

Footsteps

THE WAINWRIGHT SOCIETY MAGAZINE

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Wainwright Society Walks 2024
and much much more ...

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Note from the Editorial Team

It was great to see 'Alfred Wainwright' featured again as a specialist subject on a recent edition of the BBC's *Mastermind*. He has now joined a relatively exclusive group of subjects so popular that they have turned up more than once on the quiz show - alongside the likes of *The Lord of the Rings*, Harry Potter and The Beatles.

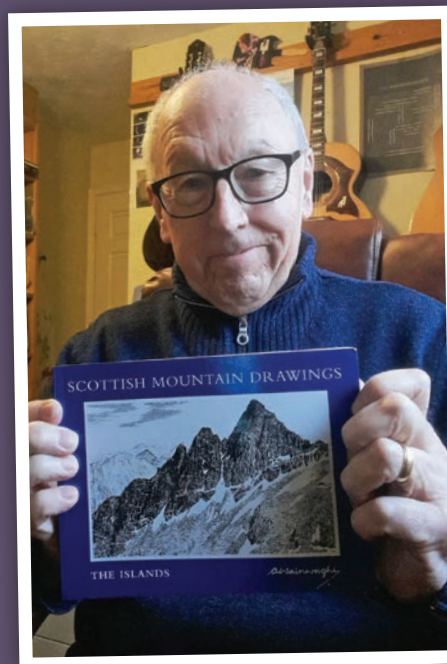
If you missed the *Mastermind* show (aired in January 2024) then you can still take the challenge as we include the questions asked on page 7 of this issue. Watching it on the night, faced with the pressure of time and the relentless questioning of Clive Myrie, I confess that I got two questions wrong. I plain forgot where AW and Betty went on honeymoon, and then I misheard the question about Blencathra (that's my excuse!). It was great fun anyway.

If you are not too quizzed out, we are pleased to include a new Missing Words Puzzle in this issue

courtesy of David Johnson (see page 29). There was a high response to A *Coast to Coast Walk* Picture Puzzle in the Winter Issue, with many participants enjoying revisiting the Guide to find the answers and recalling happy memories of their walk. The answer to the puzzle was the phrase 'vary it to suit yourself' and the winner, whose name was drawn from the hat, was Alan Thomas from Warrington, pictured below with his chosen prize, a copy of *Scottish Mountain Drawings – The Islands*. The clues to the winning phrase can be found at the bottom of page 27 in this issue.

Spring is 'here' as they say, so we hope you can make the most of it wherever you are. Although, at the time of writing this column, there is a flurry of snow rolling across the hilltops of East Lancashire. Let's get the walking boots on anyway.

Nick Burton – Editor
Andrew Stainthorpe – Graphic Designer



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Front cover photograph:
Spring daffodils in Askham
Village, by Val Corbett
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Our Chairman Steps Down



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Normally this would be the Chairman's Notes but this time we are using the page to let you know the sorry news that, owing to ill health, Eric Robson will be standing down as Chair with effect from the 2024 AGM in March, and to express our heartfelt thanks to him. As long-standing members will know, Eric has held that role from the start, leading the Society with great distinction since chairing the inaugural meeting in Ambleside back in November 2002.

When the idea of setting up a Society in AW's honour was mooted in 1991, his widow (and our mother), Betty Wainwright, was clear that Eric must lead it. With a very close connection and friendship with AW, a high profile and many important contacts in Cumbria, he was the perfect choice for Chair.

Eric has had a long and very successful professional career, including being well-known for his many years chairing episodes of BBC Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*. For those of us who love the outdoors and the Lake District though, he is particularly associated with the

BBC series of walking programmes with Alfred Wainwright. Although AW was notoriously publicity shy, Eric gained his trust, confidence and respect and AW agreed to make what turned out to be hugely successful and popular programmes. His relationship with AW and our mother continued throughout the rest of their lives and we owe him great personal thanks for this.

Eric's contribution to the Society has been immense and his resignation will be keenly felt. We must now plan a way forward without him playing such an active role but hope that he will continue to be involved.

On behalf of you all, we would like to give huge thanks to Eric for all that he has done over the years to make the Society what it is today.

Jane King and Annie Sellar
Joint Presidents



The Wainwright Society Calendar

The 2024 calendar has proved very popular – profits from the sales has raised over £8,000 for our 2023 nominated charity, Mountain Rescue Cumbria. The Society would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has purchased a copy. This has helped make the calendar such a success, and provided vital funds for the Lake District's Mountain Rescue Teams.

Work has already started preparing next year's calendar, with some pictures already selected. We are always on the lookout for members' photographs to include, so if you have any of the Lake District, or other areas included in Wainwright's books, please send them to calendars@wainwright.org.uk for consideration.



If you wish to submit your photographs for the 2025 calendar, please note the following guidelines:

- Any file type is acceptable eg. JPG, TIF or RAW
- Minimum file size is 2MB
- Images must be in landscape format
- Images must not include people – unless they are in the distance and unrecognisable
- There is no need to crop or edit your image

Wide mountain vistas, lakes, rivers and tarns, dramatic weather, sunrises, and sunsets. These are just some of the subjects that we look forward to seeing, and hopefully we can select your photographs to create a diverse and colourful Wainwright Society calendar for 2025.

Ian Nelson – Keswick
Membership No. 561



For all the latest Society news, please visit us online at: www.wainwright.org.uk or follow us on Facebook or X (formerly Twitter)

Are you a Wainwright Mastermind?

Dan Hudson, a local government manager, took on the challenge of sitting in the famous *Mastermind* black chair in the episode of the BBC quiz show aired on 29 January 2024. His specialist subject was 'The Life and Works of Alfred Wainwright'. He faced twelve questions, got two wrong, and no passes. A very impressive display.

In fact, this is not the first time Wainwright has appeared as a specialist subject on *Mastermind*. Back in 2013, a Society Member Paul Gregan, from London, went on the show and recounted his experience in *Footsteps* (issue 46, Summer 2014).

The questions (courtesy of the BBC) which Dan Hudson faced are shown below. Can you beat his score of ten points? He only had two minutes on the subject, so if you want to compete under the time challenge, the episode can still be watched for the next year on the BBC iPlayer (Series 2023/4 Episode 22).

The answers are on page 31. Good luck!

1. Throughout the time AW was working on his *Pictorial Guides*, he held what post in local government in Kendal?
2. AW was a keen supporter of which football club, co-founding its unofficial supporters' club in 1939?
3. The highest point on the main route of AW's *Coast to Coast Walk* at 2,560 feet is on which fell, whose summit he described as 'an eyrie perched high above Riggindale'?
4. A walking guide published in 1972 is devoted to which group of fells outside the Lake District which he said are often likened to 'a huddle of squatting elephants'?
5. What was the name of the cousin who accompanied AW on his first visit to the Lakes in 1930?
6. When AW married his second wife Betty in 1970, the couple spent their honeymoon in which city?
7. AW provided the illustrations for *Scratch and Co*, written by which author?
8. In his guide to *The Northern Fells*, AW details 12 ways to ascend Blencathra, with one particularly challenging route, which he describes as 'a route to commend heartily to one's worst enemy', being labelled as Ascent from Threlkeld via where?
9. The 1983 book, *Wainwright in Lakeland*, was published to raise funds for which art gallery in Kendal?
10. Which photographer provided images for a series of books that AW wrote for the publisher Michael Joseph in the 1980's, starting with *Fellwalking with Wainwright*?
11. In the book *A Pennine Journey*, AW chronicles a walking holiday he took in 1938, which started and finished in what town?
12. What was the name of the work colleague to whom AW sent a series of illustrated postcards in 1938 during the walk described in the book, *A Pennine Journey*?



The 2023 Photographic Competition



I was grateful that the new category of British Countryside was added to this year's competition. Being based in East Anglia I have an abundance of public footpaths and amazing countryside right on my doorstep. I feel everyone should share in this, whether it be by a personal visit or sharing a photo, which I often do!

As I received the photos for the competition the new category was very popular, and I was taken on a journey beyond well-known Wainwright areas to places I had never been before. I had the privilege to see stunning countryside I didn't even know existed. It was wonderful to see members sharing photographs of beautiful areas where they live and visit via this competition.

Along with these amazing countryside photos, I was also once again transported to the fells, lakes, and tarns through the photos our members were submitting. It always puts a smile on my face to see that our members fully appreciate the natural beauty of this tiny island we all live upon. It may be small, but I can honestly say it offers some of the most amazing scenery in the world.

The winners and runners-up in both categories were judged this year by professional Lake District photographer Val Corbett and our

thanks go to her. More information on Val's work can be found at www.valcorbettphotography.com

WAINWRIGHT CATEGORY

WINNER: Ray Graham – London
Photo: **Great Gable and Haystacks from Rannerdale Knotts**. Membership No. 2262

Val Corbett: This is so brilliantly dramatic! I can really feel the cold, and I'm not at all sure I would have been willing to go walking that day, but congratulations. The view from Rannerdale Knotts is terrific, one of the best in the Lakes, but this photo makes snow-capped Great Gable really stand out against the stormy sky. I hope you didn't have to wait too long to get that perfect combination of sun and shadow! The photo has great clarity, with the rock and the paths shown in sharp detail.

