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*The*  
**WAINWRIGHT  
LETTERS**

Edited by  
**HUNTER DAVIES**



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*Copyright*

# Introduction

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How many letters did Wainwright write? Who knows? In his book *Fellwanderer*, published in 1966, he wrote that he had had a ‘constant stream of appreciative letters from all manners of folk and all sorts of unlikely places. Some were straight forward about accommodation and itineraries and mountain campsites and the like, and some simply recounted personal experiences and adventures. But a thousand I have kept, and I count them as treasures.’

So if he had at least 1,000 letters by 1966, after only ten years as a published author, then in the next twenty-five years of his writing life, by which time he had published another fifty-odd books, which had sold in all about 2 million copies, and he had also suddenly and surprisingly turned into a TV star, then his total output of letters in his writing life, counting in all the letters he wrote before he became well known, must surely, possibly, have reached 5,000. Maybe even 10,000 – which would still amount to writing only one letter most days for around thirty years.

AW – as we shall mainly call him from now on – lived and was brought up in a time of letter writing, when people wrote to each other all the time, before phones were common, and was employed in the sort of bureaucratic office during his working life where producing endless acres of words and figures was commonplace.

Right until almost the last few months of his life, he did answer all his letters, on his own, without any secretarial help, in either handwriting or typing. His method of replying was to let them build up like a cairn on his desk, then when it collapsed, start writing replies, hoping to get the cairn down.

While he did not care to meet strangers in the flesh, and always dreaded anyone coming to his front door, he was friendly and affable, personal and sometimes quite revealing in his letters. He clearly preferred having chums on paper rather than in person.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of his letter writing was that even from the beginning, when he was unknown to the outside world, people treasured and retained his letters. Yet it was not as if he was doing a glamorous or important job, mixing with society, people in the arts or politics, or even in a position to give insight into local events. He was basically a clerk, then a trainee accountant, a functionary sitting in the corner of a dusty municipal office, but his fellow toilers, in their stiff collars, always kept his little letters, his drawings, his notes, his home made magazines, written just to amuse himself and his friends.

He had a good hand, so that was one reason. His writing looked attractive, was pretty to have and to hold, but the contents also gave pleasure, being amusing, informative, saucy, reflective. It also seems evident that his friends and colleagues did see something in him, something out of the ordinary, despite the fact that he had done nothing unordinary in his life, hence they found themselves retaining scraps, cartoons and any personal notes that he had done.

When he became relatively well known, it is then less surprising that people kept any letter from him. They knew him from his books, knew how attractive and unusual they were, so anything from him in his own hand was seen as a unique little bit of artwork, personal to the person who had received it. Most people also kept the envelope in which their letter had come. AW’s handwriting, even of an address, had his personal, distinctive touch.

How many exist today? Again, one can only guess at a number. Some must have got lost, been destroyed. People have moved, died, their relations done clear-outs. Any from the early 1930s are hard to find – and I still have seen none from his childhood and youth in the 1920s. Perhaps he had no need to write letters at that stage, or no money for postage.

However, there is now a thriving market in his letters, and about six or so dealers and auction houses regularly have AW letters for sale (from about £50 to £500, depending on content) plus they

pop up on eBay, but a great many people who personally received them have safely put them away, wanting them to be kept by their family, for ever, and have no desire to sell or offer them to the public.

I have been collecting and tracking down AW letters since 1994, which is the year I started working on his official biography. His widow Betty gave me full access to all his archives and documents – but of course they did not contain letters he had sent to other people. Fortunately, AW kept copies of all his own letters he thought vaguely important or interesting – either by writing out an exact copy or making a carbon copy, if he was typing, which he kept in his files, as a good accountant should. I never quite knew, of course, if the letter he actually sent was the same as the one he had kept, or if he had ever posted it, but Betty assured me his practice was to keep copies of letters sent. (As we shall see, there is one interesting example of answers to a Q. and A. which in fact he typed out but never sent.)

In the loft, stashed away, when I eventually went up there with Betty, we found a dozen or so boxes containing letters sent to AW over the decades. I looked for those who appeared to be the most regular correspondents, took down their addresses, and tried to contact them, asking for copies of letters AW had sent, and any memories or opinions of AW. Almost all of them had never met him, despite being apparently bosom penpals for years.

I also contacted many old colleagues who had known him or worked with him, in Blackburn and Kendal, including several elderly gentlemen then in their eighties, long retired who were still ‘hammering the pension fund’, so they told me with glee. This was how I came to see copies of his little office home-made booklets, done for amusement in the 1920s, which they had lovingly kept safe.

In the last couple of years, while editing this book, I did try to contact them again, in case I had missed any letters first time round, but alas I was mostly too late. They had died and often I failed to find out who had inherited their Wainwright material – but I think I had made copies of all their best letters.

When the biography first came out in 1995, lots of people wrote to me telling me they had AW letters. I asked them for photocopies, which they were all pleased to send, though at the time I did not know if or when I would ever edit the Wainwright Letters. Over these last sixteen years, I have also bought quite a few AW letters myself, or got copies from other collectors. Two years ago, when I started properly on the job of editing them, I also advertised, put the word around, asking people to contact me.

