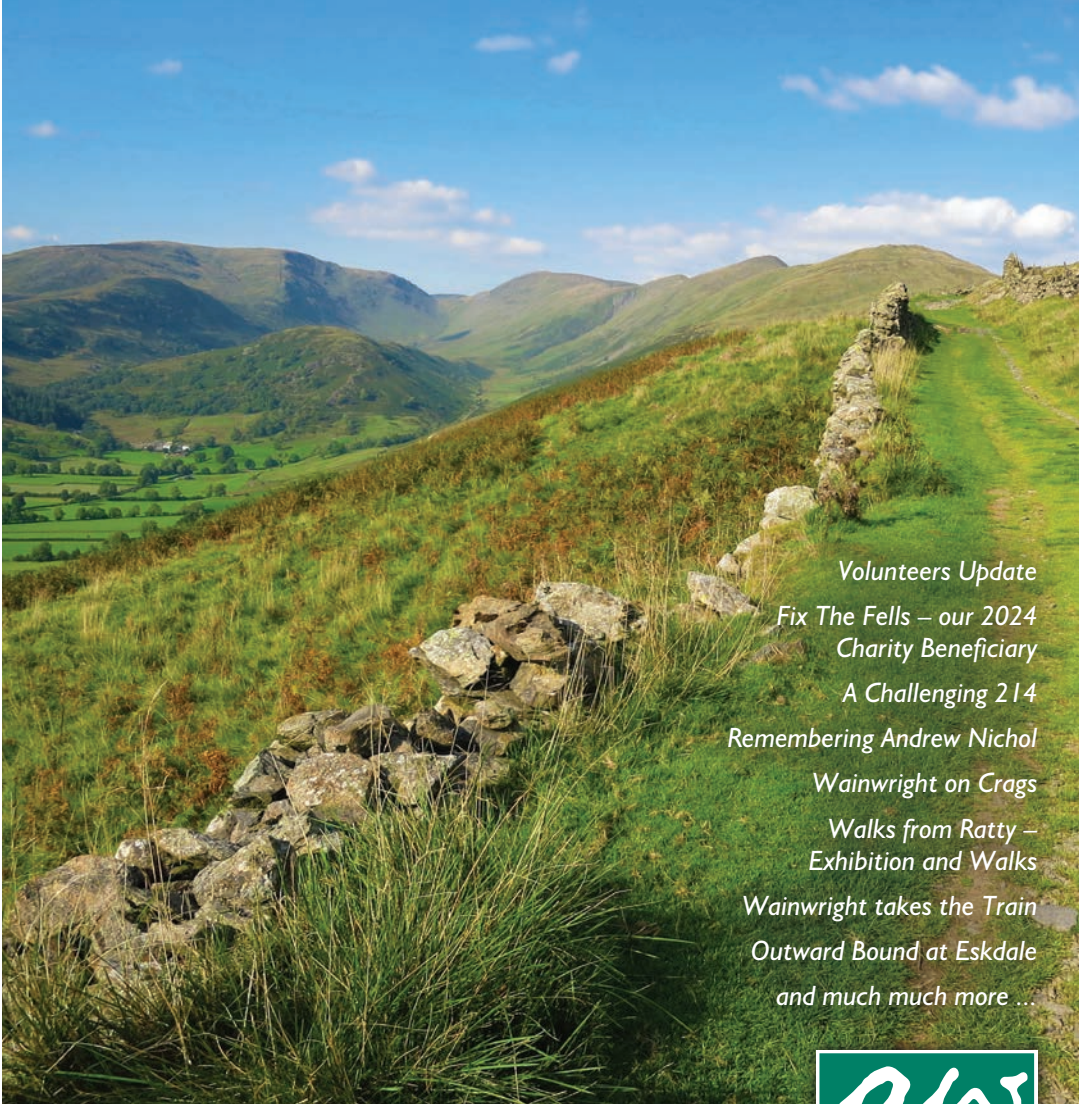


Issue 86 – Summer 2024

Footsteps

THE WAINWRIGHT SOCIETY MAGAZINE



Volunteers Update

*Fix The Fells – our 2024
Charity Beneficiary*

A Challenging 214

Remembering Andrew Nichol

Wainwright on Crags

*Walks from Ratty –
Exhibition and Walks*

*Wainwright takes the Train
Outward Bound at Eskdale
and much much more ...*

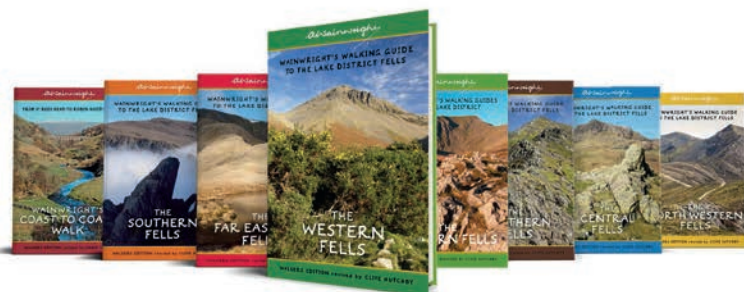
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Note from the Editorial Team

Welcome to the Summer edition of *Footsteps* which has a distinct 'railway' flavour. In this issue we announce details of a programme of *Walks with Ratty* guided walks that Society volunteers are leading in July. We also take a trip to a unique railway themed library housed in Kents Bank Station on the Cumbrian Coast line. It is a nice reminder that AW was brought up in the golden age of steam, and always appreciated a nice train journey: 'I always have my nose flattened against the window, my gaze is ever searching the horizon for a hill...' (A *Pennine Journey* p.181).

The Society Walks have got off to an excellent start this year with some fine weather. In this issue you can catch up with the reports of the 2024 walks completed so far by our members. This included a foray into Derbyshire, to walk along the disused railway line which is now the Monsal Trail, in celebration of forty years since the publication of AW's *A Peak District Sketchbook*.

Railways aside, participants in the *Eastern Fells* missing words puzzle in *Footsteps* 85 (Spring issue) commented on it being enjoyable

but challenging – one said it was hard going: 'trawling through the text was almost like tackling the fells themselves.' Well done and thank you to those who persevered, finding all the words and the passage formed from them: 'the middle is difficult to find. Much time will be saved by following the broken wall directly up the fell.' (Birks 4). The winner, whose name was drawn from the hat, was Elizabeth Norton from Borrowdale, pictured below with her chosen prize – a Jigsaw & Map of the Wainwright Fells.

We wish all our members a great summer whatever you are planning to do. You may even feel encouraged by this issue of *Footsteps* to go on a train journey. Don't forget to press your nose against the carriage window and look out for the approaching hills!

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Front cover photograph:
Heading for the Ill Bell ridge from
Troutbeck, by Jane Challis





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Volunteers Update



**A NEW WAINWRIGHT SOCIETY
SECRETARY AND PUBLICITY OFFICER
ARE REQUIRED...**

The work of the Wainwright Society depends entirely on a dedicated band of volunteers, without whom the Society could not function.

David Claxton announced at the Society's 2024 AGM that he will be standing down with effect from the 2025 AGM. David has served as a Society volunteer for eight years, first as Treasurer and, most recently, as Secretary and Publicity Officer. He has decided it is now the right time to 'retire' from the posts to focus on other interests.

David's volunteer roles will be split, and so the Society is looking to make appointments to the separate posts of Secretary and Publicity Officer.

We are very keen to make appointments in good time to ensure a smooth transition at the 2025 AGM.

Both roles are interesting and rewarding and vital to the functioning of the Society. The Secretary manages and oversees the work of the Society, while the Publicity Officer will seek to promote the Society and its work.

If you are interested in taking on either role or would like to know more about what is involved, please contact David at secretary@wainwright.org.uk or on 07516 480112.

Fix The Fells – our 2024 Charity Beneficiary



Steve Tonkin's first foray into the Lakeland fells isn't a fond memory. 'The bizarre thing is, I did my DofE up here', explains Steve, 'It was bloody cold, and the map reading was really hard, and the mountains were really big!' Fast forward a few decades and Steve has now been nominated as a Wainwright Beer 'Lake District Legend' in recognition of his charity work with the Lake District Foundation, as a fundraiser for the Fix the Fells project, and as a local swim leader.

Steve moved up to the Lake District from the south in his twenties. Crinkle Crag was a favourite destination and his first solo climb. It was also a place he liked to share with friends. In one story of youthful abandon, he recalls taking two friends up, dressed in far from conventional kit.



Photograph by Steve Tonkin

'As we were going over Crinkle Crag there was a mountaineering group coming up and the leader looked at me in my hippy trousers and long hair and went: 'Look at the state of that! That's how people die on the mountains.' Only to see my friend Alisa come up behind me, dressed in a black cat suit and thigh-length boots!'

These days, Steve is more partial to conventional outdoors gear and his walking companions are more likely to be his dogs or teenage children. Does he have a go-to Wainwright he regularly explores? 'Fairfield and High Street are close to where I live, as well as out towards Kentmere.'

For the last five years, Steve has been raising funds for Fix the Fells, a partnership project that tackles erosion by repairing and maintaining 344 upland paths, covering 410 miles (661 km). This work costs over £500,000 annually but receives no statutory funding.

As part of his work, Steve regularly joins Fix the Fells teams at work on paths. Of his first such trip, Steve, who was there to film the team, said, 'I was one of the youngest guys there. But they set off at such a pace you would not believe! All I had was a light rucksack and a GoPro camera and I could not keep up.' The team proceeded to direct Steve to go ahead so that he could take footage of them coming up the hill. 'Both the dry humour and the work they were doing was amazing. I was very humbled.'

Fix the Fells employs 19 highly skilled Rangers, who are supported by a team of 160 volunteers. This tough work involves carrying equipment up the mountains and working with rocks and subsoil, directly maintaining the trails. But the team also does landscape work, such as creating ponds or enhancing wet flushes, to encourage walkers to keep to the paths, build habitat and prevent further erosion.

