

COMET, COMET ONLINE AND E-BULLETIN REPORT 2022-23

Members received two issues of *Comet* last year, in June and in November, and both were bumper **32-page issues** containing a great deal of interesting and original material, as well as news and updates on the activities of the Society. I expect the next issues to appear at similar points this year.

The **2022 late spring/early summer issue of *Comet*** demonstrated the broad range and scope of Nicholson's oeuvre and also looked at lesser known aspects of his life. As I said in my editorial "there are so many different ways of relating to Nicholson's life and work". Some of the key articles focused on song and singing, but there were also "mysteries to explore, memories to enjoy, some geology to understand, and plenty of social and personal history to help us place Nicholson and his work in a wider context." What I felt that this issue showed was that it was important to remember **the aesthetic and emotional impact of Nicholson's work and its historical and social breadth**. I was very pleased to welcome several writers new to the Society in this issue, including **Jean Crosbie**, who shared her memories of Nicholson's poetry readings at Wordsworth House in Cockermouth with us, and **Professor John T. Andrews**, a distinguished geologist, who wrote about his memories of Millom as it was when he was still a child and young man.

The **Autumn/Winter 2022 issue of *Comet*** is perhaps the one I am proudest of since starting to edit the magazine in 2006. It was themed around Nicholson's 1972 collection *A Local Habitation*, whose 50th anniversary we were celebrating last year. All the articles in this issue complemented each other and added a great deal to our knowledge both of Nicholson's life and his themes. I'd particularly like to thank **Ann Thomson** for sharing some of the insights of her valuable MA work on Nicholson with us; **Charlie Lambert** for his original research in the John Rylands Archive, exploring the relationship between Nicholson and various Liverpudlians; and the distinguished poet and critic **Roger Garfitt** for his poem in memory of Norman Nicholson and his lovely, humorous recollection of the warm friendship he had with Norman as a young man. I am, of course, grateful to all our writers, whether I have mentioned them by name or not. It is fantastic that so many of you continue to write for *Comet* on a regular basis. Without your hard work, there really would be no NN Society magazine.

As mentioned in last year's report, **Comet Online** continues to be a useful resource for both students and the wider public. It is still the intention to add further issues of

Comet to the website, hosted by Lancaster University, when time allows. Each issue has to be carefully prepared and redacted, and each article within each issue has to be put, by hand, into a format which makes it searchable. Individual articles are downloadable from the website, as well as complete, redacted issues. So, it is not just a question of uploading an issue as a simple PDF, hence the backlog in terms of updating the website. However, new issues of *Comet* still appear on the Members' Area of our website as PDFs and in exactly the same format in which they were published. If you prefer to read online, rather than in paper format, this is a resource which is exclusive to our membership.

Nine **e-bulletins** have been sent to members since last March, two of them in the new online format that I have tested over the past couple of months. The e-bulletin is intended to be a swift way of communicating with our members and contains news about our events and other activities, as well as updates on the Norman Nicholson House Project and Appeal. I am also happy to publish relevant **Member News** here. Please send such news in good time, especially if you wish to advertise an event in which you are involved.

I make the e-bulletin available to people who are not members of the Society as well as to members. It is a way for them to keep in touch with what is going on, even if they don't want to commit to membership.

I hope that our members are enjoying **the new online version of the bulletin**, which is accessed by clicking on the visual link in the emails I send you. I can still send you a plain PDF of the same content in the older format that I used, if you would prefer. Just contact me by email to request that.

Last year I mentioned a few **outreach and networking activities** that the Society has been involved in, which were outwith the remit of the other reports. In case the following are not mentioned elsewhere, I'd like to take the opportunity of reminding members about **Laura Day's** online lecture on Millom and the Ironworks in Nicholson's 1954 collection, *The Pot Geranium*, in May last year, in collaboration with the University of Cumbria as part of their Cultural Landscapes series. Laura also gave a talk on Nicholson's representations of Cumbrian Space in November at St. Michael's Church in Workington, as well as attending and presenting her work on Nicholson at a number of academic conferences. I can't stress sufficiently how important it is that her voice has been heard speaking about Nicholson's work in so

many different arenas. We are very proud of her fire, energy and wisdom, and wish her well in whatever area of work or research she will focus on after her doctorate.

Other activities not mentioned in other reports include the representation of the Norman Nicholson Society at the **LitHouses conference weekend in Halifax** in October and at the **Cumbria Archive Service 60th Anniversary History Fair** in Carlisle in October, as well as our attendance at the **South Cumbria Musical Festival** to watch children performing their recitations of Nicholson's poem 'In a Word'. Glenn Lang and I were your representatives at all these events.

Between *Comet*, **Comet Online**, the **e-bulletin**, and our **wide range of outreach and networking activities**, we really are doing our utmost to keep Nicholson's work in the public eye and make it clear to potential new readers that he continues to have great and perhaps even increasing relevance for our current era.

Antoinette Fawcett

22nd March 2023