Manager at Bateman's and was written with substantial help from Len to provide authenticity.

The original design of the Mulberry Garden (formally known as the Kitchen Garden) was overtly ornamental, full of lush, romantic plantings incorporating shrubs, herbaceous borders and fruit trees, blending both formal and productive elements which we still see today in other areas of the garden. In today's changing climate, many of these original plants would not thrive so the Trust has chosen to adapt the planting whilst staying true to the original feel of the garden and making it sustainable for the future. At the same time as Ambrose Poynter, Kipling's cousin, was commissioned to make the house habitable after its purchase in 1902, he was also tasked with designing a garden the layout of which shows the Mulberry Garden and Pear Alley as a unified garden. This was probably to be used as the family's private space in contrast to the Quarterdeck and formal garden with the architectural pleached limes and pond. This functioned as a more formal area for entertaining and as a children's play area.



The garden design was probably influenced by prevailing horticultural fashions, in which the Arts and Crafts movement was highly influential. A local plantsman called William Robinson was a valued advisor. The Mulberry Garden has now reached a condition where renewal is essential. The fruit trees are very old, the box hedge moth has all but destroyed the hedges, the garden walls are decaying, and climate change dictates a sustainable and cost-effective replacement. The basic strategy (as reported in the January newsletter) is to create a renovation with the following objectives:

- To make the garden a free-standing destination in its own right.
- Planting to acknowledge climate change.
- Greater accessibility for children and the disabled by incorporating wider paths and more benches with adjacent buggy parking.

In practice this will involve removing all trees except the central, eponymous Mulberry. The diseased hedges will be replaced by new hedge varieties yet to be decided. The current lawns, originally created by the National Trust for reasons of economy and ease of maintenance, will be replaced by flower beds separated by 21/8/26 wide paths. There will be a generous gesture to the Arts and Craft movement in the plantings. As far as possible this will reflect those available to Kipling, albeit improved, disease resistant varieties. It will be a garden for all seasons. Spring will be welcomed with drifts of perennial bulbs and plants which provide Spring colour; Summer will be celebrated with shrubs, perennials and drought and pest resistant varieties of favourites such as roses; Autumn will be enhanced by the colours appropriate to the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness and Winter will be acknowledged with berries and structural seed heads. The borders will provide biodiverse plants and provide shelter and nesting opportunities.

The work will commence this year with the removal of the hedges, trees and the National Trust lawns. The current semi-permanent planting in the borders will be progressively removed before the bulk of the final design is planted in Autumn 2027. This will allow the garden team to establish the replacement fruit trees, plant new bulbs and most importantly decompact the soil and establish a free draining but moisture retentive substrate which will ensure ideal growing conditions for the future. Unfortunately, the Trust has been unable to allocate any funding for the project, and the scheme is entirely reliant on legacy donations. Some highly desirable improvements such as irrigation systems, so essential in the modern reality, wall repairs and even replacement wooden benches have been deleted from the original specification. Hopefully more funding might become available

KIPLING'S LAHORE

Usman Mir wrote: I have begun work on a project focused on rediscovering Rudyard Kipling's years in Lahore (1882–1887) and their influence on his literary work. The first step is the development of a dedicated website (which is under completion). Please Visit <https://www.kiplhr.com/> This platform aims to connect Kipling's Lahore with today's global audience, while exploring how his experiences in the city shaped works such as *Kim*, which famously begins near the Lahore Museum.



The site also includes a “Kipling walking trail,” closely aligned with the route Kipling used to undertake to explore the historical city of Lahore. Plan is to institutionalize Kipling Walking trail for local & international literary lovers. Last week I took this journey late at night and wandered: “through the [Delhi Gate](#) into the narrow bazaar lanes, surrounded by the faint reek of the city and the distant sounds of the muezzin's call echoing from minaret of Masjid Wazir Khan”. Not much has really changed !!

As the next step, we have started working on tele-documentary exploring Kipling of Lahore with focus on nocturnal walks in exploring Old Lahore and the literary imprint of his experiences. The documentary will be rich in Mujras (Dances) of that period. Have identified locations, dancers & songs. Have also made arrangements for coverage of Lahore Museum (Wonder house) & Punjab club. For “Kipling of Lahore” project we are also looking for sponsors.

