



# THE PATRIOT

Quarterly Journal of The John Hampden Society  
No. 11 - Summer 1995



## CHALGROVE VICTORY CELEBRATED WITH DINNER AND HERITAGE TRAIL

**Members of the John Hampden Society celebrated the news that Chalgrove Field had been included on the Battlefields Register in fine style in June.**

The Celebratory Banquet that Derek Lester had been trying to organise at Hampden House for Saturday 17 June had to be cancelled due to lack of interest (only 12 people, 7 of them members, had booked places by the deadline on 20 May) but, fortunately, Sarah Barrington of the Spread Eagle Hotel, Thame, stepped into the breach.

useful publicity. Similarly, if Derek Lester had not attempted to organise the banquet to raise funds to save the Monument, Babbie would not have heard about the problem and made their offer.

The Society would like to thank Sarah and David Barrington of the Spread Eagle for turning a possible disaster into a triumph. There is much talk about making this dinner an annual affair on the Saturday nearest to the Chalgrove anniversary, and members' views would be welcome.

44 enthusiasts turned out for the inaugural Heritage Trail the following morning. Starting at Thame at 9.30, the coach went past the old Lord Williams's Grammar School, which Hampden attended as a boy, and then to Magdalen College in Oxford, where he spent two years and where Prince Rupert rode out of the city on his night sortie. From here the route was more or less in the

horse. Sadly, new barbed wire and padlocks on the gate made it clear that the landowner was not prepared to allow anyone to view the hedge at close quarters. However, the party were able to inspect the Hampden Monument and see how the base is subsiding.

From here the coach returned to Thame in time for tea. Commentaries on Lord Williams's School, Rupert's march, Magdalen College, John Hampden, the burning of Chinnor, the history of Chalgrove, the John Hampden Society and, of course, the Battle of Chalgrove Field were provided by Derek Lester, Gill Blackshaw, John Steel-Clark, Roy Bailey and Maurice Kirtland.

And one should not forget the contribution of Mike the coach driver, who had the unenviable task of taking his large vehicle through some of the narrowest lanes in Oxfordshire. The weather was hot and sunny all day, and everyone who participated found the tour interesting and informative.

Special thanks are due to Derek Lester and the rest of Chalgrove Battle Group for organising such a splendid occasion.



Photograph: Caroline Hickman

Mrs Barrington offered a special dinner at £18.95 per head or an inclusive deal to include dinner, accommodation and breakfast for those who were going on the Heritage Trail the following day. 25 members from as far away as Canterbury and Derbyshire and two guests sat down to an excellent feast (*above*) which included smoked pigeon terrine, medallions of venison and steamed trout.

There were short speeches by our President, Dr John Adair and by Derek Lester, Dr Frank Hansford-Miller and Hon. Secretary Roy Bailey. Mr Lester was able to announce the momentous news that the Babbie Group have undertaken to fund the repair of the Hampden Monument at Chalgrove (*see page 3*).

Mr Bailey quoted Shakespeare's 'Sweet are the uses of adversity' and pointed out that, if Chalgrove had been placed on the Battlefields Register initially, members would not have had the incentive to carry out all the valuable research and the Society would not have received such

Prince's footsteps; Chiselhampton Bridge, Haseley, and Tetsworth, where there was a stop at the Swan for coffee. During this halt Derek Lester, Gill Blackshaw and Roy Bailey were interviewed live on BBC Radio Oxford, while the rest of the party investigated the antiques.

The trail continued through Postcombe to Chinnor, and then back through Aston Rowant and South Weston to Stoke Talmage and Easington. The recent research has indicated that Rupert almost certainly came this way, rather than along the road from Watlington, as had been previously thought. At the top of Golder Hill, Warpsgrove House and the site of the battle could be seen in the distance but the immediate destination was Chalgrove village and lunch.

A barbeque had been laid on at the Red Lion, and from there the party drove to the battlefield, where Derek Lester gave a detailed description of the course of the battle, and pointed out the famous hedge over which Prince Rupert leapt on his



Roy Bailey, Derek Lester and Gill Blackshaw live from the Swan at Tetsworth  
Photograph: John Steel-Clark

# PROVIDENCE SMILES

by

Roy Bailey

**Two recent incidents demonstrate that, perhaps, a benevolent Providence is smiling upon the John Hampden Society.**

In March I received a telephone call from someone I had only met once before, but who knew my interest in Hampden. He was a collector of autographed letters, and had received a catalogue from a dealer in which was listed a letter from Sir Charles Firth, the noted Victorian historian, concerning John Hampden.

