

Guidance Sheet No. 14: HELP with WRITING GOOD NOTES

There are three notes fields on the ERA record: **LOCATION NOTES**, **PANEL NOTES**, and **CONDITION & THREAT NOTES**. These are not intended to be extended essays or beautiful works of prose but should summarise your observations and include relevant information that cannot be recorded elsewhere on the recording form. This may be directed at future researchers or heritage managers. Specific instructions for each field are provided in Guidance Sheet 5. *Please try to ensure that there is minimal repetition between the three fields.* You may prefer to write brief notes in the field and expand them when you return, with the help of other reference material or Google Earth (see GS13).

The 'S' Rules

The following four 'S' rules apply to all three Note fields:

- **Sentences only.** Use full sentences rather than notes. Remember that this text will be published in the ERA database record. (You may wish to make notes in the field and then expand them at home);
- **Short and simple.** Avoid flowery descriptions – keep it brief and relevant. Save poetic thoughts for the website!
- **Strictly professional.** Keep it fairly formal and avoid personal comments such as 'I think...' or 'I felt...'. Don't refer to other team members, e.g. 'John found this panel'.
- **Spelling!** Please check through your notes, and ask other members of the team to read them too (they may disagree with some of your comments!)

Abbreviations

Use abbreviations for the following:

- All compass directions use e.g. use **NE** and not north east
- All units of measurement, e.g. use **m** and not metres
- All numbers when describing motifs, e.g. use **3 cup-marks** rather than three cup-marks
- All numbers in measurements, e.g. use **67m** rather than sixty-seven metres

Other acceptable abbreviations:

- IAG (Ilkley Archaeology Group)
- CSIRM (Carved Stone Investigations Rombalds Moor)
- Approx. (Approximately)
- Ca. (Circa)
- Deg. (The degree symbol will not be available in the final database)
- Dia. (Diameter)
- Max. (Maximum)
- Min. (Minimum)
- HER (Historic Environment Record)
- SAM (Scheduled Ancient Monument)
- NMR (National Monuments Record)
- BA (Bronze Age)
- EBA (Early Bronze Age)
- IA (Iron Age)
- RB (Romano British)

Please **do not** use the following:

- RA – Rock art (note: ‘rock art’ is not hyphenated)
- RM – Rombalds Moor

References to other parts of the form

It may be useful to make reference to other parts of the form within your notes, for example, the Panel Plan in Panel Notes, the Location Sketch in Location Notes, or the sections B10, 11 and 12 for Condition and Threat Notes. In all cases you should ensure that your comments match up between the fields and any references are consistent, if you refer to cups labelled ‘A’ in the Panel Plan, they should be present in the drawing!

References to other panels

Please refer to other panels using their full name, e.g. ‘Backstone Beck 07’. If the name is repeated several times then show the full name once with the abbreviation clearly indicated, for example ‘Backstone Beck 07 (BB7)’.

Example Location Notes

B3. Location Notes

For example, how to find the panel, its proximity to other panels or archaeological features,

the topography of the area, views and natural features etc

Rombald's Moor: Backstone Beck (E), Uckley Moor, E of beck, within ancient enclosure N of Nb288. [IAG2003]

The panel is situated on a flattish terrace, 70m E of the Backstone Beck (which flows in a steep gully), and 7m E of a well-defined track. The location affords extensive views across the Wharfe Valley towards the Middleton Moor / Beamsley area to the NW, through to Askwith Moor to the NE. The Haystack Rock (IAG302) is clearly visible on the horizon, 240m NNE (53 deg.). Two other rock art panels lie close by: Backstone Beck 07 (IAG288) is 20m SSE (170 deg.) and Backstone Beck 05 (IAG285) is 27m NNW (340 deg.). All three panels lie within a prehistoric curvilinear enclosure, Backstone Beck 06 being close to the centre. Further examples of prehistoric walling, substantial enclosures, and rock art within 300m (SE, NE, E x W) indicate significant prehistoric activity in the area. [CSIRM 2011]

Example Panel Notes

B7. Panel Notes (see over page for continuation)

E.g. description of the immediate context and form of the panel, the position and nature of the carvings and any other surface features, and any other comments, observations or impressions.

Small, flat, weathered rock. About eight cups, two basins, and three grooves [IAG 2003]

The rock is squarish in plan, with the carved upper surface sloping gently in several directions. Grooves indicated on the IAG drawing are heavily weathered, and additional channels (possibly natural) running roughly parallel are visible (indicated by dashed lines in the drawing). Some of the smaller cups in the group towards the southern edge are irregular in shape and very weathered. Both larger cups to the north have a dia. of 16 cm and approx. depth of 6 cm. [CSIEM 2011]

References:

Ilkley Arch. Grp. 1986, pp. 46, 93; Morris 1989, p. 84

Example Condition & Threat Notes

B11. Condition & Threat Notes

E.g. descriptions of condition or potential threats, information about access, ownership, or land management schemes.

Although generally weathered the panel shows little sign of severe erosion. Channels (or grooves) running in parallel down a slightly sloping surface may be the result of differential weathering. The panel is largely free of vegetation; small areas of crustose lichen present are not yet affecting the carved areas. Sheep droppings and some detritus (heather)

(B11. Condition & Threat Notes cont.)

were found in the deeper cups. No evidence of human damage was observed however the close proximity of a main trackway is a risk factor. The panel lies in an area that is subject to controlled burning (last burn ca. 2003/4).