

The Norman Nicholson Society
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
The Meeting Room, Millom Baptist Church
13th April 2019

Attendees: Barbara Andrews, David Boyd, Janice Brockbank, Brian Charnley, Doreen Cornthwaite, Stephen and Kerry Darbishire, Christopher Donaldson, Antoinette Fawcett, Judith Gale, Martyn Halsall, Phil and Christine Houghton, Norma Hughes, Charlie and Dorothy Lambert, Jean Liney, Max Long, Glenn Lang, Jonathan Powell, Dot Richardson, Lyla Taylor, Ann Thomson, John and Susan Troll, and Brian Whalley.

1. Chair's Welcome: Charlie Lambert. See below.

2. Apologies had been received from Dawn Bruin, Geoff Cox, Sue Dawson, Margaret Forsman, Peter Grayson, Mark Jenkinson, Kathleen Jones, Jane Micklethwaite, Malcolm and Rosemary Morrison, Maurice Payn, Alan and Meriel Postlethwaite, Valerie Rickerby, David and Miggy Scott, Thom and Margaret Troll, and Joanne Weeks.

We have sadly had news of two members who passed away during the year. John Churchill informed us of the death of his wife Kathleen Churchill, whose obituary was included in the most recent issue of Comet. Kathleen passed away on the 14th November last year; her funeral took place on the 30th November and included a reading of 'Wall'.

We were also contacted a couple of weeks ago by Steve Marper to let us know of the death of his mother Edna Marper, of Wigton; Edna hadn't been a member of the Society very long and was inspired to join after attending a course run by the poet and Nicholson Society member Mary Robinson.

We send our condolences to the families of both Edna and Kathleen.

3. The AGM Minutes of 14th April 2018 were approved.

4. There were no matters arising from last year's AGM Minutes.

5. Election of Committee: Under the rules of the Society's Constitution, members of the committee are due for re-election if they have held office for three years since their last election. Glenn Lang expressed a wish to stand down from his role as Secretary at this AGM but agreed to stay on for up to a year until a replacement could be found. Antoinette Fawcett expressed a wish to stand down as Membership Secretary at next year's AGM, with a view to training a replacement in the role over the coming twelve months. She will continue on the committee in her role as the editor of *Comet*.

- Charlie Lambert was unanimously re-elected as Chair of the NNS. Proposer: Dot Richardson, seconded by Antoinette Fawcett.
- Glenn Lang was unanimously re-elected as Secretary for one year or until a replacement can be co-opted. Proposer: Charlie Lambert, seconded by Dorothy Lambert.
- Antoinette Fawcett was unanimously re-elected as Membership Secretary for one year and as a committee member for three years in her role as Editor of *Comet*. Proposer: John Troll, seconded by Norma Hughes.
- Sue Dawson was unanimously re-elected as Schools and Community Liaison Officer in her absence. Proposer: Janice Brockbank, seconded by John Troll.
- Dot Richardson was unanimously re-elected as a NNS Committee Member. Proposer; Sue Troll, seconded Ann Thompson.

6. Secretary's Report: Glenn Lang. See below.

7. Treasurer's Report: Brian Charnley. See below.

8. Membership Secretary's Report: Antoinette Fawcett. See below.

9. Comet and Comet Online Report: Antoinette Fawcett. See below

10. Schools and Community Officer's report: Sue Dawson. See below.

11. University Liaison Officer's Report: Chris Donaldson. See below.

12. Project 14 update and website: Charlie Lambert. See below.

13. Any other business: None.

Chair's welcome: AGM 2019

Good morning and welcome everyone to the 2019 AGM of the Norman Nicholson Society, and thank you to the Baptist Church for allowing us to use the meeting room for our event.

