TRIUMPH AT THAME!

The Society’s long-awaited Millen-ium exhibition about John Hampden, held in The Masonic Hall in Thame on Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th of June, was a resounding success, although the Thame Gazette deemed it a failure.

With a constant stream of visitors totalling at least 500 during the hottest weekend of the year, and with sales of books more than covering the cost of hiring the hall, we know differently.

The exhibition, entitled ‘The Father of the People’, was a joint effort between the Society and Thame Historical Society. For some time beforehand we had been sorting out all our visual material - photographs, prints and posters - and having them copied and mounted on card. Starting at 8.30 am for the 10 o’clock opening, these were set up on the John Hampden Primary School’s exhibition stand, kindly loaned by Headmaster Alan Haigh.

Whereas in 1997 our exhibition in the school had only used one side of the stand, on this occasion we used both; the dark green side devoted to the story of John Hampden and the other (grey) to the Society and its activities, with the eye-catching wreath of dried flowers hung at one end.

This was set up right in the middle of the floor, so that visitors followed the story in logical progression as they walked around the display.

In addition, a table along one wall of the hall held all the Society’s products, together with a detailed plan of the battle of Chalgrove Field, the little oak chest said to have been carved by John Hampden, a replica Civil War cavalry helmet, the model Civil War trooper from Buckinghamshire County Museum, the model of John Hampden made by Alan Webb, a layout of books and documents charting the history of the town. Maurice Kirtland, being both Chairman of the Historical Society and a member of our committee, was kept very busy indeed!

For us he had secured the hire of some glass-topped, lockable display cases into which went the most precious of the borrowed artefacts, which made life much less worrying. He also undertook to store these valuable items at his home on the Saturday night.

With this exhibition in mind, we had invested in this smart plastic banner to promote the Society, and this was hung across the entrance to the Masonic Hall. Over 7 feet wide, it attracted a lot of attention, and is an investment for the future.

The kitchen of the Hall was given over to storing all the boxes and spare material, and it was here that Vice-Chairman Roy Bailey spent some time on the Saturday morning putting the finishing touches to the captions; popping out every so often to put them on the display. As with so many activities of this nature, much of the organisation went right up to the deadline, and the colour picture of Elizabeth Hampden’s wedding gloves was only e-mailed to the Society and printed out on the previous day. Had it not been for Bob Hammond’s efforts, it would not have been on show.

The products table was continuously manned by various Society members (left) on a rota basis, although there were

continued on page 2
fewer of these than had been hoped. Treasurer Sam Hearn brought along his two small children, which he later took for a long walk around the town! We were pleased to receive an encouraging visit from our Patron, Lord Buckinghamshire, and Lady Buckinghamshire, and also our Chairman, Lord Hollenden.

The general public visited in a steady stream throughout both days, and at no time was the hall empty. At times it was extremely crowded, and it was necessary to wait for a quiet period to take the accompanying pictures. A lot of questions were asked, and it was obvious that most of those attending were keen to know more about John Hampden and the Society. We like to think that they did. The younger visitors tended to head straight for the computer, where much of the same information was available in a different format. On Sunday afternoon a short memorial service had been arranged at the Hampden Monument at Chalgrove, and here a remarkable co-incidence occurred. When we arrived we found Len Barker and Valerie Horne talking to a couple of Australian visitors, Ross and Pauline Boyd.

Ross explained that he was fascinated by the Hampden coat-of-arms on the Monument, as he had been employed by the Municipality of Camperdown, Victoria, for most of his working life, and he was very familiar with the coat of arms since it appeared on all the Municipality’s notepaper. The reason for this was quite simple - until 1994 (significant date!) Camperdown had been known as Hampden. Those members present were amazed at such a coincidence, and it didn’t take much persuading to get the Boyds to accompany us back to the exhibition in Thame after the service. Here Ross was able to see more representations of the Hampden coat of arms, and learn about the man who gave his name to the Australian town. Needless to say, very little further persuasion was needed to get them to join the Society, and they were presented with a copy of John Hampden of Buckinghamshire - The People’s Hero by Len Barker.

7 new members were signed up that weekend, including the Boyds, and all members present felt that a great deal had been achieved. As a result of the work, we now have a comprehensive exhibition which can be used on other occasions and which will be touring the libraries of Oxfordshire this autumn and winter. The reprinted photographs will also form the basis of an updated slide programme, which is used in our lectures, and for improvements to the web site.

