



# THE PATRIOT

Quarterly Newsletter of the John Hampden Society  
No. 24 - Winter 1998/99



## SOCIETY SEEKS SPONSORSHIP FOR JOHN HAMPDEN VIDEO

The John Hampden Society is actively seeking sponsorship for the proposed video production about John Hampden, which is intended for showing at the exhibition in Thame in June 2000.

Work is already underway on a script, and **The Earl of Buckinghamshire**, Patron of the Society, has agreed to be the on-screen presenter and supply the voice-over commentary.

The plan is that, if the money can be raised, filming will take place during this year, mostly in and around Great Hampden and Thame. We are hoping that this will be undertaken by the media department of a local college of further education, under the Society's direction. The winter will be devoted to the editing and other post-production work, so that the finished video will be available in early 2000.

As well as being on show at the Thame exhibition, VHS copies will be available for sale.

If anyone out there knows of any organisation or person who might be prepared to make a contribution towards the production costs, or would like to help with the sponsorship themselves, we would like to hear from them as soon as possible

### TRANSATLANTIC VISIT

Following the visit of **Hugh and Trixie Muldrew** from New Zealand last year, a party of our friends in Hampden (Maine) are also planning a trip to the UK in 2000.

This sprang from an e-mail exchange between the **Hon. Secretary** and **Mrs Alice Hawes**, wherein the latter mentioned that one of our 1994 hostesses, Mrs Miriam 'Mim' Hart, had recently visited Russia. **Mr Bailey** enquired, sarcastically, why Mrs Hart could do that, yet not visit Britain. Mrs Hart promptly 'took up the challenge', as she said, and is trying to organise a party from the Hampden Historical Society members.

Sadly, June 2000 seems to be out because of flight costs, so the favourite months are either May or October. The former would enable the visitors to see the preparations for the Society's exhibition and other events planned for June; the latter would give them a chance to see the Chilterns at their best.

### BOOKSELLERS

A rich source of books about almost every aspect of life in the 17th century is Caliver Books of 816 London Road, Leigh on Sea, Essex SS9 3NH.

Their catalogue runs to over 800 titles, ranging from a leather-bound facsimile edition of the Cambridge Geneva Bible at £245 to *The Book of Sausages 1580-1660* at £1.50!

Caliver's telephone and fax number is 01702 473986, their web site is at: <http://www.caliverbooks.demon.co.uk>, and you can order the catalogue to be e-mailed from [dave@caliverbooks.demon.co.uk](mailto:dave@caliverbooks.demon.co.uk).

Be warned - it runs to 18 pages of A4!

• Another seller of historical and military books is Paul Meekins, 34 Townsend Road, Tiddington, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warks CV37 7DE. Tel/fax: 01789 295086. Enclose two 1st class stamps for a catalogue.

### NO NEWS

We have heard nothing from the English Civil War Society concerning the activities to mark the 350th anniversary of the execution of King Charles I, so there will be no official involvement by the Society

However, Mrs Angela Feaviour has discovered that there will be a parade on Sunday 31 January, meeting outside St. James's Palace at 11 am, and then moving on to Whitehall at 11.30. Members of the Society who receive this information in time may wish to attend.

### THE YOUNG JOHN HAMPDEN

The previous discussion on the birth of John Hampden Jr. has led us to consider the circumstances of his death.

As we mentioned in the last issue, most accounts state that he was killed early on in the Civil Wars, but no date or place has ever been discovered. This is surprising, because the boy was the heir to the Hampden estates and name, and would one day have been the head of this ancient and wealthy family.

Even in the turmoil of civil war, one would have expected his very influential father to have arranged for the body to be transported back to Great Hampden for a proper burial, and for an entry to have been made in the parish register. The only explanation seems to be that young John died in circumstances in which his body was never identified or never found. The most likely scene for this tragedy would appear to be the Battle of Brentford.

