

Name	Betty Watson (nee Ivy)
Relationship to NN	father knew him; later Betty was manager of Millom Folk Museum
Interviewer	Charlie Lambert
Date of recording	8/2/20
Location	Millom
Dur	14 mins 50 secs
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TOP: self-ident. Got to know NN through father, he was a blacksmith. Norman was one of the original recyclists. He used to pick up from the back of Walter Willsons, now the Co-Op, racks and things and come to my father to make them more stable so he could put plants in them.

01.15 I thought he was just a quiet, rather dour little man, very polite.

Intervention by Betty's husband Arthur who talks about N being short of breath like him; if he stopped to talk to you it depended which way the wind was blowing (literally). He was a gentleman.

02.15 Was aware he was a poet. Mentions her work at the folk museum, and an exhibition about Norman, how she discussed it with Norman, felt it was a bit awkward. Invited me to discuss it at his house. Brought out a bag of boiled sweets. Decided what we would do, with his blessing. I saw his poem 'Windscale' and then I realised that N was so in tune with nature. He gave me choice of several photos for the exhibition. He was pleased with the one I chose.

05.15 Filled a jar with weeds because of his poem, he smiled when he saw it, but it attracted a big bumble bee.

06.00 How much involvement did N have with the folk museum? Not a great deal. Little functions when we asked him. I think he opened it. With my father we had a smithy in the corner. Lovely photo of him with my father.

06.46 How was he regarded in Millom? A lot of people didn't like him, they thought he was peculiar, unfriendly, but one had to make allowances for his breathing plus his upbringing, his mother dying early, the family might not have been as well-off as people assumed... when his father had the shop there were 7 gents outfitters in town, it was very competitive.

08.00 When he passed away very little reaction in the town. Recognition came later. I didn't know many people who had regard for him or thought of him as having any importance. Now, mixed feeling. The schools took up his work which helped but I still think it's a bit negative. They don't realise what a humorous man he was. Recalls N being speaker when there was talk of parishes being amalgamated. He said it would be a good idea because the vicar could be trained as a signalman!

10.35 recalls N talking to her about the council wanting to 'do his bust'. Amused.

12.30 story about going on a cruise and meeting a women who was a member of a literary society and knew about Norman and was determined to visit Millom. Later, she did visit. I took them into the museum to see the NN exhibition, and on a tour of the town including NN's grave. So there is interest in far-flung places.