RUNNER-UP: Ashley Brogan – Wigan
Photo: **Got your back, Jack**. Membership No. 4729

Val Corbett: The right place at the right time. People might think this is just a matter of luck, but so often it's about making choices, following the weather forecasts, and taking photos early or late in the day when the light is most interesting.



So, well done, getting up early and combining that delicious early light with a great viewpoint to make a strong and atmospheric image. I love the way the rim of the fell curves away and takes our eye away to Skiddaw in the far distance.

BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE CATEGORY

WINNER: Jude Ewing – St. Helens
Photo: **Mount Joy Bluebells**. Membership No. 4585

Val Corbett: I find bluebell woods hard to photograph, especially finding something as a point of focus, but this works well. Using the tracks is an effective 'lead in' device. Also taking the photo against the light is good. The freshness of the trees really shows when the leaves are



backlit by sun. I suspect taking the photo the other way round, with the sun behind, would not have worked well.



RUNNER-UP: Leslie Fitton – Bolton
Photo: **Pigeon Tower, Rivington**. Membership No. 4693

Val Corbett: I don't know this area, but the photo intrigued me enough to look it up. The foreground, although a bit messy, adds to the interest of the scene, with the open gate and the tractor tracks leading the eye gently towards the main interest. The good sky and the nice balance of the offset tower with the people looking towards the landscape make it a pleasing photo.

Sherrie Farnsworth – Colchester
Membership No. 3421

Editor's note: this is the twelfth in a series Wainwright on C—, the previous topics being cairns, cameras, cartography, crowds, caution, cats & canines, climbers & climbing, cars, craftsmanship, compassion for animals and churches.

Wainwright on Computers



In his *Introduction to A Lakeland Sketchbook* (1969), AW wrote nostalgically about the obsolescence of the skills of those who had produced books and images by hand. He cited two inventions that had dealt 'near-mortal blows' to their craftsmanship – the printing press and the camera.

AW was wary of anything mechanical and, in turn, highly appreciative of creative skills. He continued: 'Where today is the man who could design York Minster and where is the man who could build it? Where today are the great poets and painters, the composers and sculptors whose works live on in undiminished splendour from one generation to the next? Where today are the men who can build lovely bridges and graceful arches, poetry in stone, such as were built before the age of technology withered artistic enterprise?'

In *Fellwanderer* (1966), he wrote of his difficulty co-existing with technology: 'I don't get on well with gadgets, of any sort. They never seem to work for me as they do for other people ... Anything operated by a mechanism is away over my head. Wheels and switches and levers and things belong to another world, not mine. I have tried hard to understand, heaven knows. I have studied simple mechanisms intently for hours. But they will not work for me ... You cannot

appreciate the awful and utter loneliness of a man who does not understand gadgets in a world that is becoming full of them, and in a life that cannot be lived without them.'

His thinking did not change with the passing of the years. In *Ex-Fellwanderer* (1987), he wrote: 'Computers supply instant information at the touch of a button. Machines intended to be our slaves have become our masters. They contribute to a fuller life but not a better one ... Talents have withered under modern pressures. We have to go back centuries in time to find the great artists and craftsmen, the creators of art in all its forms: their like is not seen today.' Earlier in that book he wrote: 'Of things mechanical I am innocent, having no knowledge at all; ignoramus would be a better word. I simply do not understand how gadgets and contraptions work ... the only tool I can use with success is a pen. Mechanics are an unsolved mystery.'

That reference to a pen is critical, as his own work was almost all produced by hand – beautifully produced manuscript pages and pen-and-ink drawings. With it, he could remain in control of his own creativity. But he could not resist the encroachment of technology into his professional life, as he described in *Ex-Fellwanderer*:

'I retired from the office early in 1967, and was glad to go. I had enjoyed the work immensely but methods of accounting were changing. The days (in fact, centuries) of pen and ink accountancy in local government were numbered. Computers and calculating machines and other alleged labour saving devices, which I could not understand, were coming in and pushing out the craftsmen. The only mechanical instrument I had in the office was a typewriter, the other work being done by hand by a staff who took pride in what they did. Pride died when the machines took over, producing unintelligible (to me) hieroglyphics that were a disgrace to the profession. Mechanics were taking the place of clerks. These were

changes I could never accept. I would be useless, redundant. So I left, and although continuing to live within a mile of the office, I have never been back.'

In *Fellwanderer* he had written along similar lines and referred to the pride and pleasure he had taken in 'pen and ink accountancy':

'... a new era was dawning, even in stuffy local government offices. Machines were coming in and their coming made uncomfortable the men who had been taught to work with their hands and think with their brains. Accountancy was my line. I was a pen-and-ink man. I was trained to believe that accountancy is an art, and it seemed to my juvenile reasoning in those far-off days that accountants must therefore be artists. I remember being told that every page of my ledgers should be fit for framing. I never saw anything that came out of a machine that was. Machines are monsters and they produce little horrors.'

That last sentence prompted a reader, Brian Kershaw, to write to AW. He took issue with AW's statement and enclosed a spreadsheet showing details of the fells in the Pictorial Guides, with grid references, summits and starting points. AW replied:

'To say that I was struck dumb by the remarkable document accompanying your letter ... would be to put it mildly. Here was the enemy, suddenly attacking me when I was unprepared for shocks ... Well, you seemed to have proved something: I'm not sure what ... it is rather a revelation to find the monsters wrestling with the relative statistics of ascents of the Lakeland Fells ... I concede that you have certainly proved something, but nothing that has any appeal for me. If anything you have confirmed my impression of new-fangled machines and in no way induced in me a liking for them. This document you have produced is the stuff of which nightmares are made ... Your achievement is inspired and indicates a fertile imagination that, if applied instead to matters beyond the compass of computers, could well contribute to the sum of human knowledge. This horoscope is free.'

Undaunted, Brian wrote again. AW's first letter had been forthright and dismissive, but his second reply was complimentary and laced with gentle humour. He wrote: 'Your second letter pleased



me much more than your first. In fact, it delighted me immensely, not so much for its sentiments, which coincide with mine, but for the artistry with which you can use words ... You are mis-employed, wrestling day after day with four computers, even though you do contrive to get some fun out of them ... What I am saying is that, on the little evidence I have, you have a talent you should be using not on programming computers but on writing for the greater joy of kindred souls ... First write a best-seller, an original epic of Lakeland. Then quit your job. (I hope your missus isn't looking over your shoulder). Then go all romantic: take over Millican Dalton's cave under Castle Crag ... Sorry about this, Mrs Kershaw. But I do feel that you should be prodding Brian to get away from his wretched machines and settle in lovely Borrowdale ... I hope this letter makes up for my first reaction!'

AW's two letters to Brian Kershaw are reproduced in full in *The Wainwright Letters* (2011) pp.279-281.

As AW indicated in *Ex-Fellwanderer*, he retired at the right time – just as computers were about to sweep away the craftsmanship he had employed throughout his accountancy career. I finish with his closing words in the Introduction to *A Lakeland Sketchbook*:

'Yes, I know that today we can fly to the moon. I know that today we can do maths by machinery. But to my way of thinking, it was Michelangelo, 450 years ago, who showed how men could reach up for the stars, not the magnificent astronauts in their flying computers, the 1969 model. Perhaps I myself am a throwback to the last century!'

David Johnson – Histon, Cambridgeshire
Membership No. 481

Wainwright and the Adding Machine

On a recent visit to the Lancashire County Archives in Preston, I had a spare half an hour so thought I would look up some of the old Council Minute books from Blackburn Borough Council. I have browsed through them before, many years ago, and was curious to see again if I could find the reference relating to, arguably, the most significant event in the life and career of Alfred Wainwright.



Blackburn Town Hall

The copies of the 'Minutes and Reports of The Various Committees' of the County Borough of Blackburn are preserved in the Archives, arranged month by month, dating back to 1875. The older minute books are hand-written, and quite fragile, but I was interested in committee records relating to the month of November 1941. These were held in a sturdy black book, brought to me by the archivist.

These records of local government minutiae are strangely fascinating by their very mundanity - pages and pages of minutes relating to the largely insignificant everyday matters of some 30 Borough Council Committees - Sewage, Parks and Cemeteries, Town Hall and Public Baths, Transport, Street Lighting, Markets, Health, Gas, Waterworks, Estates and Housing, to name but a few.

On page 38 of the minute book, recorded in the Finance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 26th November 1941, is Item 9 on the Agenda - 'Resignation of Accountancy Assistant.' Below it is one typed sentence:

'The Borough Treasurer submitted the resignation of Mr. A. Wainwright, an

Accountancy Assistant in his Department, on his securing an appointment with the Kendal Borough Council, and reported that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had given authority for a temporary re-organisation of the accountancy work in his office to be effected.'

Below this, a resolution:

'Resolved - That the action of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be approved.'

And there it is. The Finance Committee Chairman, Alderman Hare, and Vice-Chair, Councillor Mottershead, had rubber-stamped AW's move from Blackburn to Kendal and inadvertently set the irreversible wheels in motion on Wainwright's new life. We can only speculate that if the good Alderman Hare and Councillor Mottershead had not approved AW's resignation, there may have been no move to Kendal, and perhaps no Pictorial Guides.