Col. John Hampden’s Regiment of Foot held a Living History at Thame Showground during the following week, but the weather was unhelpful and the location too far from the town centre, so attendance was less than in 1997. They did, however, march through the town at the head of the Carnival procession on Saturday 24th, and on the same day more than 30 members of the Society gathered at The Spread Eagle Hotel for the Annual Dinner. As well as the usual excellent meal, we were greatly entertained by Lord Saye and Sele, who spoke of his ancestor the first Viscount, colleague of John Hampden.

Thanks must go to Thame Historical Society, Buckinghamshire County Museum, Lord Saye & Sele, Tim Oliver, the owners of the oak chest, and all those who assisted in any way - especially those 21 members who staffed the exhibition or came along to give support.

- Sadly, as this newsletter was going to press, we learned of the death of Len Barker. An appreciation will appear in the next issue.
GRAMPOUND 2001
by
Graham Barfield

Though a Buckinghamshire landowner, John Hampden made his initial entry to Parliament as an MP for Grampound in Cornwall. He represented that town in 1621 and again in 1624 in James I’s third and fourth parliaments. How this came about is still being investigated by the Society’s researchers; but it seems likely that the Hampden family’s longstanding friendship with the Eliot family, which had considerable influence in that area of Cornwall, helped select John Hampden as Grampound’s MP.

The town remembers its brief connection with Hampden, and Vice-Chairman Roy Bailey and I have been discussing with members of Grampound’s parish council ways in which the link might be strengthened. Roy, who visited the town during a recent holiday in the area, found them most supportive and keen for some activity to coincide with the annual town carnival which in 2001 runs from Monday 27th August to Saturday 1st September.

Events which have been proposed include the unveiling of a commemorative plaque on the wall of Trevail House and its renaming as Hampden House. It was until a few decades ago known by that name, being the building in which Hampden reputedly lodged during his two election campaigns in the town. There is a proposal to lay a foundation stone on a block of buildings which may shortly be constructed nearby and known as John Hampden Court. Additionally it is suggested that a memorial could be placed in the town’s parish church at the nearby hamlet of Creed, on the basis that Hampden would probably have attended services there during his stay in the town.

The John Hampden Society would like to make this as memorable an event as possible by having a significant number of members take part. The Carnival Parade on the Saturday is preceded by a fete, and we are looking at the possibilities of having the Society’s exhibition on display and Col. John Hampden’s Regiment holding a Living History from Monday to Saturday, with an illustrated lecture on John Hampden on the Friday evening. However, the Society’s main contribution would be during the weekend of 1st/2nd September, with participating members travelling down on Friday 31st August and returning Sunday afternoon.

I have looked at travel options - Grampound is about 240 miles from Oxford. At least 100 members live in the Berks, Bucks or Oxon areas, Greater London and the inner Home Counties and there is a real possibility that, with suitable liaison, car drivers could take passengers with them and share fuel costs.

Another option is to hire one or more self-drive 14- or 17-seater mini-coaches with Apex rail fares, booked well in advance to St Austell, about six miles from Grampound, can be as little as half the normal fare, and this can be reduced further with a rail card. For those with little time but more resources, there are scheduled flights from Heathrow to Newquay and Gatwick to Plymouth.

The area has a number of inns, guesthouses and farmhouses offering B & B, and our hosts suggested it might be possible to accommodate some Society members in private houses in Grampound. It looks as if it ought to be possible for members to take part - travel, food and accommodation - for between £100-£120 a head, perhaps less if members are offered rooms by townspeople.

We shall publicise the event both locally and nationally and the more of our members who can present at the ceremonies, the better. As well as having an enjoyable weekend - and there are lots of interesting places to visit in the area - members will be helping to bring the Society’s aims and John Hampden’s vital contribution to parliamentary and constitutional reform, to a wider public.

I have undertaken to co-ordinate this event, putting members in touch with others who wish to share travel costs, supplying details of accommodation, etc. The next issue of ‘The Patriot’ will include a form you can return to me to register your support and ask for further information specific to your individual needs.

But in the meantime, please put the dates 31st August to 2nd September in your 2001 diary. We want this to be a memorable and heavily supported event which should give Grampound, John Hampden and the Society the high profiles they all deserve.

EDGEHILL CEREMONY

The Middle Anglia branch of the Battlefields Trust will be laying a wreath at the battlefield of Edgehill on Sunday 22nd October.

The Sealed Knot Society have for many years organised a wreath-laying ceremony there on the Sunday nearest to 23rd October, and have now made it possible for the Trust to participate. The battlefield monument is inside the Army Depot, and the procession leaves from the main gates, just off the Kineton-Edgehill road, at 10.30 am.

If you are interested in attending, please write, stating numbers, to Stephen Barker, 12 Hazley Walk, Buckingham, MK18 7BL, or ring 01280 824877.
OBITUARY

Moira Ruth Calvert, who died in May of this year, once described herself as ‘the last of the Hampdens’.

