

The Milestone Society Policy Guidance Note
The Milestone Society is a Registered Charity - No 1105688
www.milestonesociety.co.uk

Archives & Records

of milestones, mileposts, fingerposts and other wayside markers

This Guidance Note sets down the approach adopted by the Society on behalf of its own records, those of its members past and present, and the accumulated records compiled by other individuals, groups & societies, and private and public bodies.

The area of interest is that of the Society generally, within its primary Aim “to identify, record, research, conserve and interpret for public benefit the milestones and other waymarkers of the British Isles”. This Aim is set within the wider context of historic road signage in general.

Archives are defined as those records, of whatever form, which represent the history, development and activities of (a) the Society itself, (b) the work of the Society through its membership, and (c) the work of others of which the Society has knowledge or of which it might be given custodianship.

It is recognised that such records may be disparate in nature, scattered or varied in format over time, but which when accumulated together may represent a valuable (and sometimes the only) record of some part of roadside heritage (artefacts, information and history), and with long-term historical value.

The Note does not discriminate on the *quality* of such records beyond accepting their potential if not actual historical value, and leaves any such discrimination to a later stage of assessment of value in the longer-term. The Society has a primary concern here with offering guidance on procedures to ensure that archives and records are not lost through any lack of interest or sense of value in the short-term. It is known that much material may be relatively ephemeral in nature and that its historical value may not necessarily be readily apparent to others.

It is also recognised that by their nature some records are themselves impermanent, e. g. some film and photographic materials, which further adds to the requirement to develop an overall strategy of care for the long-term.

Format of archives by individuals or groups may vary considerably, and include:

- Notes, files, field-notes, site drawings, manuscripts etc representing information-gathering over time
- Map information, from both primary and secondary sources
- Copies of official data e.g. acts of parliament
- Published material, i.e. books, journals, press cuttings etc
- Photographs, in print, slide or digital format, with (it is hoped and encouraged) supporting catalogue or listing information
- Oral or film records, captured by a variety of equipment

The Society has its own archive of documentation, including:

- Minutes, meetings history, Guidance Notes, etc since its inaugural meeting in October 2000
- Its publications programme, principally of its *Newsletter* (twice-annually since July 2001), *On The Ground* (seven issues annually between Sept. 2004 and Sept. 2010) and *Milestones & Waymarkers* (seven issues, now annually and incorporating *On The Ground*, since 2004). Supporting files are maintained on the contents of each of these publications. Deposit copies are placed in the appropriate public libraries and archives, and this distribution is periodically reviewed.

The Society has also been given or bequeathed archives from various sources since its inception in Millennium Year 2000. This includes, for example, 'several large collections of historic photographs from as early as the 1930s. The Ken Diamond archive provides a collection of unique illustrations to guide restoration work as well as being a reminder of the quieter roadsides of times past.'

Full use is made by the Society of such material in the compilation, development and maintenance of its Database(s) and the on-line Repository, which are its primary means of disseminating information on individual milestones, mileposts, and other wayside markers.

Another notable archive, the Jack Ward collection of slides etc, was deposited in the National Monuments Record [NMR], now the English Heritage Archive in Swindon, one of the principal national archives. Smaller collections from individual members, some now deceased, continue to be offered to the Society.

A number of members and others have expressed interest (and concern) that their own work should be properly archived under some future arrangement. In this context the Society conducted a 'survey of relevant materials and resources' amongst the membership in 2009, which produced much useful information, but also revealed the scattered nature of both the material itself and its ownership.

This Guidance Note summarises an overall and integrated Society policy on archives which it is accepted will continue to develop over time. It has seven primary strands:

➤ Policy One

The Society is fully supportive of the retention of archives, in all their forms, against neglect or loss, and is prepared to act as an agent towards preservation in any suitable way, using expertise amongst the membership to advise any particular member, individual or group on procedures and contacts. In offering advice, the Society will have regard to (a) existing deposits of similar material, (b) accessibility in all its forms, (c) geographical balance, and (d) implications for future resources.

➤ Policy Two

Where the nature, provenance and subject matter of any one collection relates primarily to a defined geographical or topographical area, the Society's view is that such an archive is best housed in the relevant repository for that area or region.

➤ Policy Three

The Society recognises the national framework *and statutory provision* of archives and record offices (repositories), based on historic counties, urban centres and more

recently unitary authorities. Given the statutory protection afforded such depositories, they should, in the Society's view take priority.

An example of such a deposit might be:

“Survey of Milestones of Eastern Yorkshire

Contains a survey of milestones within the boundaries of the pre 1974 East Riding of Yorkshire. Includes 35mm colour slides to illustrate the text. The slides were originally stored with other slides in an album known as 'D' album. These were extracted. These documents are held at: East Riding of Yorkshire Archives and Records Service”

➤ Policy Four

It is also recognized that a large number of other archives exist, fulfilling a range of local, regional, national and special-purpose functions, and these too provide potential homes. As an umbrella organization at national level for England, the National Archives provides an overview of such a spread of resources, accessible via its Archon listings on its website www.apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon. This is the NA's information gateway for all repositories which have collections indexed in the National Register of Archives. Amongst special- or single-purpose repositories, those housed in Local Studies collections, University library Special Collections, and single-purpose archives (of which the Mills Archive Trust is one example) may have special relevance.

➤ Policy Five

It is also recognized that throughout the British Isles specific arrangements apply, and in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (Northern Ireland and Ireland) the role of the national archive in each case will vary. Where material might be considered of nation-wide significance, the appropriate national archive is recommended, especially where an attempt has been made by the original compiler(s) to create a nation-wide representative archive for that purpose. The NMR at Swindon is a national and relevant archive for England.

➤ Policy Six

Whichever repository is chosen for any particular archive, the Society asks all parties involved to ensure that a suitable note to that effect is submitted for publication in a Society publication, so that the membership and the wider community may be kept informed.

➤ Policy Seven

For its own 'business' archive, which covers the whole of the British Isles, the Society has yet to reach a view as to which repository is the most appropriate for deposition. In making its decision, the Society will have regard to all the above.

Approved by the Milestone Society Exec Cttee on 07 Feb 2015 (item 9).

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