I have also been able to use letters belonging to the Wainwright Estate (which means Annie and Jane, the daughters of his widow Betty). I am grateful to all who have let me use their precious AW material.

From all these sources, I ended up with around 350 letters – not every one has been included here, as some were too short or repeated what was in other letters. I tried where possible to track down the recipient, find out who they were, why they had written to AW, but of course as time has gone on, this has become harder and harder.

Since the biography came out in 1995, interest in AW has grown greater. We now have the thriving Wainwright Society, founded on 9 November 2002, fifty years to the day when AW penned the first page of his first Pictorial Guide, with almost two thousand members. Programmes about Wainwright and his walks are regularly on radio and TV.

There was a bit of a lull in the book sales for a year or two after he died, though it still does not explain why Michael Joseph, in their wisdom, decided to stop publishing them. Fortunately, the rights were bought by Frances Lincoln in 2003, who now publish all the Pictorial Guides (updated by Chris Jesty) and other related AW books. Sales are now as healthy as they first were, back in the 1950s and 1960s. There seems no reason why the cult of Wainwright – which is what it has become – will not g

on for ever.

Each year, more people achieve their ambition to climb all the 214 Wainwright Fells – while those newcomers to Lakeland, who don't realise they are on a so-called Wainwright fell, usually find out later, then rush to buy all the books, marvelling at those little works of art, wondering how on earth he did it, falling in love with the whole notion of Wainwright.

AW fans do tend to be very devoted – and very knowledgeable. Those who don't know him don't know him. Obviously. I mean by that that you do often have to explain to people unaware of the cult exactly who he was, what he did – and usually they shake their heads, disbelieving. You mean someone I haven't heard of has sold millions? You have to climb the fells, hold the guides, before true understanding and love set in. The Lakeland fells will be there for ever. We hope. So, undoubtedly, will AW fans.

In editing the letters, I had in mind that most readers will probably know something of his life, and his works, but some will not, so I had to try and make things as understandable as possible. I aimed to build up his life story, keep a narrative going, not jumping ahead of his letters by revealing events which have not yet happened.

In many edited books of Someone Quite Well Known's Letters, or even those of Someone Dead Famous, very often the letters get slapped down in pure chronological order, with minimal explanation, leaving the reader to work out what was going on, assuming they already know most of the highlights of his or her life.

The more academic volumes of letters offer masses of explanatory footnotes, either with asterisk numbers attached like sticky buds to each letter, sometimes each sentence, leading you to the bottom of the page, the end of the chapter or the end of the book. I always find this distracting, having to jump back and forward, ruining the flow. Often the footnote is fascinating in itself, if not always directly relevant, but you end up having forgotten where you were in the actual letter.

I had a big decision to make – totally self-created of course. I wanted to do notes – but do I offer the notes *before* or *after* the letter in question?

Adding notes after a letter is perhaps the more normal way. I did try it for the first twenty or so letters then decided that too often I was directing the reader back to the letter just read, thus slowing down the pleasure and flow of the letters themselves. I plumped instead for setting the scene before a letter or series of letters, explaining in advance any references, new names, coming up which might not otherwise be quite clear to all readers.

This does have the danger of giving away something interesting in a letter before you have come to it, and possible repetitions, but I reckoned it made for a smoother read, without recourse to going back, jumping around.

So, please note well – the editorial notes almost always come *before* the letter or letters you are about to read. Now and again, particularly at the end of a Part, I might have a note after a letter or letters, but this is just to sum up, tie up that Part. Well, I made these rules. I can break them.

I have arranged the letters into Parts, as opposed to Chapters, as this is not a biography or a novel. Roughly, each Part has a theme or connection, or the letters in that Part are all to the same person.

In real life, all of us have different things going on at the same time, separate problems and dramatic irritations and pleasures, work and leisure, all running concurrently – but in a book, even one comprised of letters, I felt it made it easier to understand and appreciate if somehow main events and major players are served up roughly on different plates, in separate takes.

In presenting the letters, I have stuck almost always to the true chronology, laying out the letters in each Part in the order of the dates they were written, but for the sake of collecting a topic or a person together, some letters in one Part often overlap with the Part which has come before or after. Not all Parts do have a clear theme or topic, being simply assorted letters to assorted people during the years

in question, but that was my aim – to give some shape to the story, see his character and people developing.

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I have given his full address in the early letters, where he included it, as it is interesting to see where he was and what notepaper he was using. Once the letters progress, and he is settled in his life and habits, he mainly uses two addresses – either c/o Westmorland Gazette, Kendal or 38 Kendal Green, Kendal, which was his home, and only the favoured few had that revealed. Now and again I have deleted paragraphs in certain letters if he is repeating things he has said elsewhere. I have left unchanged Wainwright's spelling, grammar and underlinings, but now and again have rationalised his punctuation, to make things flow.

He was almost always punctilious in giving the exact date, but now and again, when he didn't, I have had to guess from internal or other evidence and have put a question mark after the date given.

If my estimate is correct, that in fact he wrote up to 10,000 letters, then there are loads still out there, waiting to be tracked down, collected, copied and then, you never know, edited into another fascinating, amusing, informative, excellent read for all AW lovers, everywhere ...

