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Press Release

Leading Story-teller will Bring Ransome to Life at Brantwood on July 13th

The Homing Stone and Old Peter is the second in a series of public events accompanying this summer's *Imagination and Reality: the Art of Arthur Ransome* exhibition at Brantwood. It promises to be an unforgettable evening, as Hugh Lupton performs *The Homing Stone*, the story of Arthur Ransome's escape from Russia in 1919, alongside stories from Ransome's own classic, *Old Peter's Russian Tales*.

Hugh Lupton is highly-acclaimed as one of Britain's leading oral story-tellers. He is also Arthur Ransome's great-nephew. As such he is uniquely equipped to bring these extraordinary, perilous and magical tales to life.

In the early years of the last century Arthur Ransome went to Russia to research and write *Old Peter's Russian Tales*. In his pocket he carried a stone from Peel Island on Coniston Water, 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 personal secretary. In 1919 Arthur and Evgenia 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.

Geraint Lewis of the Arthur Ransome Trust says: "*The first time I heard Hugh, he was telling Anansi stories, the same West Indian folk-tales that Ransome heard and studied as a young man in Bohemian London. It was Ransome's deep interest in the art of story-telling that took him to Russia, where it helped him to create Old Peter, in which he re-tells Russian folk-lore in a fresh yet timeless style, one that is simple, enthralling and magical. Hugh has the same gifts for story-telling. The Homing Stone is his own work, in which he explores the links between Ransome, Russia and Coniston. This will be a unique opportunity to hear Hugh perform at Brantwood, in the heart of Ransome's spiritual homeland: I'm confident it is an event not to be missed.*"

The Homing Stone and Old Peter is suitable for adults and young people (ages 12+). Hugh's performance begins at 7.00pm. Tickets cost £12.00 per adult, £8.00 for ages 12-16, inclusive of refreshments during the interval. Pre-booking is recommended. To book, contact: Brantwood, East of Lake, Coniston, LA21 8AD, Telephone: 015394 41396, Email: enquiries@brantwood.org.uk

Future events in this summer's Ransome series include Robert Thompson, author of *Ransome's Foreign Legion*, speaking about Ransome's novels in translation, at Brantwood on August 3rd, and

Roland Chambers, author of *The Last Englishman, the Double Life of Arthur Ransome*, who will be talking about Ransome and Russia at Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, on August 10th. Full details of all the events are available at www.brantwood.org.uk and www.arthur-ransome-trust.org.uk.

Contact Details:

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Notes for Editors:

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 nationwide 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

Previous reviews of Hugh's work (more available on his website):

- *"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*).
- *"...the Company of Storytellers have spearheaded the revival of storytelling in this country, helping to transform it from a moribund anachronism to a vigorous and contemporary form of entertainment."* The Independent.
- *"...Lupton, accompanied only by a few, sparsely used musical instruments, summoned the poem back to a bloody and ferocious life..... from the very first moment he began to speak he was utterly convincing... it was a careful and measured performance... a vigorous language that was at times playful and at times like repeated blows of a hammer. There can have been few more rewarding ways of spending yesterday evening in the West Midlands – or perhaps*

in the whole country – than in Lupton’s company” Birmingham Words, reviewing Beowulf. January 2005.

The Homing Stone:

The Homing Stone was commissioned by the Bath Literature Festival and first performed there in March 2009.

Arthur Ransome’s own Homing Stone is usually on display at The Museum of Lakeland Life, in Kendal. It is currently on display at Brantwood as part of the exhibition *Imagination and Reality: the Art of Arthur Ransome*.

Imagination and Reality: the Art of Arthur Ransome:

The exhibition 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.

It is open every day from May 19th to September 4th.

The first talk in the accompanying programme of events took place on Wednesday, June 29th, when Christina Hardyment, Arthur Ransome’s Senior Literary Executor and the author of Arthur Ransome and Captain Flint’s Trunk spoke about the links between Ransome’s *Swallows and Amazons* books and the people and places around Coniston Water and Windermere.

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