Ironically, the next but one item on the agenda to Wainwright's resignation was the approval of the 'Purchase of Burroughs Adding Machine...at a cost not exceeding £295'. Was this to ease the extra office workload caused by AW's departure? Surely not. But in subsequent months of the Finance Committee minutes from late 1941 to early 1942 it is clear there were concerns that staff were being lost due to call-ups to the war effort. Perhaps in this chaos created by war, Wainwright was never officially replaced.

Just before ending my search, I spotted a familiar name in the minute books, which led to one more intriguing surprise. The reference was 'Miss. B. Ditchfield, Correspondence and Filing Clerk in the Borough Treasurer's Department'. Betty Ditchfield had been the object of AW's affections in the Town Hall office. And why is she mentioned in the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting? She had applied for a salary increase but, as the minutes of the meeting dated Wednesday 25th March 1942 record, her request was refused.

Such a treasure trove of information. I will return to the Lancashire Archives. Who knows what else is hidden in there that can shed light on the life of AW.

Nick Burton

Lakeland Rain

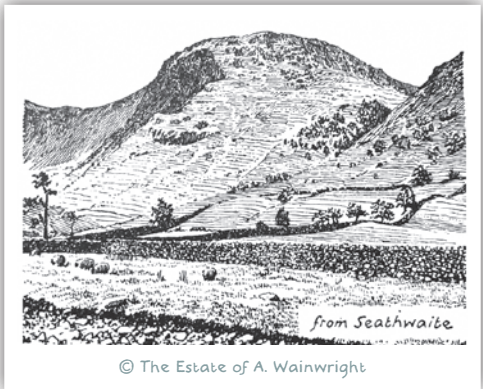
'The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain' according to the song in the hit musical *My Fair Lady*. In England it falls mainly on the hills, and, in particular, the Lake District fells. That is to be expected, these mountains being so close to Morecambe Bay and the Irish Sea. We all know the Lake District can be wet. The Wordsworths knew it; Dorothy's journals are replete with descriptions of 'sodden days and rainy evenings'. Their friend Coleridge also once remarked, 'Summer has set in with its usual severity'.

But until the 1840s nobody had any inkling just how wet it actually was in the Lake District. It was then that the first rain gauges were established in the region, and there have now been 180 years of daily rainfall measurements in Borrowdale, which we now know to be the wettest inhabited part of England.

Meteorologists, and more recently the Environment Agency, have been recording the rainfall levels in their various weather stations on the fells. Seathwaite, the highest hamlet in Borrowdale, is recorded as the wettest inhabited place in England, having a mean annual rainfall of 120 inches. The annual average rainfall at Styhead Tarn, on the track up to Great End and the Scafells, is 172 inches.

In the early 19th century, theories about rainfall in mountainous areas were, to say the least, confused. At that time, it was generally believed that the amount of rainfall diminished with altitude: a logical idea when one considers that temperature decreases as the height above sea-level increases, and that cold air holds less moisture than warm air. Scientists of the day struggled and failed to reconcile this concept with the fact that winter was normally a much wetter season than the summer.

The first serious attempt to measure rainfall in the Cumbrian hills was organised by a certain John Fletcher Miller. He was a gentleman scientist in his thirties, who lived in Whitehaven. He first installed a rain gauge in his garden on the Cumbrian coast in 1833, when he was 17,



© The Estate of A. Wainwright

and ten years later he established a network of gauges in the western part of the Lake District. One of these was at Seathwaite, where Mr Dixon - who at that time was the manager of the nearby graphite mine - took the readings for him. Miller must have been astonished when he came to add up the figures at the end of the first full year of observations in 1845: Seathwaite's total was a staggering 152 inches, compared with just below 50 inches on the coast at Whitehaven.

When he sent this information to London meteorologists, they scoffed at these findings. It was widely believed at that time that it was not possible to have more than 100 inches of rain outside the tropics. But the extraordinary numbers continued to appear on an annual basis, usually between 100 and 160 inches per year, and averaging 129 inches.

Subsequent investigations showed that even more rain fell on the north-facing slope of the Scafell massif, up to an altitude of about 2,000ft, with 185 inches falling at Sprinkling Tarn. The scoffing ceased as these figures appeared year after year.

Today, the higher-level gauges have long since been 'rationalised' out of existence, though the Seathwaite recordings continue, and the measurements are currently recorded by the Environment Agency. AW mentions the 'raingauges' (but does not reveal their location) in his ascent of Seathwaite Fell from Borrowdale in *The Southern Fells*. With all this rain, no wonder this part of Cumbria is known as The Lake District!

John Burland – Otley
Membership No. 2

Going Your Own Way

'Step-by-step I was realising that I had only just started 'Sizing up Great Britain'.'

Paul Truswell, *Island Walks Book One*

I joined The Wainwright Society over twenty years ago, back in the spring of 2003, and was pleased to receive membership number 234. Not least because being in my mid-forties at the time, with an increasingly unreliable short-term memory, I had a fighting chance of remembering it in a fast-developing digital world of passwords and numbers. Becoming a member was a way to celebrate the life and recognise the achievements of the late great Alfred Wainwright; though I reckoned that of all the things AW would not have wanted, it would be a society in his honour. I thought the whole thing was ironic, and a little bonkers, but I loved the idea.

Alfred Wainwright has always been an inspiring figure to me. My first encounter with his work was in the mid-seventies, when I leafed through the pages of his *Pennine Way Companion*, a book gifted to me as a teenager. I was fascinated and intrigued by his insistence on starting at page 171 and reading backwards, and his reasons for doing so. To my young mind this clearly was a man worth taking note of.

I have always appreciated skilful drawing. For the first twenty years of my professional life, I was employed as an Architectural Technologist in a large office, primarily to produce drawings that communicated well on large building sites. Freehand drawing, which was a highly valued skill and gifted to some of my colleagues, was something I could never do competently. Wainwright, on the other hand, had the ability to make a drafting pen 'sing'. His drawings, handwritten musings, observations, and stories, particularly in the pages of his pocket *Pictorial Guides*, are true works of art that remain, to this day, nothing short of remarkable.

In his introduction to *A Coast to Coast Walk*, AW remarks that:

'One should always have a definite objective, in a walk as in life – it is so much more satisfying to reach a target by personal effort than to wander aimlessly. An objective is an ambition, and life without ambition is...well, aimless wandering.'

Together with my own early wanderings on long-distance trails - including the Pennine Way, AW's Coast to Coast walk, the West Highland Way and Offa's Dyke - Wainwright's words motivated me in more recent times to undertake my own, bespoke, AW-inspired challenges. To go my own way, as AW suggested on page vii of *A Coast to Coast Walk*:

'The way you go and the time it takes matter not. The essence of the walk is the crossing of England, from one coast to the other, on foot.'



Reaching the Isle of Iona

So it was that I decided upon my own coast to coast walk, starting in England, and then crossing Scotland, from the Holy Island of Lindisfarne to the island of Iona. By necessity, this journey involved a few ferry boats along the way; I also went in the opposite direction to a certain Saint Aidan, who pre-dated my journey by almost 14 centuries. I thought AW would have approved.

Upon reaching Fionnphort in Mull and looking across the turbulent waters of the sound to Iona, the island objective of my 300-mile walk, did I hear a 'well-done' whispered in my ear and catch a slight whiff of AW's Three Nuns Tobacco? Imagination served me well; I was already thinking about a second coast to coast walk. This was completed in 2016 – a walk lasting 32 days, covering 560 miles, between Lowestoft and Land's End.



Arriving at Land's End

It was during this walk that I heard, with increasing frequency, suggestions that I should write a book, but I dismissed the idea. Having already spent 15 years in my second career as an IT consultant, I really had no appetite for spending yet more time staring at a computer screen. Book writing was far from my mind on all my walks up until the spring of 2020, when my plans for a walk from Start Point, Devon to Cape Wrath were thrown into disarray by the Covid pandemic. Reluctantly at first, and with disappointment and frustration thrown into the mix, I started writing up my Lindisfarne to Iona journey. But I made little progress on this until the following year when contemplation of a long walk was still on hold. *Island Walks Book One – Lindisfarne to Iona* was published in 2021, *Island Walks Book Two – Far East to Far West – Lowestoft to Land's End* was published in 2023.

Island Walks Book Three remains an ambition – but to date I do not know how this walk ends. In 2018, on April 1st, I stood on the pebble beach below Shakespeare Cliff in Dover and set off on my, as yet, unrealised ambition to walk to Cape Wrath from the south coast of England. On that occasion I got as far as Edinburgh when a developing foot injury forced me to stop, having clocked up a personal record of 612 miles in one continuous walk. The underlying theme of my books is 'Sizing Up Great Britain...without a measuring tape!' This is proving to be easier said than done.