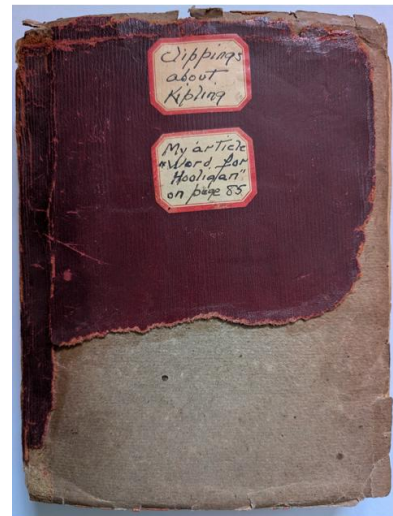
Editor's note: The Society will keep in touch with Usman's work and bring more news when there is any.

LETTER FROM AMERICA #5 (Part 1) - Steve Russ

A Young American Woman's Kipling Scrapbook

Recently I came into possession of a young American woman's personal Kipling scrapbook, courtesy of a local rare book dealer. The scrapbook of Miss Isabel Morison (1880-1943), a daughter of Boston (Massachusetts) Society and older cousin to prominent American historian Samuel Eliot Morison, spans nearly five years. The first clipping dates from the spring of 1897, when Miss Morrison just turned 17 years old, and the last from January 1902, with Miss Morison on the cusp of 22 years of age.

The volume with its heavily worn red leather cover and exposed boards bears a small handprinted label 'Clippings about Kipling' to announce its contents. The dimensions of the scrapbook are comparable to the size of a diary, measuring approximately 7 in./17.78 cm X 8 3/4 in./22.23 cm. Newspaper and periodical clippings are affixed to each of the 110 hand-numbered pages. Fourteen blank unnumbered sheets are to be found at the end of the volume. Nearly all the newspaper clippings lack headers and the periodical clippings are likewise unidentified. Those newspaper clippings with headers intact were primarily sourced from Boston newspapers.

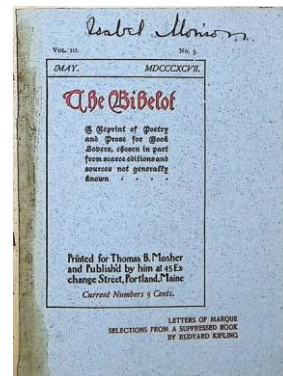
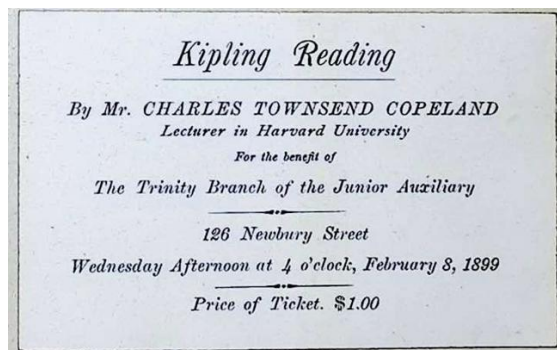


In the opening pages, Miss Morison dedicates the scrapbook to Kipling with a poem authored and handwritten here by her.

To Rudyard Kipling
Master of Art – whose genius
burning bright
Dazzles The world and bends
a nobler tone
To human nature --- hundreds
by Thy light
May guide These steps, but
Then must walk alone.

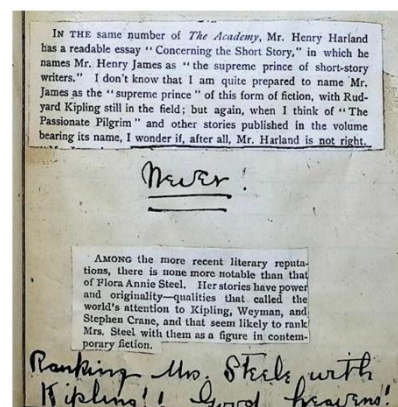
What follows are clippings about Kipling, his prose and his verse - reviews, critiques, commentary and general news items. Clippings of selected Kipling verse - such as "The Vampire," "The White Horses," "Our Lady of the Snows," "The Absent-Minded Beggar" and "The White Man's Burden" - are also present. In one instance, she wrote out in longhand a Kipling poem - "The City of Sleep," the verse accompanying the story *The Brushwood Boy*. One finds, too, cuttings of poems inspired by Kipling and parodies of his work.

Also present are a ticket to attend Harvard University professor Charles Townsend Copeland's 8 February 1899 'Kipling reading'; and an unauthorized booklet version of Letters of Marque (part of "The Bibelot" series by publisher Thomas B. Mosher, the 'pirate prince of publishers'). The booklet was gifted by (Mrs.) Emily Borie Beal, a newer member of Miss Morison's social circle who, as Mrs. Beal remarks in an attached letter, found the publication during "house cleaning."

