History Activities Coordinator — Anthony Davies

Goals

1) Encouraging proposals for IEEE History Milestones in all Sections of Region 8;
2) Encouraging students and early career professionals to take an interest in the history of technology (to enable them to make better inventions, developments etc. in the future;
3) Collaboration with IEEE History Center and History Committee in all relevant aspects;
4) Developing and observing the content of the ETHW Wiki, and trying to ensure that it gives good and accurate coverage of Region 8 aspects;
5) Encouraging oral histories and documents describing the lives and contributions of important people in Region 8 in IEEE-relevant subjects.

Progress against goals since the last report

A major activity not yet completed has been getting the HISTELCON2019 papers and other documents ready for submission to IEEE Xplore, which has involved much work especially by the Local Arrangements Chair, James Irvine. This is not yet complete but nearly so. A particular problem which was unforeseen is that the PDFs of the presented papers were in a version of PDF which IEEE does not accept, and a substantial conversion process was needed and has only recently been finished.

There are many plans for History Milestones suggested and in progress, and a few have been approved and dedication ceremonies are being arranged for them.

A list of the many suggested Milestones will be made in time for the R8 Committee meeting.

History Activities participation in conferences, meetings or other events

I attend the meetings of the UK&I Life Members AG, whose main activity is Milestone planning. I also attend 'history related' meetings of other organisations as far as possible (LEO Computers Society, British Society for the History of Mathematics, Computer Conservation Society, etc.). An 'audit' of existing Milestones in UK&I Section is being discussed, since there is uncertainty about the location of a few of them

History Activities activities/initiatives planned

Among other topics discussed is the idea of having cheap easily replaceable QR codes alongside existing History Milestone Plaques, to provide more information than is on the Citation.

History Activities activities/initiatives developed

Work towards the QR code idea described above (note that many people have QR code readers on their smart phones so this will reach many more visitors to Milestone locations.

Proposals for improvements

Continue to encourage IEEE members and others to take part in the History activities.

Points of Concern

Lack of volunteers willing to maintain an interest in these topics sufficient to do volunteer work on them over extended periods, and finding 'apprentices' to become involved and develop into the future leaders.

Other Issues to report

Need to discuss whether HISTELCON proceedings in IEEE Xplore should be made free to view since many of those interested do not have access to IEEE Xplore without high payment costs and this means that many cannot afford to view the papers.