Notes on Entering Data

The legacy of over two hundred years of yachting is a vast collection of material of historical importance reflecting the innovativeness that is characteristic of this community. The British National Yachting Archive has been established as a virtual archive, to provide a window on this resource and to ensure the proper preservation of documents and artefacts. As it is not an established collection, it is dependent upon the museums, physical archives and private collectors to update the information and tools are provided on the site for this.

The reason for developing the Archive is to consolidate what is known about the community - it has impacted every part of Britain and, although "National" in its formation, sailing has always been very international with designers, builders, owners, etc. combining from across the globe so "British" material could exist almost anywhere. The Archive will enable researchers and educationalists to make best use of the material without spending unnecessary time tracking down something that may or may not exist. To this end, the longer term aim is to provide on-line access through the digitisation of material to improve retrieval by users. Resources will be added to assist projects such as school projects researching local history as well as assisting researchers with more academic intent.

It is not our aim to possess any material, but to point users to it, although we will aim to find a suitable home for material that otherwise is at risk. Any rights attaching to commercially useful material, such as photographs or drawings will be preserved.

The Archive will inevitably be incomplete but will expand indefinitely as more material is discovered and identified and as time inexorably adds yet more history, and this can only be achieved with the co-operation of those who are aware of its existence. Building from scratch, the aim is to:

- identify collections
- catalogue the contents of collections
- digitise the content to enable on-line viewing
- and, capture history in the making

The first priority is to find out where material is held and what is in each collection. Some will be well documented, others less so and about which little may be known. The digitisation programme will be initiated once sufficient resources are available. Meanwhile, selected collections will be reviewed and tests undertaken to develop appropriate formats and interfaces. There is considerable concern that material is being lost as individuals and organisations dispose of old material. To this end, the web site provides a number of tools:

- **Directory**: describes each known repository of collections and is built from input forms that identify the general nature of the collection and its profile, along with contact details. Contact details will not be published for private collections unless permitted by the owner, but requests will be passed to owners if someone is interested.

- **Catalogue**: describes each item in a collection. If a catalogue already exists, we will endeavour to either interface with it if available on-line, or publish it. If not available, we will provide an on-line inputting system so that a catalogue can be built or try to provide resources to do so.
- **Alert System**: if anyone is aware of material that might be at risk, a notification system is provided and we will endeavour to "rescue" it and find a suitable home. Access to these facilities may be provided for collections where there is concern that the existing storage conditions are inadequate for archival purposes. Although actual boats are out of scope, we will maintain a register of boats at risk and encourage restorers to take on key projects.

Directory

All information is held in a database off-line - information provided is checked and imported then published to the web. It is by this means that the database can be protected from spam and the validity of the data can be maintained. The web site will be populated as quickly as information is provided and resources can be made available to edit it. The structure will expand to accommodate the increased scale of information and facilitate navigation and a longer term ambition is to develop innovative search capabilities to facilitate locating information.

The structure of the directory is hierarchical and extensively hyper-linked to facilitate navigation.

There is a separate book directory so that users can identify which organisations hold copies of any book.
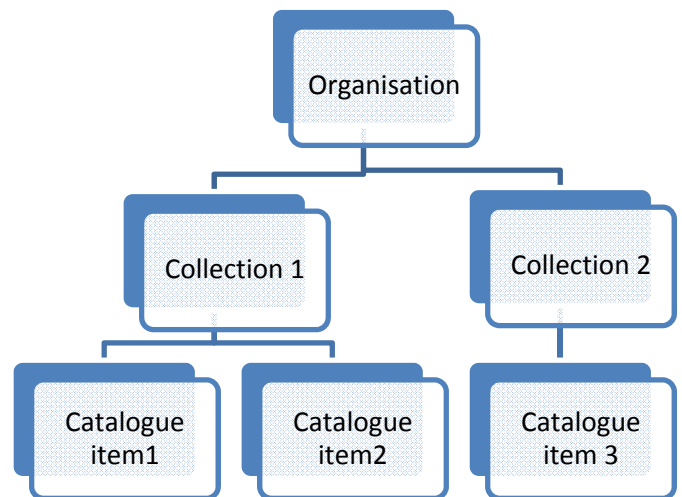
As general principle, organisations, collections and catalogue items are given IDs to facilitate the relational nature of the information, and these are displayed between square brackets, e.g. [1234], so that they can be easily identified and used in the inputting forms.

