



## NUGGET

### Bro. Joseph Rudyard Kipling

**Summary:** Rudyard Kipling – a Masonic literati.



Portrait of Rudyard Kipling (1895) from the biography  
by John Palmer  
Elliott & Fry [Public domain]

Kipling was born in Bombay in India on December 30th 1865. At the age of five, Rudyard was brought to England and spent five unhappy years with a foster family living a life of misery due to mistreatment, beatings and general victimisation. At the age of 17 he returned to India and began his life's work writing beginning as a sub-editor of *The Civil and Military Gazette and Pioneer* in Lahore which led him, in later life, to becoming a leading supporter of The British Empire, and in consequence, a very controversial figure.

In his twenty-first year he began to produce the verse and stories that were to make him famous and which attracted attention from the outset. Between 1887 and 1889 he travelled extensively in Asia and America where he married an American girl Caroline Starr Balestier and met Mark Twain and in 1907 both received an Honorary Degree for Literature at Oxford University; the same year as he became the first English writer to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.<sup>1</sup>

Tragically in February 1899 his daughter Josephine caught pneumonia and never recovered and his only son John was killed in action in Belgium in 1915. Kipling gave unstintingly of his time and effort as a member of The Imperial War Graves Commission and is credited with the authorship of the inscription seen in every cemetery, *'Their Name Liveth for Evermore'*.

Kipling's admission into Freemasonry was remarkable as was his Masonic career and had a profound effect upon his writings and he delivered a lecture to his Brethren on *The Origins of Masonry and the First Degree in Particular*. He became a joining member of Independence with Philanthropy Lodge No. 391 in Bengal.

On his return to England, Freemasonry rapidly developed. He joined as an Honorary Member the Motherland Lodge No. 3861, in London, became a member of The Authors' Lodge No. 3456, and a Founder Member of The Lodge Builders of the Silent Cities No. 4948. He became Poet Laureate of the Scottish Lodge, Canongate Kilwinning Lodge No. 2, the previous incumbent was none other than Robert Burns.



Years later, he accepted a Fellowship of *The Philalethes Society*, an organisation of Masonic writers formed in The United States of America in 1928. The Society closed its membership list upon the appointment of Kipling as the fortieth member.

Upon his return to England the Kipling family settled in the family home known as Batemans near the village of Burwash in Sussex. He refused all honours including The Order of Merit, and only accepted those of a literary nature. Kipling's works span over five decades with Tennyson and Browning still writing, and Hardy and Yates unheard of.

On the 18th January 1936 Kipling died at the age of 70 years and a complete and scholarly catalogue of all his works which carry Masonic allusions and reference in Kipling's writings has yet to be accomplished.



## References

1. The Nobel Prize in Literature 1907, "*in consideration of the power of observation, originality of imagination, virility of ideas and remarkable talent for narration which characterize the creations of this world-famous author.*" NobelPrize.org. Nobel Media AB 2019. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1907/summary> [Accessed 27 Nov 2019]
2. Harper, Paul, Famous Freemasons - A Prologue, <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=2084>



## Recommended use of Nuggets

Nuggets offer a short, simple and readily absorbed means of progressing Masonic knowledge and an easy way to introduce learning to Lodges and Chapters. It is hoped that they will become a regular feature of Lodge and Chapter meetings as well as a source for private-study.

Nuggets can be included as an item in the summons and read at most Lodge/Chapter meetings. They can be:

Read by either a new or an experienced Mason with the minimum of preparation and practice; though ideally, they need to be read a few times beforehand.

Themed with the meeting or activity.

Used to initiate a discussion within a Lodge/Chapter, LOI/COI, or group.

Read at home and shared as a topic for a future discussion.

Used as a focus for an unplanned, informal discussion.

\*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version unless otherwise specified.

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