There is also a little bit of psychology involved. Steve explains, 'What we've found is that if it's a straight line down, people will just go down it. But if there's a bit of a rise, people will go around the rise. If we build a hump, they'll turn round it on to the path. And if there's a drainage area, they won't go down to that.'

The work is carried out with mattocks, long iron bars, shovels and other handheld tools. But tradition meets 21st century technology, with the vital inclusion of 'heli-drops', using helicopter power to bring the heaviest materials up the slopes. The team have found that this is the safest, easiest, and fastest way to get the rocks to the right place.

'To get the rock there any other way, without destroying the fell... it would take a team of maybe two hundred people, a year. And those two hundred people would wear the path out!' explained Steve.

Steve describes why he's so passionate about Fix the Fells: 'The erosion...was unimaginable. The pictures you see of people up to their necks in gullies, caused by a lot of people walking up the path, then water washing it out, was unbelievable.'

So what can those of us who rely on the paths for hiking and fell running do to help? A simple ask is to keep to the path. In addition, leave any stones you see on the path, and resist the temptation to move them to cairns. If you are able to, you can also make a donation to support the work.

Char Binns – Lake District Foundation

Fix the Fells is a partnership project between the National Trust, Lake District Foundation, the Lake District National Park Authority, Natural England and Friends of the Lake District.

The Wainwright Society is supporting Fix the Fells through its Annual Challenge, the Memorial Lecture and sales of our 2025 Calendar.

Find out more at www.fixthefells.co.uk



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

Wainwright Society Annual General Meeting 2024



The Society's 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) returned to Staveley village hall on Saturday 30th March. The minutes will be available to read in the Members Area of the Society's website, but below are some points to highlight.

APPOINTMENTS

As reported in *Footsteps* 85 (Spring 2024), Eric Robson sadly stood down as Chairman on health grounds. The Secretary has conveyed to Eric the Society's great thanks for his distinguished leadership of the Society since its formation and sent him our best wishes for the future. Our Presidents have appointed Eric a Patron, recognizing his wish to continue to be associated with the Society, albeit in a less active role.

David Claxton and Ian Walkden were elected Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

The following were elected to serve on the Society's Management Committee in the capacity shown:

Membership Secretary – Michael Brandrick; *Footsteps* Editor – Nick Burton; Design & Print – Andrew Stainthorpe; Walks Organiser – Mark Abbott; Calendar – Ian Nelson; Book Project – Malcolm Summers; Administrator – Sarah Morton; Archivist – Derek Cockell and Ex-officio – David Johnson.

OUR ANNUAL CHARITY BENEFICIARY

Our charity beneficiary for 2023/24 was Mountain Rescue Cumbria. Our donation came from the Challenge event, our Rheged lecture and sales of the Society's calendar. This year we also raised additional contributions from the auction of AW drawings and prints kindly donated by Joan and Richard Robinson of Penrith and from the auction of AW memorabilia through *Footsteps*. Our total donation to Mountain Rescue Cumbria was

£12,750 which was a fantastic achievement. Our thanks to members for their support.

Our 2024 calendar sales raised £9,000. Last year we found out at a very late stage that our commercial distributor had ceased trading. Ian Nelson very kindly stepped up to send out nearly 2,000 calendars himself. Ian not only saved the day but reduced our costs so that we were able to donate a higher proportion of the sales income to Mountain Rescue Cumbria. Many thanks to Ian.

In selecting Mountain Rescue Cumbria, we recognised the great pressure their teams face as visitor numbers to the Lake District increase. We are again reflecting the impact of visitor numbers on mountain paths in choosing Fix the Fells as our 2024 Charity Beneficiary. Fix the Fells was a previous beneficiary but keeping mountain paths in good repair is a never-ending challenge and we are delighted to be raising money again for this very good cause.

Since our formation we have raised a total of some £186,000 for good causes associated with AW.

ANNUAL CHALLENGE

Our 2023 Challenge, exploring the varied landscape of the historic County of Westmorland, was a great success with each of the walks being undertaken by a different Society member. Our grateful thanks went to Mark Abbott, our Walks Leader, who put in a considerable amount of time drawing up the list of walks, allocating members to walks and collecting member donations. As above, the Challenge raised £1,500 of the sum donated to Mountain Rescue Cumbria.

BOOK PROJECT

Our Book Project continues to go from strength to strength. Since May 2019 our four out-of-print AW titles have now sold over 5,000 copies – a testament to AW's enduring popularity.

The most popular title of the four is *The Outlying Fells of Lakeland*. This would not have been possible, of course, without the kind permission of the Wainwright Estate, the hard work of the Society's volunteers, and the great support of the many people who have purchased the books.

In 2023 we published *A Newt in Hard Tarn* by Derek Cockell, a former Society Secretary. The book has been selling very well and has made the Long List for Lakeland Book of the Year 2024 (see update on this on p.30). The book is a personal appreciation of the life and work of Alfred Wainwright.

THE COAST TO COAST WALK

In August 2022 the Government designated AW's Coast to Coast route as a National Trail. We have campaigned for this designation over several years. David Johnson represents the Society on the Coast to Coast Walk stakeholder group for the project. Group meetings led by DEFRA and Natural England, are held online every six months. Work is forging ahead, with a launch of National Trail status for the route proposed 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 routes are being devised. Much work is being done to address the potentially dangerous problem of crossing the

A19. The signage along the route will be done sensitively (with no signposts on high ground) and the AW logo will be used.

Natural England intend to publish regular progress reports as we move towards the opening of the National Trail. We will add these to our website to keep Society members and the public generally informed of developments.

VOLUNTEERS

There have been changes to our volunteer team over the past year.

Peter Linney, a founding member and first Society Secretary, has stepped down from the position of Archivist and a place on our Management Committee. Peter's contribution to the Society has been exceptional and we shall greatly miss his enthusiasm and sense of humour. We wish him all the very best in his 'retirement'.

Roger Wakelam has given great service to the Society over seven years keeping our completers registers up to date and responding to member requests for certificates and badges. Aneesh Patel has looked after our Member Discounts with great efficiency. Both Roger and Aneesh are also now stepping down from their volunteer roles with the Society.

The AGM expressed its thanks to Peter, Roger and Aneesh on their 'retirements' and to all our present volunteers without whom the Society could not function.

EVENT REPORT



Society Walk: Staveley & Potter Tarn – 30.03.24

Our first walk of the new season was blessed with fine conditions, a great start for the year ahead. The damp overcast skies dispersed, leaving few clouds and some welcome sunshine. After so much poor weather recently this was a real bonus for the group of twenty-six walkers, who were in good spirits after the winter break. Exactly five years had passed since our last March walk from Staveley. For many years this attractive village had been the traditional starting point for the annual walk that precedes the Society AGM. However, the constraints of the covid pandemic meant we had not met there since 2019.

Setting off from our regular meeting point in Abbey Square, outside the Village Hall, we headed down Main Street passing St. Margaret's Tower and then crossing the River Kent by the footbridge at the south end of Mill Yard. The route then climbed to the rear of Staveley Park to join the small lane that eventually leads to Bowston. After a third of a mile on tarmac we headed up to Spring Hag, through delightful woodland amidst a carpet of green wild garlic and bluebells, spring plants that would soon be in flower. Sections of the woods were deer-fenced in 1990 to protect and regenerate the old oak coppice. Several agencies have been involved in the protection of this beautiful place, including the Woodland Trust. We joined the bridleway that climbs steadily northwards, pausing briefly at 'Mike's Wood', an area owned by the Friends of the Lake District. The path levels a little before descending steeply to Frost Hole. Here we met the residents of this farm, who have recently commenced a refurbishment of this charming property.

Our route then climbed steadily for 330 feet, a walk over short grass, rocks and through numerous gates. The superb views soon revealed



Potter Tarn – Photograph by Helen Hackney

Potter Tarn, lying below one of Wainwright's 'nameless summits' in his description of Potter Fell in *The Outlying Fells*. The tarn was one of several built to supply Burneside paper mill, which was founded in 1845. A twenty-minute pause allowed for refreshment and an opportunity to view the dam and overflow construction, including the concrete stepping stones.

Descending via the walled footpath to Side House we were fortunate to meet the owner, who was keen to impart some of the farm's fascinating history. Dating partly from the 14th Century, it had once functioned as a pack horse station. The owner also revealed an intriguing Wainwright story – he recalled the day AW sketched the farm (*The Outlying Fells* – Potter Fell p. 10) in the early 1970's. It was a task interrupted when his pet jackdaw pinched Wainwright's pencil!

Moving on from Side House we continued across fields to join a minor road, and then followed the north bank of the River Kent back to Staveley. With the sun shining, it was, by now, a very pleasant afternoon and, following all the recent rain, the river flowed strongly. It had been a most enjoyable and interesting walk through a delightful landscape.

Mark Abbott
Walks Organiser

Solution to the *Eastern Fells* Missing Words Puzzle (Footsteps 85)

The quotation to be found was '... the middle is difficult to find. Much time will be saved by following the broken wall directly up the fell' (Birks 4). The words forming this were from: 1. Nab Scar 3. 2. Hart Side 5. 3. Raise 7. 4. Middle Dodd 3. 5. Catstycam 5. 6. Great Dodd 2. 7. Little Hart Crag 5. 8. Hartsop above How 4. 9. Stybarrow Dodd 7. 10. Great Rigg 5. 11. Birks 5. 12. Dollywaggon Pike 7. 13. Great Mell Fell 2. 14. Helvellyn 4. 15. Low Pike 3. 16. Fairfield 9. 17. Clough Head 6. 18. Nethermost Pike 7. 19. Red Screes 7. 20. Gowbarrow Fell 2.