We're in Millom, the place which meant so much to Norman, and we're just a few streets from his home. But we're also in a town, and a few streets from a house, whose influence still reverberates, not just throughout the UK but throughout the world. Early in the New Year I received an email through the contact form on the Society's website. It was from Stacey Sherman from the Nelson Adkins Museum of Art in Kansas, USA. She told me that the museum had commissioned a remarkable art installation by a British artist called Andy Goldsworthy, this piece of art being a drystone wall which, over the course of several months this year, would WALK across the grounds of the museum. The inspiration for this comes, of course, from Norman's poem 'Wall', which, it turned out, has inspired a number of installations by Andy Goldsworthy in different countries over many years. Stacey knew that there was an audio recording in existence of Norman reading the poem himself and she wanted to find it to use as part of the museum's promotional work. To cut a long story short, members of the Society quickly pinpointed where the audio was used, both by the BBC, in 1977, and London Weekend TV, in 1984, and I have been helping the museum obtain the necessary permissions to use it. My point is that the point that WE often make, that Nicholson's writing may be local but is also universal, could not be better illustrated. Right now, in Kansas USA, Andy Goldsworthy's wall is in place, and – unlike another wall which we keep hearing about in the south of the United States - it is there to symbolize connection and co-operation. Nicholson's poetry is being celebrated this very day in the States, and our Society has been instrumental in extending that project's reach. (Charlie used the laptop and projector to show photos of Andy Goldsworthy, the Kansas wall, and the Nelson-Adkins Museum).

I should say that this contact from America is by no means the only one which has come our way from foreign places, through our website. We have also heard from a teacher in NZ who wanted to use *Rising Five* in a teaching resource, and a publisher in India, wanting to use *Off to Outer Space Tomorrow Morning* in a book for schools. Poetry generated here in Millom walks the planet.

It is just as important that that same poetry continues to be recognised right here in Millom itself, and so, back in the autumn, the committee took the decision to hold a two-day NN Festival in Millom this summer. We were inspired by the wonderful event organised by the Maryporters last September, *When Percy met Norman*. I hope the Maryporters will agree that imitation is indeed the sincerest form of flattery because we have unashamedly taken our cue from them. Our festival will take place on Saturday and Sunday June 29th and 30th, and I am delighted that the main speaker will be the poet Sean O'Brien, winner of the TS Eliot Prize, Northern Writer of the Year, and fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, as well as Nicholson devotee. We'll also be delighted to welcome Dr Andrew Frayn of Edinburgh Napier University who is currently leading the way in academic discussion of Nicholson; and the groundbreaking environmental photography and writing duo Rob and Harriet Fraser of Somewhere-Nowhere. There will be a creative writing workshop led by the poet Patrick Wright, supported by Antoinette; guided walks led by blue badge guide Tom McCafferty; access to Norman's house; a service at St George's Church on the

Sunday; an evening of contemporary Cumbrian poetry and music at the Beggar's Theatre on the Saturday night; and the whole thing set up by a social get-together in the Clock Tower on the Friday evening, that's June 27th. Final arrangements are falling into place and they'll be confirmed when the committee meets at the beginning of May; after that we will make a proper announcement but for now you can find announcements as they occur on our website and Facebook and Twitter pages.

In connection with the festival, I can announce today that the Arts Council has awarded us funding of £1000 to help cover the costs. This is fantastic news, it'll be a big help, and it's also really encouraging that the Arts Council recognises the cultural value of what we are doing. I must also say a big thank-you to Millom Town Council who, without being asked, gave us a grant of £200 and their full support when we approached them before Christmas to discuss the idea of having a festival. Their enthusiastic and instant backing meant as much as the money.

You'll have spotted the Society's impressive new banner. I want to pay tribute to the artist Alan Roper for his magnificent interpretation of Nicholson. If you went to the Maryport event in September you'll know where we got the idea of commissioning Alan – he was also the designer of the very impressive posters which advertised the Percy and Norman event, so that's something else which we must thank the Maryporters for.

