

*The Kipling Society
of
Australia*

*The
Jungle Drum*

- A Quarterly Newsletter of the Society

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Next Meeting - Saturday February 23rd
AGM & Poetry with Susannah Fullerton
2pm – Lord Street, Roseville (Bring a friend)

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Random jottings from the Editors desk

We have had our final meeting for the year, a lunch at La Tavola at Crows Nest. I was very sorry to miss it, having to go overseas for a funeral, unfortunately its difficult to change the dates for a funeral!. However by all reports an enjoyable time was had, as the photographs taken by Ian, our esteemed Treasurer bear out.

Several news items, we have now got our agenda for next year in place, and have got some very interesting meetings lined up .Remember with the meeting with Professor Ricketts we will have some of his books available. On the musical meeting Dr Halliwell is trying to get David Miller as his accompanist.

During the year the film "My Son Jack" will be screened in Sydney, more of that nearer the time, but we will try and get up a party to view it.

Our website is up and running, I have already had some comments forwarded. If you have not tried www.kiplingsocietyaustralia.com I urge you to try it. It will mean some repetition of notes in the Drum and website, and I would welcome your comments and suggestions. Credit for the website is due in no small measure to Adam Wilson of LogoPogo.



Lunch at La Travola

Name tags have been printed and will be available at the AGM in February, later on I will look at getting some engraved ones.

A little know fact about RK is that he paid for a gardener employed by the War Graves Commission to sound the Last Post at the Menin Gate every night in

remembrance of his son, this continued until the Germans invaded in 1940. This came out of an anthology called Poem for the Day, edited by Nicolas Alberry, and was a footnote to the poem "My Boy Jack"

I am having problems making a Kipling crossword, and would welcome some assistance.

Another book on RK's early life has just been published, called Kipling Sahib by Charles Allen, published by Little.Brown, it describes the years in RK's life in India 1865-1900, and paints a vivid and realistic picture of the young RK, warts and all.

Charles Allen is known for his book "Plain Tales from the Raj"; and has strong family connections with the Kiplings, starting when his greatgrandfather gave RK his first job!

I look forward to seeing you all again at the AGM, but in the meantime any news, information or copy for the Drum and website are very welcome.

- D.W.



www.kiplingsocietyaustralia.com

Jack Kipling's Prep School

From: Simon Hitchings
To: David Watts
Subject: Jack Kipling's Prep School

Dear Mr Watts,

I have taken your contact from the website of the Australian Kipling Society. I am not sure if you are the correct person to contact; I wonder if you might pass this on if you judge that someone else in the Society is better placed to deal with my enquiry.

I am headmaster of St Aubyns in Rottingdean which is the Prep School that Jack Kipling attended before going to Wellington College. I have discovered in our archives a number of photographs of Jack when he was a pupil here and I am keen to share them with those who are interested. I have attached an article which I wrote for our village magazine - the village is very aware of the Kipling connections as the Elms where they lived before Batemans and North End House where Jack was born and the Burne-Jones' lived are still prominent and recognised buildings. The article has photographs at the end which I have taken of the original photographs that we have. Please use the article and photographs in any way that you wish. I would be very happy if somebody from the Society was in this country and wanted to visit the school and do a more professional job, or indeed to see the school chapel and war memorial which commemorate Jack amongst the other old boys who died in the world wars.

Thank you for your attention to this.

With kind regards,

Simon Hitchings
Headmaster
St Aubyns, Rottingdean

Village Magazine Article: Jack Kipling at St. Aubyns, Rottingdean

Since 1895 the old Rottingdean Manor house on the High Street has been a prep school, initially only for boys who boarded. Not least amongst the pupils of the school who have achieved fame is John Kipling, son of Rudyard. This Remembrance weekend an ITV film "My Boy Jack" with Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter) as J.K. recalled his short life and tragic death at the Battle of Loos in 1915.

John Kipling's name is preserved within the school on a War Memorial in the corner of the school playing fields and amongst the roll of those who died in both world wars engraved either side of the altar in the school chapel. The chapel also contains the photographs of the war dead, including J.K. He can also be found in old team photographs in the school dining room. Residents in the village who would like to see these memorials should contact the school.

The school has no written records of those early days of the school (although there are photographs), but it is in the letters of Rudyard to his son that something of J.K.'s life here can be found. The delightful and endearing collection of letters to his children entitled "O, my beloved kids!" contains many of these.