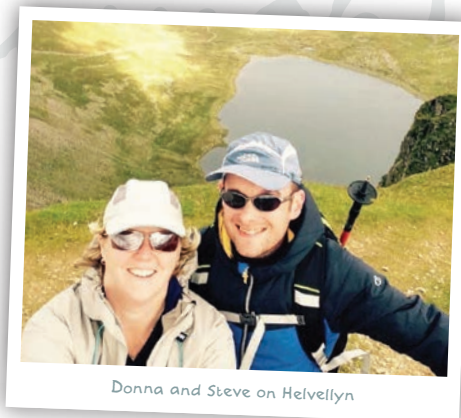


Editor's note: As reported in Footsteps 84 (Winter 2023/24), Steve and Donna Harrison completed the challenge of climbing the 214 Wainwright fells in 2023. Here is their story of what turned out to be ...

A Challenging 214

We have always loved the Wainwrights, the 214 fells in the Lake District that were described by Alfred Wainwright in his famous pictorial guides. It was our dream to complete them all together, and we finally did it in September 2023, after eight years of amazing adventures. We had so many wonderful memories along the way, from our first fell, Conistone Old Man, to our last one, Wetherlam, which we celebrated with our friends and family, as well as David Powell-Thompson and the Conistone Mountain Rescue Team. The BBC even filmed our final ascent for the local news!

We enjoyed every single fell, but some of our favourites were Causey Pike, Steeple, Pillar and Great Gable. We loved how each fell had its own character and charm, and how they showed us different views and aspects of the



Donna and Steve on Helvellyn

beautiful Lake District. We felt like we explored every corner of this magical place, from the valleys and lakes to the ridges and summits.

Our journey was not easy, though. Steve had to go on dialysis in 2020 due to kidney failure, and we thought we would never be able to finish



Enjoying the view on Blea Rigg

the challenge. But we did not give up, and we managed to climb six more fells while Steve was on dialysis, including Bannerdale Crag, which has a fantastic east ridge that we really enjoyed.

In December 2020, Steve received a kidney transplant that changed his life. We were so grateful to the donor and their family for giving us this gift, and we decided to honour them by completing the Wainwrights. We resumed our quest in 2021 with Great Calva, and we never looked back.



Dale Head summit



Walking to Whiteless Pike

We are so proud of ourselves for achieving this goal, and we are so thankful to everyone who supported us along the way. We received a certificate and a badge from the Wainwright Society when we finished, and we treasure them as symbols of our love for each other and for the fells. We would also like to give special thanks to the Conistone Mountain Rescue Team for their fantastic support and to our friend David Powell-Thompson.

Through our 214 Challenge we also raised £2,000 for the charity Kidney Care UK. We are not done yet, though. We still have many more walks to do in the Lake District and beyond. Maybe we will try the Coast to Coast next!

Steve and Donna Harrison – Gainsborough
Membership No. 4639

Anyone who wishes to donate to Steve and Donna's charity cause can do so at www.kidneycareuk.org



Remembering Andrew Nichol



Andrew Nichol and AW at Blea Tarn –
Copyright Ian Shepherd and Rosemary Gutteridge

The Wainwright Society was sorry to hear of the death of Andrew Nichol, aged 91, in April 2024. A resident of Kendal, Andrew was the former General Manager of the *Westmorland Gazette* who worked with Alfred Wainwright from 1982 up until AW's death in 1991. Andrew wrote his own book about his association with AW – *Behind the Scenes with Wainwright – A Publisher's Perspective of a Reluctant Celebrity*, which was published in 2012. He also featured as one of the subjects in David Johnson's book, *Encounters with Wainwright*, published by The Wainwright Society in 2016.

Born in 1932 in the north-east of England, Andrew left school at the age of fourteen and spent a career in the production side of the newspaper industry, joining the *Westmorland Gazette* in 1969. He managed the production of the weekly newspaper, as well as the general printing of the Wainwright guides and popular monthly magazines like *Dalesman* and *Cumbria*. Harry Firth, the general printing manager, had been the newspaper's main link with AW but he retired in 1982 and Andrew replaced him. So began his personal association with AW, which started with twice weekly meetings at AW's

home and developed into a personal friendship, with meals out and even a joint holiday to Scotland with their wives, Betty and Bernice.

In his own book, Andrew shares many insights into AW's later life and the projects they were working together on. He was a regular visitor at AW and Betty's home at Kendal Green, and even purchased the four cornettos AW requested as his retirement present from the *Westmorland Gazette* at the end of 1990. As part of his retirement promise, AW then treated Andrew to a pancake at the Little Chef at Ings village. Andrew visited AW at home and hospital during his period of illness in January 1991 and dealt with the huge media response which followed AW's death.

If AW had been surprised by his own celebrity status later in life, then Andrew had a similar experience in October 2023. The story of his association with AW attracted the attention of the national media after he undertook the remarkable feat of climbing to Innominate Tarn on Haystacks, with the assistance of the Cockermouth Mountain Rescue Team. It was a proud achievement for Andrew and his family, which includes seven grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren.



Derek Cockell (then Wainwright Society Secretary) with Andrew Nichol in Kendal – Photograph by David Johnson

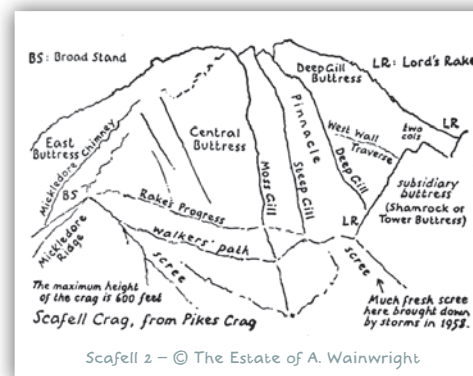
The Wainwright Society and its members offer our condolences to Andrew's family at this time.

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

Wainwright on Crag

According to AW, the 'ultimate objective' of a fellwalker is always to reach a fell's summit cairn – The Central Fells – Loft Crag 6. Even so, much of the enjoyment of fell walking comes from observing the scenery, and especially the rock scenery, on the way up. 'Featuring on almost every mountain are precipitous crags, great buttresses of naked rock that both attract and repel, awesome pinnacles fissured by frost and rain.' *Fellwalking with Wainwright* p.173. So let us take a tour of some of the most impressive rock scenery in the district, with AW joining us as our somewhat reluctant guide.

Our itinerary will take us on a sinuous route of around fifty miles, starting at Scafell and going via Dow Crag, Pavey Ark, Fleetwith Pike, Pillar, Whin Rigg, Bowfell and finally Great End. It should take us about twenty-nine hours on foot or, if we can borrow some horses, about twenty-two hours! An overnight stop will be needed at the half-way point near Fleetwith Pike, perhaps in the youth hostel at Honister Hause or, for the hardy, wild camping under the stars. AW will no doubt find a quiet spot among the rocks for himself.



many regard Scafell as a better mountain than Scafell Pike: 'This respect is inspired ... by the towering rampart of shadowed crags facing north and east below the summit, the greatest display of natural grandeur in the district, a spectacle of massive strength and savage wildness but without beauty, an awesome and humbling scene.

A man may stand on the lofty ridge of Mickledore, or in the green hollow beneath the precipice amongst the littered debris and boulders fallen from it, and witness the sublime architecture of buttresses and pinnacles soaring into the sky, silhouetted against racing clouds or, often, tormented by writhing mists, and, as in a great cathedral, lose all his conceit. It does a man good to realise his own insignificance in the general scheme of things, and that is his experience here.' *The Southern Fells – Scafell 2*

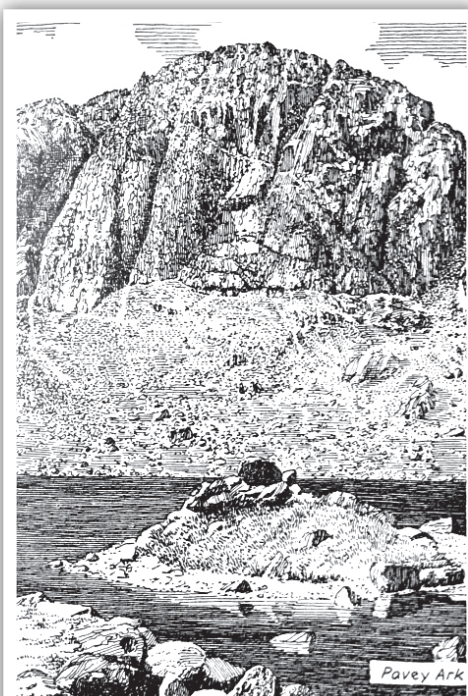
'The most formidable of these natural bastions', he continues, 'is Scafell Crag which towers in supreme majesty above a stony hollow in the fellside: a vertical wall of clean rock some 500 ft high, divided by gullies into five buttresses, the whole appearing to be totally unassailable ... The aspect of the Crag from below is intimidating, even frightening, and it is so palpably impossible for common or garden mortals to scale that none dares venture up the rocks from the safe ground at the foot ...' *Fellwalking with Wainwright* p.173

Suitably impressed, we begin the eight-mile trek south to Goat's Water. On arrival, having remained silent for the entire journey, AW gazes up at the impressive wall of shattered rock that rises behind the tarn, and begins to fill his pipe. 'Second only to Scafell Crag in the magnificence of its rock architecture is the imposing precipice towering above the stony hollow of Goat's Water, a favourite climbing ground hallowed by memories of the earliest and greatest of Lakeland cragsmen and so obviously the supreme natural attraction hereabouts that its name is given to the whole of the fell of which it is a part.' *The Southern Fells – Dow Crag 2*.

We begin our tour at Scafell on a pleasant May morning. At Hollow Stones, AW tells us that

Can we get closer? 'The outlet of Goat's Water is forded and a track rising across slopes of scree is followed to a pile of large boulders forming a cave below the lowest part of the crag, which now looks fearfully imposing and even intimidating as it soars above.' *Fellwalking with Wainwright* p.129. A strenuous climb up the South Rake leads us to Dow Crag's summit, where we take lunch.