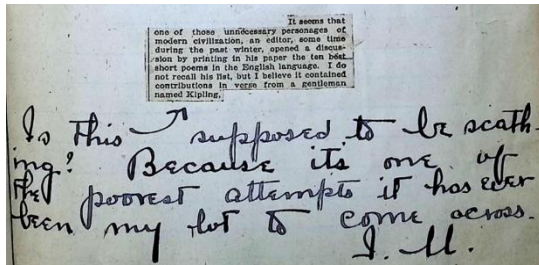


Dominating nearly 20 pages are clippings about Kipling's near-fatal pneumonia and subsequent recovery during late February to early March 1899 on that fateful visit to New York. Kipling's illness coincided with Miss Morison's trip from Boston to Palm Beach, Florida. Her notations on several pages reflect her despair at being starved for news over Kipling's health. During a train trip to Florida ("actually on the train") in late February she lamented how she "got only these few cuttings although the papers all over the world were flooded with them." In early March, now in Palm Beach, she "could only glean this meagre but reassuring harvest from a local paper" that Kipling's health showed signs of improvement. She likewise followed daughter Josephine's condition - her illness, death and cremation.

Miss Morison's occasional marginal comments are primarily emphatic dismissals of any attempt to diminish Kipling's status over other writers. When one commentator agreed with novelist and editor Henry Harland's ("Concerning the Short Story") assessment of Henry James as "the supreme prince of short-story writers ... with Rudyard Kipling still in the field," she declared "Never!" When another commentator praised Flora Annie Steel for stories with "power and originality," qualities the commentator believed ranked Steel with Kipling, Stanley Weyman and Stephen Crane, Miss Morison thundered "Ranking Mrs. Steele [sic] with Kipling! Good heavens!"



And when a reviewer of Mrs. J. M. Fleming's (Kipling's sister Trix) novel *A Pinchbeck Goddess* ("A Sister of Rudyard Kipling Makes Her Literary Debut") suggested Kipling's



sister's "singularly light, graceful and comprehensive manner might be studied by [Kipling]" – Miss Morison's emphasis – "as well as by all story-tellers of the day with advantage," Miss Morison objected with "No!" In response to one item, which made a veiled swipe at Kipling's skill as a poet, she noted: "Is this supposed to be scathing? Because it's one of the poorest attempts it has ever been my lot to come across."

To be continued

MOWING AS KIPLING WOULD HAVE KNOWN IT – David Forsyth

I took this on 2 August at Bateman's in the field by the mill. It is Trust policy to use Shire horses for ecofriendly cutting and bailing. They are used at Bateman's several times during the season to the delight of the visitors. The teams (two were on duty) were hired by the Trust from a local company which also works at other Trust properties.



CANINE AND EQUINE MEMORIES

Rolf Johnson read in our last edition that a Kipling poem was read at the funeral of our past president Roger Ayers. He thought members might not be aware that 'Four-Foot' featured in the memorial service for the famed racehorse trainer Ian Balding and was very well received. Ian, who trained the mighty Mill Reef and winners for the Queen, loved his dogs as much as he loved his horses. Great man.

*I have done mostly what most men do,
And pushed it out of my mind;
But I can't forget, if I wanted to,
Four-Foot trotting behind.*

*Now I must go by some other round,—
Which I shall never find—
Somewhere that does not carry the sound
Of Four-Foot trotting behind.*

*Day after day, the whole day through—
Wherever my road inclined—
Four-Foot said, 'I am coming with you!'
And trotted along behind.*



TREASURES OF BATEMANS #3 – DAVID FORSYTH

Kipling's Guns

Kipling's winter visits to South Africa and his brief experience of warfare in the Second Boer War planted the firm conviction that a European war was a strong possibility. He had concern that the youth of England were ill-prepared for combat and he felt obliged to support the growing consensus in the late 1890s that organised clubs to train young men in the rudiments of military discipline and felicity with firearms was a national imperative. In 1901 he set up a rifle club in Rottingdean. It had a thousand-yard range on the Downs and a drill hall in the village which included a miniature range. It had some fifty members and a strict regime of military activities such as signalling, drill, gymnastics and rifle shooting on the range and in the drill hall. Shooting competitions with other clubs and local military units were organised and the whole was supervised by a retired soldier, Sergeant Johnstone, but under the close control of Kipling who was a good shot and participated in the competitions himself.



The drill hall rifles were .22 calibre. The Martini-Henry (above) was a .22 model specifically manufactured for indoor range use. The Lee-Enfield (below) was a standard .303 rifle, modified by the insertion of 0.22 rifled Morris tube into the barrel. For outdoor range use the standard rifle was used. Kipling also donated a Nordenfelt and a Gardner machine gun (although he may have confused the two weapons). These were 4–6-barrel guns developed from the Gatling gun. They were likewise converted with Morris firing tubes for indoor range use. Kipling had seen the standard model in use during his visits to units in South Africa.