## **Brief Early Biography**

The letters begin in 1932, when he is aged twenty-five, and after that, the editorial notes fill in the main biographical events in his life as it unfolds, but it is perhaps useful to give some details about what had happened beforehand. (As for the books he went on to write, a full list of all those he eventually published, with dates, is given at the end of this book, for those who might wish to refer to them while reading the letters.)

Alfred Wainwright was born on 17 January 1907 in Blackburn, Lancashire, the youngest of four children. He had two sisters, Alice (born 1894) and Annie (born 1900) and a brother Frank (born 1896).

His father Albert was a stonemason, originally from Penistone in Yorkshire. He travelled around for his work, in Yorkshire and Lancashire, was unemployed for long periods and also drunk, often for equally long periods. His mother Emily, née Woodcock, was hard working and god fearing and brought up her family in clean if impoverished respectability. Emily had several sisters one of whom Annie, they remained in close touch with, and AW was friendly with his cousin Eric, son of Annie, who lived in Penistone.

Their rented family house, where AW grew up, at 331 Audley Range, Blackburn, was two up, two down, with no inside bathroom or lavatory, surrounded by cottons mills. AW went to the local council school, Accrington Road Elementary, then on to what was called a Higher Elementary, Blakey Moor School.

AW was tall and thin and had bright red hair and while at school had to put up with shouts and taunts of 'Carrots'. He was good at maths, English and drawing, but left school at thirteen, as did most children of his age and class. He secured what was seen as a most enviable job, for a boy of his background and education, as an office boy in the Borough Engineers' Department, working at Blackburn Town Hall.

After three years, he moved to the Treasurer's Department, where the chance of advancement was considered much better. To catch up with his colleagues in the new office, most of whom had come from a grammar school, he had to pass various examinations for which he studied at night school. Having done that, he then began the long slog of qualifying as a municipal accountant, which took many years and was done mainly by correspondence. In the office, to amuse his fellow trainee accountants, he wrote and illustrated little booklets called *The Pictorial Gazette*, in which he mocked superiors and poked fun at his colleagues. His fellow trainees were men but there were girls in the

outer office, typists or secretaries, whom the young men spent a lot of time discussing.

AW's first visit to the Lake District came in 1930 when he went on a holiday with his cousin Eric now working as a clerk on Penistone Council.

AW said that this first trip to the Lakes changed his life for ever. He planned to go again, the following year, 1931 and became determined somehow, some day, to live and work in Lakeland rather than amongst the dirt and squalour of urban Lancashire, without knowing how and when he would ever achieve this ambition.

# Part 1

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## Letters to Eric Walter Maudsley, 1932–41

*On Christmas Eve, 1931, Wainwright, aged twenty-four, got married to Ruth Holden, aged twenty-one, his first ever girlfriend. She was a mill girl who lived locally and attended the same church as AW: Furthergate Congregational. Both her parents had died and she lived with her sister Dora in Artillery Street, Blackburn. After their marriage, AW moved in with Ruth and her sister and lived there for two or three months, before they acquired their own house.*

*On the wedding certificate, AW's job was given as clerk in the Borough Treasurer's Office. He was still studying, mainly by correspondence, to become a qualified municipal accountant. He had passed the intermediate part of his exams, though it was another two years, after several attempts, before he passed his final exams.*

*Eric Walter Maudsley – sometimes addressed as Walt or Walter but later more usually as Eric – was born in 1910 and had worked with AW in the Treasurer's office in Blackburn as a fellow trainee accountant. AW and Maudsley, along with two other office friends (Jim Sharples and Harry Driver) had spent the Whitsuntide holidays of 1931 in the Lake District. AW had planned the holiday meticulously, promising them that in one week they would see every lake, every mountain, every valley. AW had been over ambitious and they never covered as much as he had hoped. But they had a good time, chaps together from the office, out on the fells. In 1932, Maudsley had moved from the Blackburn office to Carlisle.*

# LETTER 1: TO ERIC WALTER MAUDSLEY, 1932?

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The Love Nest,  
Artillery St.  
Blackburn.

Dear Walt,

What poignant (pron. 'pwannant') memories did my old familiar writing on the label bestir? None probably. Remember that poignant moment at Watendlath when we parted company? – that poignant night at Rosthwaite when we sunk so low as to use the utensil 'neath our bed?

Annexed please find text-books as requested. I have not yet re-commenced the stud.

Well, sonny. I have been thinking a lot about the Lakes of late – Striding Edge, that view of Gable from Kirk Fell, the solitude of Burnmoor Farm, Dale Head, Ill Bell, and a host of other memories giving me little rest, and I shall shortly be in the throes of another Gigantic Walking Tour Programme for Whitsun, 1932, but my companion this time will be the wife. Poignant memories!

Let me know sometime how you are getting along.

