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| Name | Peggy Troll |
| Relationship to NN | friend |
| Interviewer | Charlie Lambert |
| Date of recording | 13/9/17 |
| Location | Millom |
| Dur Part 1 | 21'44 |
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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.

PART ONE

How did you become aware of Norman?

At school. He was a notable figure. Smart, dapper. Lionised at the time. When there was a broadcast he would be brought into the school.

Was he the local star?

Yes, in a way. People were beginning to cotton on he was a writer of note. In the 1940s and 50s, he was lionised in London as a new talent, although I don't think he reached his peak till much later.

How did you get to know him individually?

I went to university in Nottingham. He came to talk to the Literary Society. My professor was – can't remember his name, South American I think. I went to Norman's talk with my friend. Norman talked to us, he was delighted to find we came from Millom. We got on really well. (Later) my dad was really ill and (by then) I was teaching at Workington. I needed to be close to him so I got a job at the new comprehensive school in Millom. I had been Head of Dept at Workington but in Millom I was second to Yvonne (Nicholson's wife). That was fine, I was glad to get a job near home. When Yvonne got breast cancer and retired I took over.

5 mins on timeline:

I had opportunities to go somewhere else but didn't want to. When Yvonne died I went to see Norman. Yvonne and I had both been on Millom Arts. I offered to help Norman. He said it would help him if I could drive him to places. Our lives became intertwined.

6 mins 30:

Our friendship became deeper and closer. My mum was diagnosed with cancer. Norman was an absolute rock. Se were all very close by then, as a family. Norman passed his enthusiasms on to me. My mum bought all his books and my friend gave me The Lakers. Norman was an education in the Lake District. But the circumstances were very difficult. Before my mum died he told her he would look after me.

9 mins 15:

I knew he loved me. It was an awful shock to find he'd left me the residue of his estate (in his will). Not the full amount, just the residue. People thought he should have left it to the town. One person made it public in the paper that I had been left everything but I hadn't. It was a very difficult time.

10 mins 25:

It was harrowing. I realised how much he thought of me.

How was Norman's work regarded? What was his reputation in Cumbria?

He wasn't really recognised. He was, on a general level, for opening things and giving readings. But the mining community never really took him over. There was such a big difference.

12 min 16:

Why did the activities of ordinary people captivate him so much?

Norman said he had never thought about writing about people but then (unclear reference to a piece of writing) he realised that there was a lot of material in the town.

13 mins 35:

What was it like when you were driving him? What was he interested in?

Flowers, plants, rocks. We would stop the car and he would show me things, remember the bog asphodel.

Did he have favourite places?

I can't remember.

14 mins 45:

What do you think about the way his appearance changed over the years?

I was startled when he grew the whiskers. Yvonne encouraged him, a sort of Wordsworth image. Before, he was vert smart, till he married Yvonne.

16 mins 00:

Can you describe what it was like inside his father's shop at 14 St George's Terrace?

All shelves. Gents outfitters, drawers for collars etc. The counter. Back wall had bigger drawers. He had the contract for the school uniforms. Good quality. I got my first uniform there – green and black.

17 mins 50:

And when you went there in later life?

There was a stool beside the fire, from when it belonged to his grandma. Fireplace, tiles, scrolls. His armchair in the corner. On the wall a picture of a map of the Lake District. There's a photograph that shows that. The TV. Yvonne put up tartan wallpaper. She was very artistic. Sage green colour, with orangey overtones. Upstairs, she had striped wallpaper in the sitting room, and walls painted white. It was more modern.

Was there a kind of feeling when you went in?

I always enjoyed going there. We used to hold meetings there when Yvonne was in charge.

(end of audio part one)