A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IET NORTHUMBRIA NETWORK
RETIRED MEMBERS’ SECTION AFTER 26 YEARS AND COUNTING

Yes, fellow members, 26 years on and still going. Our thanks go to Alan Harkness, one of the original members for his memories that are detailed below. It was unfortunate that the Covid pandemic prevented a celebration of 25 years at the appropriate time.

In October 1997 Alan Jarvis contacted a few members of the then NE centre who were retired, with the suggestion of forming a retired members’ section; they were invited to an informal meeting at Van Mildert College, University of Durham. The idea was well received, and Alan Jarvis became the first chairman, with Robert (?) Tindale as secretary and Alan Harkness as treasurer. The late Arthur Sheel, a member of Westerhope Methodist Church, was able to get the hall hire at an advantageous rate and here we have remained ever since. Robin Brooks, our current Hon. Sec. is both a retired engineer and Methodist Minister and has also had a long association with this venue. Having served his time as chairman, Alan Jarvis was given the title of Hon President, which he held until his death in 2010.

Possibly the most remembered Hon. Sec. will be John Cure, who served both the Local Network and the RM’s for a great many years. He continued to be an active member until his death in his 90’s in February 2021. His widow, Judith, still attends our meetings.

We presently have about 60 members, partners and friends who attend our meetings and we look forward to welcoming new members to the group; there is no need to be an IET member to join the group. We also have cross links with the other retired members groups in the other Institutions (ICE, IMechE, IoP etc)

Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Westerhope where a fork buffet is provided before a talk. Most topics are covered in our lectures apart from technical matters – local history proving to be very popular. In the four summer months we organise various interesting visits across the local area. A copy of this year’s programme is enclosed for your information.

In December we hold a convivial Christmas lunch at a local hostelry.

Membership fees are £5 a year to cover admin costs; meetings typically cost £15 per person and include the excellent fork buffet and speaker fees. Meeting details are published in advance and a “calling notice” is circulated about 3 weeks before each meeting so places can be reserved. Please contact our Hon. Sec., Robin Brooks, or myself Ed Dinning if you would like to join our group, you will be made most welcome.

Ed Dinning

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