In 'A Village Rifle Club', first published in the *Spectator* 22 June 1901, Rudyard describes daily life on the outdoor range. Use of the full-size range was a rite of passage and was not permitted until signed off from the .22 drill hall as being competent. Membership was about 60 and most practiced regularly. There was a weekly free allowance of 10 shots with targets at 200, 500 and 1000 yards. The group became creditable enough to consider entering a 3-man team at Bisley. They had twelve Lee-Enfields, each with their own characteristics and each one had its devotees. Sergeant Johnstone ran a tight ship with rigorous supervision. One of the members, 'Young Carroll', a farmer's son, had served in the Boer War and was able to give practical advice about shooting under field conditions. Carrie became increasingly concerned about her husband's dedication to this project, with endless committee meetings at *The Elms*, complaining that it occupied too much of his time. Interestingly, it was through the rifle club that Rudyard made contact with the owner of the Cordoba leather wall covering which now adorns the dining room at *Bateman's*.

Having moved to Burwash in 1902, Rudyard continued his project there. A new range was established; and the drill hut was resited from Rottingdean, although there is some doubt as to whether it was reused for shooting or lent to the Burwash Parish Council as temporary accommodation during fund-raising for a permanent village hall. Without his influence the club at Rottingdean declined. However, the local Burwash youth showed no great enthusiasm for military inculcation, so Rudyard's shooting was thereafter manly shooting on his estate, probably for pheasant and control of vermin.

On 11 December 1915, less than three months after John was missing at the battle of Loos, Rudyard opened the Cecil Rifle Range at Winchester College. 2nd Lt George Cecil, an Old Wykehamist, had been killed on 1 September 1914 on the retreat from Mons. His mother, Lady Milner, who was an old friend of Kipling's from India, asked him to perform the opening ceremony in George's memory. Rudyard fired the first shot - a bull's eye. He gave the following address: 'It is well to die for one's country. But that is not enough. It is also necessary that so long as he lives, a man shall give to his country, as George Cecil gave, a mind and soul neither ignorant nor inadequate'.

The guns at Bateman's

Apparently, the National Trust inherited a small arsenal of rifles but currently only three remain on display: a Martini-Henry and a Lee-Enfield, both indoor range-modified, and a .410 cartridge shotgun, manufactured in the early 1900s by BSA (Birmingham Small Arms), typically used for small game hunting or pest control.



The Lee-Enfield, of a pre-1915 pattern, is believed to be John's rifle, as it has the initials JK on the stock. John would have had access to the Burwash rifle range, when home from Wellington College (where he was in the cadets) or on leave waiting to go out to France with his unit, 2nd Battalion Irish Guards, when he turned eighteen. Although there is no direct provenance, circumstantially the case is strong.

MORE BIRKENHEAD DRILL

John Dearing wrote: Thank you. I was interested to see the reference to the Birkenhead drill [in the March 2026 newsletter] and wondered whether the society was aware of a poem written at the time of the incident by Sir Francis Hastings Doyle. I expect Kipling would have known it and like everything else these days it's on the web: [Poets' Corner - Sir Francis Hastings Doyle - The Loss of the Birkenhead](#) Doyle was onetime Professor of Poetry at Oxford and probably best-known. at least in the days when patriotic poetry wasn't frowned on, for 'The Private of the Buffs' from memory –

Last night, among his fellow Buffs
He jested quaffed and swore,
A drunken Private of the Buffs
Who never looked before...

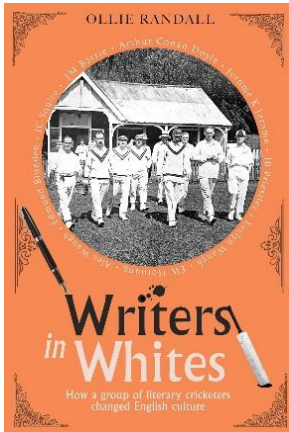
DEAR LOVE, JOHN

Maggie Washington wrote: I wonder if you are aware of the ten minute YouTube clip in which Colin Firth and Taron Edgerton read a few letters between John Kipling and his father?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GY1r9P1RFk>



‘WRITERS IN WHITES’ by OLLIE RANDALL – reviewed by David Forsyth
‘How a group of literary cricketers changed English culture’



In 1887, JM Barrie founded a writers’ cricket team which played intermittently from 1887 to 1905 with a final memorial match in 1913. The tradition of literary cricket carried on until the 1960s and faded away with the decline in the popularity of cricket which had previously been so strong since the 1880s. The team was named the Allahakbarries - a play on his name and ‘Allah Akbar’ (‘God is Great’). Prominent members included Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (captain 1899-1912), PG Wodehouse, Jerome K Jerome, AA Milne, EW Hornung, EV Lucas, and Bernard Partridge as well as host of now lesser-known writers, journalists and artists.

