

# THE SEARCH FOR KIPLINGS PAST

By MIKE KIPLING

[It will be immediately apparent to Members why this subject is of interest to Mr Kipling, although he tells me that he only became interested a couple of years ago. He is an actuary by profession and is working for an external MSc in genealogy at the University of Strathclyde. – Ed.]

The origins of Rudyard Kipling's family have long been a subject of uncertainty and speculation, not least by Kipling himself.

In a letter written from Vermont in 1896 to Butler Wood, Librarian of Bradford Public Library<sup>1</sup>, Kipling wrote,

We used to be small Nidderdale yeomen and I believe that, in a humble way, few stocks carry back purer Yorkshire blood for so long a time. I think we are West Riding for a matter of two hundred years, a thing of which I am not a little proud.

In the Kipling Papers<sup>2</sup> is correspondence to Kipling from F H Sunderland of Yorkshire, in draft response to which Kipling wrote

The family is certainly Yorkshire, and I believe that some of it came from Snaith way and thereabouts. They seem to have included small farmers, bell-founders, clockmakers, and the like, scattered all over the Ridings, and, I suppose, originally with some far-off connexion with the hamlet that carries their name [and] I believe the sons were christened Joseph and John in alternate generations.

It has also been said that Kipling was 'of the clan whose home was in the valleys of the Tees and the Swale' and that 'his great great grandfather came from Bedale or Richmond'. The latter is stated by Birkenhead<sup>3</sup> and is *verbatim* a comment from a letter in the July 1927 edition of this *Journal*<sup>4</sup> from a Percy Fallowfield Kipling, who later<sup>5</sup> explained that he was in possession of a letter from Kipling's father stating that the family came from the neighbourhood of Richmond in Swaledale. The former appears in *The History of the Church and Parish of Romaldekirk*<sup>6</sup> and is therein also attributed to John Lockwood Kipling.

We will consider later how much of this speculation is likely to have been true and how much might have other explanations.

Charlotte Kipling, the daughter of Percy Kipling, showed in this *Journal*<sup>7</sup> that the name “Kipling” was, both around the time of Kipling’s birth and, although to a lesser extent, still today strongly associated with those areas of Yorkshire and Durham lying immediately on either side of the upper Tees. However, Kipling’s great-grandfather, John Kipling, was born not there but in Loftus, inland from Whitby, in 1773, the son of another John Kipling and his wife Ann.

It is likely that Kipling’s great-great-grandfather was, as Ankers<sup>8</sup> has it, the John Kipling who married an Ann Sanderson in Loftus in 1764 and who was buried at nearby Lythe in 1795, age 65, although there is some speculation that there might have been more than one John and Ann Kipling. This is because the Lythe registers<sup>9</sup> record the birth of a daughter, Jane, to John and Ann Kipling in 1787, when Ann would have been an unfeasibly old 61, assuming her age at death was correct (82 in 1808). An alternative explanation would be that Jane was the illegitimate child of one of the Kiplings’ elder daughters, passed off as their own to avoid shame. Despite the wide availability of parish and other records on-line today, no records have to my knowledge been discovered which show a John Kipling born in 1729 or 1730. Nor, as it is quite possible that the age at death recorded in the Lythe registers was imprecise, have any of the John Kiplings born in adjacent years been identified as particularly likely candidates.

There are some tantalising facts which may be clues or may simply be red herrings:

- The publication at Eggescliffe, Durham of banns of marriage between William Kipling of Loftus and Mary Bowbank of Eggescliffe in 1773<sup>10</sup>, leading to speculation that William was John’s brother.
- The marriage in Loftus in 1791 of William Orton of Loftus and Ann Kipling of Gainford in Durham, suggesting a possible link to that village just north of the Tees<sup>11</sup>.

Until recently, this would have been as far as genealogists could go. However an exciting new avenue has now been opened up by DNA testing.

Our DNA is mainly an intermingling of that of both our parents. However, the Y-chromosome passes from father to son unaltered, apart from infrequent random mutations. By comparing the Y-chromosomes of

two individuals it is possible to determine how likely it is that they related in the male line.

