



Mr & Mrs Rudyard Kipling: Mar. 21, 1914

Kipling (far right) in front of the Hôtel Portugal, with his signature from the hotel's visitor's book



Vernet-les-Bains and Canigou

Tribute to Rudyard Kipling 2011

A hundred years ago, in 1911, Rudyard Kipling and his wife spent a month in the spa town of Vernet-les-Bains, in the foothills of the eastern Pyrenees mountains. Today, a century later, the town pays tribute to the author of *The Jungle Book* - and of the lesser-known but delightful tale *Why Snow Falls at Vernet*.

This document provides information about the background to the *Année Kipling* in Vernet-les-Bains, plus a detailed programme of events (see Annex).

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January 2011

For more detailed information please visit the Vernet-les-Bains website at www.vernet-les-bains.fr/vernet/english.asp

VERNET-LES-BAINS KIPLING CENTENARY 2011

SUMMARY



More than fifty events are planned in Vernet-les-Bains in 2011 to celebrate the centenary of Rudyard's Kipling stay in the town. The theme of the events, which will take place from March to October, will be the personality and the works of Rudyard Kipling, author of *The Jungle Book*.

Kipling stayed in Vernet-les-Bains with his wife Carrie in 1910, 1911 and 1914. At that time, Vernet was one of the most prestigious and luxurious hot-water spa towns in Europe. In particular, it attracted a wealthy English clientele.

Kipling described Vernet as "a lovely place" where one could enjoy "the quietest life under the sun". He was especially captivated by Canigou, "a magician among mountains". While he was in Vernet in 1911, he wrote a short story entitled *Why Snow Falls at Vernet*.

In Vernet-les-Bains in 2011 there will be:

- New self-guided trails
- "Theatrical" guided tours
- "Story-telling" evenings
- Walks
- Concerts
- Films
- Talks and lectures
- Exhibitions
- Historical reconstructions and other entertainments organized by local associations, shops and restaurants

In particular, the local council will open two new self-guided trails, one around the historical "Belle Epoque" part of Vernet where Kipling stayed, and a second in the Winter Garden, a former landscaped park linked to Vernet's hot-water spa.

Vernet-les-Bains is a spa town long renowned for its healing hot-water springs and for its sunny, healthy climate. It is a designated *Station Verte* ("Green resort"), lying at the foot of the mighty Canigou mountain in the Catalan Pyrenees Regional Park.

The town and its surrounding countryside have a rich historical heritage. In Vernet-les-Bains there is a wide range of accommodation, services, and sport and recreational facilities.

For more detailed information please visit the Vernet-les-Bains website at www.vernet-les-bains.fr/vernet/english.asp

VERNET-LES-BAINS KIPLING CENTENARY 2011

Rudyard Kipling and Vernet-les-Bains

The world-famous English writer Rudyard Kipling visited Vernet-les-Bains with his wife, Carrie, in 1910, 1911 and 1914. The principal reason for their visits was to seek treatment at the town's hot-water spa for Mrs Kipling's rheumatic condition. At that time - the *Belle Epoque* - Vernet-les-Bains was one of the most renowned and luxurious spas in Europe.

The resort was especially favoured during the early twentieth century by English visitors. They contributed to the erection in the town of a monument to the Anglo-French *Entente Cordiale*, and they built an Anglican church here.

Kipling's visits to Vernet were much celebrated in the locality. He had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. His *Jungle Book* had been translated into French and was very popular in France. Perpignan's newspaper, the *Indépendant*, announced Kipling's arrival on February 20th 1911 by saying "We are very pleased to have among our guests such an eminent literary figure".

Here are some edited extracts from Kipling's dairies and letters, written during Kipling's various stays in the town:

Vernet is a lovely, cheerful place, surrounded by high mountains on which snow still lingers in March. The sun is Spanish and stabs through the gorges like a knife.

There is a pleasant English Club, with all the papers. Our rooms are very comfortable.

Carrie takes her sulphur baths, drinks her sulphur water and had a drastic course of massage sous l'eau that made her swear yet made her better. On the whole, she found great good out of her course of baths.

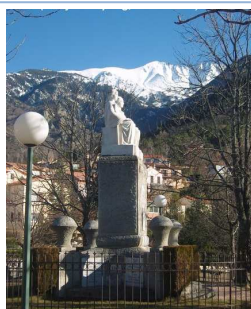
I have a bath and a massage every other day. One feels very slack for an hour afterwards but then one feels very light and comfortable.

We often go climbing up the mountain paths and watch the flowers come out. It is the quietest life under the sun.