Alf

*AW never did go on that trip to the Lakes with his wife Ruth – in fact there is no record of him ever going on any sort of walk with her. Just over a year later, something clearly was beginning to go wrong with the marriage – judging by his next letter, paragraph numbered 5 and headed Married Life – which he left totally blank.*

*The other news in this March 1933 letter (having been prompted to write it by Bob Alker, another office colleague) included the birth of AW's son, Peter, and the fact that, along with others in his office, he had failed the latest part of his exams.*

*The letter contains the latest news and gossip from the Blackburn office. Paragraph 9, 're Cut Shop', could possibly refer to Betty Ditchfield, assistant secretary to the Borough Treasurer, after whom AW, along with most of the other young men in the office, lusted, but without any success or even encouragement.*

*AW and Ruth and their baby Peter moved into a two-bedroom semi-detached house at 90 Shadsworth Road, Blackburn, in 1934, a more desirable residence, befitting a newly qualified municipal accountant. During the next six years, he went off on lots of walks – locally with groups from the office, to Yorkshire, the Pennines, Scotland and the Lakes.*

*In 1939, along with some of his office friends, he founded the Blackburn Rovers Supporters' Club. Ruth took no part in the club, nor in the walks, and it could be that one of the attractions of these two activities was getting out of the house, escaping from Ruth and whatever was going wrong in their marriage. Maudsley meanwhile had moved in 1939 from Carlisle to a post in Hertford, where he stayed until 1942 when he was called up for the army and sent to Burma. AW had not been called up. His job was looked upon as vital to the war effort and his call up papers had for the moment been deferred. In late 1940, or perhaps early 1941, for the letter is not dated, he wrote to Maudsley in Hertford, describing a trip to the Lakes he had done with his son Peter, now aged eight. The reference to 'Methods of Blocking the Female Form' might possibly be about some nude magazine he had sent Maudsley – or just some joke. The letter is on Blackburn Rovers Supporters' Club headed notepaper showing that AW was Treasurer and Acting Secretary. Perhaps a bit of boasting, showing Maudsley the good times he and the rest of the chaps were still having in Blackburn.*

Blackburn  
19th March 1933

Dear Walt

Mr Acker told me that you have told him that you would like to hear from me, so I have pleasure in submitting the following information which may be of interest.

1 re Students Society

I have been appointed convener for this area, and am pleased to note your appointment to your local committee

2 re Rev Townson, of Great Harwood

He's left

3 re I.M.T.A. Exams, Jan 1933

RESULTS

COMPTON	INTER.	FAILED
PANTER	PART 1.	FAILED
WAINWRIGHT	"	FAILED
ALKER	PART 2.	FAILED
SELLERS	"	FAILED
WOLSTENCROFT	"	FAILED

What's the B.C.A. motto?

4 re Film Service

Now a highly efficient machine. Files remain in the hands of Mr Haworth, who has now less time for municipal accountancy. Mr Sye now rings 'too long' before he decides which pictures to visit. If you have visited the Karlisle Kinemas recently, I should be pleased to have reports on what you have seen (on the screen, not the back row).

5 re Married Life

6 re Parenthood

On the 15th Feb 1933, at Parkside Maternity Home, Queens Road, to Mr & Mrs. A Wainwright (nee Ruth Holden) a son – vide 'Northern Daily Telegraph'

7 re Furthergate Branch, Yorkshire Penny Bank

Little activity. Present pen-nib has been in use over 3 years.

8 Furthergate Church

Now an exceedingly prominent member. Pleased to hear of your call to office in the service.

9 re Cut Shop

Frequent visits continue to be made by the top desk junior. Demands for 'new thrills' are made

daily, but are seldom satisfied.

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10 re Lake District

Spent a glorious week in June last. Sharples is now preparing plans for a 'sleeping bag' holiday, ie Taking sleeping bag (weight 1 lb) and blanket and sleeping out. Entertainment? Please let me have details of any excursions you may have made.

11 re Ault Lang Syne

You are forgotten at Blackburn, just as I told you. You are never mentioned – nobody cares a hang what is happening to you. Remember our talks on this subject?

12 re Making Water

Do you recall that night in bed at Rosthwaite when you wanted to use the po chamber, but modestly forbade? And your immortal words: 'Well I might as well – it's what it's there for' ha, ha!

AW

# LETTER 3: TO ERIC WALTER MAUDSLEY: 1940?

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## BLACKBURN ROVERS SUPPORTERS' CLUB

Chairman: F.P. HASLAM, Esq.

Hon Secretary: J.L. CROOK, Esq. (With H.M. Forces)

President: W.H. DUCKWORTH, Esq.

Vice Chairman: N. McLEOD, Esq.

Hon. Treasurer & Acting Secretary: A. Wainwright, Esq.

90 Shadsworth Road

Blackburn

Wednesday night

Dear Walter,

I have just received your urgent letter of the 11th.

Your briefly-mentioned plans for your holiday fill me with envy. I am just back from a week at Keswick, where I have been fulfilling the pleasant and long-awaited task of introducing my infant son to the Loveliness of Lakeland. Keswick is crowded at present with a well-to-do set who have made it their home for the duration (how your Socialistic soul will writhe at the sight of them!) and there are great many London evacuees. The food problem is rather acute, and we had to manage as best we could with bed and breakfast, which is all that most places will provide. But around Keswick there are the same hills, the everlasting hills, always changing and yet never-changing. On these hills you will meet just a few happy youths and maidens. The ridges we tramped in days of yore are still there as wild and lonely as ever, and you will find that their appeal is as insistent as ever before. So I envy you for I fear I shall not be in their company again this year.

