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Press Release

New Arthur Ransome Charity starts work in the Lake District

***Imagination and Reality: the Art of Arthur Ransome* (May 19 – September 4) is the Arthur Ransome Trust's inaugural exhibition, being held in partnership with The Brantwood Trust at Brantwood, Coniston. Accompanied by a series of Arthur Ransome-themed lectures, *Imagination and Reality* marks the starting point for the Trust's ambitious plans to develop an Arthur Ransome Centre in the southern Lake District.**

Trustee Geraint Lewis explains: *"Arthur Ransome is best known for writing the Swallows and Amazons series of children's books. Five of these take place around a fictionalised lake based on Coniston Water and Windermere. This area was Ransome's life-long spiritual home, which makes it the ideal location for a dedicated Ransome Centre. But there was much more to Ransome's life than Swallows and Amazons alone. We are convinced that an Arthur Ransome Centre will help current and future generations discover, experience and appreciate his wide-ranging and fascinating life and works.*

Interest in Arthur Ransome remains strong. This is perhaps no surprise because the Swallows and Amazons books have inspired the imagination, reading and activities of generations of children. They have also contributed to the popular image of the Lake District, not least through Ransome's unique and instantly recognisable illustrations: sparse pen-and-ink line drawings that perfectly complimented his precise prose. It is these illustrations that form the subject for the Trust's first exhibition.

As Brantwood's director Howard Hull says: *"Ransome certainly deserves his fame among the ranks of writers and artists who have imagined and re-imagined the Lake District over the centuries. Indeed it might well be argued that for sheer enduring influence it is Ransome's Lake District that has the edge on all the others in the popular mind. Certainly his Lake District is closest to the experience of the many millions of families that come to the area annually for enjoyment and adventure on and around the lakes themselves, rather than the fells."*

Christina Hardymont, author, journalist and Arthur Ransome's senior Literary Executor will deliver the Trust's inaugural lecture on Wednesday, 29 June at 7.00pm at Brantwood. Subsequent events include a lecture by Roland Chambers, author of the *The Last Englishman: the Double Life of Arthur Ransome*, and a performance by Hugh Lupton, Arthur Ransome's great-nephew and one of Britain's foremost oral storytellers.

Full details about the exhibition, the lectures, the Arthur Ransome Trust and its plans for a permanent Arthur Ransome Centre can be found at www.arthur-ransome-trust.org.uk.

Contact Details:

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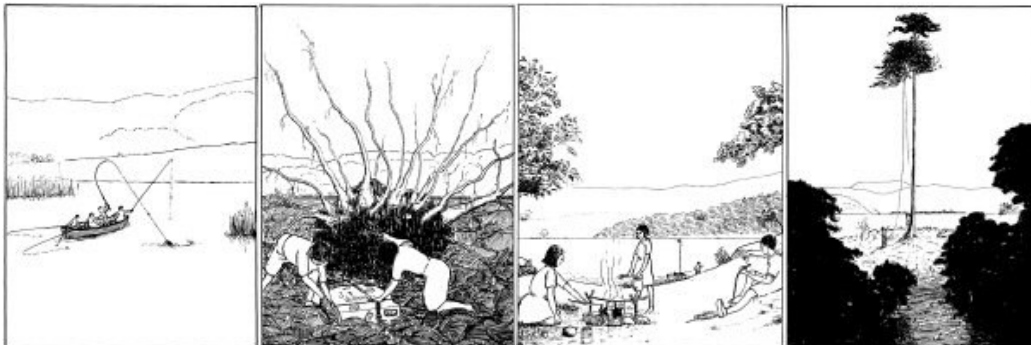
Notes for Editors:

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Images:

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"It's a shark!"

"We've Found it!"

The Camp Fire

The Lighthouse Tree



Image Ref, 418304: Ransome in his study at Low Ludderburn, where he wrote and began illustrating the *Swallows and Amazons* books



Image Ref, AR2: Ransome sailing *Swallow* in Bowness Bay, Windermere, in 1929.



