

## Banbury Cross Players

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### **MY BOY JACK - Behind the Scenes**

This week, Director Helen Watson gives us some insight into Rudyard Kipling.



Rudyard Kipling was an English writer, perhaps best known for writing 'The Jungle Book' and his 'Just So Stories'. However, a keen imperialist and patriot Rudyard Kipling also enthusiastically wrote poems and pamphlets that supported England's intent to restore Belgium, after it had been occupied by Germany. In September 1914, Kipling was asked by the British Government to write propaganda, on their behalf, for the war, which proved to be very popular with the British public.

Kipling believed in the fight and would often write statements that 'Britain was standing up for the cause of good'.

He had great disdain for those men who dodged their duty to fight in the war. In 'The New Army in Training' (1915), Kipling concluded the piece by saying:

"... But what will be the position in years to come of the young man who has deliberately elected to outcaste himself from this all-embracing brotherhood? What of his family, and, above all, what of his descendants, when the books have been closed and the last balance struck of sacrifice and sorrow in every hamlet, village, parish, suburb, city, shire, district, province, and Dominion throughout the Empire? ..."

Rudyard Kipling's son, John, was commissioned as a second lieutenant into the 2nd Battalion, Irish Guards on 15 August 1914, having just turned 17. After reports of the Rape of Belgium and the sinking of the RMS Lusitania in 1915, Rudyard Kipling came to see the war as a 'crusade for civilisation against barbarism', and was even more keen that his son should see active service.

John Kipling was at the Battle of Loos in September 1915. He had just turned 18. He never came home.