Talking of committee meetings, I drove away from our most recent meeting last month feeling incredibly proud of our committee. We had spent the best part of three hours discussing a range of constructive, valuable, invigorating activities which different members of our committee have been pursuing on behalf of the Society. I won't steal anyone's thunder by mentioning them now but you will hear about them in the individual reports coming up. But I do want to say a big thank-you on behalf of the Society to all our fantastic committee – Antoinette, Glenn, Sue in her absence, Dot, Chris, Brian and Janice, who have worked so hard and effectively to make the last 12 months a year of real progress and achievement.

So welcome again to our annual meeting, and on with the business of the day.

NNS Secretary's AGM Report, 2018-19

The past year has been a busy one for the Society. I have listed below the major events, as other aspects of the Society's work will be covered in other committee members' reports.

AGM 14th April 2018

- AGM and lunch
- Talk by **Charlie Lambert**, inspired by Nicholson's enthusiasm for the sport, entitled *Nostalgia is the besetting sin of many who write about cricket*.
- Talk and guided walk around the cricket field by local historian **Marshall Mossop**

Alliance of Literary Societies AGM and Study Weekend, Birmingham 18th-20th May 2018

NNS was represented by **Antoinette Fawcett** and **Glenn Lang**. Antoinette read NN's poem *Epithalamium for a Niece* to an appreciative audience.

Summer Event: The Closing of Millom Ironworks 7th July 2018 Millom Methodist Church

50th anniversary of the ironworks closure, an event which features significantly in Nicholson's poetry. Local writer and historian **Bill Myers** gave a fascinating and informative talk on the history of the works and of Millom itself.

After lunch Bill led a walk to the Ironworks site while **Antoinette Fawcett** ran a creative writing workshop for those who preferred not to walk.

The event ended with the reading and discussion of three of Nicholson's poems inspired by the closure of 1968: *Glen Orchy*, *On the Closing of Millom Ironworks*, and *On the Dismantling of Millom Ironworks*.

Friday July 27th

Millom Library

'Why is a football reporter from Liverpool nuts about Nicholson?'

A talk by **Charlie Lambert**, Chair of the Norman Nicholson Society and former BBC NW Sports Correspondent.

Sat Sept 15th 2018

Creative Writing Workshop at Cockley Moor, led by poet and biographer Kathleen Jones.

Our grateful thanks to our Honorary Vice-President Kathleen for devising and delivering this very successful event for NNS members, and to NNS member Hilary Rock for once again hosting an event for us at her lovely house.

Friday Sept 28th, Saturday Sept 29th 2018
When Percy met Norman
The Settlement at Castle Hill, Maryport

A two-day festival celebrating the meeting 59 years ago of **Norman Nicholson** and the Maryport artist **Percy Kelly**. Talks, readings, workshops and exhibitions inspired by the art and poetry of the 'Cumbrian Brothers', organised by the Maryporters Town Team and the Settlement at Castle Hill. Society members were heavily involved in this festival.

- **Alan Beattie** gave a talk, and also helped to lead a walk for the CWAAS.
- **Antoinette Fawcett** ran a creative writing workshop.
- **Brian Charnley** gave a reading of Norman's poems.

Sat Oct 20th 2018
Autumn Event: Josefina de Vasconcellos (1904-2005)
Venue: Haverigg School, Atkinson Street, Haverigg

An opportunity to find out about the sculptor and her friendship with Norman Nicholson. Josefina's work included a bust of Nicholson and the striking 'Escape to Light' work which is located at Haverigg.

- Talk and Q&A by **Shawn Williamson**, sculptor and former pupil of Josefina.
- Talk by **Chris Powell**, former Warden of the Harriet Boat. Walk to Haverigg beach to see 'Escape to Light,' Josefina's last sculpture.
- Reading and discussion of four of Nicholson's poems reflecting his interest in rock, geology and sculpture, led by **Antoinette Fawcett**.