J.K. was born in Rottingdean in 1897. Rudyard and family were staying at the time at North End House with "Aunt Georgie", Lady Georgiana Burne-Jones, Rudyard's aunt. Rudyard decided to move away from the village to Bateman's in 1902, but in September 1907 J.K. was sent to board at St Aubyns until July 1911 after which he moved to Wellington College in Berkshire. From there he joined the army in the second year of the Great War.

The first Headmaster of St Aubyns was C.E.F. Stanford, and sometimes Rudyard calls the school "Stanford's" or refers to "Stanford boys". Perhaps Rudyard had met Stanford while living in Rottingdean, and that connection, allied to the presence of family in the village whom the young boarder could visit on half-holidays, led to the choice of school. In his first letter to his son at the school (18/9/07) Rudyard refers to the large tea J.K. consumed at Aunt Georgie's before being left at the school, and this is a recurrent theme of the letters at the starts and ends of terms.

Some initial homesickness is countered by Rudyard in October of J.K.'s first term with the contrast with his own experience as a boarder at Westward Ho! J.K. is only thirty miles from home, in the village where he was born and where many of his family



Third from right in back row – Shooting Team? 1909



Third from right in back row – Football team 1908

live. Indeed, on that very day J.K. was due to have seen his sister at Aunt Georgie. Rudyard also comments that “they look after you in a way that that no-one ever dreamed of doing when I was young”, although photographs of the dormitories from early days suggest a fairly spartan environment.

This same homesickness gives rise to a comment that we might feel is typical of a late Victorian such as Rudyard Kipling was. He writes: “You behaved yourself like a man when you felt homesick. I understand that you did not flop about and blub and whine but carried on quietly”. The letters (which were part of a weekly exchange) are full of love and humour, but they also have the edge of a father who hopes for great things from his son and feels the need to push his son accordingly. So, there are pleas for J.K. to move up his form (until the 1990s St Aubyns still published a school list each term, ranking the boys on their academic performance in each form). In May 1908 he writes whimsically, “You are quite all right if you will only think; when you don’t think you ought to be kicked. I regret I have not kicked you enough”, but the father’s aspiration for his son is evident. The letters likewise celebrate the good reports and the successes as J.K.’s place in his forms sometimes goes up. The last letters (July and October 1910) record low placings and Stanford’s comment that J.K. is “inclined to shirk difficulties”. Stanford wondered whether J.K. should drop Greek and take up German, but Rudyard urged J.K. to keep going with his Greek (“the key that unlocks half the real wisdom of the world”).

One attraction of St Aubyns may well have been the militaristic ethos that later made Wellington the obvious choice of public school. Stanford instituted the St Aubyns corps in 1909. On one occasion in February 1909 Rudyard writes that he hopes J.K. will qualify “to shoot at the outdoor range” (the location of which is still very clear). If he does, his father promises that he can bring his own rifle into school. The whole school took part in regular drill and Stanford was known for giving prominence to the great events of Empire. When the school celebrated Empire Day in 1909, Rudyard comments approvingly on “the progress Empire Day is making”. The letter on the day of Edward VIII’s burial (May 20th, 1910) states that the school will have had the same service as Rudyard had attended near Bateman’s.

It seems that generally J.K. was happy in his years at St Aubyns. Writing to his daughter Elsie, Rudyard says that dropping J.K. off in June 1908 “was like chucking a trout into a pool” and describes how he was met by a gaggle of friends with whom he quickly disappeared. From September 1909 there are some apologetic comments about the effect of a poem “Children’s

Song” (from “Puck of Pook Hill”) “so cruelly used against the young”. There must have been some drawbacks to having a famous father.

Away from school there was a loving family who sent many things to J.K. apart from letters – magazines from Elsie, “the sort of stick that Indian tribes send to each other when they declare war” from his father after a holiday in Canada, many items sewn by his mother, roller skates which can be used in the Gym and on the brick paths.

Life at school was full of youthful excitement beyond the classroom. Rudyard celebrates with J.K. a cricket bat which “has the habit of knocking up fours”. When reports of his progress are not so good, it is suggested that he has been “skylarking with Bingham”. On the other hand when J.K. avoids the cold that many have this may be because “the other chaps get theirs by fooling about after their baths, as you say.” One wonders quite what lay behind the incident which causes Rudyard to write “I was very pleased with you going downstairs in the night when Beresford [who slept in the next bed to J.K.] thought he saw a ghost”!

