

EXPLORE South Lakeland

A tale of two children's authors

24 May 2016

Postman Pat met Swallows and Amazons at Hill Top near Haverthwaite in the Lake District.

Writer John Cunliffe, who created the phenomenally popular Postman Pat series of stories when he lived in Kendal in the 1970s, recently spent a week's holiday at the cottage where Swallows and Amazons' writer Arthur Ransome lived for the last years of his life.

The 82 year old author, who also wrote the Rosie and Jim stories, and his wife Sylvia, also went for dinner with the owners of the cottage, Stephen and Janine Sykes, who live in the main house – and John had his photo taken sitting by Ransome's fireplace.



"They were a delightful couple and it was lovely to spend some time with them," said Stephen.

"John signed some pictures of Postman Pat and we'll be using one for display in the Pavilion at the cottage. John also gave us four signed Postman Pat books. He left a lovely long comment in our guest book extolling the virtues of Hill Top with additional thanks from Postman Pat and Jess!"

John Cunliffe created Greendale, where Postman Pat is set, based on the Lakeland valley of Longsleddale, near Kendal. After the success of the TV series, which he wrote as the result of a commission from the BBC, he became something of a local celebrity, even having a room dedicated to him at Kendal's Museum of Lakeland Life.

At Hill Top, Stephen and Janine are collecting Lakeland literary and film memorabilia, and have, for example, items signed by Arthur Ransome, Sir Hugh Walpole, Lord Birkett and Sir John Barrow. They also have such signatures as Virginia McKenna (stills from Swallows & Amazons 1974), Donald Campbell, Stan Laurel, Hardy Kruger (a signed still from The One That Got Away), Michael Hordern (Rod & Line TV series), Danny Boyle (a poster from 28 Days Later whose final scenes were shot in Ennerdale), and signed publicity photos of Trevor Howard and Celia Johnson including an original publicity shot from Brief Encounter .

The Cottage at Hill Top is a luxury five-star holiday cottage which was runner-up in the Cumbria Tourism awards last year.

More information: www.hilltopvista.com