

Membership update

A report from Emily Randall, Membership Development Manager

While the long dark days of January may be firmly drawn in on the HA basement office at 59a, there's a lot to celebrate and to give us cheer. One of the best things about working for the HA is the joy of collaborating with such a lively, friendly and sharing bunch of members, and especially at such an exciting time for the association itself. We're pleased to say that for the first time in over two decades our membership total now stands at over 7,400 members, with continuing growth both across the UK and internationally. This represents a growth of 1,300 members over the past year alone.

Members make up just a proportion of the wider HA network. For example there are 50,000 registered website users, around 25,000 followers through

social media, as well as 1,400 local branch members who engage with the extraordinary offering of HA branches on a local level.

Of course, the important thing is not the numbers! It's about what this growth – particularly in membership – represents, and what it means for you. It means that together we have a bigger collective community. We have more members being supported by and supporting other members. Together, we have a wider reach through growing regional networks, a broader pool of shared expertise, and a stronger voice for history. It is a pleasure to see new and existing members with different backgrounds supporting and connecting with one another through the unique

opportunities offered and facilitated by the HA.

So with this I wish a very warm welcome to our newest members – we hope you'll find your membership a supportive and rewarding one filled with new prospects and the assistance of new colleagues. Similarly, to our long-standing members, committee members and other volunteers who do so much to support the growing vibrancy of the association, a huge thanks. The HA simply wouldn't exist without you!

2020 promises to be another lively one with a number of new events, resources, projects, competitions and publications on the horizon, and we do hope you'll get involved.

Reviewing our promise to you

Talking and listening to members is central to what we do. In the summer of 2017 we conducted our largest membership survey of the decade, and invited you to tell us more about your membership experiences, what you value most, and what we can do to improve. Thank you to all who responded to the survey and shared their thoughts, which have directly influenced HA membership over the intervening months and years. Below are the key areas for development we identified through those surveys, and a taster of what we've been working on so far.

Supporting you better regionally and digitally...

You said:

- You would like to see new local branches where none exist, and for current branches to be better supported.
- For those involved in primary and secondary education, you found CPD activities too London-centric and would benefit from tailored support which you can access locally.
- You would like us to provide digital resources when you are unable to access events locally.

We have:

- Supported the development of a new branch in Tyneside, with strong potential for new branches in Leicester, Brighton, Leeds and Lancaster as well as an ongoing commitment to establish new branches.
- Increased the profile of local branches through *HA News*, social media and our monthly e-newsletters.
- Provided support to branch officers to address challenge areas such as succession planning, branch marketing, building links with local universities, and history in schools.
- Actively recruited to the Branches and Members' Committee to ensure a wider reach across the country and given them the task of developing a strategy to support the work of branches.
- Developed a termly programme of subject and CPD webinars for those who find it difficult to travel or to find school cover.
- Made better use of digital resources such as workshop recordings from history forums and HA Conference.
- Developed a new regional CPD forum in the North-West (Liverpool) and broadened the geographical spread of our regular primary CPD events such as 'Becoming an effective primary history subject leader'.
- Supported bespoke consultancy across schools in different regions, and extended the reach of Quality Mark schools across the UK and internationally.
- Undertaken research on suitable venues across the country for development of a more fixed CPD offering in each region
- Widened the number of fully-funded Teacher Fellowships available to all state schools across the country.

Increasing awareness and accessibility of your membership benefits...

You said:

- You are not always aware of the membership benefits that are on offer to you.
- Where you are aware of the benefits, you do not always have the time or knowledge to make best use of them.
- You find digital resources on the website difficult to find or use effectively.
- Supporting the HA's charitable mission through your membership is important to you, but you are not always aware of how this is carried out.
- For those involved in education, you would like to see more practical resources.

We have:

- Launched new monthly 'resource edits' emails to highlight and preview the latest published digital resources you can access through your membership.
- Created short guides on 'making the most of your membership', e.g. how to add extra logins to your school membership.
- Improved our website search function, homepage and journal indexes to help you find the resources you need quickly and with ease – a continuing work in progress!
- Renewed the content provided in this very publication – *HA News* – to make it clearer how we work as a charity and reinvest funds to support the history community in all its forms.
- Increased our membership support staff to provide you with a more personal and responsive service.
- Continued to develop practical resources for teaching members, from a new subject leaders' area for primary members, to upcoming lesson sequences for corporate secondary members.

Enhancing opportunities to get involved and connect with other members...

You said:

- You are not always aware of available opportunities to volunteer and get involved.
- You do not always feel that membership helps you to connect and share insights with other members.
- You do not always feel a sense of belonging as a member of the HA.

We have:

- Shared more volunteer and member stories and achievements through *HA News*.
- Put a call out to all members for co-options to elections to our committees, and for delivery of 2020 HA Conference sessions and workshops.
- Increased the profile of our competitions for schools and young people, resulting in our highest participation rates.
- Developed our social media channels as a platform for knowledge-sharing and conversation.
- Increased participation from new writers on the *One Big History Department* blog.
- Continued to increase the number and spread of in-person CPD events across the UK to connect members with each other.
- Held sessions on writing for the journals at HA Conferences.

Personalising your experience...

You said:

- You would like to see your membership benefits developed further according to your needs.
- You would benefit from a greater tailoring of communications to receive information that is relevant to you.
- You would like to see a more balanced approach to our work supporting the individual and the profession.

We have:

- Developed more defined benefit packages by membership type – particularly for whole-school corporate members – with new developments planned for historian members this year.
- Tailored our membership e-shots based on your details and preferences.
- Developed the communications you receive at each stage of your membership journey – particularly for new and trainee members.
- Continued to develop our membership database which enables us to use your information more effectively and provide you with a tailored experience.
- Launched our Chartered Teacher of History (CTHist) accreditation to recognise the excellence and commitment of individual history practitioners.

The above is just the start, and we are continuing to improve our membership offer day by day. But we know that a lot can change in three years. **That's why we'll be launching a new membership survey in late spring** where we'll be asking you for your opinion on how we're doing and how we can better support you in the years ahead. We do hope you will get involved.

If you have any comments or suggestions in the meantime please don't hesitate to get in touch on: emily.randall@history.org.uk, or you can call our membership line: 0300 100 0223. **Thank you so much for your support.**