

NICHOLSON FOUND

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Phil Houghton

Locality, identity and 'local distinctiveness' resound in the opening pages of *England in Particular* by Sue Clifford and Angela King of Common Ground, published by Hodder & Stoughton, noted as 'A Celebration of the commonplace, the local, the vernacular and the distinctive'. This book, in itself, has a real distinctiveness, capturing a sense of place and of places, at every turn of its pages. It is no surprise, therefore, to encounter Norman Nicholson in the folds of its captured landscapes and amongst the layering of humankind, set between the hedged edges of its encyclopaedic field patterns.

Within the descriptions of landscape features, games, names, local traditions, wildlife and too much more to describe here, there is a wealth of locality and Nicholson is drawn upon for three references, in support of entries in the book's A to Z layout. The entry for 'Becks' quotes from Nicholson's poem 'Beck' (*Sea to the West*, Faber & Faber, 1981) from the line 'Motionless to the eye', down to, and including 'In the blink of a lifetime.'

Echoes of Nicholson describing the gurning encountered at Egremont, are to be found in the entry for 'Crab Fair', included as an extract from Nicholson's *Cumberland & Westmorland*, Robert Hale, 1949.

'Hound Trailing' sees us on the trail of Nicholson again, where the definition for this entry in the book gains significant support from the inclusion of Nicholson's description of the sport, taken from his prose writings in *Cumberland & Westmorland*. Here, in the chosen quotation, we see a real layering of Nicholson's concept of a Greater Lakeland and its industry, through his listing of those who attend the trails – '...bookie, miner, shipyard- and steel-worker and clerk mix with farmer, farm-labourer and squire' (*Cumberland & Westmorland*, Robert Hale, 1949).

We remain on Nicholson's trail, where the poet's writings and references to his work become the aniseed drag, to be followed into the craggy crevices of library shelves, across the fell-side curves of back copy magazines, a scree of paper clippings from the local press and lately from within solid collections of place and of people, as laid down here by Common Ground – track down England in Particular and wherever else you can, Nicholson in particular.

Philip Houghton

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