

SIGNALS

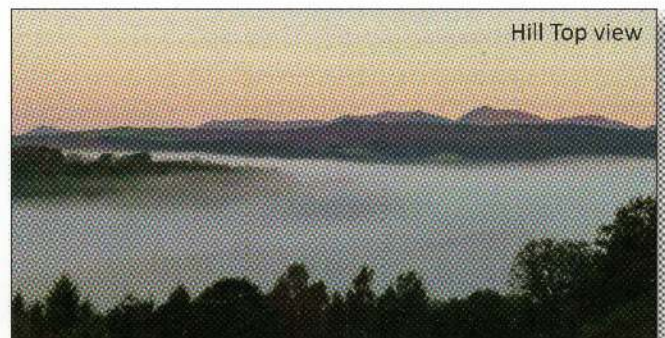


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The visit to Hill Top

Hill Top Cottage (as it was known to Arthur and Genia, but really a fairly substantial house) is at Ealinghearth, just above Haverthwaite. This was one of Arthur's most favourite parts of South Lakeland (including for fishing!) for much of his life, and it also overlooks the Rusland valley, where the graves of both himself and of Genia are to be found. At first Arthur and Genia had rented the house in 1956, after a rather acrimonious dispute with the local farmer (the owner) had been settled; this concerned the adjacent barn, which the farmer wished to retain; Arthur refused to agree to rent the house without the barn – in the end he got his way, with a slightly increased rent.

Eventually Arthur and Genia bought the house, and carried out some fairly extensive building work on it (and the current owners have since then altered it again). Stephen, the current owner, showed us round, explaining, as far as he could, what the house had been like in Arthur's day. He also showed us a short video (made from old photos, including some in colour) of Arthur and Genia supervising the building work. They lived at Hill Top in the last decade of Arthur's life, and by this time he was pretty frail; Genia also had frequent



Hill Top view

heavy colds. Usually they used separate bedrooms. Arthur was looked after in later years daily by a district nurse, Hazel Ross, whose recollections of those years are recorded in the 'Encountering the Ransomes' DVDs.

At the end of our visit, in addition to the video referred to above, Stephen showed us two further videos, including one about the more recent renovations carried out on the house since Arthur's and Genia's time, and another which included recordings of BBC broadcasts, in which Arthur himself read from *Rod and Line* and *The Soldier and Death*.

Chris Birt