

History of the North Eastern Section

The first mention of the North Eastern Section is in Eric Barrass's Secretary's notes, Bulletin No: 50 in September 1968. Eric had obviously been talking to Peter Knighton about our section with the result that Peter said he was willing to have a stab at getting something going in the north east next year. A year later in September 1969 Peter Knighton became the North Eastern Section Secretary and the section was born. Although we had a secretary nothing happened rally wise although Peter was always cheerful at the end of the phone.

After two years Peter's name was no longer on the Section Secretary's list but in January 1972 Edwin Smith who was a great friend of Peter penned the first North Eastern Section Notes asking members to support his first rally to Wallington Hall in Northumberland, on 20th May 1972. We had a new Section Secretary.

Bulletin No:73 in 1972 the North Eastern Section News reported a successful first rally at Wallington Hall with a photo of the cars present, this event was also supported by the Austin Club. May 1973 saw the second Wallington Hall Rally which was better than the first with more cars attending, then Wilf Davis came on the scene with the idea of starting a new section to cover North Yorkshire and South Durham and later, Cumbria.

Those present at the first meeting in the Golden Lion at Northallerton were Doug Thomas, Richard Harrison, Don Reed, Ian Hick, Eddie Neille, Edwin Smith, Bill McGarr, Peter Knighton and Gordon Blacklock.

November 1973 the first entry of the North York's & South Durham, the Section Secretary was Wilf Davis. At the second meeting, Wilf suggested that we held our monthly meetings at the Vintage Hotel near Scotch Corner. These meetings were never as well attended but survived, numbers varied depending upon the weather.

1974 saw the fourth Wallington Hall Rally, again organised by Edwin Smith. Members present were Mr & Mrs Les Dickinson, Ian Wilton, Peter Knighton, Ian Turnbull, David Sills and Ed Dixon.

1974 also saw the first Durham Castle weekend organised by club member Robin Mills who was a lecturer at the University, and did it for three years. Things were ticking over throughout the region but we only had two RREC events in that year. We were kept entertained with invitations to events with other car clubs in the area. Then in 1977 things changed, Wilf Davis informed us that the two sections were going to amalgamate and would continue to be called the North Eastern Section, Wilf would be secretary and Edwin would assist. Wilf Davis tried very hard to arouse interest in events in the Teesside area. It was then that Bill McGarr gave a silver cup as a trophy for the Teesside Rally but to no avail, the event was cancelled and the Trophy sat on the shelf for a few years.

In March 1978 Richard Harrison and Gordon Blacklock decided to produce a monthly news letter of which the first edition was published in April of that year. Another mile stone was bringing Cumbria into our area and that decision was well received by members over there.

In June Wilf announced his decision to retire as Section Secretary and Gordon Blacklock took over as caretaker secretary. An AGM was held on the 18th July attended by Roy Brooks, then Club Vice Chairman and Messrs McGarr, Smith, Harrison, Chapman, Neille and Wilson. Gordon Blacklock was nominated, and accepted the position of Section Secretary. Roy Brooks suggested that Wilf become Section Chairman, which he accepted. Barry Chapman became Treasurer and Richard Harrison joint Editor with Gordon.

Hardwick Hall at Sedgfield was chosen as the new venue for our meeting of which took place in The Cellar Bar on the 13th September 1978 of which 22 members and friends attended. The following month we held our first Annul Dinner with equally good turnout. The fifth Durham Castle Weekend took place also took place in September, attended by some 30 members and friends in 21 cars.

In November 1978 Wilf Davis resigned as Chairman and as one came forward to take the post the section operated with one for a number of years. 1979 was the 10th anniversary of the North Eastern Section, and when Gordon received on behalf of the section "The Section Trophy" from Roy Brooks in recognition of the section that had made the most progress in the previous year. Also in that year, the Northern, East Midlands, Yorkshire and North Eastern Sections joined forces to form the North of England Rally at Harewood which is still going strong to this day.