

Meet Our Speakers

Michelle Magorian - Arthur Ransome's books propelled Michelle (Mikki) Magorian into learning outdoor survival skills and led her to read novels, plays and poetry. As well as writing nine novels and the book and lyrics for four musicals, these survival skills helped her during the seventeen years she was living in rural areas and cities, performing in musicals, comedies and dramas. In the children's novel *Impossible!* (set in 1959), Arthur Ransome's world also comes to the aid of the main character.



John Sergeant - John's background has much in common with AR's. As a BBC news and political correspondent, he reported on a total of four wars, beginning with Vietnam. Whereas Ransome interviewed Trotsky and Lenin, John locked horns with senior politicians of the late 80's and 90's winning a British Press Guild Award for his famous interview with Margaret Thatcher at the start of her leadership demise. Like AR he was relieved to be able to give up that kind of journalism, writing books, and making TV programmes, including one on *Swallows and Amazons*. There was also his memorable stint on *Strictly Come Dancing*. He and his wife enjoyed family holidays with their boys in the Lake District and Norfolk, with John doing his best to play an amateur version of Captain Flint.



Jim Ring - Jim learned to sail on the Norfolk Broads under the spell of Arthur Ransome. After reading English at Oxford, he spent a decade in advertising before becoming Erskine Childers' biographer. He has written a number of other works of award-winning non-fiction, and published two novels, one satire and one alternative history. He is a director of the literary quarterly **Slightly Foxed**, in which several of his articles on Ransome have appeared. His documentary films include a study of the 2011 nuclear accident at Fukushima Daiichi, and two on the D-Day landings.



Jon Sparks - Jon made his living for 30 years as an award-winning outdoor writer and photographer, specialising in landscape, travel and outdoor pursuits, particularly walking, climbing and cycling. He cites Arthur Ransome as a lifelong influence and has written on the real places behind Ransome's 'lake country'. He spoke on Swallows, Amazons and Adventure at Kendal Mountain festival and this will be the basis of his talk this weekend. He's now writing fiction and again the Ransome influence is not far away. He lives in Garstang, Lancashire, with his partner Bernie and several bikes.



Robert Twigger - Robert has written 15 books translated into 16 languages. He has made several journeys following the routes of 19th century explorers and has edited the Thames and Hudson book *The Modern Explorers*. He has been a fan of Arthur Ransome since he was eight, which inspired him to write his 2022 book *36 Islands*.



Paul Crisp - Apart from AR, Paul has always read with great pleasure the works of P. G. Wodehouse, and, like Bertie Wooster, has both enjoyed and suffered the company of Aunts Great and Small. He will tread the streets of Harrogate with caution, ever aware of who might lurk around the next corner. Join him in this study of As & GAs in literature and reality, and discover how the plot of a certain book might have been...

Kirsty Nichol Findlay - Arthur Ransome's places and people were Kirsty's companions in her New Zealand childhood. Inspired by Titty and Dorothea she studied literature in Wellington and Cambridge and taught at universities in New Zealand and the UK before freelance consultancy took her to work in 29 countries. With Brian, she developed The Bull Pen, a cottage on a tributary of the Duddon in Cumbria, where Ransome fished. She lives there and in the Wairarapa.

Rachel Chalmers - Rachel has worked in clinical microbiology and public health for more years than she cares to remember, publishing over 150 scientific papers and contributing to guidance on prevention of infection. However, as a mum of two boys she has sometimes failed spectacularly to follow her own advice, leading them into many misadventures in the countryside around their home in west Wales and beyond.