



Northern Towns visited Blackburn on Thursday 21st October 2023.

With thanks to Bonnie Fourie for her planning and organisation of a fascinating visit.

A walking tour of the town followed by a splendid buffet lunch and tour of the Cathedral.

First stop by our guide, Simon Entwistle, was the story of James Pitt awarded the Victoria Cross in the Boer War. His medal was presented by Queen Victoria herself so where better to tell the tale than by her statue near the cathedral.

James received a hero's welcome on his return home and declined to sell his medal despite his family being in desperate need of food and clothing in the great depression of the 1930's.

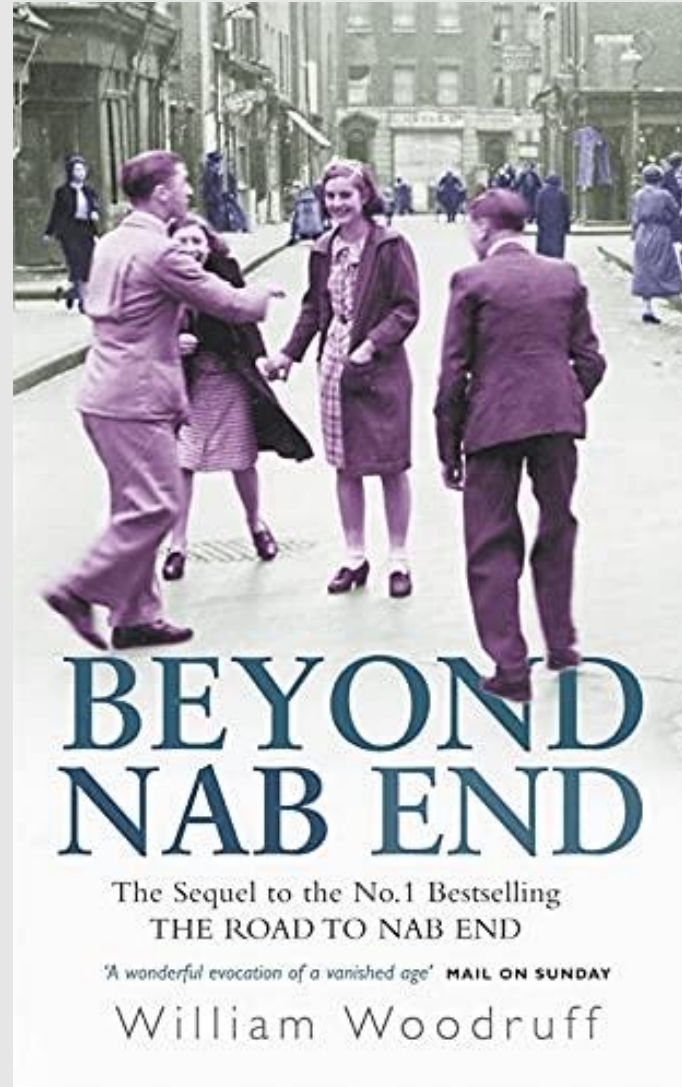
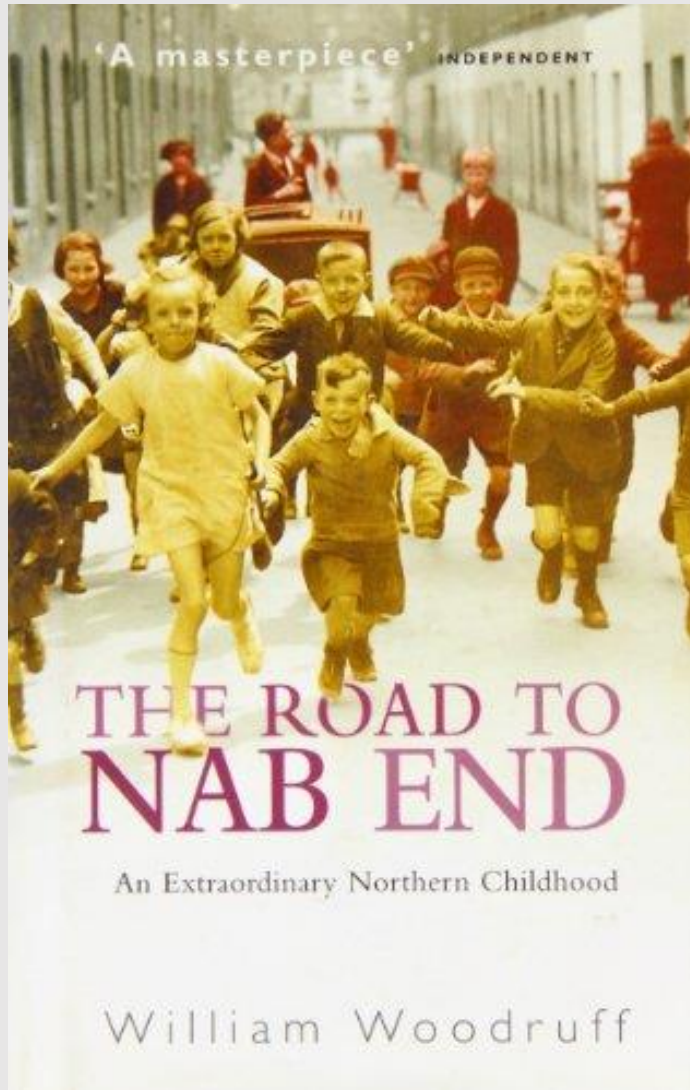
A Ghost Story with a twist

Tales of strange happenings at this old coaching inn and an 19th century murder. And then the hotel owner emerges to tell of a ghost seen by his staff when renovating the property.