Despite an unshakeable feeling of disappointment, I returned a year later with the goal of getting much further and reaching the Cape, whilst trying to pretend that the intervening twelve months were just another aspect of my wild imagination. I still did not make it. After a magnificent and sometimes extremely challenging 300-mile route for an ageing solo walker, I still fell short of my goal. I ended at the village of Scourie, due to a combination of what was, for the end of May, exceptionally wet weather, and the uncertain status of the Ministry of Defence Cape Wrath firing range at that time.

Cape Wrath is still calling. The far north still has a magnetic attraction for me. This year, perhaps as you read this, I will hopefully be setting off again - God, knees, feet, and weather willing - towards what, for me personally, seems a very elusive goal. Third time lucky? In accordance with Alfred Wainwright's recommendation for life, Cape Wrath is my 'definite objective'. Quite whether it will be a two day or fifty-two days expedition – well, you will have to wait for the yet unwritten *Island Walks Book Three* to find out.

Paul Truswell – Macclesfield Membership No.234

Paul Truswell's *Island Walks Books: Book One – Lindisfarne to Iona* and *Book Two – Far East to Far West – Lowestoft to Land's End*. Further information on these titles can be found at: truswell.org/book



Outward Bound – An Outdoor Legacy

As youngsters, many of us were taught our first mountain skills at schools operated by the Outward Bound Trust or the burgeoning outdoor pursuit centres that followed in their wake. The Outward Bound Trust was established as a charity in 1946, a year after the end of World War II. However, its true origins were five years earlier, during some of the darkest days of the war, when the Battle of the Atlantic was developing so menacingly.

A ship is deemed 'outward bound' when it leaves a safe port for the open sea, whether it sets out on a voyage of a few days or several weeks. The term is indicative of the nautical beginnings of Outward Bound training more than eighty years ago.

During the first two years of the Second World War 4,523,000 tons of Allied merchant shipping were sunk with enormous loss of life. The crew that managed to survive the torpedo, bomb or mine were then faced by a very hostile environment. Sea water immersion for even

a few minutes was usually fatal, either due to hypothermia or by the ingestion of harmful fuel oils spilled because of enemy action. The plight of our merchant seamen was, therefore, of prime concern. Aside from the human tragedy, their skills were essential to maximise the ongoing war effort as the Battle of the Atlantic was to be contested until the end of the war.

One Liverpool ship owner recognised a desperate need to improve the survival training of his seamen and hence save lives. The Alfred Holt Company (Blue Funnel Line) operated a large fleet of cargo liners on world-wide trades with some carrying passengers. The Company strongly advocated that training in sea survival was essential to reduce these excessive casualties, and so they set about doing something about it.

Lawrence Holt, a partner, managing director and nephew of Alfred Holt, was a significant motivator. He had served as Lord Mayor of Liverpool between 1929 and 1930. Lawrence was also a driving force in the early days of the

Youth Hostels Association (YHA), specifically the creation of their Merseyside and North Wales Group. Maeshafn, opened in 1931, was the first purpose-built youth hostel outside continental Europe, with the bulk of the design by architect Clough Williams-Ellis, a contemporary of Lawrence Holt. It was funded by the shipping company and officially known as the 'Holt Hostel'. Lawrence Holt had what we now call the 'great outdoors' at his heart. His foresight and experience in both marine and shore activities was of crucial importance.

Pioneering educational developments had also taken place in Germany in the decades prior to the Second World War. In 1909 teacher Richard Schirrmann had established the first youth hostel in the world at Burg Altena in Sauerland. His original idea was to provide places where young school children could stay and study in the 'outdoor classroom'. The German Jugendherbergen network of hostels grew rapidly to become the largest to this day.

Separately, and some years later, Kurt Hahn and colleague Marina Ewald were encouraging character development through outdoor expedition and adventure preceded by an organised training program. Initially they put these ideas into practice at the Salem School, Baden-Württemberg, established in 1920. It is widely recognised that Ewald's month-long group expedition to Finland during 1925 was the precursor of what would become the traditional Outward Bound 'expedition'.

Hahn, however, was forced to leave the country due to his fierce opposition of the Nazi regime. Marina Ewald remained at Salem and despite political shutdowns was able to keep the school running; Schule Schloss Salem is still in business today. Hahn moved to Scotland in 1934 and founded Gordonstoun School, based on the same ideas and principles.

In 1941 Lawrence Holt and Kurt Hahn worked together to establish the Aberdovey (Aberdyfi) Outward Bound Sea School to provide sea survival training and to develop strength of character, with its priority being the saving of lives. Ship losses in the Atlantic reached a nadir in 1942. Blue Funnel Line lost eighteen ships

that year, including the MV Medon, which was torpedoed in the Atlantic by an Italian submarine. Four of the lifeboats escaped with the ship's complement of 64, and all survived.

Two of the boats endured 35 days at sea including that commanded by 2nd Officer Freddie Fuller. Captain Fuller, as he later became, was a huge influence at Aberdovey and the senior warden (manager) until 1971. It was at this time that the Outward Bound Trust's powerful motto 'To Serve To Strive and Not To Yield' was coined, based upon the final lines of Alfred Tennyson's inspirational poem, Ulysses.



MV Medon – Photograph with kind permission of Sea Breezes Publications Ltd.

Although Blue Funnel Line lost 41 ships in the Second World War, not one lifeboat launched due to an 'abandon ship' signal failed to reach safety. This was a statistic of which the Holt family was immensely proud. 'It was surely these traditions of the Holt fleet which made the difference between success and disaster' (Merchant Fleet at War, Captain S. Roskill, 1962).

The immediate post war years saw a huge expansion of Outward Bound training. Although sea survival had been the wartime prerogative, the benefits to be gained in the peacetime landscape were soon apparent. A leaflet of the Manchester & District Outward Bound Association promulgated 'Character Training Through Adventure'.

The Trust was able to increase its training facilities throughout the United Kingdom. In 1949 a second sea school opened in Moray, Scotland, although it was replaced in 1977 by the current facility at Loch Eil. The Eskdale Outward Bound Mountain School (OBMS) was



Aberdovey Outward Bound Sea School – With kind permission of the Outward Bound Trust

established at Eskdale Green, Cumberland in 1950 with the first women's programme created the following year. Ullswater OBMS opened in 1955. The Trust established additional centres at Howtown and in Wales at Ogwen Cottage, next door to Idwal Cottage - the YHA's oldest hostel (opened at Easter 1931).



Eskdale OBMS – Photograph by Mark Abbott

The late Duke of Edinburgh was a charismatic and important patron of the Trust. His DoE Award Scheme was founded in 1956. Many Outward Bound course candidates were able

to progress their DoE Award at the same time. Since those early days, Outward Bound training has spread throughout the world, creating an international network operating in 35 countries.

For 25 years after World War II, Outward Bound training formed a part of many Blue Funnel seagoing apprenticeships with the principles of their courses recognised by the Company as 'to be of great value and provide quality of character above the average' (Blue Funnel Line - Conditions of Service 1966). Sadly, Blue Funnel ships disappeared from the seas in the late 1980's due to restructuring of the international shipping industry.

Mark Abbott – Northwich
Membership No. 2208

Editor's Note: In the Summer 2024 issue of *Footsteps*, Mark Abbott will recall his experiences of Outward Bound training at Eskdale in the 1960's.



Outward Bound at Patterdale Hall

I first visited the Lake District in 1963, aged ten, when I spent a week on a field course at Patterdale Hall. I was lucky enough to return in October 1966, for a month's Outward Bound course at the same venue, leased at the time by Oxfordshire Education Authority. There were 36 boys on my four-week course, all chosen from secondary schools in Bicester, Banbury, Charlbury and Witney. Most of us were aged just fourteen at the time.

The first couple of weeks concentrated on map reading and practical navigation skills, the last two weeks involved rock climbing, abseiling, first aid, and an introduction to the Thomas Stretcher. At this time, Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team was in its infancy, and our climbing instructor, Neil Allinson, was a founder member.

During our last week there, the six tallest and strongest boys on the course were assigned to



Patterdale Hall by David Lang

the mountain rescue team and joined them on an overnight search. They helped recover a fell walker who had slipped and fallen hundreds of feet after coming down from Helvellyn. He had received multiple fractures.



Patterdale Hall Outward Bound course – October 1966

We also worked towards obtaining our Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award whilst at Patterdale Hall. This involved undertaking a three-day-long fell walk, covering 50 miles, and requiring two nights camping. In my team of boys, we had walked about ten miles on the first day when one of our group slipped and badly sprained his ankle. We took it in turns to walk either side of him, arriving in darkness, long overdue, at our Watendlath camp in dreadful wet weather.

The injured boy was taken to Penrith for treatment, and was, unfortunately, unable to complete the rest of the course.



At the end of the month, successful completers were presented with an enamel badge, engraved with the letter 'P' for Patterdale Hall. I still keep this attached to the sheath of my boy scout knife.

The group photo (above), taken during our 1966 course, shows me on the second row up, seated next to the last adult instructor on the right, who is Neil Allinson. He was a great friend of the Heaton Cooper family and used to accompany William Heaton Cooper on climbs to sketch scenes prior to painting his landscapes. Neil, who also went on to work for the National Trust in the Lake District, sadly passed away last year at Matterdale. I managed to visit him and his wife, Doreen, for afternoon tea about eight years ago. There is now a memorial bench dedicated to Neil outside Glenridding Health Centre. He taught many Oxfordshire school boys to love the Lakes in the 1950's and 1960's.