Your time is almost too short to expect a reply from Wasdale before the 21st, and I think that at this time of the year, with the school holidays finished, you could almost risk going over to Wasdale on the chance of getting accommodation. However, the address of the Place Perfect is Mrs M.E. Ullock, Wasdale Head Hall, Gosforth, Cumberland. The Hall, now a farm, is on the shore of the lake, just below the Burnmoor track (where we once flogged weary feet on a day notable for W.E.M.'s reticence to pee in a pot), two miles from the inn. Failing this, there is Mrs Wilson at Burnthwaite Farm, which is not quite the place it was, a cottage at Row Head, by the inn, and of course the inn itself. As a last resort, you could spend a night in the church. I should be very interested to know how you fare.

As a foretaste of things to come I enclose a card I bought in Keswick, intending to send it to you, but due to the constant attentions of my offspring it so happened that I had no time for card – and letter – writing.

I presume you received the weighty tome on Methods of Blocking the Female Form; again I intended to follow this with a letter, but didn't. The road to Hell is paved with good intentions, and alas, I am well on my way there. Damn those snails: I can't forget them. I shall be very pleased to see you on your way to the Lakes; if you are staying overnight in Blackburn, or for a day or two, we might be able to have an hour or two together, or maybe half a day.

We are winning the war.

Yours sincerely

AW

*Again he writes on the Supporters' Club notepaper a very cheerful letter, about all the new people he is meeting. Once the war began, lots of men in the office did go off, and their places were often taken by women – younger, rather attractive single women, which was a moral booster for those left behind.*

doing vital work.

*'Pennine Campaign' was an illustrated journal he had written during and after his two-week solo walk across the Pennines two years previously in 1938 – his first attempt at a walking book. He even produced a pretend report of it, as if written by a publisher's reader, and a booklet announcing its publication. It is not known if he sent it to any real publishers, but it was a serious attempt at a book and he let many of his friends read it, wanting their opinion and suggestions about getting it published. But now the war was on, with paper and other restrictions, there was even less chance of any publisher taking it.*

# LETTER 4: TO MAUDSLEY, 2 FEBRUARY 1941

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## BLACKBURN ROVERS SUPPORTERS' CLUB

Chairman: F.P. HASLAM, Esq.

Hon Secretary: J.L. CROOK, Esq. (With H.M. Forces)

President: W.H. DUCKWORTH, Esq.

Vice Chairman: N. McLEOD, Esq.

Hon. Treasurer & Acting Secretary: A. Wainwright, Esq.

90 Shadsworth Road

Blackburn

Feb. 2nd 1941

Dear Walt,

It is the Sabbath day. This morning I climbed the hill to Belthorn to worship in the little chapel there, and returned feeling well rewarded: the trudge through the snow was really invigorating, the service was good, but best of all were the magnificent views from the top of the hill. The panorama ranged from Darwen Moors to Pendle, and there was a glimpse of snowclad hills far beyond in the north. High in the blue sky glinted a silvery cluster of barrage balloons over Clayton – a recent innovation this. It was a brilliant morning, and for the first time this year there was warmth in the sun.

I thought of holidays. I thought of winding tracks midst purple heather, of streams tumbling down the mountain-side, of the wind high up on the ridge, of the summit cairn. I thought of beer and strange beds. Son, I fretted for the hills.

I feel that my days of solitary wandering are drawing to a close. I find myself in demand by others who would fain share the blissful secrets I have found in lonely places, and, frankly, I feel the prospect of tutoring them quite pleasing to contemplate. I shall never lose the urge to be off on my lonesome, but there is much to be said, too, for good company.

So I have been making half-promises these past few weeks. I have requests for walking-tours from my son, from a man of 36 and from a boy of 16, whilst a new addition to our staff, a blonde of 27, is making the most alarming hints. The man of 36 will have to wait for another year, and the blonde of 27 will have to wait for ever. She has, however, a passionate regard the Lake District akin to my own and, although she has been with us only a fortnight, we get along extremely well. Her home is called 'Blencathra'; she is married, not happily I suspect. As for the boy of 16, he is the son of a woman with whom I am at present on most intimate terms, and the happiest and jolliest lad I've ever come across. He'd enjoy himself immensely, and so would I, and I certainly intend to arrange a week with him during the summer. He'll have the time of his life.

At present I seem to have more friends than I've ever had. Until a couple of years ago, I had none. I used to call Lawrence Wolst and Jim Sharples my friends, and still do, of course, but I never sought their company after office hours. I knew nothing of the pleasures of entertaining companions. That's all changed now. The most profitable evening I ever spent was the night when the Supporters' Club was formed. I was elected to office, and put my whole heart into making it a success. I've been rewarded a thousand times. The committee meetings became a joy to my starved soul: there I found bright talk and laughter and beer, and it suited. I made friends, easy-going friends but the best in the world. Better still, with their help I rid myself of an accursed complex: it became easier to meet other people, and to be friendly with them, too. I have become a favourite with the ladies! And I like them a lot. Nowadays I never need to spend a night moping and sighing: the trouble is to resist all the invitations I get for a night out.