Inputting

All the inputting procedures are suitable for both private and public collections -- they will be treated differently on output to protect the identity of private individuals and, except with permission, contact will need to be made through BNYA. If any organisation has a collection that it would prefer not to be identified with the organisation, perhaps for security reasons such as extremely valuable books, then create an additional organisation entry as a private collection for these.

There are five input forms:

- **Organisation**: to add information about the organisation and contact details
- **Collections**: to add information about the collection(s) held by the organisation
- **Catalogue - Items**: to add information about items in each collection

- **Catalogue - Books**: to add information about books in each collection
- **At Risk**: to add information about boats at risk

Users of these tools will be required to register and any submissions they make will be logged.

Any information submitted will be reviewed and added to our database, and only then published to the web. Contact details must be provided but will only be published with permission and eMail addresses will be published in a secure form to prevent spam crawlers from harvesting them.

Organisation

Each organisation or individual should provide a profile describing the general nature of the organisation and their role and interest in yachting history.

Each organisation/individual will be allocated an ID in order that information can be correctly attributed which should be submitted with your return if available. We may have already allocated an ID to you or your organisation which will be included in any eMail we send you, or check the directory where IDs will be published. Alternatively, once we receive your return, we will allocate and notify you or your organisation of an ID and it would be appreciated if that could be used with future submissions to help make sure it is correctly attributed.

- If the submission is **amended data**, it is only necessary to enter the changed data – select "amended input".
- **Type of Organisation**: select the most appropriate description. If none apply, then select "Other" and enter the details – we may re-allocate to a generic description and will develop this classification based on these entries.
- **Opening hours**: enter a description of your opening hours e.g.:
  "Closed until Jan 2009; Daily: Sat 14th Feb - Sat 28th Mar 10am to 4pm; Daily: Sun 29th Mar - Sat 24th Oct 10am to 6pm; Daily: Sun 25th Oct - Sun 1st Nov 10am to 4pm; Weekends: Nov 2009 10am to 4pm"
  If not usually open, check the box "Not open ..." and enter contact details under opening hours
- **Contact Details**: enter the name and eMail, etc. of the person responsible for yachting material – it is helpful to be specific and not use general addresses which add delay and frustration for users. All eMail addresses are obfuscated so that they cannot be collected by crawlers, although they will display correctly.
- **Publishable**: if private individuals are content for their details to be published, check this box.

Collection

A collection is defined as the holdings of an organisation or individual. An organisation may have several collections - a core collection that contains the general holdings and named collections, which contain a set of related items from a common source, such as drawings and documents from a design office or another collection donated to your organisation or to catalogue separately natural groupings such as a library, model collection or cups. Items not in a named collection should be assigned to the core collection of the organisation. Should you wish to include additional

information about your organisation such as advice on research, publications available, etc. create a named collection called "General Information" and add the items to that.

The collection record is a general description of the type of material – it will be allocated an ID which should be used when catalogue items are entered so that each item is attributed to the correct collection. Once a collection has been defined and you have been given an ID for it, you will then be able to enter catalogue data into it.

Enter at least one collection as a **Core collection**. Select "**Information**" to create a pseudo-collection to include references to additional information about your organisation such as advice on research, publications available, etc.. Select "**Named collection**" to describe any coherent sub-set of your holdings and give it a name - for instance, you may wish to set up a collection called "Library" in which to enter your book collection. You can re-submit this form with information on as many collections as necessary.