David Lang – Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

Encounters along the Wall

I was pleased to see the picture of Sycamore Gap on the front cover of the Winter issue of *Footsteps* (number 84). I thought it was a lovely thing to do after its tragic end. I was very upset to see it on the news. My friend Sandra and I walked the Hadrian's Wall path in the previous year, in the hot summer spell of July 2022, and had the opportunity to sit under the sycamore and take photos of it. I now have a framed photo of it in my living room. It was a very steep and stony walk down to the tree, with a view over the fields to Twice Brewed.

When we did the walk there were preparations going on at Housesteads to celebrate the 1,900 years since the construction of the Wall, with an art installation - a gatehouse built by scaffolding - decorated by children's posters. Just after we had left Vindolanda, we bumped into the author, Mark Richards, and a photographer. I think they were recording some podcast material. This led to a chat about Wainwright and walking.

At Banks, we met a lovely lady who farmed land through which the Roman Wall ran. We found out that her farm was included in the *Forty Farms* book produced by Amy Bateman. This book was produced at the end of an immersive project and exhibition that told the story of Cumbrian farming through forty individual farms. Our chance encounter led to a firm friendship with the farmer, and, by invitation, we have been back twice to visit her and all the lovely lambs and sheep.

THE 2023 SOCIETY CHALLENGE – WESTMORLAND: TRIBUTE TO A COUNTY

The completion of last year's Society Challenge was reported by Mark Abbott in the Autumn issue of *Footsteps*. The 2023 Challenge Book, which contains all the contributions by members who completed individual challenges has now been published. **To purchase your copy please go to the Society website. All profits will go to the Society's 2023 charity beneficiary, Mountain Rescue Cumbria.**

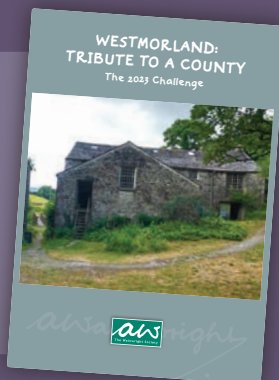


Sandra and Margaret at Vindolanda

One of the 'B&B's we stayed in along the way was the Howard Arms at Brampton. Here we had our photo taken with Her Majesty, the Queen. The Queen was, in fact, a very realistic life-size cut-out. We also took a day off to visit Carlisle, visiting the Castle, the beautiful Cathedral, and the Tullie Museum. The gardens and arches at the back of the Cathedral are magnificent. On the day home we called in to explore Lanercost Priory, as we had not had time to visit it on the walk.

All in all, walking the Hadrian's Wall National Trail was a lovely experience and a must for all keen long-distance walkers.

Margaret Rodgers – Nafferton, Driffield
Membership No. 117



Nights on the fells (the Wainwright way)



Much is written about the joys of wild camping and an internet search will lead to a host of articles and websites that promote this innocent activity. There are health warnings, of course, the most important being that one should seek the landowner's permission before pitching your tent for the night and leave no trace of your occupation when you leave. There is also plenty of advice about the gear you will need to make your experience more enjoyable, comfortable and safe. Everyone has a duty of care these days, it seems.

Wainwright was no stranger to wild camping but in his case, it was a minimalist activity with little regard paid to his own comfort. He would have struggled to erect a tent and the idea of carrying a ton of additional gear in his rucksack was an anathema to a free spirit like Wainwright, who liked to stride out over the fells unencumbered with baggage he would never use.

What was the Wainwright way of spending a night on the fells? He first described his method in *Fellwanderer*, the book he wrote following the publication of *The Western Fells Pictorial Guide* in 1966: 'On a few occasions I went on the fells at night, climbing up in the dusk, finding a simple promenade near the summit where I could move about slowly and safely to keep warm, for even a summer's night can be bitterly cold up aloft, and moving off with the dawn. There is no question of sleep and it is a waste of energy to carry a sleeping bag or a tent.' He elaborated this description in his later autobiography, *Ex-Fellwanderer*: 'On early such occasions I carried an Army blanket for warmth, but later discarded it because of its weight and failure to induce sleep, preferring to find a patch of easy ground and outwit the cold by pacing slowly to and fro across it during the hours of darkness, adopting the old routine of a cigarette every half hour.'

During this prolonged vigil he would occupy his mind by reviewing his past life or indulging in his version of counting sheep – remembering all the teams that had won the FA Cup: 'There is nothing to see but the black silhouette of the nearby slopes and the skyline, and, sometimes, the moon and a million stars. The hours of darkness drag. You think. You live your life over again. You try to remember, in sequence, the names of the football teams that have won the cup in the past ten years. You try to recall all the women who might have married you if you had asked them, and this passes the time along well, not because there are so many but because there are so many doubts about the few.'

Fellwanderer

Eventually the hours of darkness passed and, almost imperceptibly, came the realisation that a new day was dawning. But, as Wainwright admitted, it was not always the magnificent sunrise that one hoped it would be: 'You keep trying to kid yourself that it is getting lighter, that the dawn is breaking. Eventually it does, after what seems an Arctic winter, and it is rarely the glorious spectacle the poets tell us about: much more likely it will be grey and damp and you will find that mist has silently shrouded the top.'

Fellwanderer

But, for Wainwright it was a rewarding experience, particularly the emotions he felt when accompanied by a glorious sunrise after the eerie silence of the night hours finally gave way to the first rays of golden sunlight. He described this in a written reply to journalist, Bill Mitchell, when he was asked about interesting experiences he had while writing *The Eastern Fells*: 'I would say that the most intense experiences have occurred during nights spent upon the fells. Occasionally (not often, and only in Summer) I have bivouacked alone in high places; these occasions remain vivid in memory! Nobody who has not done it can imagine the splendours of sunset and sunrise from the summits, the eerie stillness of the hours of

darkness, the joy of being on the tops at dawn when the larks are rising.' *Wainwright the Biography* pp. 162-3

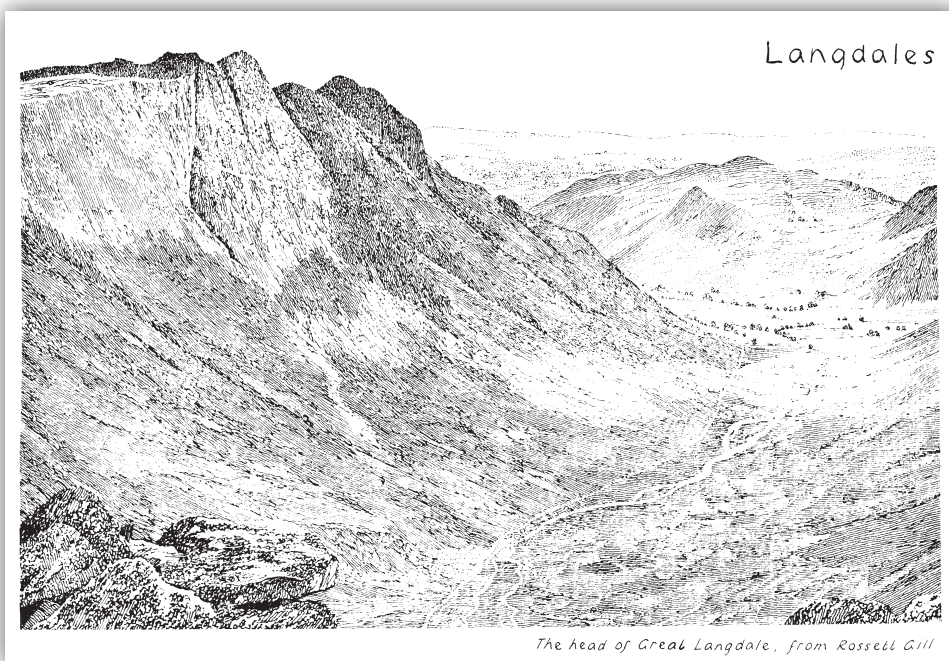
It was not just the emotional experience of being a part of the mountains alone, there were the joys of communing with Nature, of being at one with the sights and sounds of the natural world. It was on these occasions that Wainwright felt most at peace in his heart. He sensed that he was amongst friends, disconnected from his workaday world with all its disappointments and petty jealousies. He put it like this: 'I lost all fears of the fells. Down below I was a pen-pusher. Up here I was a king; a king amongst friends.' *Ex-Fellwanderer*

Then there were the practical considerations. Being on the tops at dawn almost guaranteed that he would see no other walkers until later in the morning. This was important to him as he could work on his research undisturbed for several hours: 'When the sheep resumed their daily business and I could hear cocks crowing down in the valleys it was time for me to be off on my travels. The privations of the night were succeeded by several hours of supreme bliss. I had the fells

all to myself. Not until midday would the first walkers appear on the scene. I was already on the tops, the effort of climbing having taken place the previous evening. I could wander and explore at will undisturbed, visit the summits, make notes and take photographs unobserved.' *Ex-Fellwanderer*

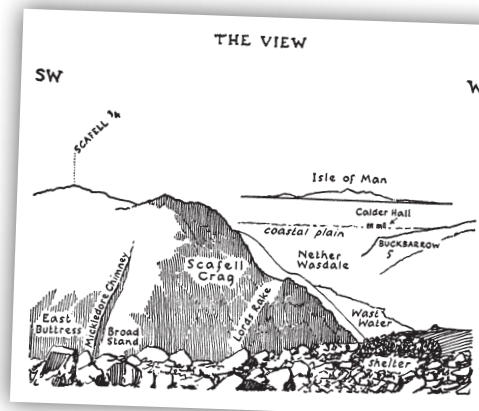
There is no record of when Wainwright began these nocturnal visits to the fell tops, but his earliest reference was a night spent on Skiddaw before he moved to Kendal in 1941. In *Fellwalking with Wainwright*, he described seeing a fiery red glow to the south and discovering the next day that Liverpool had been bombed, the first air raid taking place on the night of 28th August 1940.