Sat December 8th, Christmas Lunch 2018
Netherwood Hotel, Grange over Sands

Annual Christmas Tree Festival at St George's Church, Millom
Sue Dawson, Janice Brockbank and Dot Richardson

All of the events I have listed above have required extensive planning and the Committee has met five times in the past year, usually for at least three hours, not counting travelling time. Each event has involved work on the day by committee members and by other members of the NNS, particularly the Troll family, without whose organisational and catering skills we would be lost.

Norman Nicholson Society
Income & Expenditure Account
1st January 2018 to 28th February 2019

- **Main/General Account:**

Income:		Expenditure:	
Subscriptions	1661.00	Printing / Postage	754.25
Events	461.50	Events	325.00
Donations	571.00	Expenses	39.84
Bequest	5000.00	Insurance / Licence	352.32
Interest	4.68	AGM	149.50
Total Income:	7698.18	Total Expenditure:	1620.91
		Excess of Income over Expenditure:	6077.27

- **House Account:**

Income:		Expenditure:	
From main account	255.00	N/A	00.00
Interest	0.38* (above)		
Total Income:	255.38	Total Expenditure:	00.00
		Actual Excess of Income over expenditure:	00.38
		TOTAL Excess of Income over Expenditure:	6077.65

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 28TH FEBRUARY 2019

CURRENT ASSETS:

Debtors	/
Bank Account - Main/General	7682.78
Bank Account - House project	2634.01
	10,316.79

CURRENT LIABILITIES:

Creditors	/
TOTAL ASSETS:	10,316.79

CAPITAL ACCOUNT:

Balance brought forward +	1860.51 + 2378.63
Excess income over Expenditure	6077.65

TOTAL RESERVES: **10,316.79**

NORMAN NICHOLSON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP REPORT 2018-19

Membership numbers for the year 2018-19 were as follows: **121 members**, of which **7 are Honorary Members**. We have given temporary Honorary Membership to the student who has produced *Comet Online* for us, which is why we have one more honorary member this year. We therefore had **114 paying members** for 2018-19.

The total is **11 fewer than** reported in **the previous year**, when the total was 132 members. As explained last year, however, there were at that point some members on the books who had either forgotten to renew or who were unable to renew for other reasons. I believe that it is now clear that certain members have been lost to the Society. Sometimes we are informed of a death, or another reason why a renewal has not taken place; at other times we are left guessing.

In the course of the year we acquired **15 new members**. These are included in the total of 121. We also had three lapsed members who re-joined the Society and two members who resigned and then re-joined only three months later. These are also included in the totals.

We have **four Youth Members**, which is one more than last year, and one possible Youth Member, who made an enquiry but has not followed up by joining the Society. 30 of our members are joint members, i.e. there are 15 Joint Memberships.

There are now only **three members living abroad**.

We had one clear resignation and two notifications of the deaths of members.

The summary is as follows:

2017-18			2018-19		
listed as members	of which New Members	resignations	listed as members	of which New Members	Resignations and deaths
132	12	1	121 (114 paying members of which 30 pay a joint membership)	15	3

As can be seen from the figures, that means that quite a number of people have defaulted and the reason for this is unknown. I contacted people either by email or by letter with membership reminders, but in these cases have had no response.

However, the influx of new members into the Society is healthy and there are already good signs for the coming membership year, as we have acquired some new members already. My guess is that the Festival may bring us further members and that as the reputation of the Society spreads wider, yet more members will join.

This year also saw the committee carry out a Membership Review, the results of which were collated by Janice Brockbank. The purpose of the review was to help us to understand why membership numbers might be dropping and what we can do to increase our membership numbers and to make the Society visible to a younger demographic.

Amongst the many recommendations that emerged, we included increasing publicity for the Society through a variety of means, but especially by ensuring that our events are well-publicized in the local press and in locally-oriented magazines such as *Cumbria/Lancashire Life* and *Cumbria*, and attracting new members through a well-designed set of publicity materials, which you will already have seen in the form of the front cover design for the AGM programme, and in the new publicity leaflet and the pull-up banner which we have been able to bring to today's meeting.