Which all fits in with one of your pet theories, doesn't it? How are all your romances faring? You're growing to be an old bugger now, you know; it's high time you were making a move. Don't be too careful in your choice; whoever you select, you'll be disappointed, but safe, at least, from the

succession of disappointments that have marked your erratic career so far.

~~I am looking forward to meeting you at the Green Man, Ashbourne, at Easter. I don't know yet what holidays will be granted, but assume we shall have a decent weekend. I have arranged to travel south with Irene Wyatt, en route to visit her solidier husband, and to pick her up on the return journey.~~

Please let me have 'Pennine Campaign' at an early date. Every day the afore-mentioned blonde comes round to my desk and pushes her soft breasts into me and whispers 'Have you got it back yet?' I am anxious that she should have it, even though that may mean that she will no longer push her soft breasts into me, which same operation, by the way, I could endure until Judgment Day.

With best wishes.

AlfW

*Not content with the Supporters' Club, AW then helped to begin the Pendle Club – named after Pendle Hill, a local beauty spot near Blackburn. Many of his office friends joined in, along with their wives, but there is no sign of Ruth in all this jollity.*

*Over the next six months, he continues to have good times with his clubs. He makes several Lakeland visits, spends time walking with Maudsley in Derbyshire and gets a pay rise at work.*

BLACKBURN ROVERS SUPPORTERS' CLUB

Chairman: F.P. HASLAM, Esq.

Hon Secretary: J.L. CROOK, Esq. (With H.M. Forces)

President: W.H. DUCKWORTH, Esq.

Vice Chairman: N. McLEOD, Esq.

Hon. Treasurer & Acting Secretary: A. Wainwright, Esq.

90 Shadsworth Road

Blackburn

21st February 1941

Dear Walt,

Forgive my neglect to reply promptly to your welcome letter, but this has been my first evening at home for some time. Not that I've been particularly busy at work, no it isn't that; it's this blessed circle of friends I mentioned before who seem to have set their hearts on establishing me as a social lion, and whose blandishments and entreaties I find hard to refuse, the one unfortunate aspect being that I come crawling home in the small hours, somewhat shamefacedly and in no condition to perform my normal functions as a husband and sadly conscious that I am an erring father.

Tonight I have an opportunity to reflect, for the first time in weeks, on the progress I have made in certain spheres, and my meditations are certainly sobering. I am spending pounds as easily as I used to spend shillings; I am carrying on affairs with half-a-dozen women, all of whom are ready to lie down with me when I give the word; I am consorting with fellows whose incomes run into thousands; I am shifting shandies at an alarming rate, and even whisky has passed my lips of late. What am I to do? I cannot withdraw from these new commitments, I am being carried along willy-nilly, with no hope of escape: I am heading for ruination. I recite to myself at frequent intervals 'C'est la guerre' and this soothes my conscience a little.

I am being persistently urged by the girls in the office to form a rambling club, and this appeals to me hugely, for it is an idea I have secretly nursed in my skinny bosom for many years only to postpone it after a review of the meager female company available.

But now things are different: the office is crammed with plump juicy specimens who are itching for excitement. So I am contemplating forming THE PENDLE CLUB, an association for cultured young men and women interested in walking. The blonde I told you about is as keen as mustard. Perhaps you'd better send me that Manual of Sexual Methods; I'd like to read it, in case the Pendle Club has a wet day, and I fancy the blonde would take to Method 34 like a duck to water. Send it, will you, please?

I felt flattered at your references to the success my book is having in Hertford, but tell my readers to be bloody handy, will you? – I want it back quick.

I'll see you at the Green Man on Easter Saturday, and if you want to bring 2 women it's okay by me. Don't think I've gone altogether depraved – I've started smoking a pipe which is an infallible indication of inherent decency. N'est pas?

AlfW

# LETTER 6: TO ERIC WALTER MAUDSLEY, 1941?

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## The Pendle Club

Chairman: L Wolstenholme, Esq.

Hon Treasurer: R. Alker, Esq.

Vice Chairman: A. Wainwright, Esq.

Hon Secretary: Mrs Dorothy Coleman

Blencathra, West Leigh Road, Blackburn  
Sundara

Dear Eric,

At last I have a letter from you! Every day these past months has dawned with a promise of news from Hertford – and closed with bitter disappointment. No word! I was forgotten, forsaken, I told myself. My heart grew cold and hard towards you.

Then, last week, came a note in familiar writing, and out of the very winter of discontent was born new hope; as I read, the winding tracks amongst the heather seemed to be very near again. Holidays again! How I yearn for a few days release from the bondage!

I have yet no official news of the Easter vacation, and base the following remarks on the assumption that I must return on the Sunday evening. I shall travel south on Friday morning and arrive Derby in the early afternoon and be in Ashbourne at teatime. So please book a room for me at the Green Man, and we will spend the evening visiting the flicks and consuming mineral waters.

