

Norman Nicholson Society
Schools & Community Liaison Officer
Annual Report 2021

This annual report will reflect one of the most challenging years for the NNS in view of the lockdown and restrictions placed not only on the NNS, the community but nationwide by Covid. Many of the normal events which we would have participated in like the Christmas Tree Festival had to be cancelled, which will be the first time in 10 years that the NNS have not needed to decorate a tree. We can only hope that 2021 will see the return of this popular community event.

Millom Town Council have suspended the awarding of the NN Literary Fund and we can hope that this will be back in place for the start of the new term in September and students will be again encouraged to apply.

I have been involved in contributing photographs and content to the new Walking Trail App which has been created by a team of people to link NN's writing with the locations around Millom and district. I was able to suggest appropriate quotations and text for a range of different sites including the Ironworks, Hodbarrow and Millom town for people to enjoy as they explore the Trails.

Last year we welcomed the students from the University of Cumbria MA Romanticism and the English Lake District course for a field trip to Millom so that they could enjoy listening and experiencing NN's poetry in the locations which inspired him. This year proved more of a challenge as I attempted to recreate some of this 'lived in experience' virtually for the students. After a number of discussions with the Senior Lecturer in English Literature, Dr Penny Bradshaw, I was able to create a range of resources which showed the students the locations which NN wrote about accompanied by a reading of the poem that each one was based on.

On the day of their 'visit' we organised a session which included a video introduction by our chair Charlie Lambert, illustrated poems, readings by Janice Brockbank, answers to students' questions, and discussions about what they had all seen in order for them to experience the locality NN was writing about. It was also possible to do some filming in the attic of number 14 St George's Terrace which at least provided the students with an insight into an important part of NN's home. The feedback has been positive about this first 'virtual' event and Penny Bradshaw was very appreciative that the NNS was able to provide the current MA students with some 'lived in' experience of Nicholson's Millom.

The Millom Discovery Centre has recently rebranded and become the Millom Heritage and Arts Centre. There has also been some refurbishment during lockdown and some of the rooms have been moved including the Norman Nicholson one. In discussion with the Centre's staff it was explained to me that they have tried to make the Nicholson section more interactive and child friendly. However as the Centre is closed until May 17th it is not possible to report back about these changes until it re-opens.

As schools have been closed for large parts of the last 12 months there has been little opportunity to engage with them. However Antoinette Fawcett was able to provide learning resources for the NN poem to 'To the River Duddon' for the Haverigg School Hub in the hope that they might have been able to use them to produce some materials to be included in the forthcoming Wordsworth Trust exhibition. However this was not possible due to an emergency school closure and challenges over the curriculum during this difficult period. It is hoped that the local schools will be involved in the NN Festival in June and that they will be able to use the NN Learning Resource Files they were provided with last year to produce some materials for this event.

Sue Dawson
Schools & Community Liaison Officer