Some aspects of St Aubyns have remained unchanged. The boarders still put their clothes ready for the next day in baskets under their beds (in the first letter Rudyard writes “Elsie was most excited about the dog-baskets at the end of the beds”); anyone who has watched sport on the school field will appreciate why Rudyard says that Elsie will not be able to wear her large new hat to Sports Day in 1909 if there is any wind! But the mainly unaccompanied journey of J.K. from Engelberg in Switzerland each January (the Kiplings had an annual holiday there in January and February) is of a different era – although telegrams reassured the Kiplings firstly that J.K. had been picked up from London by Mr. Lang (a master and later Headmaster) and secondly from Mr. Stanford that he had arrived in Rottingdean.

These letters are a fascinating insight into a past time and into a loving family of the Edwardian era. Their importance is enhanced when we remember in the coming weeks that along with so many young men J.K. died only four years after leaving his school in Rottingdean. The letters then seem to portray moments bathed in light, unconscious of the looming shadow and remind us of the fleeting nature of life and youth.

Close up of School photograph Summer Term 1908 (notice the Headmaster’s daughter, Molly Stanford, the only girl in the school)



Second from right seated – Rugby team 1911



1. His field equipment was a piece of twisty rag and a goatskin water bag.

Gunga Din (Ballads) it starts

"the uniform 'e wore, was nothing much before, and rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind"

2. Lit a smoke signal for her daddy.

Taffimai, Merrow Down, RK's reference to his late daughter Josephine.

3. Jangled his keys in weariness and wrath.

St Peter, Tomlinson, when Tomlinson was applying for admission to heaven, it starts the "good souls flocked like homing doves, and bade him clear the path"

4. Was spanked by his relatives.

The Elephants Child, Just So stories How the Elephant got his nose.

5. Not the least of our merchant princes.

Sir Anthony Gloster (The Mary Gloster, The Seven Seas) Sir Anthony was talking on his death-bed to his son Dickie.

6. Had an amended law named after him.

Tod, Tods Amendment (Plain Tales). A political allegory,,a precocious 6yr old, by repeating remarks heard in the bazaar, is responsible for changes to an unpopular Land Act.

7. Stole an egg.

Rikki Tiki Tavi (Jungle Book) The mongoose was distracting the cobra Nguina by stealing her egg, to protect his owner, a young boy.

8. Filled old ladies with kerosene.

Boh Da Thone.(Ballads) He crucified noble, he scarified mean, he filled old ladies with kerosene: While over the water the papers cried, "The patriot fights for his countryside!"

9. Used flower pots as stepping stones.

George Cottar Brushwood Boy (Days work) In one of his dream sequences.

10. Rides the tallest horse he can.

Bobs Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar.

11. Breakfasted on cold rice.

Kim Kimball O'Hara. More of him from Rodney Pyne later in 2008.

Stay tuned for the next Kipling Quiz...

Merrow Down

*There runs a road by Merrow Down –
A grassy track to-day it is-
An hour out of Guildford town,
Above the river Wey it is.*

*Here, when they heard the horse-bells ring,
The ancient Britons dressed and rode
To watch the dark Phoenicians bring
Their goods along the Western Road.*

*Yes, here, or thereabouts, they met
To hold their racial talks and such-
To barter beads for Whitby jet,
And tin for gay shell torques and such.*

*But long and long before that time
(When bison used to roam on it)
Did Taffy and her Daddy climb
That Down, and had their home on it.*

*Then beavers built in Broadstonebrook
And made a swamp where Bramley stands;
And bears from Shere would come and look
For Taffimai where Shamley stands.*

*The Wey, that Taffy called Wagai,
Was more than six times bigger then;
And all the Tribe of Tegumai
They cut a noble figure then!*

*Of all the Tribe of Tegumai
Who cut that figure, none remain,-
On Merrow Down the cuckoos cry-
The silence and the sun remain.*

*But as the faithful years return
And hearts unwounded sing again,
Comes Taffy dancing through the fern
To lead the Surrey spring again.*

*Her brows are bound with bracken-fronds,
And golden elf-locks fly above;
Her eyes are bright as diamonds
And bluer than the sky above.*

*In mocassins and deer-skin cloak,
Unfearing, free and fair she flits,
And lights her little damp-wood smoke
To show her Daddy where she flits.*

*For far — oh , very far behind,
So far she cannot call to him,
Comes Tegumai alone to find
The daughter that was all to him.*