During his 1911 visit to Vernet, Kipling wrote a letter to the Alpine Club of France about the nearby mountain called Canigou, which rises to over 9,000 feet. He praised it as "a magician among mountains" which he watched "with wonder and delight". In the same month (March) Kipling also wrote a light-hearted short story entitled *Why Snow Falls at Vernet*. It makes fun of the English habit of talking about nothing except the weather.



The "English" church and the monument to the "Entente Cordiale"



Kipling (bottom, far right) with a group of dignitaries in Vernet, 1911

For more detailed information please visit the Vernet-les-Bains website at www.vernet-les-bains.fr/vernet/english.asp

VERNET-LES-BAINS KIPLING CENTENARY 2011

The programme 2011 - summary

See Annex for full programme

A self-guided trail around the village is being created. This will be marked by a dozen information panels at various key locations. They will tell the story of Kipling in Vernet and of the *Belle Epoque* period.

Guided tours of the village will be offered - but with the added attraction that they will be led by actors and musicians who will offer a "theatrical" presentation of Kipling's visits to Vernet.

There will be exhibitions at the tourist office centred on Kipling and other literary aspects of the Pyrenees mountains. Historians and other scholars will give lectures on these and related themes.

One of these talks will be preceded by a screening of the Michael Caine film based on Kipling's story "The Man Who Would Be King". Other films based on Kipling's works will be shown - including, of course, "The Jungle Book".

Specially-commissioned chamber concerts will be held in Vernet. These will feature songs based on poems written by Kipling.

The Chichester Symphony Orchestra will be welcomed to Vernet and will give a concert here.

A local puppet theatre is preparing a new show, based on Kipling's characters and stories, for presentation in 2011 to audiences of all ages.

Throughout the year, events and entertainments traditionally held in Vernet will adopt Kipling-related themes. The town's carnival will be based on the "Jungle Book". And the town's great spring festival - the *Fête de la Belle Epoque*, a long weekend of open-air historic reconstructions, entertainments and much dressing-up in period costumes - will give pride of place to Kipling's charming tale, "Why Snow Falls at Vernet".



The "Fête de la Belle Epoque"

For more detailed information please visit the Vernet-les-Bains website at www.vernet-les-bains.fr/vernet/english.asp

VERNET-LES-BAINS KIPLING CENTENARY 2011

Vernet-les-Bains as a tourist resort

Vernet-les-Bains is a beautiful mountain village situated at an altitude of 650 metres (about 2,000 feet) in the eastern Pyrenees of France. It is an ideal centre for visitors and holidaymakers. The village enjoys a wonderful climate (with, on average, 300 days of sunshine each year) and is set in a sheltered valley in the foothills of the Canigou mountain - which rises to a height of 2,785 metres (over 9,000 feet).

Tranquil and restful, Vernet-les-Bains has long been known for its hot-water springs. A health centre in the village is located above this source and is specially equipped for the treatment of respiratory and rheumatic conditions.

Here the natural environment is a treasured asset. Officially designated as a "Centre for green tourism" Vernet-les-Bains is also proud to be the first "Village-Arboretum" in France. Over 1,500 trees are located within the village, with some 200 species having been identified and listed.

Vernet-les-Bains is an excellent centre for walkers. There are many possibilities for good walks in the Canigou massif, and in the Cady valley, where the village is located. There is also a geological museum with a fine collection of specimens, including some remarkable crystals and marine fossils.

And, within close reach of Vernet-les-Bains, there are many other fascinating attractions : romanesque abbeys, picturesque villages and fortified towns, stunning limestone caverns, the famous "little yellow train", etc...

Vernet-les-Bains is enchanting: a village which is a delight to visit, whatever the time of the year and whatever your preferred pace of discovery.



**The abbey of
St Martin du Canigou**



**Vernet-les-Bains,
the old village**



**The
"little yellow train"**

For more detailed information please visit the Vernet-les-Bains website at www.vernet-les-bains.fr/vernet/english.asp

VERNET-LES-BAINS KIPLING CENTENARY 2011

PROGRAMME

as at 26 January 2011

Exhibitions at the tourist office:

"Silhouettes"

Exhibition by British artist Hannah Thompson, inspired by characters in the town at the time Kipling wrote his short story, *Why snow falls at Vernet*.

"Pyrénéisme"

The Pyrenees mountains have given inspiration to mountaineers, writers, artists, scientists and many others. This exhibiton, prepared by a leading local history society, explores these various themes.

Self-guided history trails

"The Kipling walk"

This short walk introduces the "belle époque" section of Vernet-les-Bains. It has been adapted for partially sighted people.

"The Winter Garden walk"

This former landscaped garden lies on a steep hillside opposite Vernet's spa. It was here that Kipling found inspiration for his short story about Vernet.

Saturday 19 March 16h00: inauguration at the tourist office of the exhibitions and self-guided trails.

