

CURRENT GOOD PRACTICE FOR THE STORAGE OF PHYSICAL HISTORY ITEMS

What follows is a summary of good practice in regard to the appropriate methods for storing physical history and records typically used by Rotary clubs and groups. These guidelines are not provided as a policy, but are included here for reference.

1. Storage Buildings, Rooms or Areas

Where some choice is available, it is recommended that the following general criteria be used when choosing a suitable rooms or areas to house physical archives. More details on storage guidelines can be found in “Keep it for the Future” (2007) Pp 27-28 available from the National Archives in Canberra.

The building, room or area should ideally be:

- Weather proof
- Cool and dry
- Secure and lockable
- Situated above known flood levels
- Dark, and not subject to direct sunshine or ultra-violet light - with no windows or only small windows covered with thick drapes.

2. Storage Spaces

Within the building, room or area, storage spaces should ideally be:

- Positioned at least 10cm off the floor on blocks or pallets
- Not subject to leaks from plumbing
- Not subject to sunshine or ultra violet light
- Situated away from outside walls
- Maintained at a constant temperature as close to 20 degrees Celsius as possible (wide changes in temperature can damage many types of records)
- Regularly cleaned and kept free from dust

3. Storage Cupboards, Filing Cabinets or Chests

It is recommended that depending on the current funds and space available, one or more of the following formats be used for the storage of archives in the available storage space:

- Powder coated, lockable steel cupboards with no exposed areas that might rust (Fibreboard can emit vapours harmful to archives, and some wooden shelves harbour insects)
- Powder coated steel lockable 4 drawer filing cabinets
- Large, but portable storage chests that are weatherproof, lightproof, and preferably lockable.

4. Storage Containers, Covers & Labels

- a) Within cupboards, chests, and filing cabinets, it is recommended that archive items be stored individually in a range of containers, wrappings, folders or covers appropriate to each item. In general terms, these containers and wrappings should be:

Current Good Practice for the Storage of Physical History Items

- Made of archival quality, acid-free cardboard or stable plastic - NOT coloured paper, newspaper, or PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic that can eventually breakdown and leak harmful chemicals. “Bubble wrap” is suitable for 3D items.
- Used for just one item unless it can be determined that chemicals from one item will not leak into an adjacent item. (e.g. Inks from newspaper clippings and printed pages can eventually affect other sheets next to them)
- b) It is recommended that every item be securely labelled according to clearly established labelling guidelines

5. Storage of Physical Archive Items

Examples: Old versions of club flags, seals, trophies, plaques, models, sculptures, regalia items used in past events or meetings.

Selection: Only keep the really significant items since storage for these items is very costly. In general terms, keep items that are the oldest, and/ or directly connected with significant historical figures in the organization, and/ or of most financial value (e.g. a silver plated shield is of more financial value than one made in plastic), and/or fairly rare (because there are unlikely to be other copies around), and/ or not easily replicated.

Method:

- If a secure display cabinet is available in a weather-proof area frequented by members and/ or the public, it is recommended that interesting items not affected by light could be stored on permanent display.
- Otherwise, it is recommended that items be individually wrapped in approved materials such as bubble-wrap, or packed in archive quality boxes or tubes, clearly labelled and stored in recommended storage cupboards or portable chests.

6. Books or Bound booklets

Examples: History books of Rotary International or District 9780, history books of individual clubs, bound, handwritten minute books, annual reports, conference reports, bound policy documents.

Selection: One to two copies of all bound books and booklets would be kept for display or research. If space becomes an issue, bound reports might only be kept in original format from significant milestone occasions e.g. 5 and 10 year anniversaries or when hosting a major district event.

Method:

- If dates are not included with books, it is recommended that the date of production or publication be written in ball-point pen on all stored copies along with any other relevant information that may be useful to future historians.
- It is recommended that valuable books and booklets be stored individually in acid-free, archive quality plastic bags sealed with acid-free sticky tape.
- It is recommended that books be stored flat (NOT on their edges with spines facing upwards).
- It is recommended that as time permits, all valuable books and booklets be scanned into digital format (PDF) and stored using the recommended digital storage guidelines.

