

Name	Dorothy Richardson
Relationship to NN	Knew him through school and work
Interviewer	Charlie Lambert
Date of recording	20/9/17
Location	Millom
Dur	23'50
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*Note: this is not a verbatim transcript, but a guide to what topics were discussed. For quoting purposes, the original audio should be consulted.*

Top: how first got to know about Nicholson the poet – as a schoolgirl, heard his typewriter tapping away. Big display in local shop window, in the 1940s.

We were really working class so never mixed in those circles. Only time I heard about academic world was when Montague Slater visited.

02.45 how first met NN. I worked for the Gas Board, was asked to go and see him, went to his house, the back door, saw his stepmother, she said Norman was busy, 'you know what these men are like'! Went back later, he was v charming, arranged for him to come to showroom to have photo taken for Gas Board magazine.

04.20 how he came across as a person – I used to hear about him and Yvonne courting. Got to know him more when we opened a gift shop around the corner from No 14, got to know Yvonne mostly because she was in and out of the shop. Saw NN in church, very nice, quiet, gentlemanly, would speak to everyone. His reputation? I'm not academic, his books looked a bit highbrow, didn't hear a lot about him, not till 1960s that really got to know them. Remember one day Yvonne came in excited because she had a Sheila Fell painting which she showed us.

07.40 Importance of Yvonne in his work. He didn't drive, Yvonne had a car. Gradually I saw more of him. We had Millom Arts committee meetings at No 14 because Yvonne was on the committee. He seemed to come out more when he got married. I saw him more about the town. One evening, reading at Millom School, he was wonderful but when spoke to Yvonne afterwards and asked why he didn't read more often in Millom and she said it was because they always wanted it for charity, they wanted it for free and didn't realise that it was his livelihood. So I think he did quite a lot of reading outside Millom.

10.30 Relationship between NN and Millom? Working class town, I don't think anyone paid a lot of attention to him. His academic friends were in awe but the ordinary people weren't. When I told a friend I was in the NN Society he was very disparaging. Norman wouldn't contribute to a collection after the war – he had never forgiven him. It's changed now. People here are generally better off. Particularly through the NN Society people accept him a lot more than they did in 40s and 50s.

12.30 He's had a big effect, in Millom and wider fields. I've been amazed to find out how famous he is. Recalls Norman reading 'Weeds' in the church (*St George's*) when celebrating church's centenary

in 1977. Quiet sense of humour, like when he dropped his cap on my daughter's head when he came to visit. Kindness to kiddies. Twinkle in his eye, a nice man.

15.00 Talks about his father's shop and the two other outfitters in the town. Mr Nicholson had a lovely little shop but I had impression it was high class, so I never went in. I did buy my husband Tony a shirt there once. It was too small anyway! Working classes went to Bradley's.

16.30 Norman's visit to the Gas Board to have his photo taken. Used to see Rose (*his stepmother*) daily, she must have been middle class, went out to buy all the food where we all learned to cook.

18.10 Memories of the Ironworks closure. Had only had our shop four years. It was a big shock. My brother was serving his time as a draughtsman – he was thrown out of work. But I could see ahead because we were trying to attract tourists; ahead of our time. We did well with tourists. Selfishly, we thought it was good because it would clean the area up. My sister and me had decided to re-start the Chamber of Trade. People were happy to join but none of them would attend meetings! The apathy. We heard people had carried an empty coffin up to the town. I said how tasteless and horrible. Following day the local paper said Millom Chamber had organised the coffin. So we wrote to disassociate ourselves. Horrible time.

22.40 Looking back, see Norman had made heck of an impact, also on environmental issues, found out later how anti-nuclear he was. A man after my own heart.