

KIPLINGS PAST REVISITED

By MIKE KIPLING

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Ten years ago, in 'The Search for Kiplings Past' (KJ 347), I explored Rudyard Kipling's ancestry, finding that Kipling's seventeenth-century forefathers farmed the Yorkshire hills south of the Tees. This conclusion was reached by comparing the DNA of men named Kipling, including myself, whose ancestry could all be traced to that part of the county, particularly to the parish of Barningham. What I lacked was any documentary evidence linking that area with Kipling's great-great-grandfather John Kipling, who was first recorded marrying in the north Yorkshire coastal parish of Loftus in 1764. Over the succeeding decade, I have continued my research and discovered several pieces of evidence which support my original findings.

In my original paper, I mentioned a William Kipling of Loftus who had married at Eggescliffe in County Durham, lower down the Tees, in October 1773, speculating that he might have been related to John Kipling. Further investigation revealed that William had been arrested in 1772 for horse-stealing and appeared before the assizes at York in March 1773.¹ In his statement, it was noted that he was a labourer from Dalton, which lies in the parish of Kirkby Ravensworth adjacent to Barningham. It was alleged that he stole a horse at nearby Gilling and rode it to his sister Ann Hart's house in Loftus, where it was discovered by searchers, including his uncle George Kipling from Gilling. William claimed that he had gone to Loftus to get a job in the alum works there and that he had been asked to deliver the horse nearby. He may have been believed, for he was acquitted.² He did not keep out of trouble thereafter, though, for in March 1774 he was arrested for burglary in Stockton, being found back in Dalton with some of the stolen goods on him.³ The *Newcastle Chronicle* described him as 'a notorious offender'.⁴ He was sentenced to death, later reduced to transportation for life. However, before he could be sent away, he managed to escape from Durham Gaol, and despite the hue and cry being raised he seems to have successfully disappeared, a reward of two guineas notwithstanding.⁵

Who were William, his uncle George and his aunt Anne Hart? It is likely that George and Anne were two of the children of another George

Kipling, who married an Ann Sigswith at Kirkby Ravensworth in 1714.⁶ Records exist of the baptisms of three of their children, Francis (1719) at Bowes and George (1721) and John (1724) at Barningham.⁷ I can find no record of Anne's baptism, although parish records are incomplete around this time, but she married John Hart at Kirkby Ravensworth in 1754. There was also a fifth sibling, William. He married a Mary Story at Kirkby Ravensworth in 1748 and was most likely the father of William the burglar, who at one point is described as 'William Kipling the younger', a device often used to distinguish between a father and son of the same name. William the younger's age was also mentioned in 1774 as being 24, meaning he was born around 1750. I have illustrated these relationships in a simplified family tree, which includes only those people mentioned in this paper (Figure 1).

Two descendants of the above Francis Kipling have DNA which matches that of a descendant of Rudyard's uncle, Joseph Kipling, so making it likely that the John Kipling baptised in 1724 was Rudyard's great-great-grandfather and that he moved to Loftus for work some time between his sister's wedding in 1754 and his own in 1764. John named one of his sons George (baptised at Loftus in 1779), so maintaining the name in the family as his brother George had no sons.⁸ A DNA test has also been carried out by one of that son George's descendants, which reassuringly matched the other samples, confirming the relationships.

As I mentioned in my previous paper, when John died in 1792, his age was given in the parish register as 62. This is inconsistent with a 1724 birth. However, it was not unusual at this time for someone to be unsure of their exact own age, or even to lower it somewhat when wooing a younger partner, so this difference does not in my opinion invalidate the other evidence.

I have not yet been able to discover the origins of the George Kipling who married at Kirkby Ravensworth in 1712, although as two of his sons were baptised at Barningham it is possible that he originally came from there, which is where my own ancestors lived (my DNA also matching that of Rudyard's family group).

In my previous paper, I mentioned a large family of Canadian Kiplings descended from a John Kipling who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company in the late 18th century. Two members of this family have now carried out DNA tests, which do not match that of Rudyard's wider family group. Rather, they match the DNA of the second, genetically distinct Kipling family group I mentioned in my earlier paper. Knowing this, I have been able to identify a John Kipling baptised at Bishop Auckland in 1743 as probably being the John who travelled to Hudson's Bay.⁹ This rules out a possible alternative life story for the

John Kipling baptised at Barningham in 1724, so increasing the likelihood that he was indeed Rudyard's great-great-grandfather.

One other fact I mentioned in my original paper was that an Ann Kipling of Gainford in County Durham was married at Loftus in 1791. This now appears to have been pure coincidence, as Ann was very probably part of that genetically distinct Kipling family group.¹⁰ In more recent years, further discoveries have been few and far between, as I have by now explored all the archives most likely to contain relevant documents. However, I continue to live in hope that further facts may come to light to reveal yet more about Kiplings past.