Specific parts of the chromosome known as “markers” are used to make such comparisons. A mutational change to a marker happens on average only once every 300 -500 generations, so there is a high chance that a father and son have the identical values for a specific marker. Conversely, though, if around 400 different markers were compared between that same father and son, there would be around a 50% chance that there would be at least one difference.

Commercial tests are available which test around 40 markers and so far thirteen individuals named Kipling have submitted themselves to such a test (it only involves rubbing a large cotton-wool bud on the inside of one’s cheek). The ancestry of most of those tested had already been traced back with reasonable certainty for over 200 years, in some cases much longer.

Statistically<sup>12</sup>, it can be shown that on a 40 marker test a difference at only one marker means a 50% chance of having a common ancestor within about seven generations and a 90% chance within about 18. Whereas a difference at five or more markers means that a recent common ancestor is unlikely.

The results show that there have been two genetically distinct groups of Kiplings for quite a few hundred years. One explanation would be that a number of families settled in the village of Kiplin in Yorkshire, having arrived there in the various waves of migration into and across England, with family members subsequently becoming known as ‘de Kipling’ after taking up residence elsewhere. Kiplin, sometimes Kipling, is near Northallerton and (as Chipeling) is recorded in *Domesday Book*. Today, the Jacobean Kiplin Hall stands proud [<http://www.kiplinhall.co.uk/>] but only a few cottages remain of the village proper. The earliest mention of the surname Kipling of which I am aware dates from the third year of the reign of Edward III (1329-30), being of a William de Kyplyng in the context of a dispute over property in Lartington in Romaldekirk parish, Teesdale<sup>13</sup>. Of course, it is equally possible that different DNA entered part of a single-origin Kipling family centuries ago, through illegitimacy, adoption, adultery or a simple name change.

Of particular interest to the readers of this journal will be that one of the participants was Kipling’s first cousin twice removed, a great-great-grandson of the Rev Joseph Kipling, Kipling’s grandfather. His test differed at only one marker from my own result and was two markers different from two other participants (related to one another). My origins

can be reliably traced back to the North Riding village of Barningham in the early 17th century and those of the other two close matches to the nearby parish of Bowes in the early 18th century. We can thus conclude that relatives of Kipling populated and farmed the hills to the south of the Tees in the 17th and 18th centuries, and that it is quite possible that his particular line sprang from there also.

Amongst the people to whom the results show Kipling is related are the Kiplings of 19th century Darlington, weavers and woollen manufacturers and staunch pillars of the Methodist church. They include Edward Kipling, Mayor in 1869-70, and Francis Lawrence Kipling, co-founder of Watson, Kipling & Co, chemical manufacturers of Seaham near Sunderland around about the same time<sup>14</sup>.

It is also possible to use the results of the DNA tests to look much further back to the broad population group from which Kipling came. He belongs to the broad group which first arrived in Europe from west Asia about 35,000-40,000 years ago. It is a common population group, and about 70% of individuals currently residing in southern England are part of it.<sup>15</sup> More granular analysis of my own DNA suggest that I, and by implication, Kipling, descend from a sub-group whose origins are the Alpine region around 1600 BC, representatives of which first arrived in Britain rather more recently, although probably not as part of one of the waves of Celts<sup>16</sup>.

Turning now to Kipling's speculation on his origins. As Ankers<sup>17</sup> noted, we find that his grandfather ministered to the Methodists of Snaith in the East Riding from 1835 to 1837<sup>18</sup>. This may have been at the back of Kipling's memory. Similarly, the reference to Nidderdale may recall the Rev Joseph Kipling's ministry at Pateley Bridge in that valley.