In his 1976 biography of Hampden, our President, Dr John Adair, stated that the young Hampden was probably a gentleman volunteer in the Redcoat regiment of Col. Denzil Holles. This seems highly likely, as Hampden and Holles were old colleagues. They were both among the Five Members whom the King had tried to arrest in the House of Commons, and their two regiments spent much of the early part of the Civil War brigaded together. What more natural that Hampden, perhaps fearing accusations of nepotism if his son served in his own regiment, would ask his close colleague to take the boy under his wing.

The evidence for this is in the letters of Nehemiah Wharton, a serjeant (and later ensign) in the Redcoats. According to these, on 20 August 1642, Wharton and some of his men killed a fat buck of Sir Alexander Denton's and had it taken to Buckingham. 'With part of it', he wrote, 'I feasted my captain, Captain Parker, Captaine Beacon, and Colonel Hamden's sonne'.

This is the last mention of John Hampden Jr until 15 April 1643, when the Royalist paper *Mercurius Aulicus* published the following:

continued on page 3

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

In your article in the Summer issue concerning the birthplace of John Hampden's eldest son, you wrote that Richard Fermor was the owner of one of the Manors of Fritwell, but that he appeared to have no connection with Hampden. This would have certainly been my opinion except for a serendipitous research finding.

A few days later, while I was researching the Lee papers in the County Archives Office in Aylesbury, I came across some documents which, I believe, strengthens your belief that this is indeed the son of our John Hampden.

From around 1609 to 1629 there were a number of land sales between Sir Richard Fermor of Somerton, Oxon (the neighbouring parish to Fritwell), and the Lee family, originally of Moreton and later of Hartwell, Bucks. The Lee family had extensive property and considerable connections, and it is worth noting that Thomas Lee the younger's wife was Elienora or Ellyanor Hampden.

She was, I believe, second cousin to the Patriot and her brother the same Alexander Hampden who lived at Great Hampden and, it has been suggested, took some early care of John Hampden. This Alexander is also recorded as having bought land in Hartwell from Sir Richard Fermor. These land deals were considerable, and on one sale to the Lee family a value of £600 is given.

The second point we should note is that, apart from the Hartwell sale of land previously mentioned, all the transactions relate to land in Great Kimble and Marsh. Both of these parishes are neighbours of Great Hampden, and in Great Kimble the Hampden family held the Advowson. On both these scores, therefore, it seems extremely unlikely that they would not know one of the largest landowners and it is not improbable that they were on friendly terms.

Indeed, in the 1620s Sir Richard Fermor was a Freeholder of Wendover - one of the select few permitted to vote for the MP. At

this time John Hampden campaigned to have Wendover re-enfranchised as a Parliamentary Borough, so it is inconceivable that they did not know each other well.

In the case of all the land sales mentioned Sir Richard and his wife Lady Cornelia were the sellers. They were a Roman Catholic family, and it may be that they wished to dispose of their land in Bucks and concentrate on the Somerton property where they had been Lords of the Manor since 1512. However this is total guesswork and would need a proper historian to give an opinion.

I hope you will agree that this chance find strengthens your original conjecture, although I apologise for giving so much detail that I may have muddied the waters.

It seems to me that there are now two questions to answer:

1. Were John and Elizabeth caught out, so to speak (as you suggested), and obliged to stop with a family they knew in the neighbourhood?

2. Had they travelled to Fritwell quite deliberately for a birth there?

It has to be borne in mind that Elizabeth Hampden's own mother had died two years previously and that this was the young woman's first child. Amazingly enough, we don't have a record of the maiden name of Elizabeth's mother (another Elizabeth), but if she were a member of the Fermor family, it is possible that the young Elizabeth wanted to have the baby where she felt at the greatest ease. Her rather formidable mother-in-law may have been in residence at Hampden House at this time.

I believe we must search the parish registers, initially of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, to find the record of Edmund Symeon's marriage, which will give us his wife's name.

Any offers of help out there?