Then we are on our way to Pavey Ark, almost nine miles to the north. At Stickle Tarn AW tells us: 'Pavey Ark is Langdale's biggest cliff. In an area where crags and precipices abound, here is the giant of them all, and, scenically, it is the best. The view of the Ark across the waters of Stickle Tarn, at its foot, is superior to all others of this type in Lakeland, having an advantage over the principal rival team of Dow Crag-Goat's Water in that the scene, being invariably reached by the steep climb from Dungeon Ghyll, bursts upon the eye with dramatic effect.' *The Central Fells – Pavey Ark 2*. A striking sight indeed! But with another nine miles to go today to reach Fleetwith Pike, we do not stay long.



Pavey Ark 10 – © The Estate of A. Wainwright

It is early evening when we arrive at Honister Hause. After 25 miles fellwalking I am feeling the strain, but AW seems unaffected. 'Honister', he says, 'is well known for its pass, its crag and its slate. The road through the stony defile... is, on the Buttermere side, a desert of boulders, one of the roughest wildernesses in Lakeland. Impending high above the pass is Honister Crag, a near vertical precipice honeycombed with quarries where, in defiance of gravity, a beautiful slate is won and taken down to the cutting sheds.' *A Coast to Coast Walk* p.21. 'This precipice towers dramatically above the road between Borrowdale and Buttermere, a savage wall of rock and heather strewn with natural debris and spoil from the quarry-workings high on the cliff, a place without beauty, a place to daunt the eye and creep the flesh.' *The Western Fells – Fleetwith Pike 2*. With a slight shudder, we retire to the nearby youth hostel for overnight rest and refreshments.

The next morning, we make the short six miles hop to Pillar. The May weather remains fair. 'Excitement becomes intense as the Shamrock Traverse rises to confront the upper part of Pillar Rock, the High Man, and reveals its intimate detail at close range. The scene is overpowering. Thoughts are of nothing else but the immense tower of rock immediately ahead. Worldly worries are totally excluded from the mind ... The scene is sublime, yet brutal, without a shred of beauty, and indeed to timid observers will seem a place of horror, awful and ugly.' *Fellwalking with Wainwright* p.200

After this awe-inspiring start to the day, we wonder what our next destination, Whin Rigg, can offer. When we reach the shores of West Water we are not disappointed. 'No mountain in Lakeland,' declares AW, '... can show a grander front than Whin Rigg, modest in elevation though the latter is, and so little known that most visitors to the district will not have heard the name ... Whin Rigg is the southern terminus of the shattered ridge above West Water, beyond the screes where the great grey cliffs have resisted erosion and rise in gigantic towers over the foot of the lake to culminate finally in a small shapely summit, a proud eyrie indeed. This savage scene is tempered and given a rare beauty by the blending of dark waters and rich

woodlands that form the base of every view of the soaring buttresses – but there is no denying the steepness and severity of its precipices and chasms.' *The Southern Fells – Whin Rigg 2*. The view across the lake to the Screes is indeed stunning.



Whin Rigg 2 – © The Estate of A. Wainwright

Another eight miles walking brings us to Bowfell. We make our way up to the Great Slab, overlooking Cambridge Crag and Bowfell Buttress. 'It is possible,' AW tells us, 'and does happen, that walkers ascend Bowfell and traverse its top quite unaware of the imposing line of crags overlooking Mickleden: from the summit and the shelf-track there is little to indicate the presence of steep cliffs. But to miss seeing the crags is to miss seeing half the glory of Bowfell.' *The Southern Fells – Bowfell 11*. 'These crags are of diverse and unusual form, natural curiosities that add an exceptional interest and help to identify Bowfell in the memory.' *The Southern Fells – Bowfell 2*. They certainly are unforgettable.

At last, the end of our tour is in sight. In just a couple of miles we reach Great End. 'But the vast northern fall of the mountain', says AW, 'is one of the finest scenes in the district, awe-inspiring in its massive strength and all the more imposing for being eternally in shadow ... When mist wreathes the summit and clings like smoke in the gullies, when ravens soar above the lonely crags, when snow lies deep and curtains of ice bejewel the gaunt cliffs, then Great End is indeed an impressive sight.' *The Southern Fells – Great End 2*

With our excellent crag tour over, AW leaves us with a final thought:

'This is the true Lakeland of the fellwalker, the sort of terrain that calls him back time after time, the sort of memory that haunts his long winter exile. It is not the pretty places... that keep him restless in his bed; it is the magnificent ones. Places like Great End...' *The Southern Fells – Great End 2*

Alan Thomas – Warrington
Membership No. 2518

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

Society Walk: Chee Dale & The Monsal Trail – 13.04.24

It is forty years since the publication of Wainwright's *A Peak District Sketchbook* (1984). In the introduction, AW drew attention to its 'delectable countryside', 'relics of past industries' and, in his summary noted, 'perhaps I have succeeded in conveying a little of my admiration and affection for this favoured part of England.' He dedicated the book to his friend Ron Scholes.



Stepping stones along the River Wye
– Photograph by Ian Nelson

Fifteen members, accompanied by dogs Jake and Thor, met up at Miller's Dale Station to experience Chee Dale and the Monsal Trail, two wonders of the Peak District National Park. We descended to the north bank of the River Wye, as it twists and turns around a series of limestone bluffs and tors. The mid-19th Century viaducts and embankments, built by the Midland Railway, direct the river's course in several places. When the river floods its famous stepping stones can become impassable. Fortunately, the final walk recce had indicated that the stepping stones were safe to cross. But there was thick, deep mud alongside the river, covering the footbridges and boardwalks.

A short diversion enabled us to avoid much of this and enjoy a higher view over Chee Dale, with a view to the enormous rocky bastion of Chee Tor on the far side of the river.

Following the river under the series of railway viaducts and tunnels involved negotiating two long sets of stepping stones set securely in the riverbed, hard up against bulky limestone outcrops. We counted fifty-eight stone steps and then thirty-eight stone steps, respectively. The viaducts are a dominating feature and along the way we also encountered a rich birdlife – dippers, grey wagtails, a pair of Mandarin ducks and numerous mallards. After passing the delightful Blackwell Mill cottages, we joined the Monsal Trail.

The Midland Railway arrived in Buxton in 1863, a feat of great engineering prowess and physical effort. North of Matlock the route via Miller's Dale required the construction of seven double-track tunnels and at least ten viaducts. The opening of the railway through such a magnificent landscape was contentious. The Victorian social reformer John Ruskin was particularly indignant about the viaduct at Monsal Head and the route westwards. However, in words accompanying one illustration in *A Peak District Sketchbook*, AW described the railway as 'a scenic joy throughout its length...a rich kaleidoscope of colour.' The railway closed in 1968, an act that AW suggested was 'lamented.' It was once a main line route running through the north of England, connecting London St Pancras with Manchester Central.

A railway journey here in the early 1960's was an exciting, noisy experience, as powerful steam and diesel engines hauled passenger expresses, while freight trains loaded their heavy cargoes of limestone. In 1960 the route saw the introduction of the blue *Midland Pullman* diesel multiple unit,

part of British Railways' 'Modernisation Plan'. With a maximum speed of 90mph, these trains stopped once between the two cities, completing the journey in a scheduled 3 hours and 10 minutes.

The National Park acquired the disused trackbed in 1981, creating a recreational trail of 8½ miles. Five tunnels remained closed to walkers and cyclists on safety grounds although four were subsequently reopened in March 2011. One tunnel under Haddon Hall has never re-opened. There have also been attempts to restore the Trail to full rail traffic. We passed through two shorter tunnels, quickly crossed the Wye, and almost immediately entered Chee Tor Tunnel. During daylight, the four reopened tunnels are all artificially illuminated.



Inside Chee Tor Tunnel – Photograph by Sue Nelson

Arriving back at Miller's Dale we enjoyed our lunch between former station platforms. This had once been a busy junction with the popular branch line to Buxton. The main station building is now a refreshment room and contains some superb railway posters. The old goods shed has recently been converted into a museum. We continued eastwards passing high above the former Litton and Cressbrook cotton mills, before walking through two more restored tunnels. Between the two portals, a spectacular view of the valley below revealed

itself – overlooking an area euphoniously named Water-cum-Jolly Dale. Further on we passed a geological site where we saw the presence of volcanic pillow lavas. Eventually we arrived at the famous Monsal Head Viaduct. A steep climb up to the Head was rewarded with a welcome ice cream.

Our return initially followed the road to the Grade II* listed Cressbrook Mill (1815), now converted to apartments. We had a quick look at the interesting Dale View Terrace (1817), once the mill apprentices' house. The route alongside the mill pond is currently closed due to footbridge damage. There was also excessive mud once again, so we climbed a short distance up Bottomhill Road to a pleasant woodland path that contours round Cressbrook Hall (1843). Early bluebells were flowering here. We walked back to Miller's Dale station alongside the river, gazing in awe at the climbers on the popular limestone crag of Ravenstor. Soon after, we passed a memorial to the late naturalist David Bellamy.



The group in Chee Dale – Photograph by Helen Hackney

It was an expedition full of interest throughout. We had walked thirteen miles with 349 metres (1,145 feet) of ascent. A special thanks to all who attended, particularly those who had travelled long distances to join the walk.

Mark Abbott
Walks Organiser

Walks from Ratty – Exhibition and Walks



the walks. There will be an opportunity for participants to make a donation, with any funds received divided between the Ravenglass Railway Museum and Fix the Fells, the Society's chosen beneficiary for 2024.

An outline of the schedule of walks is shown below. You can see that two of the shortest walks will be repeated. Full details, including times and meeting points can be found in the News section of the Wainwright Society website.