The Membership Action Plan has given us a lot to think about and sets out in writing what our aims are as a Society, in terms of making Nicholson's work known to a wider public. As I emphasized in my own response, the focus should, however, always be on Nicholson and his work, and not on how large the Society is. As long as we can maintain our numbers at around the current level, then I think we have a truly viable and healthy Society, even if the ideal would be to increase our membership.

For comparison, I asked the secretaries of various other comparable Literary Societies what their membership numbers were. Here are some of the results:

The RS Thomas and ME Eldridge Society has 60 members, of which 10 are life members. RS Thomas was an extremely well-known Welsh poet, of Nicholson's generation, who wrote in English and was also published by Faber and Faber. ME Eldridge was his wife and a gifted artist in her own right.

The Friends of the Dymock Poets, which is a Society which honours the work of six poets, including Robert Frost and Edward Thomas, has 211 members.

The David Jones Society has 309 members.

The John Clare Society is large, at 407 members.

I should point out that poets like John Clare, David Jones, Robert Frost and Edward Thomas have worldwide renown and are particularly well-studied in the United States. A literary society is a specialist kind of society and will always attract primarily enthusiasts – however Nicholson's own wide-ranging interests, the accessible nature of his writing, and in particular his focus on the environment and on locality give us plenty of potential to attract a broader audience and membership than some.

I have been pleased to see a good new influx of members in the years I have been Membership Secretary and I've been very happy to maintain the relationship with our established members. However, on top of the work I do in editing *Comet* and contributing in all sorts of other ways to the work of the committee, I have begun to feel that this is too big a task for me. As many members know, I am developing a second career in literary translation, and that also requires much time and commitment. I'd like to take the opportunity, therefore, to say that I intend to give up my role as Membership Secretary as soon as possible, and certainly by March 2020. My hope is that we can encourage someone either presently on the committee, or who may be co-opted onto the committee in the course of this year, to take on the role, and that we can work collaboratively for some months, to enable the transition to be as smooth as possible.

Antoinette Fawcett
Membership Secretary
The Norman Nicholson Society
April 11th 2019

REPORT ON COMET 2018-19
Norman Nicholson Society AGM
Millom Baptist Church Rooms – April 13th 2019

Comet has now been in existence for twelve years and the editor has not changed throughout that period. As the editor, I feel that I have learned a great deal about Norman Nicholson, about the members of the Society, and about writing, editing and layout in that period. As usual, I am extremely grateful for the contributions that *Comet's* writers make to the periodical and I've been just as impressed this year by the high quality of the work, and by its variety.

What does *Comet* do? Firstly, it provides lively reports on most of our events, enabling members to keep a record of those events for the future, reminding them of what they heard and did and saw, and enabling members who cannot join us in person to participate in those events virtually and by proxy. I'd like to thank **Sue Dawson** for her reports on the Nicholson-themed field trips made to Millom by Nottingham University last year and for the interesting insights into the creation of the NN Society Tree for the Millom Christmas Tree Festival. More thanks go to **Charlie Lambert** for his patient updates on Project 14 and its progress, to **Glenn Lang** for his report on talks on Norman Nicholson given by committee members to other organizations, and to **Brian Charnley** for his splendid report on last September's Maryport Festival, 'When Percy Met Norman', which you will have read about in the most recent issue of *Comet*. These reports represent the newsletter element of *Comet*, the type of writing that helps you to keep in touch with what the Society and its members does. You will also have come across a range of other pieces, including member news, obituaries and book reviews, all of which are appropriate for a group of people who share common interests and get to know each other through the Society. I am always happy to publish writing of this type, and would encourage you particularly to write about your memories of Norman Nicholson, or about your specific interest in his work. Many members have not contributed writing to *Comet* and it would be wonderful to hear something from them.

