

## Introduction

These **ALHF Authenticity Principles** have been compiled to clarify the presentation of 'core activities' of the Federation, *Living History* and *Historical Re-enactment*, as outlined in the ALHF Constitution.

These general principles of authenticity **must** be followed at any event or activity organised or undertaken by a member, or member group of ALHF, that is a *Living History* or *Historical Re-enactment event*.

ALHF does not have a formalised system for appraisal of member groups' authenticity standards. However, ALHF does assess whether a member group meets standards of authenticity at the time of application, including considering reports on a group's relationship to these Principles. Failure to comply with or strive towards these Principles may mean refusal of a membership application, or review of membership status.

*The related ALHF Authenticity Documents (TBC) will provide assistance in interpreting and meeting the requirements of the following principles.*

## Definitions

**Living History:** Living History is the setting up and activating of people, clothing and accoutrements in a display or activity, either for the public or for members only, of the daily life of an historical period. This may take the form of a 'living history village' or 'encampment', or activities such as a 'route march'. It usually requires an agreed area where all modern or anachronistic items are dispensed with or completely hidden.

**Historical Re-enactment:** A re-enactment differs from living history in that it undertakes to recreate a specific historical event. However, it is acknowledged that the term 're-enactment' has a wider accepted currency that is often interchangeable with 'living history'. In this document the terms 're-enactment' and 'living history' will be used interchangeably.

**Impression:** An impression is a term sometimes used for an individual Living Historian's interpretation and presentation of a person from a specific time period.

### In these Principles:

- The word *must* indicates a mandatory rule. Groups must follow mandatory rules.
- The word *should* indicates an advisory rule. Groups must follow an advisory rule or have their own rule or risk management step in place to address the risk.
- The word *may* indicates an optional guideline. Groups may observe an optional guideline.

Any reference to a group also includes a reference to individual ALHF members.

## ALHF Authenticity Principles

1) **Historical Accuracy:** Historical accuracy is the primary goal that underpins Living History & Historical Re-enactment. Historical accuracy is our main tool to promote understanding of the past, and distinguishes the activities of ALHF members from other displays and public dealings with history and the performance of history.

Within the bounds of safety and accepted, current, animal welfare principles, all steps possible must be taken to present displays and information based on solid historical evidence.

Sources and references should be quoted in printed or visual materials, and where possible referred to in displays or performances (for example, rather than a blanket statement of 'This is what they wore', when talking about clothing add in the main source; this dress is

based on [relevant archaeological find], this coat is based on a relief carving from [period/ area], these pants are based on a painting by [artist/ period]).

Where an event or activity is not strictly a Living History or Historical Re-enactment activity, but still involves the presentation of history in some way, the principle of historical accuracy should still be followed to the maximum extent practicable given the constraints of the activity. This is particularly the case for public displays.

**Private events:** Generally the host of the event should define and communicate the minimum required standard of historical accuracy for the event.

- 2) **Historical Interpretation:** Interpretation is the written, verbal or performed explanation of history. It must be firmly based on relevant, researched historical evidence. It may occasionally be conjectural, if based on well-researched, current historical information. It may be delivered 'in character' (see Performance below) or as signage, handouts, narration etc.
- 3) **Historical Performance:** Performances in re-enactments or living history displays may vary between first, second and third person. All performances should endeavour to present historical characters (real or generic) to the best standards of current historical knowledge of how individuals would have behaved, and how they would have dressed or used historical artefacts.
- 4) **Educational and Public Display:** Displays and 'shows' should present informative and educational historical information. They may be entertaining, whilst retaining the presentation of historical insight. They should foster historical understanding among audiences. They should be professionally conducted. For schools, they must follow any relevant Education Department legislation regarding the conduct of performances in schools and should be relevant to schools curricula or educational outcomes.
- 5) **Clothes & Artefacts:** Clothing, artefacts or objects should be accurate representations of items from the time period portrayed, and not misleading. Where possible they should be constructed as close to the historical original as possible in terms of materials and construction methods, or based on original items.
- 6) **Anachronisms:** During living history activities care should be taken to remove non-period jewellery and other anachronistic items from public view. Items that must be worn such as medic alerts should be covered. Modern equipment should be stowed where it cannot be seen, or disguised.
- 7) **Combat activities:** Combat, skirmish or other military re-enactment 'battles' should be conducted with the intent of creating a display for audiences, and/or 'effect' for participants that is as historically accurate as possible, considering safety for participants and audiences (See ALHF Safety Principles & Guidelines).
- 8) **Professionalism:** ALHF members must conduct re-enactment and living history activities in a professional manner and not bring ALHF into disrepute. ALHF member groups should keep a portfolio of their general public presentation in some form, (for example: a document, or a portfolio, or a website), that describes the historical methodologies of their activities and impressions, and that can be provided to ALHF on application for membership, or on request.
- 9) **Contemporary Interpretation:** ALHF members must not use historical performance to engage in contemporary politics. Members should make every effort to be aware of, and sensitive to, racial, gender and cultural issues - particularly in representing various cultures through time.
  - a. In all periods of history there were events that had and still have strong associations for particular groups. Many events are viewed quite differently by members of different groups. Such associations would also have had an impact on historical viewpoints or commonly held beliefs.

- b. An even-handed approach should be taken with regard to the history being explored by members, even if a single perspective is chosen as the member group's focus,
- c. Historical beliefs or attitudes may be presented, including those based on bigotry, hatred, intolerance or extremism **of the time**, provided that they are clearly contextualised for the audience and steps are taken to ensure that the audience are aware that these views are not the views of the individual or group portraying them. The exploration of history by Living Historians **must not** be used as a pretext for the dissemination of such viewpoints contemporarily.
- d. The ALHF will not accept any membership application from any group which has a stated aim of supporting racist, intolerant or extremist views.