

# Timeline Activity ③ | Biography



## Born 17th January 1907 into a poor family in Blackburn, Lancashire

His father was a stonemason, often unemployed. His mother was hardworking and god-fearing and raised him, along with his brother and two sisters, decently, but in somewhat poverty-stricken conditions. They lived in a small cottage with no garden and no indoor bathroom.



## As a child he loved to walk, write and draw

His greatest joy was to copy drawings and cartoons from comics. He became fascinated with maps and would walk up to 20 miles at a time.



## He left school at the age of 13

He did very well at school, coming top of the class in most subjects, but left to earn his keep as an office boy in Blackburn Borough Engineer's Department.



## On 7th June 1930, aged 23, he saw his first view of the Lakeland Fells

He arrived in Windermere for a walking holiday with his cousin Eric Beardsall and they climbed the nearby Orrest Head – a hill 780 feet high. Wainwright was enthralled by the view and this was a pivotal moment in his life that started his love affair with the Lake District.



## Married in 1931 to his first wife Ruth, they had a son called Peter

They later divorced just before he retired and he married his second wife, Betty McNally, in 1970, who became his walking companion.



## Qualified as an Accountant in 1936

This enabled him to escape Blackburn and move to Kendal in 1941 when he took a job as an Accountancy Assistant at Kendal Borough Treasurer's Office. He went on to become Borough Treasurer in 1948, remaining in this position until he retired in 1967.



## On 9th November 1952 he started work on a series of seven guides to the Lake District Fells

He started work on a series of seven guides to the Lake District Fells. Over the next 13 years he spent his weekends walking, collecting information in notebooks and in annotations on maps. His evenings were spent drawing detailed maps, diagrams and landscape views. These diagrams were compiled into the finished pages, along with his hand-written text, and published as A Pictorial Guide to the Lakeland Fells. For this labour of love he was awarded the MBE.



## Wainwright was a lifelong Blackburn Rovers Fan and a founding member of the Blackburn Rovers Supporters Club

And a founding member of the Blackburn Rovers Supporters Club. He was also Chairman of Animal Rescue Cumbria, and gave most of the profits of his books to animal charities.



## Between 1965 and 1990 Wainwright went on to publish a further 50 books including a guidebook about the Pennine Way

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## Wainwright died in 1991

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