

Our commitment to you

Reviewing the feedback from our 2020 membership survey

Talking and listening to members is central to what we do. In the summer of 2020 we conducted a full scale survey open to all members, inviting you to tell us more about your membership experience, what you value most, and what we can do to improve. Thank you to all those who responded to the survey and shared their thoughts, which have directly influenced HA membership over the intervening years. Here you will find a summary of just some of the key areas that we have been working on since then, and much of this development work continues.

Please note that this summary is limited to the key areas of feedback we received relating specifically to membership. To find out more about some of the wider developments and activities the HA has undertaken since 2020, please refer to the annual report on the HA website, as well as the 2022-25 strategy which lays out our wider priorities for the coming years. These documents are both available in the 'About us' section of the website.

Supporting you better regionally and digitally...

The global pandemic has transformed the way we deliver some membership benefits over the last three years and has in many cases allowed us to improve the scope of our offer as well as opportunities for you to connect with other members nationally and globally.

You said:

- You would like to continue to see more and different kinds of online events for greater accessibility and convenience
- You would like us to provide more remote and 'on demand' digital resources when you are unable to access events live or locally
- 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 wanted more tailored online regional connectivity with other members, schools and practitioners

We have:

- Continued the HA Virtual Branch for those who do not have or cannot attend a local branch. A live talk is held once per month, free and available to all, and recordings are available exclusively to HA members.
- Run two successful short courses for lifelong learners on Berlin and the Berlin Wall (June-October 2022) and The Jews of Medieval England (January-March 2023). These courses offer structured learning experiences through live and on-demand lectures, interactive sessions, and a module of supplementary resource materials. We will continue to offer short courses going forward, available to members for free and to non-members at a nominal charge.
- Developed our year-round CPD programme including the introduction of three subject-specific development courses for secondary educators at different stages of their career: the Early Career Development Programme, Subject Leader Development Programme and Masterclass for Senior Leaders. These courses are discounted to members and can be completed at your own pace to fit around a busy work schedule. At primary level, we continue to run popular courses on Becoming an Effective Primary History Subject Leader, Practical Approaches to Teaching Primary History and Mastering Primary History, with both online and face-to-face options. All courses offer discounted access to members.
- Developed our provision of CPD webinar series based around specific themes, such as 'History for all' and 'Building better history'. These flexible webinar series will continue.
- Broadened the availability of 'on demand' recorded talks that are available to watch back for free or at a subsidised price for members.
- Moved to a hybrid option for HA Conference 2022 and 2023, with a view to continuing this in future. Delegates can now attend Conference in-person or virtually for livestreamed workshops, with access to recorded content after the event. In 2022 we saw just over 400 at the venue and a further 300 people attending virtually, reaching new international audiences.
- Published a guidance pack and support for Building a local teacher network
- Trialled online regional teacher forums including the London History Forum and Yorkshire History Forum, however these have seen limited success. We will be running virtual primary regional meetings in summer 2023 and will continue to explore other ways to facilitate regional connectivity, for example online forums.

- Supported two new branches at Tyneside and Leicester since 202, and branch revivals at Durham, Norfolk & Norwich and Northampton. Central HA are delighted to have helped and supported Glasgow & West of Scotland, Exeter & District, Central London and Hampstead & North-West London branches to stay open.
- Continued to profile branch activities through *HA News*, social media and our monthly e-newsletters.
- Provided support to branch officers to address challenge areas such as developing links in schools, and run a Conference fringe session on the same subject.
- Increased dedicated officer time on central staff to support branches and their officers in running their branches, and in the development of new branches, revival of closed branches, and branches struggling with threatened closure.

We also recognise that some of our membership cannot or do not want to access events or other benefits online, and continue to maintain an offline presence and face-to-face opportunities for this cohort.

Increasing the awareness and accessibility of your membership benefits...

You told us that you value your membership and see the HA as a high quality and reliable organisation. However:

You said:

- You are not always aware of the membership benefits that are available 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 sometimes find digital resources on the website difficult to find or use effectively
- For those involved in primary and secondary education, you would like to see more resources with an immediate practical application

We have:

- Developed membership communications through all channels to highlight the range of support available, plus upcoming and past resources on offer
- Offered regular 'making the most of your membership' live and recorded webinars which offer a practical introduction to what's on offer, and which integrate key recommendations from other members and volunteers
- Continued to send monthly 'round-up' emails highlighting the latest resources, events, competitions and other opportunities available through your membership
- Developed semi-regular 'resource pick' e-communications such as themed selections from the journal and podcast archives. In primary for example, we have published regular collections from the *Primary History* archive and 'my favourite resources' picks from other members – bringing helpful content direct to your inbox.
- Published a set of online 'how to' films that can be used to support you in using various membership functions, such as adding other school staff, or how to use saved 'my saved resources'
- In the short term, made some steps to improve the organisation of resources on our current website to ensure that commonly accessed resources are better surfaced, while regularly reviewing and archiving less relevant content. In the longer-term, we plan to invest in a new generation website with improved infrastructure.
- Introduced regular lesson sequences for secondary members, linked to past articles from *Teaching History* and including teachers' notes, resources and PowerPoints. For primary we have continued to publish schemes of work and a new suite of significant individuals resources, plus practical resources to support schools with teaching around significant events such as the platinum jubilee and coronation.

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

In the survey we asked you about what membership helps you to achieve. The good news is that many of the factors that you deemed as the most important reasons for being member of the HA, you largely agreed that it delivers. However, there were some lower-rated areas for improvement.

You said

- You are not always aware of available opportunities to volunteer and get involved
- Where you are aware of the opportunities, the process can sometimes feel confusing or daunting
- You do not always feel a sense of belonging or community as a member of the HA

We have:

- Widely publicised the calls for elections to our committees and executive board in 2022, as well as the opportunities to vote for your committee representatives
- Further improved members' magazine *HA News* as a channel of communication and community-building across the HA's membership, sharing more volunteer and member stories
- Increased the profile of our competitions for schools and young people, particularly the Great Debate and Young Quills competition resulting in higher participation
- Increased participation from new writers on the One Big History Department blog

Personalising your experience...

You said:

- You would like to see your membership benefits and resources 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:

- Continued to review our membership categories and benefits with your feedback, responding to changes in the education sphere such as extending our concessionary status to Early Career Teacher Year 2 and exploring online-only options for beginner teachers
- Enhanced the benefits and communications you receive at each stage of your membership journey e.g. for education members, support by career stage and role, exemplified by reworked 'beginning teacher' resources and CPD programmes for every level
- Continued to develop our membership database which enables us to use your information more effectively, and provide you with a tailored experience as well as identifying benefits you could be making more use of – this is a continuing work in progress
- Introduced monthly post-renewal surveys to find out more about how we can support you over the year ahead, and a member feedback panel for focus groups to provide more regular and actionable feedback
- During the summer of 2022 work began on trialling new support for non-teaching members of the HA, this work will continue over the next two years as new short courses and other events such as literature and history events, short webinar series for lifelong learners, and a 16+ seminar series looking at public history will be trialled.

Next Steps

In summer 2023 we will be launching a new membership survey, and we want to hear from you. Your voice matters. In the meantime, we also invite you to register for our dedicated 'member feedback panel' for more focused and in-depth research, and to act as a soundboard for future pieces of work. **Find out more and register.**

Thank you again for your valuable support, and if you'd like to make further comments or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact us on membership@history.org.uk