George **Kipling**

(?–1754)

m. Ann Sigsworth

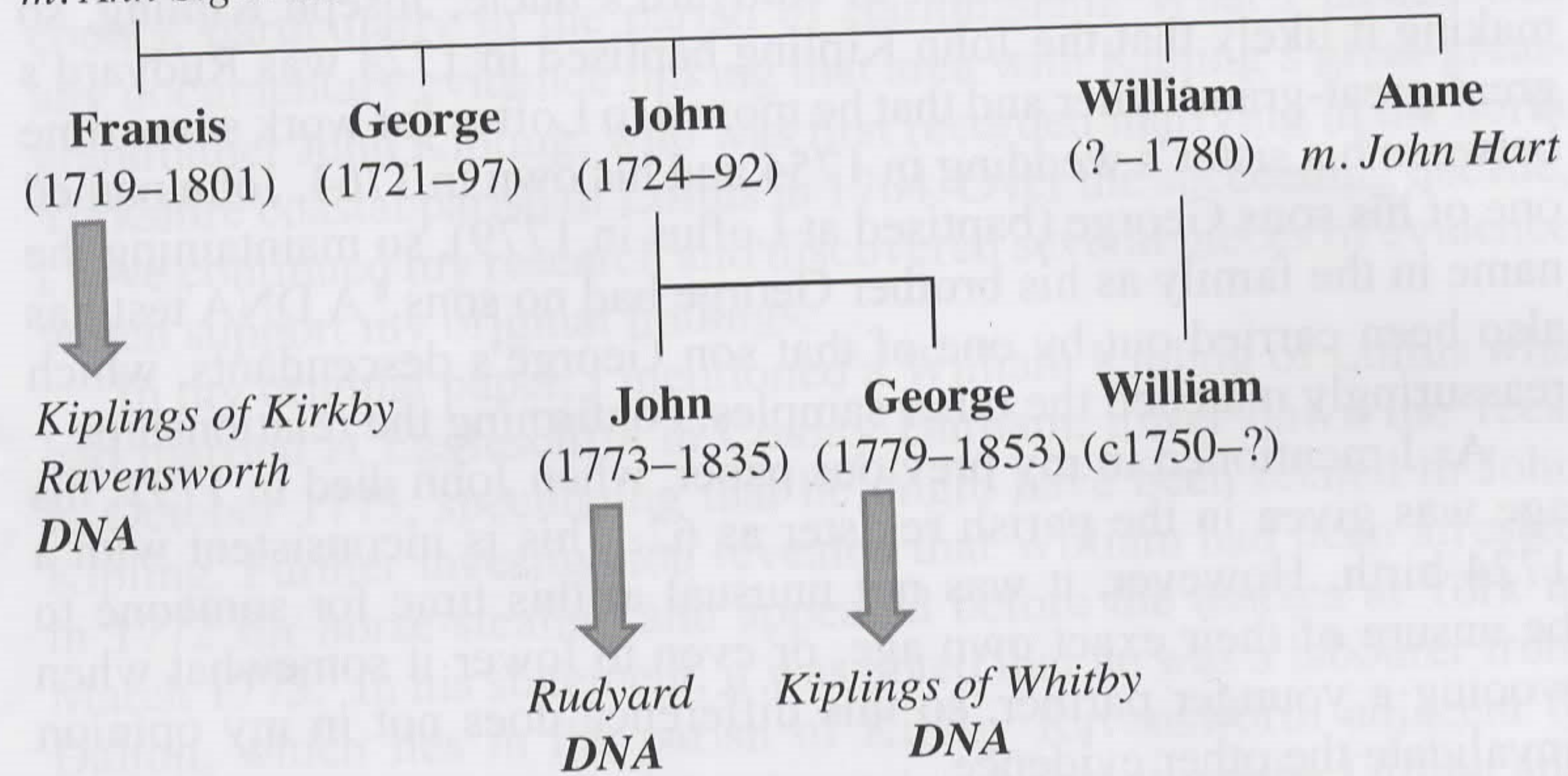


Figure 1. Family tree

NOTES

- 1 The National Archives (TNA), ASSI 45/31/1/184-187.
- 2 *Derby Mercury*, 26 March 1773, p. 4, col. 1
- 3 TNA, DURH 17/14, Rex v Wm Kipling.
- 4 *Newcastle Chronicle*, 26 March 1774, p. 2, col. 3.
- 5 *Newcastle Courant*, 5 November 1774, p. 1, col. 1
- 6 Kirkby Ravensworth parish registers, www.findmypast.co.uk
- 7 Bowes parish registers, www.ancestry.co.uk; Jon Smith, 'Barningham Baptisms', *Barningham Local History Group Publications*, 8 (2011)
- 8 Loftus parish registers, www.findmypast.co.uk
- 9 St Andrew Auckland parish registers, durhamrecordsonline.com
- 10 www.kipling.one-name.net/Bolam%201911.pdf