You will observe with your customary shrewdness that the Pendle Club has come into being, but alas, far from being a rambling club, it is already developing into an association of Mature Men and Young Ladies Who Have No Dread Of Pregnancy. The idea was originally good and completely moral, but so far the primitive urge to sit in a dark cinema and play with the genital organs of a member of the opposite sex has been paramount in our thoughts, and there has been very little walking done. Hence our practice to date has been to clear off to a strange town (Clitheroe, usually), have tea, and then do a bit of groping on the back row of the local picturedome.

Your Manual of Sexual Methods has not yet arrived, in spite of your assurances; I am anxious to discover whether certain of my own devices have been publicly recognized; if not, I shall be able to affix an allonge for the benefit of subsequent readers.

What I'm much more concerned about is the fate of my Pennine Campaign. WHERE THE HELL IS IT? There are several people here panting to read it; must I forever put them off with feeble excuses? Get it back TODAY and send it on to me TONIGHT. The Hon. Secretary of the Pendle Club has promised that I can so-and-so her when I produce it, but not before, and I should like to get this done on Thursday night before joining you the day after, as it appears from your letter that I must be continent during the weekend.

So you'll book the Green Man for Friday and get there yourself for teatime if possible. BRING PLENTY OF CIGARETTES; they are unobtainable in Blackburn. I'll bring some matches.

AW

# LETTER 7: TO ERIC WALTER MAUDSLEY, 9 APRIL 1941

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90 Shadsworth Road  
Blackburn  
9th April 1941

Dear Eric,

Your latest letter has caused a quiver of apprehension – it appears we shall have difficulty in getting beds, never mind bedmates.

I shall proceed to Ashbourne as early as possible on Friday, and shall be standing on the pavement outside the Green Man, clothed in rags at one of the following times

2 p.m.	exactly
4 p.m.	do
6 p.m.	do
8 p.m.	do

If possible, I shall be there when the clock strikes two. If I am, and you are not, I shall walk away and return at four. And so on, at two hour intervals until you appear. Do you the same.

I should most urgently counsel you to get an extra gallon of petrol and bring the car into Ashbourne with you, so that if accommodation is unobtainable, we could as a last resort push the car into a woodland glade and sleep in it.

Should we both arrive early we could of course be away from Ashbourne and stuck well into Dovedale by nightfall.

I shall return home on Sunday evening. You'll have had enough of my coarse humour by then. Bring a camera and plenty of cigarettes.

'Manual of Sexual Knowledge' has arrived safely, thanks. Have you dispatched 'Pennine Campaign'?

See you Friday, son.

I'm looking forward to it.

Alf

90 Shadsworth Road  
Blackburn  
17th April 1941.

Dear Eric,

I last saw you, a lonely disgruntled figure, on the Black Rocks at Cromford, and this is what happened to me afterwards: I went down the hill into Cromford and proceeded at a good pace northwards to Matlock, arriving there at 2.15 to discover to my chagrin that there was no train till 5.36. Matlock's shops were all closed, and the whole place was enveloped in a familiar Sabbath atmosphere, so I retraced my steps to Matlock Bath, where, by comparison, there was lots of life and plenty of opportunities to spend money. I had a 3s 3d tea, and, after passing the shop several times, finally expended a shilling on the current 'Sun Bathing Review', this purchase being effected without a blush. A disappointing book, though – no hairs on. Arrived at Manchester at 7 to find there was no train till 9.40, so went across to the bus station and returned by bus, getting home at 9.30. The later stages of the journey were made miserable by an acute shortage of smoking material. I had conserved the five cigs as far as possible, but the last one turned into ashes in Manchester, and as I had already scraped out the corners of my pouch, I was left completely destitute all the evening, and was not able to satisfy the craving until Monday noon.

And now I am back to the familiar life, women fore and aft and right and left, and find myself besieged with invitations. Absence, it seems, had made their joint and several hearts grow even fonder. Dorothy is treasuring her letter, 'the loveliest I ever received' she says. Doris thought hers was 'beautiful' and has returned it for me to preserve for her out of her hubby's reach. Both wanted me to take them for a walk last night (after much indecision, I chose Doris). If ever they meet and swop confidences I shall have to flee the town: could you then find me a job? Anyway, I have made them both wonderfully happy: what does it matter that I have sacrificed honour? I told them about your disturbed first night and confided that I must have been dreaming about them, and this pleased them greatly. Are these white lies? I think they are.

What of you? The gloom of Wirksworth was biting deep into your soul when I departed from you: the holiday was a disappointment to you, n'est ce pas? The time at our disposal was too short for a proper expedition to be planned, and the weather was lousy, but I thoroughly enjoyed it: I found your blasé sophistication and naïve innocence stimulating.

Yet I sensed that you are not a happy man, or only superficially so. There's something missing in your life, Maudsley lad, and it will still be missing when your salary runs into four figures. I told you what it was and I tell you again: go and find a little hole to put your old man in. Remember the snails and go and do likewise.

I have just written to Wasdale Head for accommodation for Whitsun for Doris and myself and her husband and son. Later in the year Dorothy and I are going hiking in the Lakes; this might develop into an organized holiday of the Pendle Club, and if so, there will be a sincere invitation for you to come: imagine us all strewn in couples along Langstrath after the fashion of the Dovedale snails!