Image Ref, 418324: Ransome sailing his first yacht, *Racundra*, in the Baltic in the 1920s.



Image Ref, 418303: Ransome in Russian Press Corps uniform during the First World War.

About the Trust:

- The Arthur Ransome Trust was formed in February, 2010.
- It's Charity Registration No is 1136565

Arthur Ransome's Life:

- Born in Leeds in 1884, son of Professor Cyril Ransome.
- Childhood holidays spent at Nibthwaite, Coniston, gave him his life-long love and respect for the Coniston area and the people who lived there.

- As a young man Ransome rejected a career as a chemist to become a publisher's office boy in London. Entering Bohemian society, he became deeply fascinated in folklore, literary criticism and the art of story telling.
- Ransome went to St Petersburg in 1913 to study Russian Folk Tales. This led both to his highly-acclaimed *Old Peter's Russian Tales* (1916) and to Ransome becoming a war correspondent and political journalist for the *Daily News* and *Manchester Guardian*. He became one of the few British observers inside Russia during and after the 1917 Russian Revolutions. His reporting, his friendship with leading Bolsheviks and his eventual marriage to Evgenia Shelepina (Leon Trotsky's secretary) led to enduring speculation over his involvement with both the British and Bolshevik governments and intelligence agencies.
- Ransome was also a dedicated and skillful sailor and fisherman. *Racundra's First Cruise* (1927) is regarded as a classic cruising book, whilst in the late 1920's he wrote *Rod and Line*, the weekly angling column for the *Manchester Guardian*.
- In total he wrote over 40 books, contributed to many more, and produced over 1,500 articles for newspapers and magazines.
- In his autobiography he wrote he felt he had 'lived not one life but snatches from a dozen different lives'.

Current interest in Arthur Ransome includes:

- Random House Ltd will be publishing electronic editions of all twelve novels for the first time this summer, during the *Imagination and Reality* exhibition.
- All twelve *Swallows and Amazons* books have been continuously in print since they were first published during the 1930s and '40s
- They continue to be widely translated: all twelve novels have been licensed earlier in 2011 for publication in Chinese.
- In December, 2010 the Bristol Old Vic produced a highly-successful and critically-acclaimed musical adaptation of *Swallows and Amazons*, at which the Arthur Ransome Trust mounted its first mobile display about Ransome. It is likely that the musical will tour the UK in the winter and spring of 2012.
- BBC Films and Harbour Pictures are currently developing a new film adaptation of the same book. They announced the appointment of their directors, Tom and Charlie Guard at the Cannes Film Festival last week and are currently hopeful that principal photography will start within the next twelve months.

The Exhibition:

- *Imagination and Reality: the Art of Arthur Ransome* has been jointly organised by The Brantwood Trust and Arthur Ransome Trust, with the support of the Brotherton Collection, Leeds University Library, the Lakeland Arts Trust and the Arthur Ransome Literary Estate.
- The Lakeland Arts Trust have kindly loaned a selection of Ransome's original sketchbooks and personal artefacts from the the Museum of Lakeland Life, Abbot Hall, Kendal.
- The Brotherton Collection is part of Leeds University Library's Special Collections. They have kindly loaned original artwork by Arthur Ransome and Stephen Spurrier for this exhibition.
- The exhibition is open daily from 11.00am until 5.30pm, with admission included in the Brantwood ticket. For further information please contact: Brantwood, Coniston, Cumbria, LA21 8AD tel. 015394 41396. www.brantwood.org.uk

Lecture and Event Details:

A programme of public lectures and events will be running alongside the exhibition. These will mainly take place at [Brantwood](#), with one lecture at [Abbot Hall Art Gallery](#) in Kendal. Pre-booking is strongly recommended for all of these events.