It is often asked whether Rudyard Kipling (and HG Wells), both of whom knew many of the team, were members. This book definitively answers the question in the negative. The team was always a light-hearted enterprise, captained by Barrie and playing several fixtures annually against local village teams and ‘exhibition matches’ against like-minded compatriots. Raising eleven men plus umpires, usually at short notice, was always difficult. Recruitment often involved bystanders, surplus members of the opposing team and on one occasion the taxi driver that brought the team from the station to the venue. The matches were strictly social, although often fiercely contested. Play had a habit of mellowing after a particularly congenial lunch. Barrie had no illusions about his team’s competence. He said to one player “You scored a good single in the first innings but were not so lucky in the second.”

The premise of this splendid book is that cricket, increasingly popular in the early 20th century, provided an opportunity for aspiring authors to meet and network with their contemporaries and more importantly with established authors, journalists and publishers, giving the opportunity to advance their careers. Driven by Barrie in particular, it opened up the whole literary landscape, and not just to fellow cricket lovers.

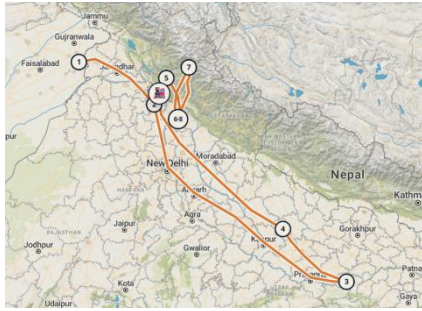


I approached the book with some scepticism, anticipating an over-egged pudding, but was converted. As well as providing a convincing rationale for the premise, it is a fascinating read with absorbing and often little-known information about a whole generation of British writers. Lives and loves, triumphs and tragedies are unfailingly absorbing when the ball is back in the box.

Editor’s Note: This book has introduced me to some interesting cricketing fiction, including Hornung’s ‘Raffles’ stories and Wodehouse’s ‘Mike/Psmith’ books. The joys of De Selincourt’s ‘The Cricket Match’ are still to come.

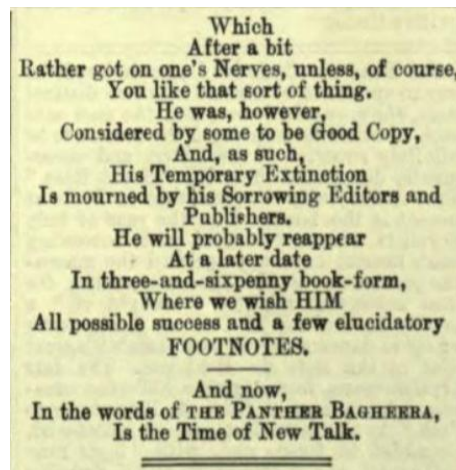
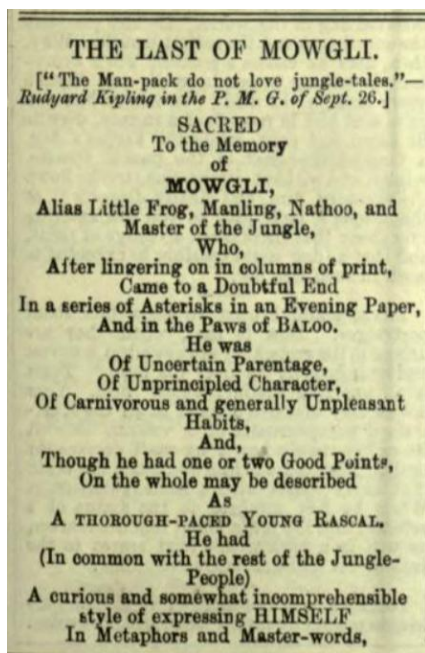
MAPPING KIPLING

Aires wrote: Hi, I've mapped 1,100+ routes from literature on readingmaps.com as a side hobby - including *Kim's* Grand Trunk Road and *The Jungle Book*. Hopefully this is of interest.



The secretary replied: How very fascinating! Your mapping of *Kim* illustrates his journey well, and I will draw it and your website to the attention of our members. Other Kipling titles which include journeys are *The Man who would be King*, *Captains Courageous*, and *The Light that Failed*. Note: Aires has since added all three.

KIPLING IN PUNCH #6



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AND FINALLY...