I should be interested to know how you fared on the return journey, and if and when and how the black mood passed, and I should be positively delighted to receive 'Pennine Campaign' by return of post. Blessed if I can get that book of yours back from Billy Ashton yet; I think he must be making a copy of it!

AlfW

**LETTER 9: TO ERIC WALTER MAUDSLEY, 28 APRIL 1941**

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90 Shadsworth road  
Blackburn  
28th April 1941

URGENT

Dear Eric,

Doris has had a breakdown in health, and is going to the seaside on Thursday to rest for a few days.

It is my earnest desire that she should have 'Pennine Campaign' to read during this Period.

The matter is particularly urgent. Will you please recover the book and send it on immediately? If you will I will return it afterwards.

AW

URGENT

90 Shadsworth  
Blackburn  
4th July 1941

Dear Eric,

Glad to hear from you again, sonny, and to note from your letter evidence of a return to better humour after your harrowing experience at Wirksworth.

Yes 'Pennine Campaign' came back quite safely, thank you, but I believe you have somewhere two other publications of the Shad Press, viz

1. 'Alpine Adventure', 1939
2. 'British Lakeland Climbing Expedition 1940', complete with graphs etc.

I still peep furtively at times at your Manual of Sex, and can say definitely that the Posterior Seated Position has nothing to commend it. I'll let you have the book back shortly.

I was at Keswick for Whitsuntide: couldn't get a bed so went up Skiddaw and watched the sun rise from the top: a wonderful experience. Food was scarce, breakfast being the only meal obtainable and there was a queue a mile long outside the chip shop.

In these circumstances I felt myself quite unable to recommend an organized expedition, for I hear that every place in the Lakes is the same and hundreds are sleeping under the hedges at night. So this summer it's every man for himself. Next year the war will be over and things will be back to normal, and then the Pendle Club will venture forth en masse.

I am, however, going to Keswick for the week July 26 to August 2nd, having booked a bed, but as I shall be taking my infant son, activity will be restricted and I don't think you'd like to join us even if you could get a room and food.

Possibly I shall go north again in September – if so, I'll let you know. Best wishes to you and the snails.

AW

## LETTER 11: TO ERIC WALTER MAUDSLEY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1941

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90 Shadsworth road  
Blackburn  
5th September 1941.

Dear Eric.

I received my Baddeley and map safely, thank you, but was considerably surprised, almost alarmed, to get them so early. You must have dispatched them on the Saturday, yet I thought your stay was to extend until the following Tuesday, and you are not usually so prompt in returning other people's possessions. Did anything go wrong? Did vile weather send you scampering off back home, prematurely, away from a storm-wracked Wasdale? Surely not! Armed and fortified with Dunn's Supreme Headgear the weather would have no terrors for you. What else then could have happened? Was not one of the horde of females rapeable? Nor Hazel? Or perhaps you found after all that the solitude had no longer any appeal and hankered for the bright lights and jolly company of the drink-loving mob in Hertford. Fie on you!

I am most anxious to have the details of your holiday. Did you have a squint at Broad Stand, go up Lord's Rake? How did you like Wasdale Head Hall?

If you returned before the Tuesday you would not receive the letter I posted to you at the week-end although possibly Mrs Ullock has sent it on. In that letter I asked if you would kindly forward me a big consignment of Three Nuns Baccy when conditions were favourable. Will you, please, when they are?

My love to Longland. I shall never forget the noble manner in which he brought the Sherpas safely down to the North Col.

## LETTER 12: TO ERIC WALTER MAUDSLEY, SEPTEMBER 1941

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Dearest Eric, or Little by Little;

Many thanks for the card received this morning; as it does not depict a human being adhering impossibly to a rocky bastion I confidently await a second one.

The weather here has verged on the putrid all week, with high winds and rain; often I have thought of you tirelessly pacing the hills, pondering deeply on your New Order, shielded from the downpour by Dunn's Latest and Greatest Creation. I cannot join you, alas, despite the added incentive of a hord of blockable women. Go to it, son. I recommend Method 7b. I have today celebrated an increase of salary by sending 2-14-0 to the publishers of Smythe's PEAKS AND VALLEYS, A CAMERA IN THE HILLS, MY ALPINE ALBUM and THE MOUNTAIN SCENE for a copy of each: these are magnificent books and I advise you to follow suit.

Well, how is the gradient on Brown Tongue; any easier than of yore? What of the merciless scree Hollow Stones? Had a look at Broad Stand yet? Got lost on Lord's Rake? Oh boy, the mere mention of the names tears my heart out. How I would like to be there!

Remember me to Mrs Ullock, please. Last time I was there she was seriously considering an assault on Scaffell; has she tackled it yet? I'll bet she hasn't.

Good hunting during the few hours that remain to you.

AW

AFTERTHOUGHT: when returning Baddeley will you please send also a consignment of 3 nuns, if possible?

*On 8 October 1941 AW had some big news to tell Maudsley. In September, Bob Alker, one of his colleagues in the office, had spotted an advertisement for a job. It was the last day for application, but AW decided to apply all the same. He got a good reference from Blackburn's Borough Treasurer R.G. Pye, who mentioned an accountancy prize that AW had won, albeit ten years previously. In October, AW heard that his application had been successful.*

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