A second thread that runs through each year's volume of *Comet* is that of the scholarly or in-depth article on an aspect of Nicholson's life and/or work, which makes the periodical more like a journal or special-interest magazine. Last year we had a long piece from **Charlie Lambert** on Nicholson and Cricket, which was adapted from his talk to the Society at the 2018 AGM. It was wonderful to be able to relive this very successful presentation if you had attended the AGM, and I'm sure our members who were not able to join us in person very much appreciated being able to read the witty and lively text of the talk. We also had the first and second parts of a series of articles about Nicholson and Geology by **Brian Whalley**, Emeritus Professor of Geomorphology at Sheffield University. Two more parts will follow. Together these will form a fantastic resource to help us to appreciate the breadth and depth of Nicholson's interest in geology and to understand the importance of geological and geomorphological processes in his work. **Joanne Weeks**, Vice-President of the Cumbrian Literary Group from 2013, wrote an introduction to Nicholson's involvement with this important circle of writers, with the promise that more detail will follow.

Not-quite academic writing, but certainly written by academics, were the two rather serendipitous articles just published in the most recent *Comet*: the very touching story of how the teenage **Jeremy Craddock** was in correspondence with Norman Nicholson and received a detailed and quite personal letter from the great man, much to Jeremy's astonishment; and the story of **Andrew Frayn's** roots in South Cumbria and his first encounter with Nicholson's work. Jeremy became a well-known reporter and journalist, and is now lecturing at Manchester Metropolitan University, while Andrew has recovered from his youthful puzzlement as to why Norman's poems, as he thought, didn't rhyme, and is now

based at Edinburgh Napier University, investigating two main threads in Nicholson's writing – that of the influence of war on his work, and that of industry and post-industry. We really pleased that he has added this focus to his current research.

A third important thread in *Comet* is that of our own creative writing. We know that Nicholson encouraged others to write, either by the informal mentoring of younger poets, such as Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney and Matt Simpson, by participating in writing workshops, such as the Cumbrian Poets group, and by judging school and adult writing competitions. In last year's volume readers were able to read lively poems by **Martyn Halsall**, **Brian Mitchell**, **Jean Liney**, and **Frankie Ward** and a very nice piece of reportage by **Brian Whalley** about his visit to the Pennine Stanza Stones.

And there was much more: our first ever quiz, submitted by **John Gilder**; a plea for Word of the Month submissions by **Ann Thomson**; news of an MA programme at the University of Cumbria, which will include Nicholson's writings, by **Dr Penny Bradshaw**; a flashback to a performance of *The Old Man of the Mountains* in 1976 – and many more delights, too many, in fact, to single out each writer for special mention.

We had a total of nineteen different writers last year, producing around 41 pieces of writing. *Comet* is varied, interesting, erudite, amusing, passionate, grounded, and a fount of information on all kinds of topics connected to our Norman.

At last year's AGM (2018) you passed a special proposal which mandated the committee – and the editor of *Comet* in particular – to look for ways in which issues of *Comet* from more than three years ago could be made available on the internet in fully searchable pdf format, to enable the sharing of articles of academic and general interest with the wider community. I am pleased to say that we have been working with Lancaster University to bring this to fruition, and in particular with the Computer Sciences student **Bartek Barański** and his supervisor, **Dr Paul Rayson**. This was enabled by **Dr Chris Donaldson**, our Universities Officer. Bartek has created a very nice, clear *Comet Online* website, which is presently hosted on the Lancaster University server, and isn't as yet visible to the general public, as it forms his final project for his degree. However, the website will undoubtedly soon be handed over and made live, and then we will have a resource to which we can add further issues of *Comet*, after the three-year period has elapsed, and which will enable people anywhere in the world to consult the kind of scholarship and knowledge-sharing I have described above. As the 'History of the Project' page will soon say: 'The Society is grateful to Mr Barański for his work on this project, and we are indebted to Dr Rayson, Dr Donaldson and Dr Fawcett for their guidance and input. Thanks to their collective effort, we are pleased to be able to preserve past issues of *Comet* in a digital format and to make the journal available to an even wider audience than ever before'. It was a real pleasure and privilege to work with Mr Barański, Dr Donaldson and Dr Rayson on this project.