Writing to a Miss Whelpton in 1892 or thereabouts, Sir Charles gives his thoughts on the facts of Hampden's death and the Battle of Chalgrove Field, as follows:-

Craigside

Llandudno

Jan 9

Dear Miss Whelpton,

**I remember your coming to my lectures, and am glad to be of any assistance to the faithful few who did so. No apologies are necessary and I am fortunately able to answer your questions without my books.**

**The accounts of Hampden's death in all modern histories are based on a narrative purporting to be written by a certain Edward Clough, which was first published in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1815. This narrative is a fraud throughout. It gives an account of the manner in which he received his wound, of his illness, last words & funeral.**

**In two letters to the Academy written shortly after the publication of Mr Gardiner's volume, I gave reasons for disbelieving the genuineness of Clough's account, and Mr Gardiner told me he was concerned by then of its fictitiousness.**

**In my life of Hampden in the Dictionary of National Biography you will find the correct references to these letters, but I cannot give them from memory.**

**The Account of the Battle of Chalgrove Field and of the manner in which Hampden was wounded, as given by Gardiner, can be depended upon. Nugent's topography is shaky. Some picturesque details of the fight are given in the contemporary narrative of Prince Rupert's beating up of the rebel quarters at Postcombe and Chinnor, which was printed at Oxford in 1643.**

**If I can answer any more questions I shall be pleased to do so.**

Yours truly

C.M. Firth

**Please direct letters to my Oxford address.**

The asking price for this letter was £25 plus VAT, and I was considering whether or not to purchase it for the Society when a donation of £30 was received from new member Miss Marie Endean of Woolhampton.

Sir Charles's letter, which is on four pages of octavo notepaper and is in very good condition except for some slight damage down the side of the last page, is now in our archives, and grateful thanks must go to Miss Endean for making the purchase possible.

The second incident is even more amazing.

The Spring issue of *'The Patriot'* carried a copy of a letter to the Thame Gazette from Mr Fred Tildesley of Thame, who objected to John Hampden being described as a hero and patriot. This produced a healthy response from members, but nothing further from Mr Tildesley.

On 29 May I attended the Street Fair at Kintbury, near Hungerford, with my wife and daughter. It being Oak Apple Day, the anniversary of the Restoration of King Charles II in 1660, we all wore sprigs of oak leaves - an ancient tradition commemorating the famous incident when Charles hid in the oak tree at Boscobel. Like many of our traditions this has now, sadly, fallen into disuse and we appeared to be the only ones at the Fair wearing such a buttonhole.

However, when walking through the churchyard, I met a tall, grey-haired man similarly adorned and, naturally, stopped to speak to him. I introduced myself and he replied, "I'm Fred Tildesley from Thame!"

He had come to Kintbury to play with the Big Brass Stompers, who were performing at the Fair, and boasted that he had that morning placed a sprig of oak leaves on John Hampden's memorial in Thame. (*This is not inappropriate. Hampden is said to have nursed an ambition to be Governor to Charles when the latter was Prince of Wales. Had this happened, Charles would probably have been a much better king.*)

I sent Mr Tildesley details of the banquet and Heritage Trail, and received the following letter in elegant copperplate:

**Dear Mr Bailey, I am inclined to believe that, following the eerie coincidence of date and place of our recent meeting, that I, and perhaps, you are not entirely free agents in matters relating to 'J.H.' (I cannot bear to write his name.) Accordingly, I have decided to make the modest investment of £7.50 by way of a membership application to join your Society.**

**I do this for three reasons -**

- 1. To prykke your consciences with an alternative view.**
- 2. To keep an eye on your subversive activities and**
- 3. The hell of it.**

**I am glad that Chalgrove Field has been upgraded and if this prevents the site from having a housing estate built on it, or a motorway traversing it, that's all to the well and joyful.**

*(Mr Tildesley then goes on to apologise for not being able to attend either the banquet or the Heritage Trail, and regrets the loss of a possible opportunity to burn Chinnor again!)*

**God preserve his/her Majesty (delete whichever is inapplicable.)**

Sincerely,

F. Tildesley.

31. V. 95

Mr Tildesley's alternative view will be most welcome within the Society, and perhaps in time Luke Ch 15, v 7 will apply.

## BIOGRAPHY

Dr Frank Hansford-Miller's excellent little biography of John Hampden, published in the 'Lifelines' series by Shire Publications of Princes Risborough is now out of print, but Frank has kindly donated what must be the last 20 copies to the Society. Half of these were sold at the Dinner and the Heritage Trail, but the remainder are available for £2.75 post free from the Hon. Secretary.

