



30 October 2021

Dear Ian

Thank you for sharing your 'open letter' with the Royal Historical Society which has been circulated and discussed with the President, Professor Emma Griffin. We will also be sharing the letter with the RHS Council ahead of its next meeting in late November, as we do all significant correspondence from Fellows and Members. Thank you also for this invitation to respond on your website.

We are aware that many of the proposals in the letter are prompted by your standing for the recent Royal Historical Society Council elections. We also fully appreciate your wish to publish the letter following the election results in September, and while your ideas are current.

As we've discussed previously, the President and RHS Office are grateful for your observations but not presently in a position to respond more fully—not least as we prepare for a busy couple of months which include the Anniversary General Meeting and the President's Lecture. At the same time, we're continuing our work to develop the Society's membership, events programme and what we offer those who belong to the Society, which of course are areas of interest raised in your letter. In addition, we are currently providing what assistance we can to a number of university-based historians whose programmes and livelihoods face closure at this time.

This said, we would like to offer a few observations to accompany the publication of your letter, and to start by saying the points you raise are ones I know the RHS's central office, Council and many across the Society are already engaged with and take seriously.

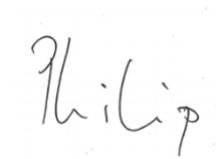
Many of the RHS Fellows and Members we encounter daily—the majority of whom indeed work in Higher Education—certainly appreciate the importance of promoting high-quality History to the widest audience.

Likewise, the Council and Office are engaged in work to 'broaden' the Society, in terms of its appeal, membership, activities and message, while also maintaining the RHS as a scholarly learned society whose membership—given the changing nature of the historical profession in past decades—will always likely draw its largest part from the higher education sector. The results of this work will start to become apparent from early 2022.

In the coming months we also intend to survey the Society's membership (under the guidance of our recently appointed Chief Executive) to gain a better sense of members' priorities; what the membership considers the Society's main purposes to be; and what it wishes the Society to focus on in the next few years. Via a survey we intend to learn the views of the full range of sectors and interests that make up the membership.

Speaking personally, I expect the response from academic historians will be much more varied than you set out in your letter. It will be interesting to gain a clearer and more detailed picture, and it's then, with data, that discussions about the Society, its aims, and contribution to History will be most profitable.

With good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long tail on the 'i'.

Dr Philip Carter  
Academic Director  
Royal Historical Society