For events at Brantwood contact:

Post: Brantwood, East of Lake, Coniston, LA21 8AD
Telephone: 015394 41396
Email: enquiries@brantwood.org.uk

For the lecture at Abbot Hall (August 10) contact:

Post: Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 5AL
Telephone: 01539 722464
Fax: 01539 722494
Email: info@abbothall.org.uk

Please do not contact the Arthur Ransome Trust for tickets.

June 29

[“The Lake in the North”](#)

A public lecture at Brantwood.

Christina Hardyment, Arthur Ransome’s senior literary executor and the author of *Arthur Ransome and Captain Flint’s Trunk*, explores the places and people who inspired his imaginary lake. 7.00pm for refreshments; 7.30pm for lecture. £5.00 per person, includes glass of wine or soft drink. Pre-booking recommended.

Christina Hardyment

- *Arthur Ransome and Captain Flint's Trunk* was first published in 1984 by Ransome's publishers, Jonathan Cape, to mark the centenary of his birth. It contributed significantly to a growth in interest in the real world places, events and people that inspired Arthur Ransome, a process that led to the founding of The Arthur Ransome Society in 1990. A fully revised edition was published in 2006.
- Christina writes extensively on domestic history and literary geography. Her published works include *Literary Trails* (National Trust, 2000), *Dream Babies: Childcare Advice from John Locke to Gina Ford* (Frances Lincoln, 2007) and a biography, *Malory: The Life and Times of King Arthur's Chronicler* (Harper, 2010). She also writes a regular column reviewing audiobooks for *The Times*.
- Christina is currently working on a historical novel and also on *Arthur Ransome, at Home and Aboard*, (sic) which is scheduled for publication in Frances Lincoln's "Authors at Home" series in 2012.

July 13

[“The Homing Stone”: Written and Performed by Hugh Lupton](#)

A public performance at Brantwood.

“Hugh Lupton’s storytelling art is sheer wizardry in the guise of utter simplicity... a packed house sat in a thrall of enchantment, no movement, no intrusive sounds...” (Eastern Daily Press review of Hugh’s *Psalms from the Horse’s Mouth*).

In the early years of the last century Hugh’s great-uncle, Arthur Ransome, went to Russia to collect folktales. In his pocket he carried a stone from Peel Island on Lake Coniston, a reminder of his spiritual home. Swept up in the turbulent events of the Russian Revolution, he played chess with Lenin, became the only western journalist trusted by the Bolsheviks, and lost his heart to Evgenia, Trotsky’s secretary. In 1919 they escaped from Moscow. Ransome, the stone still in his pocket, was drawn homewards as powerfully as the salmon he loved to fish are drawn to their spawning ground.

Hugh Lupton is uniquely equipped to tell this extraordinary, perilous tale. He is highly-acclaimed as one of Britain’s foremost storytellers and this is an event not to be missed. The evening will include both *The Homing Stone* and stories from *Old Peter’s Russian Tales*. It is suitable for adults and young people (ages 12+).

7.00pm for performance.

£12.00 per adult, £8.00 for ages 12-16; including refreshments during interval.

Pre-booking recommended.

Hugh Lupton

- Hugh Lupton became one of Britain’s first professional storytellers in 1981, working largely in schools. In 1985 he formed the Company of Storytellers with a view to introducing storytelling to adult audiences. The Company toured for twelve years and was instrumental in stimulating a nation-wide revival in interest in the storytelling art. He has written and performed many works. Full details can be found at his website, www.hughlupton.com
- The Homing Stone was commissioned by the Bath Literature Festival and first performed there in March 2009.
- Arthur Ransome’s Homing Stone is usually on display at The Museum of Lakeland Life, in Kendal. It will form part of the exhibition “Imagination and Reality: the Art of Arthur Ransome” at Brantwood from May 18 to September 5, 2011.

August 3

[“Ransome’s Foreign Legion”](#)

A public lecture at Brantwood.

Robert Thompson explores Arthur Ransome in translation from Chinese to Swedish, examining the efforts of over thirty translators and the often entertaining interpretations of seventeen foreign illustrators.

