



The latter years of Arthur Ransome's life have hitherto been somewhat neglected in terms of literary comment or examination.

Understandably, authors have concentrated on the Russian years, the *Swallows & Amazons* years, sailing, fishing and so on. But these twilight years are rich in interest on many levels.

In this book we enter into Arthur's world of enjoying the nature and company around him; of fighting for his literary rights; of struggling with his *Autobiography*; of suffering, but never giving in to, increasing illness and infirmity; of fishing whenever and wherever he could; of managing and being managed by Evgenia. He holds nothing back; either you are a "splendid fellow" or an "idiot". There is no middle ground.

The diary entries from 1956 to Arthur's death are here presented virtually verbatim; very little is omitted. He was not a meticulous diary-keeper. Any gaps are his gaps.

And following the diaries, we present the BBC saga, the torment Arthur put himself through in respect of the BBC Television *Swallows & Amazons* six-part series, shown in 1963. This is primary material, most of which has never before been published.

The Twilight Years: Hill Top

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Each year from 1956 onwards, Arthur Ransome and his wife Evgenia would vacate their London flat overlooking the Thames near Putney Bridge and head to the Lake District where they spent their summers at Hill Top, Ealinghearth, just to the south of Lake Windermere. Initially renting the farm house, they bought it in 1960, and in late 1963 decided to remain permanently at Hill Top following major renovation works and finally having had electricity connected.

The Twilight Years: Hill Top is based on Arthur Ransome's own diary entries and tells of their daily lives at Hill Top. Also included in this period is Arthur's own detailed account of his unhappy dealings with the BBC which acquired the rights to produce a TV serialization of his beloved *Swallows and Amazons*, and which was broadcast in 1963.

Margaret Ratcliffe painstakingly transcribed Ransome's diaries (held at Leeds University) and Stephen Sykes collaborated in their transfer to computer and subsequent editing. Stephen also wrote the Introduction.