

NNS Secretary's Annual Report, 2022-23

A summary of the Society's key events are listed below not otherwise covered in other committee officers' reports. It's safe to say that The Norman Nicholson Society has offered a fantastic range of varied events maintaining a local and online presence for members during the previous year.

AGM 2022, April 23rd held online by Zoom

Over the previous 12 months NNS membership increased and the society started this year in a sound financial position. Society members can find detailed reports from our officers in the Members' Area on the Norman Nicholson website.

Four committee members whose three-year terms had expired were re-elected: Antoinette Fawcett, Charlie Lambert, Glenn Lang and Sue Dawson. Our thanks to all members who attended and especially to Laura Day who presented a superbly researched and constructed talk on Nicholson's 1948 collection Rock Face after the AGM formalities were complete.

Spring Event - GeoWeek Cumbria 2022, May 14th

As part of Cumbria GeoWeek, '**Saturday Morning Geology**' was a walk and talk led by Brian Whalley of the University of Sheffield and the Norman Nicholson Society. It included a walk around central Millom to look at the geology in and around the town. In the afternoon Antoinette Fawcett, Glenn Lang and Brian Whalley led a talk and discussion about 'A Local Habitation' which was a focus throughout most of the year. Nicholson's 1972 volume includes poems linking geology and Millom (Great Day, The Borehole, Bee Orchid at Hodbarrow, Scree, Hodbarrow Flooded, On the Closing of Millom Ironworks etc). Thanks to Brian the event was reported in the national GeoWeek Journal promoting The Norman Nicholson Society to a wider audience.

This took place at St George's Church. We are grateful to the Rev Carl Carter for permission to meet in the church.

Online Event - An Evening with Ruth Sutton, July 27th 2022

The Norman Nicholson Society was delighted to organise 'An Evening with Ruth Sutton', held online via Zoom. Ruth Sutton is one of Cumbria's most successful contemporary novelists, having published two series of novels set in West Cumbria since 2012. She has now turned her talents to drama, commissioned by Copeland's Deep Time project. Her debut play, 'The Day the Ironworks Closed', set at the time Millom ironworks closed in 1968 with such devastating consequences for the town, was premiered successfully to full houses at the Beggar's Theatre on November 4th and 5th 2022. Ruth joined us on Zoom to talk about the play and how it reflects the legacy of Norman Nicholson, and also to answer a range of questions about her novels and her writing career in general. A video recording of the event is available on our [YouTube channel](#).

Pop-Up Exhibition: A Face, A Place, A Root. Sept 17th 2022, No. 14 St George's Terrace, Millom

A one-off exhibition was organised in Norman Nicholson's old home to coincide with National Heritage Week and mark the 50th anniversary of his collection 'A Local Habitation'. This gave visitors the chance to see many of Nicholson's possessions which are not generally on view to the public, as well as setting foot inside his lifelong home and hearing audio recordings of Norman reading his own poems in the place where he wrote them. Thanks to Sue Dawson for accommodating the society's plans once again.

Celebrating A Local Habitation, November 26th 2022, Online, using Zoom

An afternoon of readings and discussion to continue the society's events to mark the 50th anniversary of Nicholson's 1972 collection, introduced by Antoinette Fawcett and led by our committee members Jack Threlfall Hartley and Laura Day. We were delighted to welcome attendees from across the UK and beyond. The event focused on five poems: *The Borehole*, *Windscale*, *The Elm Decline*, *An Absence of Islands*, and *Boo to a Goose*.

Commemorative Event marking Norman's 109th Birthday: January 8th 2023 at No. 14 St George's Terrace and St George's Church, Millom. 'Speaking to Our Times'

We gathered in Norman's lifetime home and enjoyed a series of readings of Nicholson's poems, chosen to celebrate Norman's poetry that engaged with and spoke to his own times and which continues to speak powerfully to us today, whether on the subject of war in Europe, climate change, or living with difficult circumstances. After the first few readings - which included an audio recording of Nicholson himself reading *The Whisperer* - we made our way to St George's Church where the rest of the event took place, followed by refreshments, a birthday cake, and a special song in honour of Norman composed and sung by Antoinette Fawcett. Our thanks to Rev Carl Carter for permission to meet at St George's.

The Society was pleased to offer a 'hybrid' option for this event and were delighted to welcome attendees from around the UK and beyond.

Thanks must go to every committee member who played their part in organising and supporting each event.

Janice Brockbank
March 2023

Secretary: The Norman Nicholson Society