Talks and lectures

Talks presented by senior lecturers of the University of Perpignan

The talks will be held in the Winter Garden, the Casino Park and the Casino Theatre.

Friday 17 June, from 14h30

"Vernet-les-Bains seen from the Himalayas", by Hélène Guillaume, specialist in 19th century English literature

"Kipling and war", by Jean Louis Trouillon, specialist in English literature (terminology and lexicology). Casino Park.

"Kipling and the Victorians", by Isabelle Cases, specialist in English civilization (Victorian England).

"The Man Who Would Be King", film by John Huston (1975), followed by a discussion led by Jocelyn Dupont, specialist in English studies.

Vernet-les-Bains and "high society" at the start of the 20th century

A series of talks in the Casino Theatre, presented by members of the Pyrénées-Orientales Historical Society.

"The Pyrenees and the arts" by historian Laurent Fonquernie. *Friday 24 June, 17h00.*

"The conquest of Vernet-les-Bains by the European élite" by historian Edwige Praca. *Friday 01 July, 17h00.*

"The Anglican church of St Georges, Vernet-les-Bains" by historian Madeleine Souche. *Friday 08 July, 17h00.*

Shows and other entertainments

"Theatrical" guided tours

"As Kipling might have said...": a stroll in the Casino Park with tales and songs, by the *Eparpille* company (three actors, including a violin-player...)

Monday 25 April 16h00

Saturday 14 May 16h00

Saturday 28 May 16h00

Saturday 18 June 16h00

Saturday 10 September 17h00

Saturday 08 October 16h00

Films

Films and cartoons adapted from the works of Rudyard Kipling, screened at the Casino Theatre.

April school holiday in the Casino Theatre : "The Jungle Book" (Disney)

Friday 17 June 21h00 in the Casino Theatre: "The Man Who Would be King" (John Huston). See *Talks and lectures*, above.

Saturday 24 September 21h00 in the Casino Theatre

Classical music concerts

"Melodies inspired by Kipling". Songs adapted from poems by Kipling, presented by pianist Michel Peus (fomer deputy director of the Perpignan Conservatoire), violinist Jean Verdier (former member of the National Orchestra of France) and lyric soprano Marielle Vizentini (Perpignan Conservatoire).

Monday 18 April 16h00, Casino Theatre

Saturday 30 April 17h00, Casino Theatre

Friday 16 September 21h00, Casino Theatre

"Concert by the string ensemble of the Chichester Symphony Orchestra" (organized by members of the British community in Vernet-les-Bains).
Thursday 04 August, Casino Theatre

"Evening stories"

Spend an evening with "The storytellers of Sahorre" as they re-create "Kipling's imaginary world".

Saturday 19 March, 21h00, Salle Polyvalente

Thursday 05 May 17h00, Casino Theatre

Thursday 13 October 21h00, Salle Polyvalente (with vin nouveau and roast chestnuts)

Historical reconstruction

"Kiping in Vernet-les-Bains", by the the Vernet-les-Bains association which organises each year the "Belle Epoque" festival

Saturday 17 September 21h00, Casino Theatre.

Guided tours

"The Winter Garden" - a landscaped garden formerly attached to the Spa, it was laid out at the end of the 19th century.

Thursday 28 April

Thursday 19 May

"The village arboretum" - this historic collection of more than 2000 trees, made up of around 320 different species, is spread throughout the village.

Thursday 16 June 16h00

Thursday 25 August 16h00

Walks

"The English visitors' waterfall" - *the classic walk* from Vernet-les-Bains.

Wednesday 18 May 14h00

Wednesday 15 June 14h00

Wednesday 14 September 14h00

Mystery trail

"In search of Puck the elf" - follow the clues to discover on foot Vernet's natural heritage and Kipling's magical world.

Thursday 21 July

Thursday 18 August

Annual events

Carnival, based on "the Jungle Book"

Procession through the centre of the village, followed by food and drink in the *salle polyvalente*. *Friday 18 March, from 15h00.*

The "Belle Epoque" Festival

Historical reconstructions, processions and games, organised by the "Culture and pastimes" association.

From 2 June to 5 June.

Gardening events

"The garden: source of contemplation and inspiration"

From 3 June to 5 June

Canigou - at a leisurely pace

A week in which to discover Canigou - mostly at an easy pace: walks, strolls, entertainments, with, as a climax, the celebrated Canigou mountain race, initiated in 1905.

From 1 August to 7 August

National Heritage Weekend 2011

"Rudyard Kipling in Vernet-les-Bains"

Saturday 17 & Sunday 18 September

Painting course & exhibition

Course in watercolour painting (open to everyone) and exhibition by local artists organised by the association "1001 colours" and by local artists.