7.00pm for refreshments; 7.30pm for lecture.

£5.00 per person, includes glass of wine or soft drink.

Pre-booking recommended.

Robert Thompson

- Robert has had a life-long interest in language. He is acknowledged to be the leading expert on the foreign editions of Arthur Ransome’s Swallows and Amazons series.
- His book *Ransome’s Foreign Legion* (Amazon Publications, 2009) was published for members of The Arthur Ransome Society and short-listed for the 2010 Lakeland Book of the Year.

Robert lives in Coniston. He works for Coniston Launch, hosting their regular *Swallows and Amazons* lake cruises.

August 10

[“Secret Water”](#)

A public lecture at Abbot Hall Art Gallery.

Roland Chambers, author of *The Last Englishman: the Double Life of Arthur Ransome*, presents a candid history of one of England’s most surprising children’s authors.

6.30pm lecture start.

The Abbot Hall Coffee Shop will remain open until 6.30pm on this evening.

£9.00 adults; £6.00 for Friends of the Lakeland Arts Trust and students; ticket price includes admission to the permanent Ransome exhibition in the Museum of Lakeland Life immediately prior to the lecture.

Pre-booking recommended.

The Lecture

Between 1913 and 1924, Arthur Ransome lived in Russia and the Baltic States, with only occasional visits home to England. As a reporter for the Daily News and Manchester Guardian during the Russian Revolution and Civil War, he became a controversial apologist for Bolshevism, made a bosom friend of Lenin’s chief of propaganda, and while working for the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), acted as an informant for the Bolshevik secret police, the Cheka. Returning home in the year of Lenin’s death, Ransome settled in the Lake District with his second wife, Evgenia Shelepina, formerly private secretary to Leon Trotsky. But it was six years before he published his most famous book for children, *Swallows and Amazons*, which contained no mention of Ransome’s Russian adventure, and another forty before his fans were given a chance to read his carefully worded autobiography.

Roland Chambers

Roland Chambers’s biography of Arthur Ransome, *The Last Englishman*, won a Jerwood award from the Royal Society of Literature and the Biographer’s Club prize for best first biography. He lives in London.

August 24

[“The Collingwoods, Coniston and Ransome”](#)

A public lecture at Brantwood.

Vicky Slowe, Curator of the Ruskin Museum, Coniston, will use quotations and artefacts to explore the Collingwood family and other local influences on the young Arthur Ransome’s life, ideas and work.

7.00pm for refreshments; 7.30pm for lecture.

£5.00 per person, includes glass of wine or soft drink.

Pre-booking recommended.

Vicky Slowe

- Vicky Slowe grew up in South Cumbria and has had a long-standing professional and personal interest in Arthur Ransome’s life and works. Vicky worked at the Museum of Lakeland Life in Kendal before becoming Curator at the Ruskin Museum, Coniston. Whilst at

Kendal she was closely involved in the receipt and cataloguing of Ransome artefacts and papers in the early 1970s.

- In 1990 Vicky played a major role in setting up The Arthur Ransome Society, which has remained based at The Museum of Lakeland Life to this day.

September 3

["Imagination and Reality: Arthur Ransome's Maps"](#)

An expedition on Coniston Water followed by a seminar at Brantwood.

Join us for an evening of exploration and discovery, starting with an early evening Swallows and Amazons cruise on Coniston Water, followed by a seminar exploring maps and mapping in the Swallows and Amazons series.

This is a joint Brantwood Trust, Arthur Ransome Trust and Royal Geographical Society event. Places are limited and a proportion of tickets will be offered to RGS members in the first instance.

6.00pm at Brantwood's Jetty for the lake cruise, returning to Brantwood for light refreshments after 7.00pm. The seminar will start at 8.00pm.

Tickets cost £12.00 for adults, £8.00 for u16, inclusive of cruise, refreshments and seminar. Pre-booking is essential for this event.

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