Beyond Graffiti creates its own milestones

11/10/2013

Beyond Graffiti – waymarking through time is The Milestone Society's West Yorkshire project which will see students make history by creating new waymarkers to be installed in the Dewsbury Country Park.

Milestones and waymakers are classed as 'listed buildings' but they are at risk from neglect, vandalism, damage from verge-cutters and from vehicle impact. Members of The Milestone Society work to preserve them for future generations to enjoy.

The project is being hosted by Kirklees College's construction department. David Pollard, Head of Construction at Kirklees College said: "I was delighted when The Milestone Society approached me regarding getting our students involved in this important project. Students on the college's diploma course will be amongst the participants and the college's digital media students are planning to make a documentary film of the project as part of their studies. This is a great investment into enriching these young people's lives, learning about how their enthusiasm and skills can be put to great effect."

Jan Scrine said: "Young people will be the guardians of our milestones and other waymarkers in the future. The Beyond Graffiti programme will introduce the students to stone in the landscape, including a visit to Shibden Hall and its drystone walling display for hands-on experience. They will also visit Johnson's Wellfield Quarry to see Yorkstone flags being hand cut as well as large scale machinery in action. Local sculptors Melanie Wilks and Dave Bradbury will lead workshops to teach stone-carving skills with blocks donated by Johnson's. There will also be themed creative workshops and an exhibition of artwork with the carved stones at Oakwell Hall and The Packhorse Gallery in July 2014. As a result of this project, I hope that at some time in the future when the programme participants are demolishing a structure with a milestone adjacent, they might think the milestone worth saving rather than throwing in the skip!"

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Fiona Spiers, Head of Yorkshire and the Humber Heritage Lottery Fund said, "There's a common misconception that young people aren't interested in learning about the heritage within their community, but in our experience, they are incredibly passionate and enthusiastic. We want young people to explore the heritage that matters to them, and share it with everyone"

Notes to editors

Milestones are classed as 'listed buildings' but they are too small and scattered to have associations of Friends for each, unlike most other listed buildings. They are at risk from neglect, vandalism, damage from verge-cutters and from vehicle impact; prevention is better than cure. They also mark out a pathway to the past – many people are interested in their family history but how did our ancestors travel? How did they find the way across the moors, especially in bad weather? Members of the Society have explored such questions and the answers can be found on their website.

The Milestone Society was established in 2001 to document the remaining milestones, guide stoops, fingerposts and toll-houses of the UK; to date, over 12,000 items have been recorded in the society's database. These can been seen displayed on Google Earth mapping on the society's website. Society members give talks, publish articles and write poems to raise public awareness of the existence of these quirky little waymarkers sitting quietly by the wayside; the

majority are owned by the highways authorities.

Further information

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Visit the Beyond Graffiti website for more information.