From Sunday 11 September to Sunday 25 September

Centenary of St George's Anglican church

A day of commemorations, secular and religious, organized by the Anglican parish of Vernet-les-Bains, in the presence of Bishops from various parts of Europe.

Sunday 10 July

Local associations

Several local associations will organise entertainments and other special events as part of the Vernet-les-Bains Kipling Centenary.

Local shops and business

Workshops, restaurants and shops will offer goods, services and menus adapted to the Kipling centenary theme.

FURTHER INFORMATION

(including prices and updated programmes) from:

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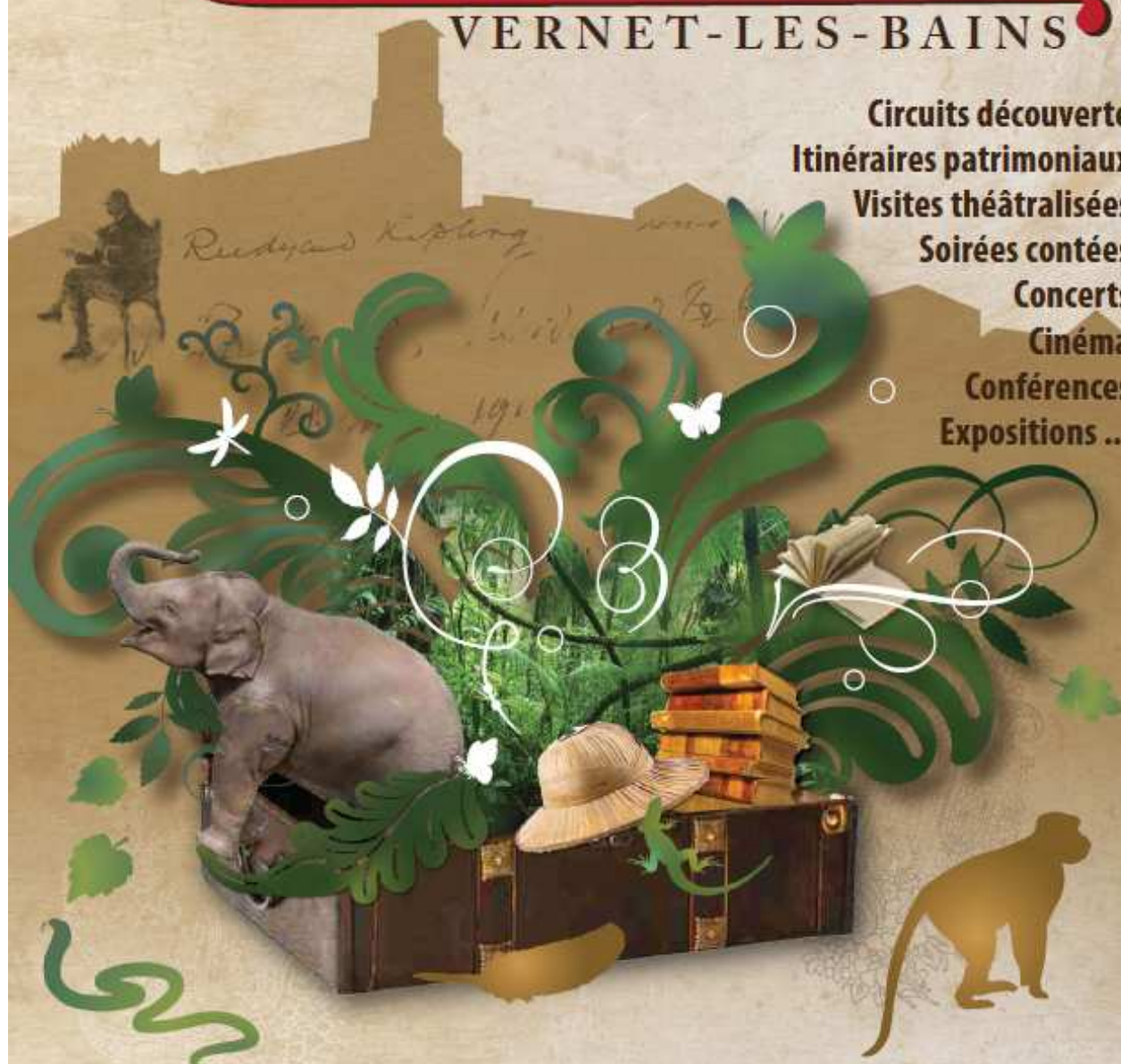
L'auteur du Livre de la Jungle pose ses valises à Vernet les Bains.

2011: La ville lui rend hommage.

ANNÉE KIPLING

VERNET-LES-BAINS

- Circuits découverte
- Itinéraires patrimoniaux
- Visites théâtralisées
- Soirées contées
- Concerts
- Cinéma
- Conférences
- Expositions ...



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