In 1942, he wrote to his old friend, Eric Maudsley, telling him about his hopes of seeing the sunrise from the summit of Great Gable: 'This weekend I am taking a short holiday with my cousin, who is bringing his family over for the week. Probably we shall get over into Borrowdale for a night or two: we may even realise an old ambition of mine and watch the sun rise from Gable's grim turret.' *The Wainwright Letters* p. 53



The head of Great Langdale, from Russell Gill

After the War, travel restrictions were eased, and he was able to indulge his nocturnal passion more freely. In a letter written to Lawrence Wolstenholme during the long, hot, dry summer of 1949, he described nights spent on Harrison Stickle, Scafell Pike and Bowfell: 'The crazy season is in full swing – that of spending nights alone on the mountains. The weather has aided and abetted wonderfully this summer, and the exciting memories I have hoarded up for old age (which seems as far off as ever!) are pearls beyond price. Best of all, perhaps, was a glorious red sunrise seen from Harrison Stickle in a purple sky, while Langdale below was choked with cotton-wool clouds and seemed like a huge curving glacier, from the sheepfold below Rossett to Loughrigg, where it was joined by another glacier coming down from Grasmere.



'Another lovely dawn was witnessed from Scafell Pike: at 3 a.m. I could see quite clearly the outline of the Isle of Man, and its winking lighthouses, and the Scottish hills were so distinct that they seemed on the fringe of the Lake District. ... Another time, last month, I was most luxuriantly sunbathing on Bowfell at 5 a.m. and watching shadowy Langdale slowly coming to life. Experiences like this have a heavenly beauty about them that sort of gets me in a soft spot. I hunger for more.' *The Wainwright Letters* p. 78

It was during this period that he had company on some occasions. At first, it was Peter, his son, who described to Hunter Davies one experience of a night spent on Piers Gill in the shadow of Scafell Pike: 'We'd often take a tent

and sleep out all night. We pitched our tent one night on Piers Gill, on Scafell [Pike], at 9:30 in the evening. It was freezing cold and hard to sleep, but Dad woke me at two in the morning to climb to the top of Scafell Pike and wait for the sunrise. Then we went back to our tent and fell asleep.'

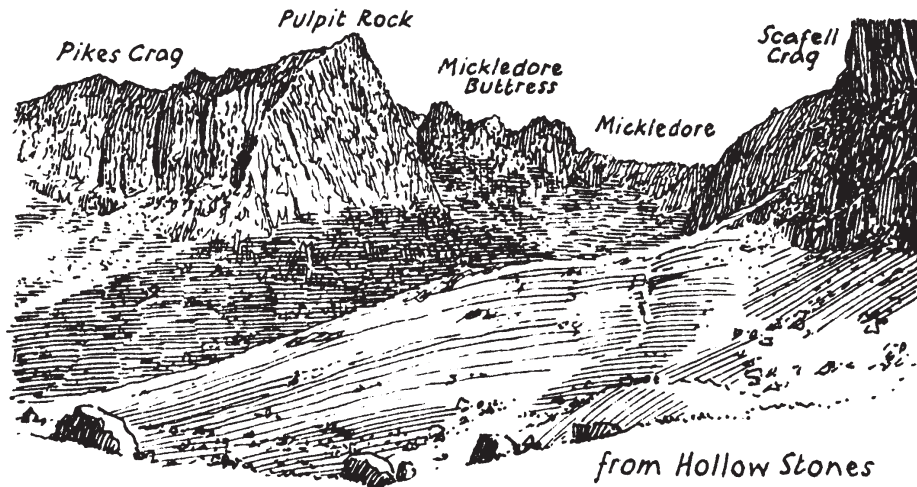
On another occasion, his companion was Weaver Owen, the local bank manager. They even spent one night together out on the fells, setting off from Kendal on a Saturday afternoon. 'We took the bus to Staveley and walked up the Kentmere valley to Mardale. We travelled light, with iron rations, not even taking a razor with us. ... We slept out in the open, or tried to. I didn't sleep a wink because of the midges. His pipe kept them off him. On the Sunday morning, we meandered down to Patterdale, had a cup of tea and caught the bus back to Kendal. We hadn't met a soul the entire weekend.' *Wainwright the Biography* p. 124

In his guidebooks, Wainwright sought to encourage his readers to experience the benefits of a night on the fells: 'Once in a while every keen fellwalker should have a pre-arranged night out amongst the mountains. Time drags and the hours of darkness can be bitterly cold, but to be on the tops at dawn is a wonderful experience and much more than recompense for the temporary discomfort.

'Hollow Stones is an excellent place for a bivouac, with a wide choice of overhanging boulders for shelter, many of which have been walled up and made draught-proof by previous occupants. Watch the rising sun flush Scafell Crag and change a black silhouette into a rosy-pink castle! (This doesn't always happen. Sometimes it never stops raining).' *The Southern Fells, Scafell Pike* p. 11

On the Pennine Way, the most challenging section was the final 29 miles walk along the Border over the Cheviot range. Habitations were few and far between, necessitating a diversion off the route to find lodgings, followed by a long trudge the following morning to resume the walk. In an unpublished letter to his friend, Frank Nash, he advised him to spend the night on the hills to avoid having to break his

Meetings and Greetings: Brief Encounters on the Fells



journey: 'What I would do if I were you would be to stuff the rucksack with goodies and find a couch for the night by the wall near Border Gate, in the heather. Hours of darkness are few at the end of May, and the weather will surely have warmed up by then. Besides which, of course, you save the miles of extra walking and the cost of a night's bed and breakfast! Letter to Frank Nash, 15th May 1986

hill and back again the following day. Advancing years may have defeated him, but he had already spent many nights on the fells experiencing the magic of the dawn of a new day, alone, immersed in the beauty of Nature that lifted his spirits to new heights. Little wonder that he advised others to follow his example and spend nights on the fells the Wainwright way.

Derek Cockell – Bishop's Lydeard
Membership No. 13

When Wainwright came this way in late August 1967, 'an advanced state of geriatricity' was against him and he completed the walk in three sections, hiring a Land Rover on two occasions to take him off the



Cartoon by Roderick Hamm

Wainwright loved walking the fells by himself, so much so that he would actively avoid encounters with other walkers. Whilst I share his preference for solo walking, I do like meeting people. In fact, the more remote the fell, and the less pleasant the conditions, the more I appreciate even the brief company of other walkers. Then the primitive urge to huddle together with fellow members of the tribe soon makes itself felt.

I have generally found fell walkers to be a friendly crowd. There is almost always a nod or a wave from someone passing by, and a greeting of the 'nice day' variety. AW was somewhat scornful of such exchanges, 'the courtesy code of the hills, y'know' (Fellwanderer), but I enjoy them. I can only think of one occasion when my greeting seemed unwelcome. I was approaching the OS column on Clough Head in a stiff breeze

to find a man sitting at its base sheltering from the wind. I smiled and said hello, but there was barely a glance in response. I concluded that he wanted to be left in peace and I did not trouble him further. As AW noted, some people climb mountains in search of solitude and silence (Scafell Pike 24). That man's reticence, however, was very much the exception.

Of the hundreds of exchanges I have had with fell walkers, most have probably involved no more than a brief 'hello', 'nice/terrible weather', 'great views' and so on. These are soon forgotten. But there are a few, more substantial conversations that stick in the mind, some because they are amusing, puzzling or disconcerting, and some because they are all three.

I was on my way up Scafell from Wasdale Camp, via the pathless Green How, making heavy weather of it and wondering why I was still doing this sort of thing, when I saw a woman strolling down the fellslope with a big white dog. They headed in my direction, and we exchanged a few words. A wiry lady, she said breezily that she had left her daughter sleeping in their tent at the campsite. whilst she took the dog for a walk up Scafell Pike and then on to Scafell. She had not a bead of sweat nor a red cheek to show for it, although I noticed that the dog had a raw red paw. I told myself, as I usually do in such circumstances, that she must be a fell runner or an armed-forces fitness instructor, and probably both, just to keep up my spirits.