Also available are copies of P.S.W. Beck's print of the Battle of Chalgrove Field at £1.25 each which, though also published in 1976, tallies very closely with the results of the latest research.



Photograph: Justin Leighton/Sunday Telegraph

The future of the Hampden Monument (above) at Chalgrove has been assured - thanks to the generosity of an engineering firm.

The Babtie Group, who are based in Glasgow but who have 19 offices throughout the country, have offered to fund a long-term survey on the Monument and to take any remedial action that may be necessary.

The Monument was erected by John Hampden's first biographer, Lord Nugent, in 1843, having been financed by public subscription, and is now owned by Chalgrove Parish Council. In recent years its condition has deteriorated, and the Parish Council recently commissioned a structural survey by a local company. This showed that the plinth has sunk under the weight of the pillar, which as a result is now some 3" out of vertical. This had led to the Monument being dubbed 'The Leaning Tower of Chalgrove'!

It was obvious that a considerable amount of work would be necessary to restore the

Monument, and all profits from the Grand Banquet which was to have taken place at Hampden House on 17 June were earmarked for a Restoration Fund. The John Hampden Society had already offered to contribute (see *'The Patriot'* No. 6).

The Babtie Group are planning and transportation consultants to Berkshire County Council, and to South Oxfordshire District Council. From the latter contact and from publicity in the media Babtie learned about the Banquet and the disposition of any profits, and stepped into the breach when they heard that the function had been cancelled.

Chalgrove Parish Council are very keen to locate the original drawings of the Monument when it was erected in 1843, if these still exist, in order to assist the renovation work. Any information should be sent to:

**2 Farm Close,  
Chalgrove,  
OXFORD OX44 7RL.**

## NEW MEMBERS

New members who have joined since the last issue of *'The Patriot'* include the Earl of Strafford, Mrs Olivia Pemberton, Mrs Barbara Hicks, Mrs Elsie Carter, Frederick Tildesley (see *'Providence Smiles'*), Barrie and Mary Linklater and Barry Keating. Mrs Rosamund White has rejoined.

Lord Strafford is the brother of committee member The Hon. Julian Byng, and is a descendant, through the female line, of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, in whose trial for treason John Hampden was concerned.

Mrs Pemberton, née Morrell, is a cousin of former members Mrs Moira Calvert and the Rev. Robert Nind, and is therefore descended from Bishop Renn Hampden and the Barbados Hampdens.

☆☆☆

## MISSENDEN ABBEY

The Adult Education Weekend at Missenden Abbey was so successful last September that another one is being planned for this year.

Details of this weekend, which is scheduled for Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 September, and also information about Missenden Abbey, are to be found in the special leaflets enclosed with this newsletter.

If you are interested, please book your place as soon as possible.

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**1995**

**Sat 9 & Sun 10 Sept** 'John Hampden and His Times' - the Second Adult Education Weekend at Missenden Abbey  
(Tel 01494 890298 for details)

**Sept** (date to be advised) Launch of 'John Hampden's Ale' at the Chiltern Brewery, Terrick, Aylesbury

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Old Mill  
Middleton  
Freshwater  
Isle of Wight  
PO40 9NX.

While reading 'Black Ivory, a History of British Slavery' by James Walvin, I came across a reference to the Hampden Estate, Jamaica. As my current interest is in the Providence Company, of which John Hampden was a member, I find myself wondering if his trading activities also took in the island of Jamaica.

The particular reference in 'Black Ivory' concerns religion and I quote: "When a new chapel was opened on the Hampden Estate in Jamaica, slaves thronged the pews and refused to make space for local whites, who were forced to stand in the aisles; slaves sat and masters stood." The sources quoted are Mary Turner, 'Slaves and Missionaries', Urbana, 1982, pp 52-3; and Monica Schuler, 'Afro-American Slave Culture', in M. Craton (ed), *Roots and Branches*, Waterloo, Ontario, 1979.

It seems likely that the above incident refers to the 18th century, but I would be very interested to know if any members of the Society have information about John Hampden's trading activities in the West Indies.

**Jan Toms.**

(There were certainly Hampdens in Barbados in the late 17th century, using the same coat of arms as the English family. One of their descendants was the Rev. Renn Dickson Hampden, Rector of Ewelme and later Bishop of Hereford. See 'New Members' and *'The Patriot'* No. 3.)