**Robert V. Hammond**

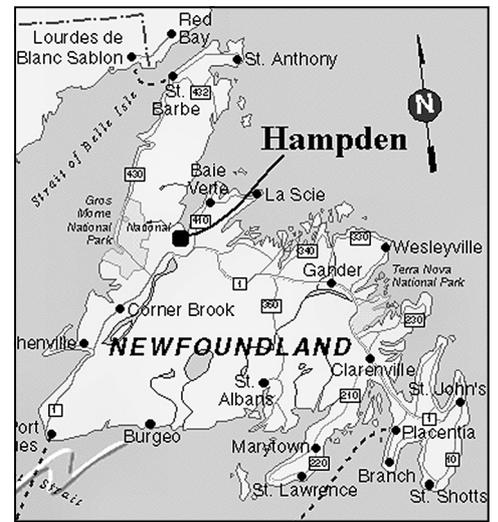
Wendover.

## ANOTHER HAMPDEN

Thanks to the marvels of the World Wide Web, we have discovered something about another of the communities named after the Patriot.

The town of Hampden in Newfoundland has its own website, which contains this extract from its potted history:

'Hampden was formerly known as Riverhead and Wild Cove. In the early 1900s, Wild Cove made application to St. John's for a post office. Because another community named Wild Cove had already existed in White Bay, they were requested to change their name. At a local public meeting, it was agreed that the name would be changed. George Rowsell, a local teacher chairing the meeting, was asked to take a history textbook, open to a page at random and choose the first surname that appeared on the page. The name chosen was John Hampden, a great 16th century (*sic*) British Parliamentarian.'



This map, taken from the web site, shows the location of Hampden, which has a population of about 800, chiefly employed in the cutting and transportation of pulpwood.

We have written to the chairman of the Community Council with details about John Hampden and the Society, and are awaiting a reply.

It would be interesting to know the name of Mr Rowsell's history text book.

## BIOGRAPHY COURSE

The University of Buckingham is running a postgraduate MA course in Biography, which they think might be of interest to John Hampden Society members

The course runs for one year, starting in January or October, and is also available part-time over two years. It combines taught course in Biography and Autobiography and Research Methods with a dissertation on the subject of your choice.

Full details are available from Jane Ridley, Course Co-Ordinator, University of Buckingham, Buckingham MK18 1EG. Direct line: 01280 820357/820292. Fax 01280 822245. E-mail: [jane.ridley@buckingham.ac.uk](mailto:jane.ridley@buckingham.ac.uk).

## MEMBERSHIP

A welcome to the first new member of 1999, Mrs Jean Gabbitas, whose husband John joined at the Fifth Anniversary Lunch in 1997.

• So that an up-to-date membership list can be maintained, please ensure that you keep Membership Secretary Liz Morris informed of any change of address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address, etc.

Members who have renewed their subscription for 1999 will find an amended membership card enclosed with this newsletter.

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BANQUETING

# NEW BOOKS

Two new books on the Civil Wars have recently been published - one which looks at the conflict from a national viewpoint, and one from a local angle.

In fact, it would be more accurate to say that the first one, *The Civil Wars - A Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660*, looks at the internecine strife of the mid-17th century as an international one.

As the editors, the late Professor John Kenyon and Dr Jane Ohlmeyer, point out, what many people regard as the English Civil War was, in fact, three separate wars affecting the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland - and this book reflects this fact.

With contributions not only from the editors but also from 7 other distinguished academics, *The Civil Wars* must be considered one of the most definitive works on the subject, and one which no student of the military aspects of the 17th century should be without.

As well as a chapter by the two editors on the background to the conflict, the wars in each kingdom are examined in depth, there is a detailed look at naval operations, and the second half of the book, entitled 'The British and Irish Experiences of War', deals with sieges and fortifications, logistics and supply and the experiences of civilians caught up in the military events.

There is a 'Postlude' of the period from 1651 to 1662 by consultant editor John Morrill, who also writes the introduction; copious notes; an enormous bibliography; and an invaluable chronology covering not only the Three Kingdoms, but also the Continent.