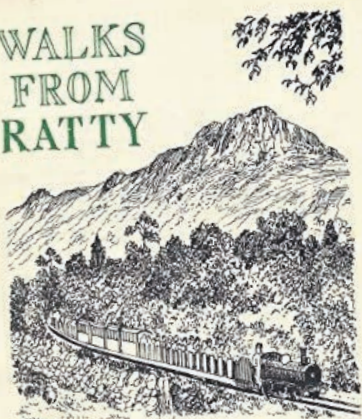
Any questions can be directed to David at footsteps@wainwright.org.uk or to Mark at walkevents@wainwright.org.uk

David Johnson – Histon, Cambridgeshire
Membership No. 481

SCHEDULE OF WALKS FROM RATTY

Tuesday 9 July:	Walk 1 – Muncaster Fell
Wednesday 10 July:	Walk 2 – Irton Fell
Thursday 11 July:	Walk 3 – Miterdale
Friday 12 July (a.m.):	Walk 4 – Blea Tarn
Friday 12 July (p.m.):	Walk 8 – Riverside
Saturday 13 July:	Walk 5 – Burnmoor Tarn
Sunday 14 July (a.m.):	Walk 6 – Eel Tarn
Sunday 14 July (p.m.):	Walk 7 – Dalegarth Force
Monday 15 July (a.m.):	Walk 7 – Dalegarth Force
Monday 15 July (p.m.):	Walk 8 – Riverside
Tuesday 16 July:	Walk 9 – Hardknott Roman Fort
Thursday 18 July:	Walk 10 – Harter Fell (this might be switched to Wednesday 17, if the weather dictates)
Friday 19 July:	Walk 8 – Riverside

WALKS FROM RATTY



SOME OF THE WALKS THAT CAN BE ENJOYED BY USING THE RAVENGLASS AND ESKDALE RAILWAY

Compiled by *AWainwright*

Published by THE RAVENGLASS AND ESKDALE RAILWAY CO. LTD.

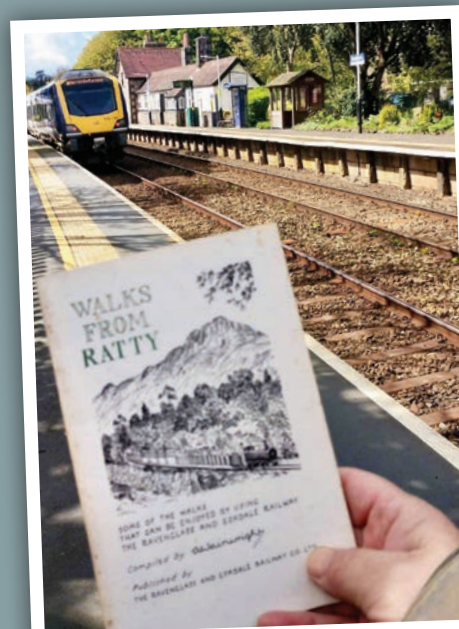
David Johnson reported in *Footsteps 80* (Winter 2022/3) on his research to update Wainwright's *Walks from Ratty*. Linked to this, there is to be a small exhibition on walking in Eskdale and a programme of led walks, including the ten in Wainwright's book.

The exhibition, at the Railway Museum in Ravenglass, which will run from July to December, is sponsored by the Society and will include information on Wainwright and *Walks from Ratty*.

These walks, which will be led by David Johnson and Mark Abbott, will take place in the period from 9th to 19th July. These are not 'Society walks' and are open to all, but it is hoped that some Society members will wish to participate. There is no charge to join these guided walks, but it is hoped that participants will want to travel on Ratty to the starting points or after

Wainwright takes the Train

A selection of Wainwright books has arrived at the Kents Bank Station Library on the Cumbrian Coast line. I travelled by train, crossing the River Kent estuary at Arnside, to donate the books to the unique 'railway' library, housed in a working station on the shores of Morecambe Bay.



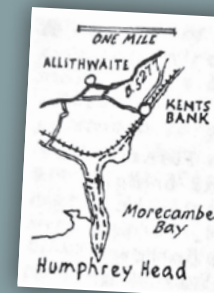
Along with AW's own railway themed book – *Walks From Ratty* – the Wainwright Society has donated to the library some of its recent publications of popular Wainwright titles – *The Outlying Fells of Lakeland*, *Walks on the Howgill Fells*, *Walks in Limestone Country* and *A Pennine Journey*. The library has also received copies of David Johnson's *Encounters with Wainwright* (which includes the story of railwayman Ken Harper accompanying AW on a train from Oxenholme to Penrith), together with recent editions of *Footsteps* magazine.

The Kents Bank Station Library was opened in 2023 by Professor Paul Salveson, historian and author, and a pioneer of Community Rail. The

free reference library of railway and transport related books, pamphlets and memorabilia has developed from Paul's own personal collection. The not-for-profit community-based library holds over 3,000 titles – with donations always welcome – and is open to the public every second Saturday of the month and by appointment at other times. There are monthly Wednesday talks, a free lending library and a cosy reading room, and Paul is also developing a collection of walking books exploring South Lakeland. For anyone interested in researching the history of railways in Cumbria, the library includes books about the Lake District's railway heritage.

Alfred Wainwright explored the area around Kents Bank in his two *Furness Sketchbooks* and *The Outlying Fells of Lakeland*. The front cover of AW's *A Second Furness Sketchbook* is his illustration of Ulverston railway station, just two stops further along from Kents Bank. AW's preferred route up the Outlying Fell, Humphrey Head, was along the coastline from Kents Bank train station: 'a journey of joy for birdwatchers and trainspotters especially' (*The Outlying Fells* p. 68). He even gives the Kents Bank 'stationmaster' a mention!

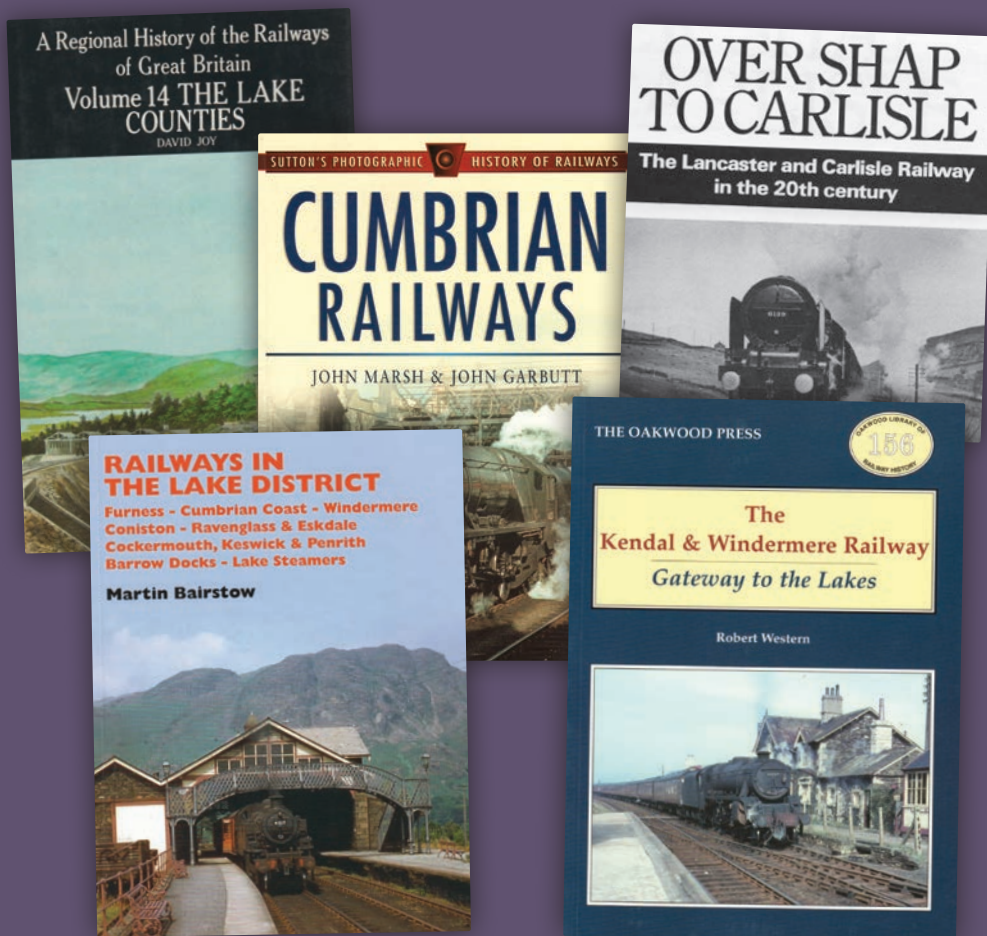
You can now get off the train at Kents Bank and browse AW's books in the beautiful setting of this train station. Part of the station buildings also houses the adjacent Beach Hut Gallery, which exhibits the work of local artists. From the station platform there is a fine view across Morecambe Bay and to nearby Humphrey Head – an outlying fell as unique as the 'railway' library. More information on the Kents Bank Station Library can be found on the website, www.stationlibrary.org.uk



Nick Burton

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Five of the Best – A Review of Lake District Railway Books

The Lake District, taking in the historic counties of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire 'north of the sands', has a rich railway history, though sadly much of the network was destroyed by the Beeching cuts of the 1960s. This review is based on a selection of our stock at Kents Bank Station Library. Some of the books are in print, others can be picked up second-hand (we have some duplicates at our library, for sale or to borrow).

David Joy: *The Lake Counties (A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, Vol. 14)* David and Charles, 1983

David Joy is a highly knowledgeable railway historian with a long and distinguished career in journalism, which included working for the *Dalesman* magazine under Bill Mitchell's editorship. This book was part of the highly acclaimed series of regional railway histories published by David and Charles in the 1980s.

As a general introduction to the railway history of the Lake Counties, David's book still takes some beating. He laments the destruction of so many of the region's railways, particularly the Penrith to Keswick and Workington Line. The section west of Keswick shut in 1966 with the remaining stub from Penrith to Keswick going in 1972. What could have been a vital link across the northern part of the Lake District was lost forever.