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## EXHIBITION

Viscount Hampden has mounted a Civil War exhibition at his home, Glynde Place near Lewes, East Sussex.

Entitled 'Harbert Morley and the Great Rebellion 1638-1660', it has been created by distinguished local historian Dr Colin Brent, and surveys the activities of Morley and other Sussex gentlemen during the Civil War and the Commonwealth period.

Lord Hampden said, "This is part of a programme showing the part played by the owners of Glynde Place in the affairs of the nation. Last year a room was dedicated to Mr Speaker Brand (1872-1884) and next year it will be the Trevor family and the 18th century Whigs."

Morley's wife's brother was John Trevor, who married John Hampden's elder daughter Ruth and became Lord Hampden's ancestor.

Glynde Place is open on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays between 2pm and 5pm from May to September. For further information contact Lord Hampden on 01273 858224.

## JOHN HAMPDEN'S ALE

The Chiltern Brewery of Terrick, which is bang in the middle of Hampden country between Aylesbury and Princes Risborough, is planning to produce a special ale to mark its 15th anniversary on 26 September - and they intend to name it after John Hampden.

This will be available in numbered pint bottles, as well as on draught, and discussions have been taking place between the brewery and the Hon. Secretary about the design of the labels and other matters of mutual interest. It is hoped that the labels will include the official portrait of Hampden and some details about him and the John Hampden Society.

Although arrangements are still in the early stages, it is likely that officers of the Society will be involved in the anniversary celebrations and the launch of this ale. Our Patron, the Earl of Buckinghamshire, has agreed to participate, the Hon. Secretary will certainly be there, and it is hoped that Colonel John Hampden's Regiment of Foote will prove to be good customers!

## CONFIRMATION

As forecast in the last issue of *'The Patriot'*, the Commissioners of English Heritage confirmed the Battlefields Panel's recommendation that Chalgrove Field be placed on the Battlefields Register.

The Society received an official letter of notification from Dr Andrew Brown, English Heritage's Inspector of Ancient Monuments, at the end of April. The Chairman of the Battlefields Panel, General Sir Martin Farndale, KCB, also wrote to Derek Lester, as follows:

**Dear Mr Lester,**

**Thank you so much for sending me an invitation to the Grand Banquet on 17th June. I am most flattered to be asked but sadly I am already fully committed on that day.**

**However, as Chairman of the Battlefields Panel I would like to explain that we did not in any way dismiss Chalgrove lightly. The snag was that, by the rules we had applied to all battles throughout the country and based on the data originally available to us, we could not include it. It was however for this reason that our initial Register was circulated in draft form so that anyone who felt unfairly considered could respond with more evidence. I should also say that our definition of a battle was deliberately flexible so that we could consider each on its merits, no matter what size. It is therefore to your great credit that your Society came up with just the data we needed to enable us to include Chalgrove on the Register - much to the relief of all members of the Panel.**

**But I am sure we were right because our course of action gave everyone throughout the land the same opportunity and the result has strengthened your claim.**

**May I wish you all a most successful weekend on 17/18 June.**

**With my best wishes,**

**Yours sincerely,**

**Martin Farndale.**



Derek Lester points out the line of Prince Rupert's advance from Golder Hill towards Warpsgrove House to members of the Heritage Trail party

## (K)NOT FORGOTTEN

The next issue of the Sealed Knot's very professional newsletter, 'Orders of the Day', will devote some attention to John Hampden. The front cover will feature the Walker portrait of Hampden in full colour, and Dr John Whitehead has written an article about Chalgrove and the recent extensive research.

The November/December 1994 issue bemoaned the fact that there are no Sealed Knot regiments named after famous commanders such as Hampden and Cromwell, so we have pointed out to them that the English Civil War Society, with Colonel John Hampden's Regiment of Foote, is ahead of them in that respect.

☆☆☆

## THAME TOURISM

Members of the John Hampden Society were on parade at the end of April for the opening of the new Tourist Information Centre in Thame.

The Centre has been moved from the Town Hall to the refurbished Market House, and Derek Lester and Dr John Whitehead were present in their uniforms to remind the inhabitants of Thame (if they need reminding) of the town's connections with John Hampden.

The new Centre was officially opened by Mr John East, Chief Executive of the English Tourist Board.

● Thame Town Council are interested in the Heritage Trail and are considering the production of a full-colour leaflet, which will be available in the new Tourist Information Centre.

☆☆☆



*The Spread Eagle Hotel*

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