As to 'bell-founders, clockmakers and the like', William Kipling was a prominent London clockmaker in the first half of the 18th century<sup>19</sup>, originally from Romaldkirk<sup>20</sup>. William's clocks



and watches still appear occasionally at auction (I own one of his long-

case clocks). It is possible that an acquaintance of Kipling owned such an instrument or that he came across one elsewhere. There is, for example, one in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Trinity House which has been there since 1725<sup>21</sup> |

Joshua Kipling was a brazier. He was born, apprenticed and made freeman in York<sup>22</sup> but later moved to Portsmouth<sup>23</sup>. A number of his bells are still to be found in the south east of England, including one in Portsmouth cathedral inscribed ‘*I was cast by Joshua Kipling in the year 1737*’ In this respect, it has previously been remarked in this *Journal*<sup>24</sup> that another bell in that cathedral is inscribed

*We good people all to prayer do call.*

*We honour to King and brides joy do bring.*

*Good Tydings we tell and ring the Death's knell.*

[<http://www.portsmouthcathedral.org.uk/Groups.htm>]

and that this same verse is what the bells pealed forth at Captain Gadsby's wedding in *The Story of the Gadsbys*. Kipling's mention of ‘bell-founders’ supports the speculation that he must have visited the Portsmouth bells, possibly on one of his long walks with the old Navy Captain when living as a child at the ‘House of Desolation’ in neighbouring Southsea.

There is as yet no evidence, genetic or otherwise, that Kipling is related to either William or Joshua. As we have seen, those of Kipling's or Lockwood's speculations likely to be closer to the truth are that he was descended from small farmers of the valleys of the Tees and the Swale. From time to time, contributors to this *Journal* have also queried whether Kipling was related to Dr Thomas Kipling, the controversial 18th century Dean of Peterborough. Another of those tested is descended from a brother of the Dean. His test results show that he is from a completely different genetic group to Kipling, so there is no evidence that Kipling and the Dean were related.

Several mistaken reports about Kipling's family have appeared over the years in the *Journal*. In 1978, Eric Hemmings wrote regarding Lockwood Kipling's brother, Joseph<sup>25</sup>. He claimed that in later life he ran a confectionery factory in Aylesbury and a shop in London. 1851 census records show Mr Hemmings' great-grandfather, Joseph Kipling, as being a London confectioner<sup>26</sup>. Unfortunately, they also make clear that he was born in London and that his birth was c1807, far too early to be the son of the Rev Joseph Kipling, who was himself born only in 1805. This Joseph

was the son of John Kipling, born in c1789 in Shoreditch, a 'chocolate maker'<sup>27</sup>.

John Lockwood's brother Joseph was actually born in 1840 in Horncastle, Lincolnshire and became a draper in Malton<sup>28</sup>. It is one of his descendants who has provided DNA for testing.

The epitome to Kipling in the March 1936 edition of the *Journal*<sup>29</sup> quotes the *Daily Mail* as reporting that the Rev Joseph Kipling 'was a farmer's son at Waitby, on the borders of Westmorland and Cumberland'. Not only was the Mail incorrect about the Rev Joseph, it would have been geographically more appropriate to describe Waitby as being on the borders of Westmorland and Yorkshire, as it is situated in the parish of Kirkby Stephen, which abuts onto that latter county. However, there have long been Kiplings in Kirkby Stephen and neighbouring Brough, both of which are just over the county border, and the Pennine watershed, from Romaldkirk.

It is important that these misconceptions are formally recorded so that future researchers are not left misinformed. This is all the more necessary now that the ability to search back-issues of the *Journal* on-line provides such easy access.

A relative of previous correspondents to the *Journal*, Percy Fallowfield Kipling and Charlotte Kipling, also participated in the DNA testing and fell into the same genetic group as Dean Thomas Kipling. This confirms that Percy and Charlotte, as they suspected, are unlikely to have been related to Kipling either.

In the Kipling Papers at Sussex University are letters from John and Mat Kipling to Moses Kipling in 1791-4<sup>30</sup>. Moses Kipling was born in Barnard Castle in 1769. He was the son of John and Christian Kipling (née Stewart) who married in 1766<sup>31</sup>. His brothers included John (b.1766) and Matthew (b.1773). By the date of the letters, Moses had moved to London, where he was in the iron trade. He was Prime Warden of the Blacksmith's Company in 1828 and composed the Blacksmith's song, sung at their dinners, the chorus of which runs:

To the mem'ry of Vulcan our voices we'll raise,  
May he and his sons be revered thro' the land;  
May they thrive root and branch, and enjoy happy days  
For by Hammer and Hand all arts do stand<sup>32</sup>.