7. Paper Historical Records (as separate sheets -A4 / Foolscap size or less)

Examples: Minutes of past meetings, cuttings from newspapers and magazines concerning the District or the club, programs from annual meetings, conferences, changeover events, club and district newsletters and bulletins, historical receipts and contracts, typed or handwritten letters and documents, certificates, prints and posters, maps, architectural plans,

Selection: Since there are potentially so many of these items, only keep items in accordance with the

Current Good Practice for the Storage of Physical History Items

Acquisition statement - e.g. items of genuine historical importance or interest. This might mean that items are limited to milestone occasions.

Method:

- It is recommended that each page item be kept in a separate, acid-free plastic pocket and either stored flat in labelled archive boxes or in Lever arch folders.
- It is recommended that boxes or folders be stored in recommended filing cabinets, storage cupboards or portable archive chests (see above).
- It is recommended that as time permits, valuable paper records also be scanned into digital format (PDF) and stored using recommended guidelines.

8. Maps, Plans & Posters

Examples: paper items larger than A4/Foolscap size, plans of buildings, publicity posters of past Rotary events, Past maps of District boundaries etc.

Selection: Based on the Acquisition statement

Method:

- It is recommended that if fragile, these items are best wrapped in protective coverings and stored flat in map cabinets where available. Without such facilities, it is recommended that maps and posters be rolled and stored in separate, labelled postal cylinders.
- It is recommended that if these items are valuable, they also be scanned into digital format with professional equipment that can handle the larger size, and converted to PDF format as a backup to the original.

9. Photographs

Examples: paper photo prints, negatives, slides, digital photographs

Selection: Based on the Acquisition statement, and since it is becoming difficult to display and have negatives and slides developed, preference should be given to important paper photographs (after copies are made in digital format).

Method:

- Where paper photographs are currently stored in photo albums with sticky pages or PVC covers (which are NOT conducive to long term preservation of photographs), it is recommended that really valuable items in these collections be removed, scanned into digital format as a backup (see below), and then sandwiched between two sheets of plain white paper and stored in archive quality plastic pockets (NOT PVC) in labelled Lever Arch folders. The remaining paper photos should also be scanned into digital format, but may as well be left in their albums to last as long as they can.
- It is recommended that slide transparencies be scanned (as a back-up) into digital format (see below) with a slide scanner (available with some domestic all-in-one printers) and may be stored in their original format as long as space is available in labelled, dust-proof slide storage boxes inside a secure cupboard.
- It is recommended that where negatives are still available and clearly labelled, and where photographs are not currently available from these negatives, really valuable images be developed into photo prints whilst facilities are still available and stored as paper photographs. Digital copies should also be made as recommended above. Other negatives may be discarded once digital copies are made of the images.
- **NOTE:** The digital format for photographs depends on how they may be used in the future. PDF format is fine if photos will occasionally be viewed on computer or on-line. The widely available TIFF (TIF) format is better if higher quality, loss-free storage is required for future high quality printing. If photos might be used in the near future in Power-point presentations, they should also be

scanned into the currently common, but lossy JPEG (JPG) format.

10. Textiles

Examples: embroidered items, clothing items, flags

Selection: As per Acquisition statement.

Method:

- It is recommended that valuable textile items be stored flat and interleaved with archive quality tissue paper. It is important not to store fragile items under heavier ones.

11. Optical Discs (CDs, DVDs and BluRay Discs)

Examples: DVD videos of Club events, DVD slideshows of events, Data discs of digital files including photographs.

Selection: As per Acquisition statement.

Method:

- It is recommended that discs be kept in labelled, rigid plastic “jewel cases” which support the disc at the hub.
- It is recommended that data on these discs also be transferred to Digital storage Hard Drives kept in at least two different physical locations.