David Joy places railways very much in the wider social and economic context. The book is an important part of the wider history of the Lake Counties, contributing to our knowledge of the rise of industry in West Cumbria and the development of tourism, which the railways, particularly the Furness Railway under the leadership of Alfred Aslett, did much to foster.

John Marsh and John Garbutt: *Cumbrian Railways (Sutton's Photographic History of Railways)* Sutton, 1999

This is a lighter read, and, as the title suggests, it is more of a photographic history than a detailed account. The photographs are very well chosen, covering the main railway companies that served the region: the London and North Western, Furness, Midland, North Eastern, Maryport and Carlisle and the Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith. It has a section on closed lines of which there are all too many: the Coniston branch, the 'Little North Western' from Lowgill Junction (south of Tebay) to Kirkby Lonsdale and Ingleton, the Lakeside branch, Penrith to Workington, the famous 'Stainmore Route' across the Pennines into County Durham and the Silloth branch amongst several others. These all had quite different characteristics but many of them ought not have been destroyed.

The Stainmore line was built primarily for freight – it carried coke for the Barrow iron works. In its latter years, before and after the Second World War, it had a short-lived period as a route for summer weekend holiday services from the north-east to Blackpool, and for the fascinating 'Miners' Train' from Durham to Ulverston and the Miners' Convalescent Home (see below).

The book provides a good range of photographs of railway features – plenty of good quality locomotive scenes but also a wide range of station images and other railway architecture. The social history of Cumbrian Railways isn't neglected either, with some fascinating images of railway workers and passengers. A real gem is a photograph dated around 1910 at Lakeside of the Furness Railway orchestra which entertained passengers about to embark on the Windermere steamers. Within four years that halcyon age would have disappeared and no doubt some of the young men pictured with their instruments would have been called up for the war, perhaps never to return home.

Harold D. Bowtell *Over Shap to Carlisle: The Lancaster and Carlisle Railway in the 20th Century*, Ian Allan, 1983

Harold Bowtell was a highly respected railway historian and wrote extensively on railways in the north of England, including lesser-known industrial lines. He lived in Kendal so he knew the Lake Counties well. This is quite a detailed history of 'The West Coast Main Line' in the last century but should be of interest to the non-specialist. It has a fascinating section on signalling and infrastructure – an aspect of railways which is often ignored. The book has detailed route plans showing features of the line, including signal boxes, sidings and water troughs, gradients and railway housing along the route, many of which remain today. The lack of any reference to the people who actually worked on the railway is something often irritating about railway histories, but Bowtell integrates quite a lot of social history, including fascinating anecdotes, into the book.

He also mentions some of the early railway enthusiasts who used to set up their cameras and tripods in locations such as the Lune gorge to photograph steam in its heyday. He refers to Dr Tice F. Budden, of Dorking 'with 40 years at Scotland Yard to his credit', who started taking photographs of the line as early as 1889 during holidays at Arncliffe.

Bowtell contributes a fascinating chapter telling the story of North Eastern Railway's operations over the Lancaster and Carlisle route from Tebay southwards. This is where his personal experience is used to good effect, describing his

sightings of the 'Miners' Train' from Durham to Ulverston, serving the Miners' Convalescent Home at Conishead Priory. The service was unadvertised and ran from Durham via Bishop Auckland, Barnard Castle, Stainmore, Tebay, Oxenholme, Sandside and Arnsdale to Ulverston. The train ran on alternate Fridays, covering a fortnight's convalescence period. In addition, there was a fairly regular run by the unusual ex-North Eastern Railway 'Sentinel' railcar (called 'The North Briton') which conveyed the committee members of the Durham Miners' Welfare Association, which was closely linked to the union, the powerful Durham Miners' Association. The LNER train crews worked throughout, with an LMS conductor beyond Tebay, with the North Eastern men lodging in Barrow.

Martin Bairstow: *Railways in the Lake District*, published by the author, 2020

This is a good companion to David Joy's general history of railways in the Lake Counties, bringing the story up to date but with much additional historical information. The book focuses on the local lines rather than the West Coast Main Line, and Martin also gives considerable coverage to the Lake steamers, particularly on Windermere, but also Coniston and Ullswater, as well as the ships which sailed out of Barrow.

The book is a pleasing mix of well-researched history with personal reminiscence, starting with his boyhood recollections of staying in a railway camping coach at Grange-over-Sands in 1968. The book has a substantial section on that very special Cumbrian institution, the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, or 'La'l Ratty'. It began life as a goods line, opening in 1875 and carrying mainly iron ore. It operated to a 3ft gauge but closed in 1908. Remarkably, it was revived thanks to the efforts of two enterprising Edwardians – R Proctor-Mitchell and W J Bassett-Lowke. It re-opened as a 15" miniature railway during the First World War, with the explicit aim of developing tourist traffic. It succeeded – despite some very close shaves – and is today a thriving part of the Cumbrian tourism industry.

The Lakeside and Coniston branches were less fortunate. The Coniston branch closed completely in 1962, the passenger services ceasing four years earlier. Whilst the Lakeside branch was preserved in part, forming the Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway. The link to Ulverston itself, which would

have given it a main line connection, was lost and the line beyond Haverthwaite was used for a road widening scheme.

Robert Western: *The Kendal and Windermere Railway: Gateway to the Lakes*, Oakwood Press, 2012

The Oxenholme – Windermere branch is a fascinating survivor which continues to provide a well-used service for local people and visitors alike. It is the last remaining 'branch line' in Cumbria, though who knows, maybe one day trains will return to Keswick. For now, it offers an hourly link from the West Coast Main Line, with some trains running to and from Manchester Airport.

The history of the line is remarkable. It was vigorously opposed by William Wordsworth who penned the famous words: 'Is then no nook of English ground secure/ From rash assault?' Despite the Poet Laureate's objections, the line was built, opening in stages between 1846 and 1847. Robert Western goes into the arguments for and against the line in considerable detail, commenting that: 'This poetic battle for the hearts and minds of those who opposed or supported the scheme to build the railway is probably unique.'

An equally interesting sequel followed in the mid-1880s when serious attempts were made to take the railway to Ambleside, either by a continuation of the line from Windermere or on a new alignment from Grange-over-Sands. This time, the conservationists triumphed and what might have been a major tool in efforts to reduce the enormous level of car-borne tourism in the heart of the Lake District never saw the light of day.

Further reading

The Cumbrian Railways Association publishes an excellent magazine, *Cumbrian Railways*, as well as superbly produced and thoroughly researched histories, including works on the railways of Barrow, Grange-over-Sands, Millom and much more. See www.cumbrianrailways.org.uk

Paul Salvesson – Manager
Kents Bank Station Library

Paul Salvesson's latest book is *Lancastrians: Mills Mines and Minarets: A New History* (Hurst & Co, 2023)

A Salute to Mountain Rescue

It was great that the Society chose last year to raise funds for Mountain Rescue Cumbria – an organisation of selfless volunteers who give up their time and risk their own comfort and safety to help those in trouble on the fells.

I have often thought that I would have liked to have volunteered for them, whether on the front line or in a support role. The reality is, that having always lived in the south of England, I could not be involved. Like many readers I am sure, I have had opportunities when on the fells to provide assistance of some kind, such as offering a much-needed blister plaster, or giving directions to someone unsure of their location and which way to go.

There was one occasion, seared in my memory, which gave me a taste of the work of mountain rescue. I tell the story only to draw attention to their wonderful work, provided 365 days a year, 24/7 and in all weathers.

It was one afternoon in June 2006, and I was nearing the end of 'doing the 214'. With limited visits to the Lakes, I could not afford the luxury of walking only in good weather – every day was precious in my quest. My wife, Janet, dropped me off near Grasmere for my climb up Tarn Crag, via Codale Tarn. A suitable afternoon's objective I thought (I had climbed Gowbarrow that morning), albeit with poor weather coming in. I later noted AW's words: 'Tarn Crag ... is not a place to visit in bad weather. It is not blessed with paths'. I reached the summit without any problems that I can now recall. By then, it was cold, wet and windy, and visibility was poor. I was keen to get back to Grasmere.

Rather than retrace my steps, I decided to head on a more direct route eastwards – my map suggested this was feasible. There did not seem to be any obvious paths and I encountered increasingly steep ground (probably that overlooking Easedale Tarn), causing me to retreat a number of times as I wandered in the cloud in search of a safe way down. Although I was an experienced fellwalker, I was feeling a bit

uneasy. Eventually I did find what looked like a way down, and I picked my way carefully, glad to have my walking poles to provide stability. It may be that I had located the approach to the east ridge described by AW.

I was relieved when I came below cloud level, but unsure of my exact location (I had no GPS in those days) and was still feeling a bit unnerved. I could see that I still had a long way to go down, but my spirits lifted when I spotted a group of walkers below on the route I was taking. Surely, I was on a safe route? It would be good to catch the group up to check. As gingerly I made my way down, I was surprised that the group was not moving. When eventually I reached them, they were still in the same spot. I wondered why as it certainly was not a day for hanging around. I thought perhaps they had seen me and very kindly wanted to make sure I was OK. How wrong I was.



The party consisted of a man, his wife, and her sister. He was carrying a very young child. They told me they were lost, the sister had sprained her ankle and they were wet and cold. They had set out from their campsite in Langdale, the injury occurred as they climbed the fells but, rather than return to base, they had soldiered on regardless, despite the worsening weather. They had somehow made it over to Easedale and had ended up high on the flanks of Tarn Crag, but not before a sit-down strike by the sister who refused to go on and had demanded that mountain rescue be called. They had spotted me and decided to wait for me to reach them.

They were not a happy family group, to say the least. They had argued, were lost, tired and cold, had no food or drink (nor map or suitable attire). So much for them giving me the assurance I would have liked. I gave them all my food and hot drink, and spare clothes to wrap round the child (I was relieved the child was crying and not silent and still). I asked if they were able to move, which they said they were, and they were glad to accept my offer to lead them down to safety.