Comet is, as people have told me, a major benefit of being a member of the Norman Nicholson Society, and I hope you will convince others of its value. I am proud of the fact that it will be available to a much larger public in the future, and believe that this is an important way to make Norman's work live on.

Antoinette Fawcett April 10th 2019

2019 AGM Report by Sue Dawson, Schools & Community Liaison Officer

Community

During the last few months I am pleased to report that the NN Literary Fund has finally been regenerated by Millom Town Council and the first applications for awards for students studying a literary course either living in Copeland or in exceptional circumstances someone following a study on NN but living elsewhere will be made in April 2019. This has taken some time to get the fund up and running again but hopefully it will now be there to provide for students of literature or studying about NN in the future.

Contact has been made with the education officer of Mr Straw's house to ask for advice about potential activities to support the next application for HLF funding to buy number 14 St George's Terrace.

I was asked to support the work of a local story teller who was delivering stories to local schools as part of the Moving Mountains Festival which was held in Millom between September and December 2018. Debbie Haines was interested to see if she could include some of the work of NN into the stories she was planning to tell as part of the project. I was able to provide ideas about possible poems etc. which might be suitable for her purposes.

I was able to help organise the Summer event which recognised the 50 years anniversary of the closing of Millom Ironworks. Bill Myers did a very interesting talk and walk linked to this event.

In December we were able to enjoy another enjoyable Christmas meal at the Netherwood Hotel, Grange. We have held this event there for a number of years now and the hotel continue to provide a very amenable setting, good food and look after us all very well.

It is worth noting that when Red Star Belgrade rugby league team came to play their Challenge Cup game in Millom recently that NN was mentioned by Dave Woods the BBC sports reporter during his commentary. There were also a number of references to NN's work on Around the Combe the local social media website during this time.

Looking to the future - the NN room in the Discovery Centre is due for a bit of review regarding the displays etc. Hopefully local schools will be able to provide some new work soon which can replace the current ones.

Schools

The most important news is that the NN Learning Resource File has been completed and handed over to each of the local schools who are in the Partnership of Millom Schools. This includes the Parkview Nursery, Millom Infant, local Primaries and Millom School. Effectively every local school now has a wide range of resources to deliver worthwhile activities and information about the life, work and impact of NN.

With the forthcoming NN Festival coming up in June we are hopeful that the schools will be able to use the Resource File and provide some examples of their creativity either for the NN room or the NN website. This will provide a much wider audience for the children's work.

I would like to thank Antoinette, Charlie and Janice for their help and support in compiling this important learning resource. Staff who have received the file have already complimented us on the amount of work which has gone into the range of resources we have provided.

The Discovery Centre is keen for the NN Society to be involved with a focused week of NN activities prior to the Festival in June and this is currently being discussed about how we can work together on this.

Unfortunately the students from the University of Nottingham will not be visiting Millom as part of their field trip this year. Different staff have taken over the organisation and want to plan different activities. When I contacted the tutor from last year he said he was sad that they wouldn't be visiting this time adding because they had had a 'fantastic time last year'

University Liaison Representative's Report 2019

It has been my pleasure to serve as the Society's University Liaison Representative this year. My professional commitments have required me to scale my contributions as University Liaison proportionally, but I am pleased to report on the success of the Comet Online project, which is the main University-partnership activity with which I have assisted over the past twelve months.

As NNS members know, Comet has served as a forum for the Society's members to share ideas, news and discoveries for the past 13 years. Last year, the Committee and I discussed the potential benefits of making back issues of Comet available in a digital format on the internet. It was agreed that making Comet available online in this way might enable the Society to reach new audiences while simultaneously providing a publicly accessible repository of the Society's main publication.

