



Banbury Cross Players

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MY BOY JACK - Behind the Scenes

Bateman's is a 17th century farmhouse located in East Sussex. It was the home of Rudyard Kipling and his family.

When Kipling first visited Bateman's, while house hunting in 1900, it was love at first sight. He paid £10,000 for the house in 1902, a considerable sum for the time, and even paid for a new road to be built from the nearest main road to the house.

He could have paid even more for the house but, when they went to view Bateman's, Kipling's Rolls Royce had broken down and they ended up arriving in a borrowed horse and trap. When they eventually arrived in the Rolls to move in, the vendor told Kipling that if they had arrived in the car to view the house he would have been charged considerably more.

Kipling lived at Bateman's until his death in 1936. Carrie Kipling, his wife, bequeathed the house to the National Trust on her death in 1939, and it is now open to the public.

My co-director, Kerrie, recently visited Bateman's and was very moved to see Rudyard's books, Jack's old school uniforms, Carrie's office and all of the other family memorabilia. She found it very poignant to walk in his footsteps. The property is open all year, and Kipling fans will find it well worth a visit.

At Batemans the Kiplings' could never escape the war. The proximity of East Sussex to France meant that the sound of the artillery guns and explosions could be heard from across the channel.

A sometimes daily reminder of all they had given and what they had lost.

Helen Watson

Photos Courtesy : Kerrie McCormick

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