

# Alfred Wainwright and “The Wainwrights”

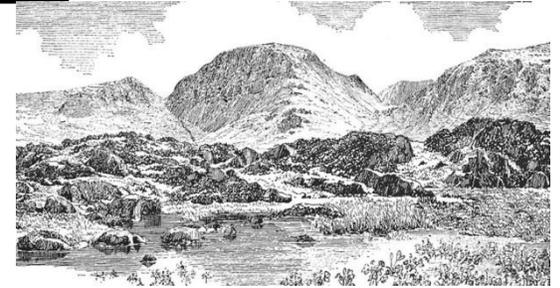
## Wainwright’s Life

Alfred Wainwright (1907 – 1991) is, perhaps, best-known for his Pictorial Guides to the Lakeland Fells, a series of seven **volumes** describing the natural features, routes of ascent and descent and the view from the summits of 214 Lakeland fells. These handwritten and hand-drawn works of art have given inspiration to thousands of **fellwalkers** and armchair ramblers for more than sixty years.

Wainwright was born in the mill town of Blackburn on 17th January 1907. His childhood was one of relative **poverty**, his father, a **stonemason** experienced periods of unemployment. To make ends meet, his mother took in washing. Alfred was the youngest of four children but was not destined for a life in the mill, as happened to so many of his peers. He left school at thirteen and went to work at the Town Hall, at first in the Borough Engineer’s Office, transferring three years later to the Borough Treasurer’s, where, after years of night-time study, he qualified as an **accountant**.

At the age of 23, in 1930, Wainwright visited the Lake District for the first time. He travelled by bus from Blackburn to Windermere with his cousin and on their arrival, they climbed the 780’ of Orrest Head. From that point, his one wish was to move to the Lake District, an ambition that was realised in 1941 when he applied for a post in the Borough Treasurer’s Office in Kendal where he stayed until his retirement in 1967. During the 1940s, Wainwright explored the hills and mountains, climbing to many of the **summits**. On 9th November 1952, he began work on his Pictorial Guides, an idea that had been slowly **germinating** for many years. The first page completed on that evening was the ascent of Dove Crag from Ambleside.

It was the start of a literary career that occupied the next four **decades** until his death on 20th January 1991. His ashes were scattered on a favourite mountain of his, Haystacks, by the quiet waters of **Innominate** Tarn, as was his wish.



## On his first mountain Peak.

Wainwright wrote, ‘Orrest Head cast a spell that changed my life’. It was the view from the top that proved to be the turning point. ‘It was a moment of magic, a **revelation** so unexpected that I stood **transfixed**, unable to believe my eyes. I saw mountain ranges, one after another, the nearer starkly **etched**, those beyond fading into the blue distance. Rich woodlands, emerald pastures and the **shimmering** waters of the lake below added to a pageant of loveliness, a glorious **panorama** that held me **enthralled**. I had seen landscapes of rural beauty pictured in the local art gallery, but here was no painted canvas; this was real. This was truth. God was in his heaven that day and I a humble worshipper.’ *A Wainwright, Ex-Fellwanderer 1987*



## “The Wainwrights?”

The Wainwrights are the 214 English peaks described in A. Wainwright's seven-volume Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland **Fells**. They all lie within the boundary of the Lake District National Park in Cumbria, and all but one are over 1,000 feet (308.4 m) in height.

The highest four mountains are Scafell Pike 3210’ (978m), Scafell 3162’ (964m) Helvellyn 3118’ (950m) and Skiddaw 3053’ (931m). The smallest mountain on the list is Castle Crag at 978’ (298m).

# Alfred Wainwright and “The Wainwrights” - Vocab

1. Volumes \_\_\_\_\_
2. Fellwalkers \_\_\_\_\_
3. Poverty \_\_\_\_\_
4. Stonemason \_\_\_\_\_
5. Accountants \_\_\_\_\_
6. Summits \_\_\_\_\_
7. Germinating \_\_\_\_\_
8. Decades \_\_\_\_\_
9. Innominate \_\_\_\_\_
10. Revelation \_\_\_\_\_
11. Transfixed \_\_\_\_\_
12. Etched \_\_\_\_\_
13. Shimmering \_\_\_\_\_
14. Panorama \_\_\_\_\_
15. Enthralled \_\_\_\_\_



What else I would like to know.....