We were still quite high up, and I handed over my walking poles to help them. Unfortunately, without them I slipped on a greasy grass slope and only later discovered that my binoculars had then fallen out of the case round my neck. Eventually we got down to Sourmilk Gill, but quite a way from Easedale Tarn. Time was of the essence and, as we could not have been any wetter, rather than go back to the crossing by the tarn, we waded across the beck to reach the path leading down to Grasmere. I phoned Janet who brought our car as near as possible to us. We made it! Somehow, we (and a gallon or two of water) all squeezed into our car and Janet drove the ten-plus miles round to the campsite at Langdale, where we decanted the soggy but relieved family. They asked for our address, but we never heard from them, which was a bit disappointing, but perhaps that can be part of the mountain rescue experience.

So, that is my little tale of a mini-mountain rescue experience, one that made my appreciation of the Lakeland Mountain Rescue Teams all the greater.

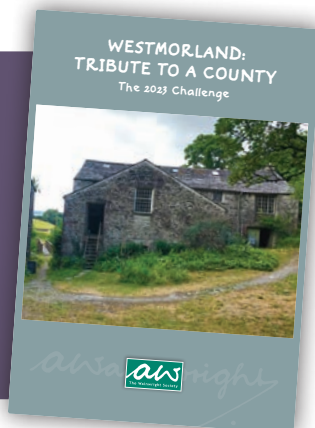


A postscript: the following day I retraced my steps, this time in good weather, and searched for my binoculars where I had slipped, but the area around the grassy path was a wilderness of thick bracken and I had no luck. Some months later, however, I was reunited with my binoculars – a walker had found them, seen my address on them and very kindly contacted me. A sort of reward, perhaps? But nothing to compare with the sense of satisfaction that rightfully our Mountain Rescue Team friends must often experience.

David Johnson – Histon, Cambridgeshire
Membership No. 481

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.



Editor's note: Following on from Mark Abbott's article in *Footsteps* 85 (pp. 16 – 18), this is the second part of his look at the development of *Outward Bound* in the Lake District.

Outward Bound at Eskdale

It was Monday 20th March 1967. A cold, onshore wind blew in from the Irish Sea as we piled off the train at Seascale and clambered aboard a lorry that took us up to the Outward Bound Mountain School (OBMS) at Eskdale Green. Our Easter adventure had begun, but with some apprehension – due to stories of straw bedding, additives in the tea and tales of early morning dips in the tarn. Our fears eased somewhat when we drew up in front of the imposing main building, Gate House, constructed of red granite and sandstone in 1896. The Outward Bound Trust (OBT) opened their School here in 1950.

On arrival we were divided into nine 'patrols', each made up of twelve trainees. My three school friends were assigned to Mallory, Scott and Slingsby. The four of us were all sixteen. There were five other patrols: Watkins, Wilson, Young, Grenfell and Nansen. I was allocated Shackleton Patrol. We were introduced to our Patrol Instructor (PI) Stewart Wagstaff and his assistant, Brian Gynn.

The old stables contained our dormitory, bathrooms and a sauna. There were housekeeping rules to follow with a rota of shared duties covering the whole site. 'Shackleton' consisted of school sixth formers,



'Shackleton Patrol' 1967. Mark Abbott bottom row, second from the left – Photograph courtesy of the OBT

police cadets and the remainder from various careers. We got on well together and socialised when not engaged on tasks or expeditions. However, there was little fraternisation with the other patrols due to the logistics of the twenty-six day course. A strong, competitive atmosphere existed throughout, with points awarded for both housekeeping and athletic events.

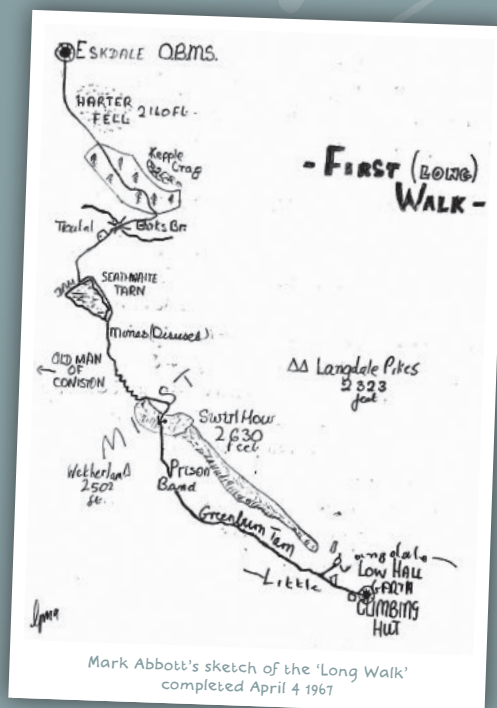
The course followed the OBT pattern of instruction: building up fitness, developing mountain and safety skills, whilst fostering a healthy team spirit. Each outdoor expedition was described as a 'scheme' with training culminating in a 'Final Mountain Scheme' of three days duration. We kept a daily journal. Drawings were encouraged and sometimes part of a task. On the 'Solo Expedition' in the second week I included a sketch of St. Paul's, Irton. Eskdale OBMS was then also a Mountain Rescue Post, providing additional manpower for the local rescue team in the event of a call-out.

The course started with an inspirational talk by warden Tom Price, a climber and adventurer. School proceedings had already commenced that morning with a run, jump in the tarn and circuit training. Rope and knots, first aid training including stretcher rescue, were important subjects in the first week. Practical activities soon got under way. Abseiling down our first crag was an exciting new experience for most. 'The Quiet Walk' began with an exhilarating leap off Dalegarth Bridge into the River Esk, followed by some rope work on the heights close to Stanley Force. There was also practical map reading with our PI. Sunday was a day of 'make do and mend', sewing and repairs. Attendance at the modern Scandinavian style chapel, in the grounds, was voluntary but many participated.

The second week marked the start of our 'First Mountain Scheme'. We camped by Stony Tarn, before moving into Upper Eskdale. There was still snow on the ground. After a tiring walk up to Dow Crag we pitched tents before pushing on up to Scafell Pike summit. This was my first 'Wainwright' although I didn't know it at the time. The tent was snowed in during the night, but we were able to practice winter skills at daylight, notably ice axe training. The third day entailed a stiff hike over Hard Knott in atrocious conditions and a road walk back from the Pass.

On March 31st a search and rescue exercise was conducted near Devoke Water. The casualties were rucksacks, the reward a chocolate bar concealed inside! Orienteering was also new to many but an invigorating chance to run over the nearby fells. On April Fool's night we enjoyed community singing. Occasionally a film was shown on the library projector.

The second expedition started with 'The Long Walk' to Low Hall Garth Climbing Hut in Little Langdale. The hut is still there, owned by the Yorkshire Ramblers Club. We spent a day climbing three pitches on Raven Crag in Great Langdale. The walk back to Eskdale via Wetherlam and Harter Col was uneventful until one participant fell into a peat bog, causing great hilarity. Another highlight of the course was the five-mile cross-country race via Forge Bridge and the Ulpha Road dropping back down to Eskdale and fording the river. We were rewarded in the evening by the school concert. The next morning's swimming at Whitehaven baths preceded the volleyball final in the afternoon where Shackleton patrol finished third.



The Gate House, Eskdale – Photograph by Mark Abbott

The 'Final Mountain Scheme' commenced on Day 22. Two of our patrol set off early as they were qualifying for DofE Gold Awards. Our team of six packed rucksacks with food and camping gear for three days and set about planning our forty mile walk that included eighteen summits. The first checkpoint was at Burnmoor Tarn. Great Gable from Wasdale Head was tough, but we needed to summon all our strength, in failing light, to climb out of Honister Hause and up to our first camp at Dalehead Tarn. The second day we continued north over Maiden Moor dropping down to Newlands then up to Robinson, pausing for lunch on High Snockrigg. Walking the High Stile ridge in the afternoon we identified our next camp, way below, by the River Liza in Ennerdale, an area which in 1967 was densely covered by conifer plantations.

There had been a couple of slip injuries so after a rudimentary 'risk assessment' we modified the final walk back to the School. Despite the forced change, in misty conditions, we finished off with Pillar, Steeple and Haycock, leaving Seathwaite for another day. That just left the final descent to Wastwater and the hike back over to Eskdale Green. We slept well that night.

The following evening, after a 'slap up' supper with the staff, the badges and certificates were awarded. The consensus was that our patrol had

all enjoyed the course and learnt so much. We exchanged addresses and then it was all over. At 5am on April 15th we were taken by the lorry to Ravenglass station where we dispersed for home.

In April 2024 I joined a two-day reunion, the first one in fifty-seven years.

The first afternoon several of us were able to jump into or canoe on the school tarn while others with a climbing preference abseiled down the same crag they had first tackled as youngsters. The second day included a walk in Eskdale, remembering back all those years when we spent a night alone in a bivvy by the river.

Gate House looked just the same. The ex-stable facilities have been updated. The chapel has gone, dismantled due to roof failure. A new accommodation block 'The Gardens' was built over the old circuit training area. The staff were very welcoming and keen to hear our stories. They are just as hard working, dedicated and very professional. The School still has superb facilities with high quality equipment. We enjoyed a fine dinner where I was seated opposite Roger Putnam, our Senior Instructor in 1967, who went on subsequently to become a great warden of Eskdale Outward Bound Mountain School.

Mark Abbott – Northwich
Membership No. 2208

A Picture Puzzle – Bridges in the Pictorial Guides

Can you find the sketches in the seven Pictorial Guides which contain these fragments? They are in twenty different chapters, no more than four from any book. When you have, use the letters as indicated below to form a six-word phrase used by AW to describe 'The moorland road between Ennerdale Bridge and Calder Bridge'.