If you are brave enough, [select here to book a room.](#)



On the site of Nab End, the group were told about William Woodruff who ran away from poverty in 1930 but went on to write two bestselling books. These detail arriving in London to work in an iron foundry aged 13, being taught how to read and write, and winning a place at Oxford University just six years later.



Watch this YouTube video of our guide explaining the significance of this book and showing us more of the places associated with William Woodruff

<https://youtu.be/ET7VsH5TI0M?si=CVvfo9kv126AKLbf>





The tour take in Queen's Victoria's statue



Blackburn Cathedral was another popular stop-off



The tour was made up of Ikey and District USA group members

Landmark tour for Blackburn

By Shuiab Khan
skhan@nrgw.co.uk

TOURISTS descended on Blackburn to take in some of the town's major sites.

Visitors from the Ikey and District USA group, who like to explore different places across the north of England, learning about local history, were on the trip.

They were joined by local guide Simon Entwistle, who relayed stories of those who lived and were raised in the town, alongside the odd ghost story.

The tour began with the story of James Pitt, who was awarded the Victoria Cross in the Boer War. His medal was presented by Queen Victoria herself, whose statue resides near Blackburn Cathedral.

James received a hero's welcome on his return home and declined to sell his medal despite his family being in desperate need of food and clothing in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The Jubilee Street Telephone Exchange stands on the site of the original Amphitheatre. It could seat an audience of



The tourists outside the Lancashire Telegraph's office

more than 1,000 and had eight dressing rooms and an orchestra pit. All the major stars of the day performed here.

On the site of Nab End, the group were told about William Woodruff, who ran away from poverty in 1930 but went on to write a bestselling book 'Beyond Nab End'. This details his work in a London iron foundry aged 13, being taught how to read and write, and winning a place at Oxford University just six years later.

The tour lasted an hour-and-a-half and started and ended at the cathedral. John Hancock, of Ikey and

District USA, said: "The tour provides social and educational opportunities for folk who are typically retired but still have a desire to get out and about, learning as they go. "We have visited Halifax, Dewsbury, Leeds and a number of northern towns but this was our first time in Blackburn. "It was lovely to hear about all the history of the town and in particular the links to the cotton industry."

The Blackburn tour was led by Simon, of Top Hat Tours, who can be reached on 07879 231705.



OPEN EVENING

for our secondary provision
Thursday 28th September 2023 4.30pm to 7.30pm

HINDLEIGH'S ADDRESS: 5.00pm, 6.00pm and 7.00pm

You are also invited TO SEE THE SCHOOL IN ACTION
Thursday 5th October 2023

Please email/helpline school to book a tour.

We look forward to welcoming you to our school.

Blackburn School, Queens Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1LJ
T: 01257 623041 E: info@blackburn-school.org W: www.blackburn-school.org

#blackburnschool #blackburn #blackburnschool



Blackburn School - Where your child will flourish

A first for Northern Towns on our travels as we were approached by a reporter from the local newspaper.

Clearly they don't get visitors from Yorkshire visiting Lancashire in such numbers because he thought it worth taking our photograph and we duly featured in the Lancashire Telegraph on Monday 25th September. A larger version of the text on next page.



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Who knew Alfred Wainwright was born in Blackburn?

Simon tells the tale, but this is copied from Wikipedia

In 1930, at the age of 23, Wainwright saved up for a week's walking holiday in the Lake District with his cousin Eric Beardsall. They arrived in Windermere and climbed the nearby Orrest Head, where Wainwright saw his first view of the Lakeland fells.

This moment marked the start of what he later described as his love affair with the Lake District. In 1931 he married his first wife, Ruth Holden, a mill worker, with whom he had a son, Peter. In 1941 Wainwright moved closer to the fells when he took a job (and a pay cut) at the Borough Treasurer's office in Kendal, Westmorland.

He lived and worked in the town for the rest of his life, serving as Borough Treasurer from 1948 until he retired in 1967. His first marriage ended when Ruth left three weeks before he retired (suspecting him of infidelity) and they divorced. In 1970 he married Betty McNally (1922–2008), a divorcee, who became his walking companion and who carried his ashes to Innominat Tarn at the top of Haystacks.

Simon mentioned the interview on Desert Island Discs. [Select here to listen to this episode.](#)



Simon provided the following list of topics covered in his tour:

- James Pitts VC
- Theatre ghost stories from the telephone exchange
- William Woodruff
- Albert Wainwright
- William Hornby
- Plug Drawing Riots
- Monkey Hornby
- 1642 Civil War, Dukes Brow



Following the walking tour in the centre of town there was a splendid buffet lunch and tour of the Cathedral.