Having said that, *The Civil Wars* is not light reading! 400 closely-written pages of stolid text with relatively few illustrations mean that this is not the sort of book you pick up in an airport bookshop to keep you amused on holiday. It is heavy going, and members of the Society will be sad to learn that John Hampden's name occurs only twice - once in connection with Ship Money, the other for his involvement at Edgehill. It is surprising to think that, in a work of this nature, the Battle of Chalgrove Field does not get a mention.

Nevertheless, this is an invaluable work of information and reference - the concerted efforts of some of the leading authorities on the subject. *The Civil Wars* is published by Oxford University Press at £25.00.

The other publication is much lighter going. *Our Island in War and Commonwealth - 1640-1660* is by **Dr Paul Hooper**, one of our two members in the Isle of Wight, and deals with life on the Island in this most turbulent period of English history. Although **Dr Hooper** naturally covers the military events, his book is much more a look at how the lives of ordinary people were affected by the conflict. As well as a detailed chapter about the Island's personalities at the start of the first Civil War (and a later one about what happened to them), **Dr Hooper** explores Parliamentary representation, the churches and the clergy, taxation, expenditure and petitions, and civic life in the Island's capital, Newport.

The ancient Chinese had a curse, 'May you live in interesting times', and residents of Newport in the mid-17th century would have agreed with them. The problems caused to the inhabitants by the fluctuating religious, political and military situation are ably chronicled, and the various Mayors had to steer a careful path between the various interests. In 1642 Moses Read, who held the post four times between 1641 and 1661, narrowly escaped arrest by the newly-appointed Royalist Governor, Colonel Jeremy Brett, who the following day wrote to him, saying, "I was yesterday in the town to have spoken with you but you were from home" and signing himself, "Your very loving friend". As **Dr Hooper** comments, "Clearly etiquette and hypocrisy were the order of the day!"

No book about the Isle of Wight during the Civil Wars could fail to mention the two chief personalities - Sir John Oglander and Colonel Robert Hammond. Oglander came from an ancient family established in the Island since 1200, and had been variously Governor of Portsmouth, MP for Yarmouth, and High Sheriff of Hampshire. He was, in effect, ruler of the Island under the King and, being a loyal Royalist, was arrested and imprisoned by Parliament.

Yet he was, in the best sense of the word, a Puritan, deploring the dissolute behaviour of Cavaliers such as Lord Portland and Col. Brett, and believing that Parliament won in the end because it had more conscientious and determined generals.

Sir John's grandmother was a Hammond of Chertsey, so he must have been distantly related to Col. Robert Hammond, Governor of the Island during Charles I's imprisonment in Carisbrooke Castle. Hammond we already know of as the first husband of John Hampden's daughter Mary, but his term of office as the King's gaoler was something of a poisoned chalice. Being a moderate man, his respectful treatment of the King was not well received by the Parliamentary authorities, and he left the Island under something of a cloud. He moved to Reading and was elected MP for the town in the second Protectorate Parliament.

**Paul Hooper's** book, full of quotations and extracts from letters and documents, and with some interesting maps and illustrations, is a useful contribution to our sum of knowledge of the Civil Wars. It is published by Cross Publishing of Chale, IOW, and is available from the author at Selborne, Pyle Chute, Chale, IOW PO38 2LE at £13 plus £1.90 postage & packing.

● As 1999 marks the 350th anniversary of the death of King Charles I, Sutton Publishing are running a Civil Wars promotion to launch their latest book, *The Last Days of Charles I*, by Graham Edwards, a review of which appeared in *The Sunday Telegraph* of 24 January.

Members will find a leaflet enclosed with this newsletter which not only offers a discount on this new work and 21 of Sutton's previous publications about the Civil Wars period (including two by our President, **Dr John Adair**), but also entry into a draw to win a year's free joint membership of English Heritage (worth £40).



1999

**Fri 5 Mar** Talk to Chinnor Historical and Archaeological Society at the Reading Room, Chinnor High Street, commencing at 7.30pm.