Moses' brother John was Quarter-Master of the Royal Horse Guards<sup>33</sup> and was killed in April 1794 during the French revolutionary war battle of

Cateau<sup>34</sup>, presaging the death of a rather more well-known John Kipling over a century later (although Kipling's son was fighting alongside the French rather than against them as in 1794). The correspondence from John to Moses follows the progress of the Duke of York's campaign of 1793 and 1794.

I intend to continue the Kipling DNA project, with the objective of identifying to which of the two genetic groups these or other Kipling families belong. For example, there is a large Canadian family of Kiplings, descended from the union of John Kipling, an employee of the Hudson Bay Company, and two Native American women. A paper signed by this John Kipling is in the Kipling Papers<sup>35</sup>. Canada, incidentally, has the same proportion of individuals named Kipling in its population as the U.K. (22 per million, far more than other countries)<sup>36</sup>.

Two other John Kiplings are also referred to in the Kipling Papers. One was a London attorney in the early 18th century and was Deputy Treasurer of the Royal Academy of Musick. The Papers contain receipts signed by him and an accompanying letter refers to another also signed by Handel<sup>37</sup>. He was the brother of William Kipling the clockmaker. Another is the Rev John Kipling of Staverton, Gloucestershire, a sketch of whose memorial in the church there a later incumbent sent to Kipling<sup>38</sup> and whose origins were also Romalldkirk.

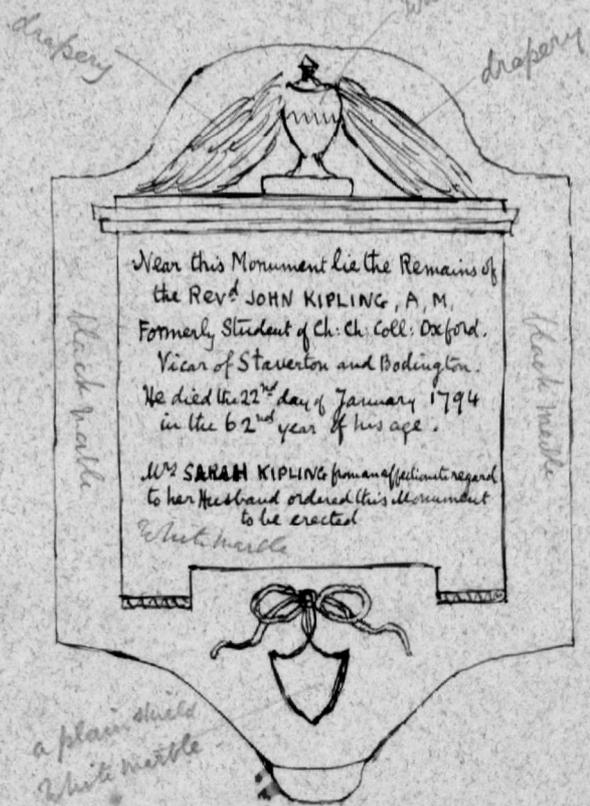
If any readers are acquainted with any Kiplings, please refer them to this article and invite them to get in touch with me ([mike@kipling.me.uk](mailto:mike@kipling.me.uk)) if they would be interested in joining in the search for Kiplings (and Kipling's) past.

From the Rev<sup>d</sup>  
HENRY HERBERT ORPEN-PALMER, B.D.,  
ST. PETER'S VICARAGE,  
CHELTENHAM.

To  
Revd John Kipling Esq

Date May 31<sup>st</sup> 1899

Greeting.



Monument in Staverton Church (on east wall)  
near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England.