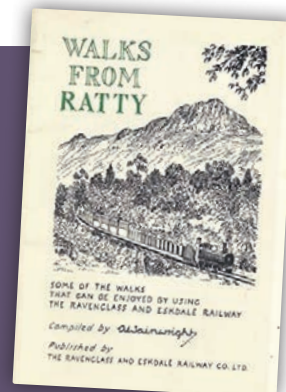


Cartoon by Roderick Hamm

WALKING EXHIBITION AT RAVENGLASS

David Johnson reported in the Winter 2022/3 issue of *Footsteps* on his research to update Wainwright's *Walks from Ratty*. Linked to this, there is to be a small exhibition on walking in Eskdale and a programme of led walks, including the ten in Wainwright's book.

The exhibition, at the Ravenglass Railway Museum from July to December 2024, will include information on Wainwright and his railway walks. David Johnson and Mark Abbott will be leading these walks in the first two weeks of July. More details will be given in the Summer issue of *Footsteps*.



Later, as I started to make my way down from Scafell's summit, I saw two ladies approaching. The younger, aged about thirty, said, 'Can you tell me if there is a quick way down to the Wasdale Camp car park? My mother doesn't like heights.' It turned out that the daughter had planned to take her mother up to Scafell Pike by Brown Tongue, but somehow had got onto Green How instead. I was, to say the least, puzzled by her choice of objective for their walk.

Equally mystifying was my encounter with a woman on Bracken Hause near Helm Crag. She seemed poorly equipped for fellwalking and was clutching what looked like a sketch map drawn on a paper napkin. 'Can you tell me which way is Borrowdale?' she said. I dutifully pointed the way, wondering how she would negotiate the seven-mile trek.

AW had a particular dislike of meeting groups of walkers, refusing to talk to any but the first in the line and maybe not even to them. For myself, I find they usually make for good 'craic'. Walking

the tortuous path from Blea Rigg to Silver How on a bright but chilly day in May 2019, I came upon a group of about fifteen pensioners, men and women. They had stopped for some reason and were talking loudly. I greeted them and said, 'You're a noisy bunch. I hope you're not arguing about Brexit.' 'No,' replied a lady wearing a brimmed hat and carrying walking poles. 'We've decided that anyone who falls behind the group will be abandoned.' 'Ah, like they do on Everest,' I said, revelling in the gallows humour. To which one of her male companions added, 'Except we'd be preserved in the peat bog instead of the snow!'

Further on, as I was coming by Lang How, three men of my age (getting on a bit) came into view, two ahead of a third who was using his walking poles like crutches. I asked the first of the men to reach me if he was the leader. 'I don't think we have a leader,' he said. 'Here's how you can tell if you're the leader or not,' I replied. 'If you're at the head of a column of people and when you turn left they turn left, you're their leader. If they go straight on, you're not!'

He laughed. Then the second man, wearing a bright bandana, arrived, as the third hobbled slowly closer. 'He's had both his hips replaced' said bandana man, 'and now he's having trouble with his knee. I'm a fell runner, and he was too. I still do it, but he can't. But we love our walking.' At last, the poor man joined us, and we chatted and joked. The first man said they used to go climbing in Glencoe. 'And at the end of the day,' I said, 'I bet you were in the Clachaig for a few jars and singing!', a reference to the popular climbers' pub. We shared the memory of it in a state of merriment, a convivial recollection of happy times.

Not all my encounters on the fells have been quite so entertaining. Like many fell walkers, I am none too happy being told what to do by 'officialdom', especially if it appears to interfere with my freedom to roam. I was more than a little put out when, as I started to climb the diminutive but delightful Binsey, I was confronted by a stony-faced man who asked, 'What are you doing?' My instant thought was to wonder what on earth it had to do with him (only in less polite language!). But I suppressed the reaction and said that I was walking to the top of the fell. He said he was a 'birder' and asked if I was. No. Regarding me with a suspicious eye, he said that the RSPB was offering a reward for information leading to the successful prosecution of anyone persecuting hen harriers. I had seen a male hen harrier the previous week near Great Calva, a few miles away, so these splendid raptors were in the area. But did I really look like a gamekeeper or bird-basher? I lived to tell the tale, so presumably not.

Then there was the person on Sallows complaining loudly that AW 'doesn't mention' a hill that could be dimly seen in the distance; and the one who, somewhere near the Lingmell

Gill crossing on the path to Scafell Pike, asked me tetchily 'How far is it to the top?', as if I was somehow responsible for it being further away than they would have liked; and the man on the long haul up to the Hole-in-the-Wall who asked me if I'd 'been here before?'. When I said 'Yes, I was last on this path thirty-nine years ago', he replied triumphantly that he hadn't been on it since he was a boy. Must everything be a competition?

Speaking of boys, I was making my way to Arnison Crag one afternoon when I came across a lad of about eight or nine standing alone on the path. I asked him if he was OK and he said, 'Yes. My dad's lost but he doesn't want to admit it.' I found dad some way ahead, poring over an OS map. Out of the mouths of babes.

One day, when I look back on my fellwalking exploits from the comfort of an armchair, it won't just be the summits I will recall. It will be the people I met along the way too. I cannot end without mentioning the man, unknown to me, who declared 'Well done, sir!' as I climbed from Swirral Edge onto Helvellyn's summit a few years ago. No stranger had ever congratulated me before for reaching a Lakeland top. And the lovely young couple from Japan who asked me if I needed any help walking up to Lingmell Col from Piers Gill. I did not, but it was very considerate of them to ask, the Japanese being renowned for the veneration of their elders.

It was good to hear these well-meaning remarks but also a little unsettling. A bit like when someone offers to give up their seat for you on a train. It says a lot about them - but it also says a lot about you.

Alan Thomas – Warrington
Membership No. 2518



Walking the line, in Easedale – Photograph by Nick Burton

A Coast to Coast Walk Picture Puzzle Clues

The clues to the Picture Puzzle in the Winter issue (*Footsteps* 84) were from sketches on the following pages:

1. p108. 2. p156. 3. p133. 4. p27. 5. p160. 6. p94. 7. p60. 8. p163. 9. p79. 10. p13. 11. p90. 12. p4. 13. p102. 14. p83. 15. p22. 16. p74. 17. p120. 18. p18. 19. p148. 20. P45. The hidden phrase was, 'vary it to suit yourself'.



Membership Discounts 2024

Please see the Society Website for all details. **Some discounters require you to show your Society Membership card, so please have it with you.**

ESTABLISHMENT	LOCATION	DISCOUNT ON
Blencathra Centre	Threlkeld	Self Catering
Blenheim Lodge	Bowness-On-Windermere	B&B
Bowderstone Bunkhouse *	Borrowdale	Self Catering
Chapelfield Cottage *	Borrowdale	Self Catering
Coniston Coppermines	Various	Self Catering
Cumbria and Lakeland Walker Magazine	Magazine	Retail and Leisure
Greenbank Country House *	Borrowdale	B&B
Haven Cottage	Ambleside	B&B
Horsman's Jewellers	Ambleside	Retail and Leisure
Inov-8	Staveley & Online	Gear
Kellah Farm *	nr Haltwhistle	B&B
Lakeland Walks & Talks	Various	Guided Tours
Lothlorien	Kent's Bank	Self Catering
The Mardale Inn Bampton Valley B&B	Bampton	B&B
Mountain Life at Rheged *	Penrith	Gear
Outdoor World Direct	Web and Huddersfield	Gear
Rosemount Hotel *	Windermere	B&B
Royal Oak	Rosthwaite	Hotel
Salutation *	Ambleside	Hotel & Meals
Seatoller House	Borrowdale	B&B
Sonata Guest House *	Kendal	B&B
Striding Edge	Website	Retail and Leisure
Stuart Sports	Bowness on Windermere	Retail
Wainwright House	Kendal	B&B
Walking World	Website	Retail and Leisure

* Discount not yet confirmed for 2024

A Missing Words Puzzle – *The Eastern Fells*



Can you find the words (marked by X) missing from the following quotations from twenty different chapters of *The Eastern Fells*? When you have, rearrange the words to form another quotation from the book.

Send the page reference where that quotation appears, by 15th April 2024, to footsteps@wainwright.org.uk or by mail to me at 18 Pease Way, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9YZ. A prize will be offered to the member, having given the correct answer, whose name is drawn from the hat.



- 'a charming climb along a good path, steep in its X reaches'
- 'Nowadays X of it is overgrown and choked; and it cannot be recommended in late summer'
- 'a big corner may be X initially by descending to it south-east from the summit'
- 'Near X cairn is a series of curious depressions like a line of sinkholes in limestone country'
- 'In October 1927, X a cloudburst, flooded waters burst the banks of the tarn, carved out a new ravine, and caused great damage'
- 'there is a X line of cliffs ... overlooking the coach road'
- 'Both summits are buttressed to the south X sheer walls of black rock'
- 'Continue along the ridge to a grassy depression, then X ahead'
- 'The walker didn't climb X here to do sums'
- 'the summit X comprehended at a glance. A well-constructed symmetrical cairn occupies the highest point'
- 'X summit has no interesting features ... all that can be found is an insignificant mound of stones'
- 'Botanists will X much of interest in the environs of the Ruthwaite cascades'
- 'Bleached skeletons of trees near the top of the fell indicate that at one X it was more fully clothed'
- 'This great mountain X below the upper slopes is of simple design'
- 'X summit is an abrupt rocky peak, a place of grey boulders and small grassy platforms'
- 'Mention should be made of the excellent turf on this wide top: weary feet X judge it delightful'
- 'Easiest of all is the grass slope X the old coach-road'
- 'The broad top is level, and it is X to locate the highest point exactly'
- 'it is so easy a saunter that the hands need X taken from the pockets only once'
- 'The X springs from a mass of high dreary ground in the north'

David Johnson – Histon, Cambridgeshire
Membership No. 481

Society News

2024 AGM

As notified in the Winter issue of *Footsteps* (84), our 2024 AGM will take place on Saturday 30th March at 3.00 pm at Staveley Village Hall. The agenda is enclosed with this issue of *Footsteps*. Do come along to the meeting if you can. The meeting will be preceded by a Society walk to Potter Tarn.