**Sat 13 Mar** Members' Spring Lunch at the Chiltern Brewery, Terrick, Aylesbury, commencing at 12 noon. (*booking form enclosed*)

**Sat 10 April** Annual General Meeting at The Barns Centre Church Road, Thame, commencing at 2.30pm

**Sat 19 June** Annual Dinner at The Spread Eagle Hotel Thame. 7.30 for 8 pm.

## YOUNG JOHN HAMPDEN

continued from page 1

'It is advertised by some who have been curious in the observation that Mr Hampden, one of the five members so much talked of, hath had many great misfortunes since the beginning of the present troubles, whereof he hath been a principal mover: particularly that he hath buried since that time two of his daughters, one grandchild which he had by a daughter married to Sir Rob. Pye the younger, and his own eldest son and heir ...'

Following the Battle of Edgehill, the Greencoats and Redcoats fell back on London with the rest of the Parliamentary army. Hampden's regiment was stationed in Uxbridge and Holles's, with some of Lord Brooke's Bluecoats, in the villages of Brentford and Old Brentford, on the banks of the Thames. Early on the morning of 12 November 1642, Prince Rupert's men, taking advantage of a thick mist, fell upon this little garrison.

'We marched up to the enemy', wrote the young Royalist soldier John Gwyn, 'engaged them by Sir Richard Winn's house and the Thames side, beat them to retreat into Brainford (Brentford), - beat them from one Brainford to the other, and from thence to the open field, with a resolute and expeditious fighting, that was after once firing suddenly to advance up to push of pikes and the butt-end of muskets, which proved so fatal to Holles his butchers and dyers that day, that abundance of them were killed and taken prisoners, besides those drowned in their attempt to escape by leaping into the river'.

According to Lord Nugent, John Hampden and Lord Brooke made strenuous attempts to relieve the Parliamentarians in Brentford, charging five times. If his son was fighting with the Redcoats that day, one can imagine Hampden's feelings as he strove to reach him.

The following day saw the inconclusive stand-off at Turnham Green, but it would appear that the Royalists kept a presence in Brentford for another fortnight before the King withdrew to Oxford, so the Parliamentarians had no opportunity to identify their dead before burial. Some must have been buried in Brentford itself, but many of those who drowned would have been swept downstream and buried elsewhere - or their bodies never found.

It seems likely that the younger John Hampden was among this number.

RHB

# THE DEATH OF JOHN HAMPDEN

by

Dr John Adair

continued from 'The Patriot' No.22

Smith would state categorically in 1863 that no other amputations took place in his presence; but reports in *The News* and *The Gentlemen's Magazine* that summer mentioned amputations of both arms to see if any dislocation had taken place - apparently a discoloured socket in one arm suggested that there had been one.

By 1832, however, when Nugent's *Some Memorials of John Hampden, his Party and his Times* appeared, the author made no allusion to the exhumation. In a footnote on Hampden's death, he mentioned the two traditions of how it occurred and declared that 'of the veracity of the first named statement (i.e. that the patriot was shot in the shoulder) no-one now entertains a doubt'.

Clearly Nugent had decided to ignore the evidence of the corpse and stick to contemporary reports, and felt entitled to dismiss Pye's version as 'a groundless story, told upon the authority of a nameless paper, by Horace Walpole, and by Echard'. On first reading the story, H.J. Pye had announced in the *St James's Chronicle* for 1761, that his father 'sent to enquire of Baldwin, the printer' of the paper, how he met with the anecdote, who informed him that it was found written on a loose sheet of paper in a book that he, or some friend of his, bought out of Lord Oxford's family. My father always questioned the authenticity of it, as my grandfather was bred up and lived with Sir Robert Pye [who died in 1701] until he was eighteen years old, and he never mentioned any such circumstance'.