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- <sup>1</sup> Pinney (1990) Editor. *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling. Volume 2. 1890-99*. London. The Macmillan Press
- <sup>2</sup> SxMs38/2/2/1/2/127
- <sup>3</sup> Birkenhead, Lord (1978) *Rudyard Kipling*. London. Weidenfield & Nicholson
- <sup>4</sup> KJ002, July 1927, p.27
- <sup>5</sup> KJ066, September 1943, p.15
- <sup>6</sup> Dickinson, K S (1936) *History of the Church and Parish of Romaldkirk*.
- <sup>7</sup> KJ239, September 1986, p.39
- <sup>8</sup> Ankers, Arthur R (1988). *The Pater*. Otford. Pond View Books
- <sup>9</sup> Hansell M W (1973) *The Parish Register of Lythe*. Transcription. Yorkshire Archaeological Society
- <sup>10</sup> Egglecliffe Parish Register. Photocopy provided by Michael Hansell
- <sup>11</sup> Loftus Parish Register. Microfilm copy at London Family History Centre.
- <sup>12</sup> Walsh, Bruce (2001) *Estimating the Time to the Most Recent Common Ancestor for the Y chromosome or Mitochondrial DNA for a pair of Individuals* *Genetics* **158**:897-912 (June 2001)
- <sup>13</sup> Plantagenet-Harrison, G. A (1879) *The History of Yorkshire Part I*. London & Aylesbury. Hazel, Watson & Viney.
- <sup>14</sup> Middleton D G (1988) *The Kiplings of Teesdale*. Unpublished
- <sup>15</sup> Ancestry.co.uk (Last accessed 29 July 2011)
- <sup>16</sup> Feher, T (2010). *A Short Essay about the U152 Haplogroup*. Available on-line at <http://www.familyreedna.com/public/R1b-U152/default.aspx?section=results>.( Last accessed 26 April 2012).
- <sup>17</sup> Ankers. *Ibid*
- <sup>18</sup> Hill, William (1853) *Ministers, &c, In Great Britain and on Foreign Stations*. London. John Mason
- <sup>19</sup> Baillie G H (1929) *Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World (Vol 1)*. London. Methuen
- <sup>20</sup> Middleton D G . *Ibid*.
- <sup>21</sup> [www.trinityhousenewcastle.org.uk/historic\\_buildings.asp](http://www.trinityhousenewcastle.org.uk/historic_buildings.asp) (Last accessed 27 Jul 2011)
- <sup>22</sup> Collins, Francis. Editor (1900) *Register of the Freemen of the City of York: Vol. 2: 1559-1759* . [www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk) (Last accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>23</sup> St Thomas, Portsmouth Parish Register. Transcription (marriage to Elizabeth Woods 1736; birth of daughter, Jane, 1739). [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (Last accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>24</sup> KJ042, June 1937, p.66
- <sup>25</sup> KJ208 December 1978, p15
- <sup>26</sup> England & Wales census 1851. HO107 piece 1520 folio 319 page 2. [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) (accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>27</sup> Guildhall, St Giles Cripplegate, Marriages, 1866 - 1870, P69/GIS/A/01/Ms 6422/13. [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) (accessed 22 October 2011). England & Wales census 1851. HO107 piece 1523 folio 322 page 29. [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) (accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>28</sup> England & Wales census 1851. RG11 piece 4811 folio 131 page 29. [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) (accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>29</sup> KJ037, March 1936, p14.
- <sup>30</sup> SxMs38/2/2/1/2/1/7/1/9
- <sup>31</sup> Barnard Castle parish records. Transcription. [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) (accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>32</sup> [www.blacksmithscompany.org.uk](http://www.blacksmithscompany.org.uk) (accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>33</sup> *The Times*, Monday, Sep 08, 1788; p. 2

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- <sup>34</sup> Packe E A *Historical record of the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards or Oxford Blues.*  
p.104 Google Books (accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>35</sup> SxMs38/2/2/1/2/1/7/1/6
- <sup>36</sup> worldnames.publicprofler.org (accessed 22 October 2011)
- <sup>37</sup> SxMs38/2/2/1/2/1/7/1/4
- <sup>38</sup> SxMs38/2/5/1/1/1