PETER LINNEY

We are sad to report that Peter Linney, a founding member of the Society, will be stepping down from the position of Archivist, and a place on our Management Committee, following the 2024 AGM.

Peter (pictured below), was the Society's first Secretary, serving in this key role from November 2002 until March 2013, when he became our Archivist. Peter's contribution to the Society has been exceptional and we shall greatly miss his enthusiasm and sense of humour. In addition to his work for the Society and his many other interests, Peter found the time and energy to compile *The Official Wainwright Gazetteer*.

Peter celebrated his 90th birthday in 2021 and moved to Kent last year to be closer to his family. We would like to say a big thank you to Peter, and to wish him all the very best in his 'retirement'.



THE BLENCATHRA CENTRE

The Blencathra Centre at Threlkeld was our 2020 charity beneficiary. Our £9,500 donation was to be used to establish an outdoor classroom. Unfortunately, Covid and planning issues delayed matters, but we can report that the Centre is now equipped with a fully functioning outdoor classroom which is removable for overwinter storage. In addition, the Centre has obtained portable bench seating for the classroom. We are pleased that the project is now complete and that an appropriate sign will recognise our donation, which included the gift of books by Alfred Wainwright and others which were donated to the Society on a member's death.

2024 MEMBER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many thanks if you have already paid your 2024 Member subscription. If not, may we gently remind you that subscriptions are now due for the 2024 calendar year. However, if you joined the Society between the 1st July, 2023, and the end of December, 2023, please note your next subscription is not due until 1st January, 2025.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE CUMBRIA

The money raised from the sales of our 2024 calendar (see page 6), has been added to the contributions raised from last year's Society Challenge and the 2023 Memorial Lecture to pass on to our 2023 charity beneficiary.

We are very pleased to report that the two recent auctions, for a collection of Mountain Rescue Annual Reports and a hip flask bearing the intriguing inscription AW (see *Footsteps* 84), raised a total of £240. The proceeds have been added to the funds raised in 2023 for Mountain Rescue Cumbria. Our thanks go to those who submitted bids.

We are pleased to report that our total contribution to Mountain Rescue Cumbria from all our fundraising activity will be close to a very respectable £12,000 – a great achievement. Our thanks to everyone who has supported this very worthwhile cause.

ELTERWATER QUARRY

We reported in the Winter issue of *Footsteps* (84) that proposals to build an adventure attraction in the former Elterwater quarry were turned down by the Lake District National Park Authority in September 2023 on the grounds of traffic impacts.

The developer has submitted a new application to the National Park to re-purpose Elterwater Quarry for heritage tourism and associated uses. Whilst we recognise the new application includes measures to seek to mitigate traffic impacts, we do not consider these are sufficient to address more fundamental concerns about the inappropriateness of such a development in the National Park and a World Heritage Site.

We have, therefore, written to the National Park to support the arguments made by The Friends of the Lake District (FoLD) against the proposed development at Elterwater Quarry.

Alfred Wainwright, writing *In the Valleys of Lakeland* in 1991, said in his Great Langdale chapter, "... the mighty leviathans on wheels that choke the narrow roads are unwelcome and should be exiled. Langdale ... is becoming a free for all." If the traffic was bad in AW's day it is far, far worse today.

COAST TO COAST WALK – AN UPDATE ON NATIONAL TRAIL STATUS

David Johnson represents the Society on a Coast to Coast Walk stakeholder group relating to the project for AW's walk to be established as a National Trail. Group meetings, led by DEFRA and Natural England, are held online six-monthly. A meeting was held at the beginning of February when an update was given, and

participants' questions answered. It was clear that work – legal, administrative and along the route – is forging ahead. The timescale was described as 'challenging', with a launch of National Trail status pencilled-in for the end of 2025.

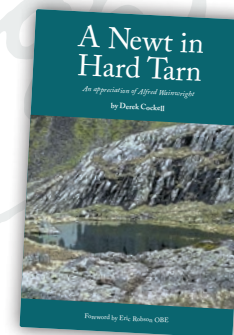
A broad aspiration is to make the route as accessible as possible to all, although it is accepted that for some parts of the route, such as the high Lakeland areas, this is not possible. In such cases, alternative routeing is being devised. Much work is being done to address the potentially dangerous problem of crossing the A19. It was pleasing that the signage along the route will be done sensitively (with no signposts on high ground) and the AW logo will be used.

Background information on the project and further details of this latest meeting are set out on the Society's website.

A NEWT IN HARD TARN

Derek Cockell's book, *A Newt in Hard Tarn*, published by the Society, has been selling very well and has been entered for the Lakeland Book of the Year 2024 competition. The book is a personal appreciation of the life and work of Alfred Wainwright. Derek's book can be purchased from our website, and we wish Derek every success with it in the competition.

A Newt in Hard Tarn will also be featured in a walking article around Helvellyn and Grisedale in the April edition of the *BBC Countryfile* Magazine.



Answers to Are you a Wainwright Mastermind?

1. Borough treasurer.
2. Blackburn Rovers.
3. Kidsty Pike.
4. Howgill Fells.
5. Eric Beardsall.
6. York.
7. Molly Lefebure.
8. Doddick Gill.
9. Abbott Hall.
10. Derry Brabbs.
11. Settle.
12. Lawrence Wolstenholme.

The contestant David Hudson got two questions wrong. For no. 6 he gave the answer Edinburgh; for no. 11 he gave the answer Skipton.

Wainwright Society Walks 2024

Members are invited to join the following spring/early summer walks, which will be led by Mark Abbott, our Walks Organiser. If you have any questions, contact Mark by email at: walkevents@wainwright.org.uk or by phone: 01606 79336 or 07944 435511.

- **SATURDAY 30 MARCH – Staveley and Potter Tarn**

5 miles, with 970ft of ascent. Time: 3 hours. Difficulty: moderate. Meet 9.30am at Staveley village hall.

The walk climbs the lower slopes of Potter Fell, where excellent views are possible, especially of the Coniston Range and distant Black Combe.

This walk will precede the Society AGM at 3pm (see page 30 and insert).

- **SATURDAY 13 APRIL – Chee Dale & The Monsal Trail, Peak District**

Meet 10.00am at Miller's Dale Railway Station (GR SK 1380 7327), 7 miles east of Buxton. Members have a choice of two walks.

Short walk is 5.5 miles, with 335ft of ascent. Time: 3 hours. Difficulty: moderate.

A limestone gorge walk along Chee Dale, then a gradual descent along the Monsal Trail, including passage over several viaducts and through three short tunnels.

Long walk is 13 miles, with 780ft of ascent. Time: 7 hours (a full day expedition). Difficulty: moderate. Includes more of the old railway trail, the longer Litton & Cressbrook tunnels, Monsal Head viaduct and the industrial archaeology of the Wye Valley.

In *A Peak District Sketchbook* (1984), Alfred Wainwright noted that: 'A thousand illustrations would not exhaust the pageant of beautiful scenes and wonderfully varied landscapes that greet the traveller passing through the Peak District.'

- **SATURDAY 18 MAY – Latterbarrow and Wray Castle (Society Challenge Walk)**

7.5 miles, with 700ft of ascent. Time: 5.5 hours. Difficulty: moderate. Meet 10:00am by the Red Lion pub, Hawkshead.

The *Outlying Fell* of Latterbarrow provides a superb viewpoint, surmounted by a conspicuous obelisk, described as 'elegant' by AW. The walk follows Wainwright's route of ascent.

- **SATURDAY 15 JUNE – Great Gable**

9 miles, with 2,800ft of ascent. Time: 7 hours. Difficulty: strenuous. Meet 9.30am at Gatesgarth Farm car park (GR NY 1946 1499)

June 2024 marks the centenary of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club dedicating a memorial on the summit of Great Gable to its members who lost their lives in the Great War. AW described the route from Gatesgarth as having 'sustained interest all the way.... This is the finest of the many approaches to Great Gable: a splendid mountain walk.' Members should advise the Walks Organiser, as soon as possible, if they are interested in joining this high-level, full day hike.

Further details on these walks and those later in 2024 can be found at wainwright.org.uk/society-walks

WAINWRIGHT SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Saturday 30 March 2024 – 3.00pm
Staveley Village Hall**

(see page 30 and insert for further details)



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