As for the corpse, Nugent seems to have fallen back on the fact that the coffin bore no inscription to proving it beyond doubt to be that of Hampden. Forster, who knew Nugent and wrote a memoir of him for the 1854 edition of the *Memorials*, quoted there Lord Denman's reply to Nugent's invitation to attend the unveiling ceremony of the memorial on Chalgrove Field:

'I cannot resist your company in attempting to give just honour to the great patriot, whose very identical body I am sure we saw.' But Nugent no longer shared his conviction. In a letter to a friend, wrote Forster, Nugent had said:

'I certainly did see in 1828, while the pavement of the chancel of Hampden Church was undergoing repair, a skeleton, which I have many reasons for believing was not John Hampden's, but that of some gentleman or lady, who probably died a quiet death in bed, certainly with no wound in the wrist.'

Nugent may well have hoped that the Pye story was now utterly discredited. Yet, in 1863, Smith, the last but one surviving eyewitness, responded to the third edition of the *Memorials* with his own account of the exhumation as quoted above. He also made it plain that Nugent had certainly believed on

the day that the corpse was that of John Hampden. On the inscription that Nugent wrote for the Chalgrove Monument erected in 1843, he noted, the cause of death was so vaguely worded that it cannot be questioned: 'he received a wound of which he died'. Under the circumstances, it was a very safe and prudent conclusion.

With regard to the cause of Hampden's death, it remains to be decided how far - if at all - the exhumation favoured one alternative or the other, or indeed both, as the press reports indicated. Having begun to write this article as a firm believer in the contemporary version that death was caused by a shot in the shoulder - I must admit that I am now inclined to believe that the Pye anecdote may point to the truth; and my reasons, in brief, are as follows.

The overloaded pistol story is inherently possible, as such accidents are known to have happened. Hampden was roused at night before the Chalgrove skirmish; in the confusion, his servant may well have wished to make doubly sure that his pistols were well loaded, and have added another charge to each.

*The Parliament Scout*, on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1643, had stated that Hampden was hurt in the battle at the first charge, when he would naturally have drawn and fired one of his pistols. Nor is Sir Robert Pye's comparative silence about it to be wondered at; for it was hardly a story that he would have liked to have handed down.

Several bottles of claret may have been necessary to elicit the confession, especially as he may have maintained a prudent silence during his years of service as a colonel in the New Model Army, or as a member of Cromwell's parliaments. Oliver, as he must have known, always professed the highest regard for Hampden, and the unwitting cause of his cousin's death would hardly have been popular with him. The discovery of a male corpse of approximately the right period, in a coffin near Elizabeth Hampden's memorial, with a right hand in the condition that Smith described, is not insignificant. It is quite possible that an exploding pistol would dislocate a shoulder, if indeed evidence was found of that during or after the initial examination. Or perhaps Hampden fell off his horse more than once before reaching the safety of Thame.

Lastly, Lord Nugent inspires little confidence as an historian, and none as an archaeologist. It is true that he did search for and use contemporary evidence while he was writing his life of Hampden; but he was, first and foremost, a Whig politician who could allow nothing to tarnish the image of his hero; and the idea that Hampden had met his death by an inglorious accident, not at the hands of the Royalists, he would have found wholly unpalatable

Nor was he beyond describing what should have happened - as opposed to what did happen. In 1847, for example, he published anonymously his *True and faithful relation of a worthy discourse between . . . JH [John Hampden] and . . . O Cromwell*, a work of pure fiction purporting to be historical fact.

It is also worth recording that *A true and faithful narrative of the death of Mr Hampden*, supposedly by a contemporary called E. Clough, which Nugent used as a source, has been dismissed by C.H. Firth as an 'impudent forgery', a view shared by most later historians. The true author of it remains unknown; but Nugent must be the first suspect.

My own theory is that Nugent was convinced that the corpse belonged to Hampden, and that he saw the evidence of the severed right hand. Later, however, he persuaded himself otherwise.

He had an emotionally powerful reason for doing so. His *Memorials* of the great patriot earned him fame as an author in his life time; but the memory of the corpse, which he so rudely disturbed and left propped up against a spade that July day in 1828, has lived to question his renown.

concluded



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