

My HA membership:

Stuart Boydell, CTHist Corporate membership



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We recently caught up with Stuart Boydell, History Subject Leader at King Edward's Pre-Prep in Bath to discuss his experiences of corporate membership and top tips for other primary members. Stuart has been a teacher since 2001 and has led history in state, independent and international schools. He led his school to a gold level award for the Historical Association Quality Mark and was also part of the pilot scheme for the HA Chartered Teacher of History programme. His school has been members for the past seven years and counting!

How did you get into history teaching?

I have always loved history. As a kid it was my favourite subject at school. I loved learning about the past and imagining I was in the past. I wanted to know what it felt like to walk around streets, wear their clothes and use everyday objects that are gone to us except possibly in museums or antique shops. When other kids wanted *Star Wars* figures, I wanted to build up my 'library' of history books. I now have two post-grad degrees in history (not counting my PGCE) and was elected to become a member of the RHS a few years ago.

As soon as I went into teaching, I became history co-ordinator and have been one ever since. Next year is my 20th anniversary of leading history in schools! I love the subject and I want to share that passion and interest for learning about the past. It's one of the few academic subjects that requires a lot of imagination and empathy. Children can learn a lot about themselves through learning about those who were here before them. I would like to think I have helped others to become historians in the future.

Why did you decide to become a corporate member of the HA?

The HA offers so many opportunities to help improve my history subject knowledge and teaching. I can tap into expert advice and resources as well as



the support of a community of like-minded, passionate historians and teachers who want the best for children's history education.

One of the great things I have learnt about the HA since I first signed my school up as a corporate member is that the organisation never stands still. There is a constant drive to be making all the content relevant and current. Consequently, the information and resources are constantly being updated and improved along with the initiatives and opportunities for CPD, not only for improving class-based practice but also for personal development.

The HA as a whole is immensely well-connected and makes it its business to know what is changing and what is coming down the pipeline from the government, Ofsted and academia. If something is likely to have an impact on how and what we teach in the history curriculum, you can guarantee the HA will be looking into it. Corporate membership means you are part of a growing and evolving support network which is very much a two-way partnership.

What do you value the most about corporate membership of the HA?

If you are a school member of the HA you have a wealth of opportunities. You have the conferences, you have a network of historians that are always there to help, you have access

to the web resources. You have a go-to body of support, and I think that is very important, especially to new history teachers and history leads. It can sometimes feel you have been left on your own, and with the HA you are not – you have friends.

For me, an additional benefit from membership was that I could contribute to what the HA offers. As I said before, the membership is a two-way partnership and there are plenty of opportunities to make a difference beyond your own classroom and school. I started as a member with corporate membership for my school and then went on to the HA Quality Mark and now I am a member on the Primary Committee – that and other pathways are open to all who want to give it a go.

How has corporate membership supported colleagues teaching history at your school?

All the teachers in my school have access to our HA membership. They know that if they want to change their history topics within their own year groups, the HA website is their first port of call to look at how others have tackled something similar. The magazine is always in the staffroom (pre-Covid days). I have regular opportunities through staff meetings to update the staff of the new initiatives and changes and how we can adopt and adapt them to suit our needs. One good example was attending Helen Crawford's talk on the changes for the new EYFS curriculum.

I was then able to go back to the EYFS in my school and feed that information back months before most schools had even begun to consider the impact.

What is your top resource tip for other HA primary members?

I would always consult the schemes of work on the website. You might not be doing exactly the same topic, but the activity ideas and the ways in which the activities are created will help to develop the children's key enquiry and historical skills. Teaching historical knowledge is straightforward, but even now, after 20 years of being in the post, I still don't have all the answers. I like to see, for example, how others are teaching chronology or using artefacts to raise questions. From there, I will then trawl the webinars to see if someone has something on the topic and/or specific key skills that I can glean for my teaching.

We all want to be creative and novel in our teaching, but the truth is we are pushed for time. The HA helps you to stop having to reinvent the wheel – the folks within the HA are constantly reinventing and improving it for us! Another excellent growing resource is the local significant individuals databases for different regions of the country. It's a great way to learn about your own locality as well and look at the wider debate of what makes someone significant.

What has been your experience of HA CPD as a corporate member?

I think the first thing that struck me when I started to access CPD with the HA was that the CPD was coming from real people who understand what it is like to be teaching in a real classroom. The CPD is being delivered by professionals who are either themselves current class teachers or teacher trainers. They know the reality of life in a busy classroom and they know the constraints that teachers work under with little or no budgets, crowded timetables, assessments and, more recently, the difficulties of offering teaching and learning via a computer screen. It is refreshing and reassuring to know that what I am going to learn with the HA will be something that has been test-driven in the real world.

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What would you say to others mulling over whether to upgrade to corporate membership?

I would honestly say, 'Just do it!' I have never regretted signing my school up for the corporate membership and the powers that be within my school have never questioned the membership fee. They see the added value from the school's membership in terms of the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The annual cost is modest compared to many one-day CPD providers who come and go and are never heard from again.

Corporate membership with the HA is a year-long open access that can be dipped into at any time by anyone on the staff. The school then has the advantage of having access to a vast collection of resources, teaching ideas, CPD opportunities and a community of people who are there to help. On so many fronts it saves you and your colleagues time, which we all need.

Besides the resources that can help you in the classroom, there is a wealth of initiatives and opportunities that can develop your career in new directions such as the Chartered Teacher of History status and the Teacher Fellowships. Membership also speaks directly to the children through the HA's enhancement activities such as the annual historical fiction writing competition.

For more information about corporate membership visit www.history.org.uk/go/corporatepri2021 Email membership@history.org.uk or call **0300 100 0223** to upgrade from only £29*

*Please note that corporate membership is available to schools and colleges. If you are a training provider, university or other type of organisation please contact us to discuss bespoke membership packages available.