- If the submission is **amended data**, it is only necessary to enter the changed data – select "amended input".
- Check the boxes for the type(s) of information **contained** in this collection – complete "Other" if these descriptions are inadequate – we may re-allocate to a generic description and will develop this classification based on these entries
- Enter a descriptive **profile**
- Indicate whether the collection is already **catalogued** and whether it is available on-line. If so, we will be able to import your catalogue data from your current listings – please describe the format or nature of this data.

Catalogue

A catalogue entry can be created to describe each item within each collection. When you are entering data about items in a collection to build a catalogue, use the ID of the relevant, core or named, collection and we'll cross-link it to the collection of which it is a part - this will enable us to re-allocate a named collection if it subsequently becomes part of a collection of a different organisation. Each item will be allocated an ID.

Please consider the granularity of the data - it may not be necessary to catalogue every single item (e.g. every sheet in a file or each issue of a magazine collection) if they can be satisfactorily described as a group and are not likely to be separated. However, when we are able to digitise material, it would be helpful if items that would require a separate file are individually described. If the item is available on-line, add the URL so that users can link directly to it.

Please use the form **Items** for all items except books. **Books** are treated differently, since many organisations may hold copies of the same book - a separate book catalogue identifies which organisations hold copies of books.

- If the submission is **amended data**, it is only necessary to enter ID and the changed data – select "amended input". It is appreciated that it is just not possible to read every document as it is entered. Once an item has been entered, it will have a unique ID which will be

included in the published entry - to add classification data later, or indeed to make any amendment, enter this ID, then only changed data need be entered

- Enter the ID of the collection – required. You will not be able to enter catalogue data until this has been allocated and may be obtained from your page in the directory.
- **Type of Item**: select the most appropriate description. If none apply, then select "Other" and enter the details – we may re-allocate to a generic description and will develop this classification based on these entries.
- **Your ID**: the accession number or ID that you use in your catalogue so that the item can be referred back to your own records and located by users if they wish to view the item.
- **Title**: a short form description of the item
- **Full description**: describe as fully as possible to facilitate users finding the item using search facilities. Add **keywords** if helpful in that field.
- **Provenance**: describe why this item is of value to yachting history
- **Date**: some items will relate to specific dates, others to historic periods – enter whichever is appropriate. For a specific date, enter day/month/year. For a limited period, such as an event, enter month/year or just year. For a general periods, enter a description, such as "1930's" or "late-19th Century"

Ultimately, we want to be able to build a directory structure that enables information about specific boats or classes of boat or other specific subjects to be easily found.

- **Boat**: if the item relates to specific boat(s), enter the name(s) of the boat(s). Boat names will change but the actual boat may be identified from the date and class – the database links will only be undertaken once sufficient resources are available, but if we have the information to start with this then becomes possible. Also enter the class of boat if appropriate.
- If the boat cannot be identified, enter either the class or general type of boat
  Notes are provided on this classification structure.
- **Other**: it would be helpful to include some other classification data to facilitate building a more useful directory structure in due course. Enter any other relevant classification and we will build a structure based on these inputs – it is appreciated that some post-classification may be required once this has been developed, but if we have the information to start with this then becomes possible.

Books and magazines will be treated slightly differently in that many organisations may hold a copy of a book. The book catalogue will identify a book and all the organisations that hold a copy. If books are being entered, check the catalogue to see if it has already been entered and use the ID associated with the entry.

- **Location info**: add accession number/shelfmark/location data to facilitate users finding the book if they visit your organisation
- **Book details**: if the book is already in the catalogue and you have the ID, it is not necessary to complete author/publisher/description/category data unless your edition is different in some way. For instance, books get republished and revised editions released. However, do enter the title as confirmation that the ID is correct and do add any missing data.

Boat at Risk

This section is fairly self-evident – provide as much information as possible about its location and condition and a risk assessment. Information about its provenance may encourage restoration, such as designer, builder, past owner(s), achievements, etc. . If the name of the boat is unknown, describe the class or type of boat. You may need to research a boat to provide some of this information.

If you have any questions concerning these systems or suggestions for improving this explanation, please contact us