In summer 2018, I assisted the Society with approaching researchers at Lancaster University to see whether it might be possible to digitise past issue of the journal and to make these issues available online. Following this initial conversation with Dr Paul Rayson, Reader in the School of Computing and Communications (SCC), the Society agreed that the proposed programme of digitisation would be an ideal undergraduate dissertation project for a computer science student. With Dr Rayson's support, the Society advertised the Comet digitisation project to relevant students in SCC, and we were delighted to receive an expression of interest from Mr Bartek Barański.

Mr Barański proved an excellent candidate for this project. Working under the supervision of Dr Rayson and with the support of Dr Antoinette Fawcett (the Society's Membership Secretary and Editor of Comet), Mr Barański developed Comet Online as a platform for digitally republishing past issues of Comet and for enabling visitors to browse these issues and the articles they contain.

I am certain that members of the Society will join me in thanking both Mr Barański and Dr Rayson. I am also certain that members will join me in expressing our gratitude to Dr Fawcett, who undertook the painstaking work of preparing the content from back issues of Comet for online publication. Thanks to their collective effort, we are pleased to be able to preserve past issues of Comet in a digital format and thereby to make the Society's work and activities available to an even wider audience than ever before.

Comet Online currently includes the first 7 volumes of the journal (Spring 2006–Spring 2012), and we expect to make more issues available in due course. It is important to note, though, that all issues published within the last three years will continue to be available only to members of the Society – both in print and via the members pages on the NNS website.

In addition to Comet Online, I have also been pleased to be able to draw attention to the work of the Society at public lectures I have given at the Maryport Literary Festival and for the St Bees Art Society. I will continue to promote the work of the Society in this way in lectures I will be giving at The Beacon Museum in Whitehaven on 7 May 2019.

Over the coming year I expect to be able to follow through with my plans to meet with colleagues at the University of Cumbria to discuss opportunities for future University-led events that will be of interest to the Society. I also expect that my recently established role as Research Coordinator at The Ruskin – Library, Museum and Research Centre, at Lancaster University, will provide a context for programming and events that may be of interest to the Society's membership.

Christopher Donaldson
19 April 2019

PROJECT 14, MEDIA AND WEBSITE reports, 2019

Project 14 - Time is short so I will not dwell unduly on this. We submitted our application for £500,000-plus to the Heritage Lottery Fund last June and were informed in September that we had been unsuccessful. The feedback was generally encouraging; we were told there was no reason why we could not apply again.

The HLF have made a number of changes to their funding scheme. Janice and I attended a briefing on this in Lancaster in February, and we have a meeting coming up with two advisers from the Lottery next week, also in Lancaster. Once that meeting is out of the way, we will be in a position to start work on another application. We do not intend to simply go through the same motions again, and to ensure that fresh eyes are brought to bear we've added two new people to our team. One is David Boyd's niece Charlotte Hazlewood, who is a former assessor of applications for the Lottery who will examine our documentation as it takes shape, and the other is Eric Robson, the same Eric who is about to step down as chair of Gardeners Question Time and is also chair of Cumbria Tourism and a patron of the Nicholson House project. Eric has very kindly agreed to act as an informal, and unpaid, consultant. We will post updates about this next application in due course.

Website

As part of our membership review we decided to introduce a members-only area on the website. The aim is to give members more value and thereby encourage more people to join the Society. This will be accessible by registering and setting up your own login. To do this we've had to upgrade our website which has cost around £250, which is a fair amount of money, but if we can attract a dozen or so new members that cost will take care of itself. (Charlie then used the laptop and projector to demonstrate to members how to access the new members-only area and show them some samples of the content).

CLOSE

Thanks for attending, thanks to the Baptist church, and especially to Sue and John Troll and Jean Liney for looking after the tea and coffee; to the Lighthouse Centre for making such a great job of the catering; and also Peter Grayson for tec assistance beforehand.

Charlie Lambert