The letters you need are the 15th letter of the title of the chapter that includes picture 1; 5th of 2; 11th of 3; 7th of 4; 6th of 5; 3rd of 6; 5th of 7; 8th of 8; 3rd of 9; 5th of 10; 4th of 11; 7th of 12;

1st of 13; 4th of 14; 3rd of 15; 6th of 16; 8th of 17; 5th of 18; 2nd of 19 and 3rd of 20.

Send the six-word phrase answer, by 20 July 2024, to me at: footsteps@wainwright.org.uk or by mail 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.

David Johnson – Histon, Cambridgeshire
Member No. 481



EVENT REPORT



Society Annual Challenge Walk: Latterbarrow & Wray Castle – 18.05.24

The Annual Challenge Walk was once again blessed with fine weather as we enjoyed blue skies and sunshine for the whole day. This year's Society Challenge is *The Outlying Fells* as the book was published fifty years ago. Yet Latterbarrow could hardly be described as an outlier, lying as it does in a central position, close to many of the Lake District's outstanding attractions.

Eighteen of us and one dog, Alfie – on his first Society walk – met up outside the Red Lion Inn, Hawkshead. The village has much attractive architecture and it was thankfully quiet before the crowds arrived. The Windermere Marathon was also taking place on the same day and the race, which starts in Brathay, was due to pass down Hawkshead's main street an hour or so after we had started our walk.

We left the village via Red Lion Yard and joined the footpath over Black Beck to Crofts Head. As we gained height there was a glimpse of Esthwaite Water, whilst the warmth of the morning was enhanced by the fragrance of hawthorn blossom and the sound of songbirds. South of Gillbank we joined the bridleway that climbs through Colthouse Plantation, leaving this by six tall conifers to follow the footpath through the forest that eventually leads to the summit of Latterbarrow.

After a short climb up several steps, we paused for a drink break, then climbed the remaining quarter of a mile to the summit, arriving about noon. A beautiful 360 degrees panorama lay before us, stretching from the Coniston range round to glimmering Windermere far below. Beyond that was Ambleside, Red Screes and the distant Kirkstone Inn caught glinting in the sun.

The relatively easy descent through woodland led to a gravel forest road above High Wray. Passing



Latterbarrow summit – Photograph by Ian Nelson

through the hamlet of High Wray was a pleasure, with several colourful cottage gardens to admire. We soon reached the boathouse on High Wray Bay but continued north beyond Epley Point for our picnic lunch looking out across Windermere. After lunch it was a short climb to Wray Castle. Built in the 1840's it was inhabited until the late 1920's. The National Trust acquired the house and estate in 1929 but did not open it to the public until 2011. The intervening decades saw it used by the Freshwater Biological Association and from 1958 to 1998 it was a Merchant Navy Radio Training College.

After visiting the Castle we headed down to Low Wray and joined the 'Hawkshead Trail'. This was recently created from a repurposed footpath to link the Castle with the village, particularly for cyclists. Gates have replaced stiles and path surfaces have been improved. Our route passed north of Blelham Tarn, south of Outgate, and on to Loanthwaite, before returning to Hawkshead across the paths of Esthwaite Vale. The reward for many of our walkers was a tasty ice cream.

Mark Abbott
Walks Organiser



Photograph by Graham Uney

2024 WAINWRIGHT MEMORIAL LECTURE

We are pleased to announce that the speaker for our 2024 lecture will be **Graham Uney**. Graham (pictured above) fell in love with the mountains at a young age. He completed the Wainwrights just before his 18th birthday, and in 1998 he became the first person to backpack over all the 2000 ft summits of Wales (the Welsh Hewitts) in one continuous expedition. He has since completed two more rounds of the Welsh Hewitts, has also completed all of the English Hewitts, and in Scotland has climbed more than 200 Munros and 100 Corbetts. He has been a rock climber since his early teens, and has a number of first ascents to his name, in both Yorkshire and the Lake District. Graham's talk will be focused on his book *Walking the Wainwrights – 64 Walks to Climb the 214 Wainwrights of Lakeland*.

The lecture will take place at **Rheged, Penrith at 7.00 pm on Saturday 28th September**. We have moved the usual start time to allow members to dine at **Rheged before the talk**. There will be a **Society walk to High Rigg before the lecture**. Details of this can be found on the **Society website**.

ELTERWATER QUARRY ADVENTURE ATTRACTION

We were disappointed that the Lake District National Park Authority approved a revised application to build an adventure attraction in the former Elterwater quarry. While the new application includes measures to seek to mitigate traffic impacts, we did not consider that these were sufficient to address more fundamental concerns about the appropriateness of such a development in a designated National Park and World Heritage Site.

SOCIETY BOOKS – 5,000 COPIES SOLD

We considered back in 2017 whether the Society should seek to re-publish some of Alfred Wainwright's out-of-print books. Our thinking was that we should try to keep these works available for future generations. We published *A Pennine Journey* in 2019 and *The Outlying Fells of Lakeland* in 2020. Revenue from sales of the first two titles enabled the Society to publish two further titles: *Walks in Limestone Country* in 2021 and *Walks on the Howgill Fells* in 2022. This year we reached a significant project milestone with total sales of the four titles now exceeding 5,000 copies. This is testament to AW's enduring popularity and to the hard work of the Society's volunteers.

We are also pleased to announce that the latest book published by the Society, Derek Cockell's *A Newt in Hard Tarn*, has successfully made the Shortlist of nominees for the Lakeland Book of the Year 2024. The awards will be held on Tuesday 9th July at the Castle Green Hotel in Kendal.

WALKS FROM RATTY – EXHIBITION AND WALKS

David Johnson and Mark Abbott will be leading the ten walks described by AW in *Walks from Ratty*. These will compliment an exhibition of walking in Eskdale, sponsored by the Society, which will take place at the Ravenglass Railway Museum and run through to December. The walks will take place in the period from 9th to 19th July. More details and the Walks Schedule can be found on page 18 of this issue.

HONORARY MEMBER – COLIN BYWATER

We are saddened to report the death of Honorary Member Colin Bywater who provided the sketches for the pictorial guidebook to the 76-mile *Howgills and Limestone Trail* written by Society Honorary Members David and Heather

Pitt with route maps by Society Honorary Member Ron Scholes. The book was inspired by AW's 1970s books, *Walks on the Howgill Fells*, and *Walks in Limestone Country*, which the Society now publishes. The entire route was test-walked by former Society Secretary, Derek Cockell, accompanied by his wife Alison, and their Bedlington terrier, Beattie.

The 2023 Photographic Competition

The winners and runners-up of the Society's 2023 photographic competition have received their prizes of framed prints of their photos.

The competition was judged by Val Corbett and the results were included in *Footsteps* 85 (Spring issue). The winner and runner-up in the 'Wainwright' category were able to attend the AGM in March, where they were presented with their framed photos by the Secretary, David Claxton.

WAINWRIGHT CATEGORY WINNER

Ray Graham – London (Membership No. 2262)
Photo: Great Gable and Haystacks from Rannerdale Knotts
Photograph (top right) by Ian Nelson

WAINWRIGHT CATEGORY RUNNER-UP

Ashley Brogan – Wigan (Membership No. 4729)
Photo: Got Your Back, Jack
Photograph (second right) by Ian Nelson

BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE CATEGORY WINNER

Jude Ewing – St. Helens (Membership No. 4585)
Photo: Mount Joy Bluebells

BRITISH COUNTRYSIDE CATEGORY RUNNER-UP

Leslie Fitton – Bolton (Membership No. 4693)
Photo: Pigeon Tower, Rivington



Wainwright Society Walks 2024



Walking to Wray Castle (see page 29)
– Photograph by Ian Nelson

Members are invited to join these walks, which will be led by our Walks Organiser, Mark Abbott. If you have any questions, contact Mark by email at: walkevents@wainwright.org.uk or by phone: 01606 79336 or 07506 196353. Further details of all the 2024 walks can be found at www.wainwright.org.uk/society-walks

- **SATURDAY 20 JULY – Eycott Hill, River Glenderamackin and Souther Fell**

This walk explores the natural history of the Northern Fells and is a joint walk with the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) free to all our members.

6½ miles, with 985 feet of ascent. Time: 5 hours. Difficulty: moderate. Meet 10.30 am at Eycott Hill Nature Reserve car park (GR NY 393302). This is 5 miles from Threlkeld – turn north off the A66, signed for Hutton Roof and Berrier. The car park is ½ mile past Berrier on the left.

The walk is divided into two parts. We first undertake a short circular walk (0.6m) to the spectacular viewpoint on Eycott Hill. We will then relocate to Mungrisdale, parking courtesy of the parish council (£2), to commence the second walk along the river Glenderamackin, before ascending Souther Fell (1712ft – 522m). AW wrote that

Souther Fell ‘occupies an important position as a cornerstone of the Northern Fells, having an extensive view out of proportion to its modest height.’

- **SATURDAY 10 AUGUST – Black Combe**

5½ miles, with 1,900 feet of ascent. Time: 5 hours. Difficulty: moderate. Meet 10.00 am at St. Mary’s Church, Whicham – there is a car park with a donations box.

On a clear day the view from the Outlying Fell, Black Combe can include Wales, Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man. AW notes that ‘the grass bridleway to its summit from Whicham is amongst the most delectable of Lakeland fell paths. Which other can be ascended in carpet slippers?’ (*The Outlying Fells* p.163)

- **SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER – Forest of Bowland (meet at Dunsop Bridge)**

- **SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER – High Rigg and St. John’s Vale (meet at Legburthwaite)**

This walk precedes the 21st annual Memorial Lecture.

2024 MEMORIAL LECTURE

The 2024 Society Lecture will take place at Rheged, Penrith on Saturday 28th September at 7.00pm. The speaker will be Graham Uney, author of *Walking the Wainwrights – 64 Walks to Climb the 214 Wainwrights of Lakeland*. Further details are on page 30 of this issue of *Footsteps*.



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