She was born in 1921 at Henley, the daughter of naval officer Geoffrey Cromwell Hampden. Her father was the grandson of Bishop Renn Dickson Hampden, Lord Bishop of Hereford, who was a descendant of the Barbados Hampdens. On the death of Moira’s grandmother in 1930, the family moved to The Old Mansion in Ewelme, which had been bought by Bishop Hampden when he was Rector.

Moira served as an ATS driver in World War II, and afterwards with the WRVS in Germany, where she met and married Paddy Philips, an officer with the King’s Shropshire Light Infantry, in 1956. He died 4½ years later, and in 1966 she married Colonel Wilkie Calvert.

They settled at The Old Mansion, and while Wilkie became a very good churchwarden, Moira served on the parish council - for 4 years as its formidable chairman. The Rev. Ieuan Williams, who knew her well for many years and who gave the address at her funeral, said that she showed signs of John Hampden’s characteristics - indomitable in her fight for what she considered to be the rights of people, especially against the Establishment.

She was proud of her Hampden ancestry - following the death of her beloved brother Grenville in the Fleet Air Arm at Narvik in 1940 she was the last of the family in Britain, though branches overseas are still extant. She cared for the Hampden Monument at Chalgrove, which her great-grandfather had erected, and made it over to Chalgrove Parish Council in 1988. For several years she was a member of the John Hampden Society. Moira had no children from either of her marriages, and after the death of Wilkie she sold the Old Mansion and moved restlessly from place to place - Henley, Waltham, London - until she died in West Sussex.

She returned to Ewelme to be buried at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, on 1st June (Ascension Day).

BUCKS BONANZA

by Liz Morris

On Saturday 23 September what can only be described as a ‘Buckinghamshire History/Archaeological bonanza’ took place in Aylesbury Civic Centre from 10 am until 5.15 pm.

This was a conference, entitled ‘Buckinghamshire in the Last Millennium’ organised jointly by the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society and the Buckinghamshire Local History Network (BLHN). The latter is a collection of more than 40 organisations dedicated to promoting history and archaeology within the county. As a member of BLHN the John Hampden Society had been invited to have display of our activities and publications, so Bob Hammond, Sam Hearn, Maurice Kirkland and I organised to organise and staff this.

We arrived at 8.30 am to start setting up. Display stands had been provided, and on them we were able to put much of the material used at Thame in June. We also put up our new banner, and this attracted a lot of interest - one woman carefully taking down details of the makers. So, too, did our stall with its publications, and we took over £80 in sales, as well as recruiting 2 new members. One of these was Julian Hunt, Head of Local Studies at the County Library.

During the day there were 6 lectures by such well-known specialists as Carenza Lewis of Channel 4’s ‘Time Team’ on such varying subjects as ‘The Changing Landscape of Bucks in the 16th and 17th Century and Aristocrats of Bucks, with Special Reference to the Grenvilles’. Admission to the conference for the general public cost £12 each, and there must have been well over 300 people filling the Civic Centre.

We were told by a lady from the County Museum that some artefacts connected with John Hampden, including Elizabeth Hampden’s wedding gloves, would be on show there until the end of October. It sounds well worth a visit.

WINTER WARMER

A Winter Lunch, similar to the successful Spring Lunch of 1999, has been arranged at the Chiltern Brewery for Saturday 18th November.

Members will find a booking form enclosed with this newsletter.

BOOK BARGAINS

Also enclosed with this issue members will find a leaflet from Sutton Publishing, offering books on the Civil Wars at a discount of 20%.

Among them is By The Sword Divided; eyewitness accounts of the English Civil Wars by our President, Professor John Adair.

ADDRESS LIST

Members will find an up-to-date address list with this issue. We have been able to make this more comprehensive, thanks to those members who returned the form enclosed with the last issue. Sadly the response was only about 25%, which is rather disappointing.

Some recipients may have felt that supplying the details was an invasion of their privacy - indeed, one long-standing member resigned, citing as his reasons, ‘the Society’s increasing thirst for personal and business details (and eagerness to publish them)’. This, of course, is nonsense. Our only reason for asking for so much information is to ensure that we can contact members if something of interest crops up at short notice (the Battlefields Register Chalgrove Walk in March was one example and the funeral of a member is another).

Sending out multiple faxes or e-mails is so much quicker, cheaper and more efficient than printing out letters, addressing envelopes, and buying stamps.

If you still have not sent back the address details form, please do so. We abide by the Data Protection Act, so nothing will be published or distributed without your permission.

THE NAME GAME

Our enquiry some time ago as to why Hampden Park football ground is so named has been answered. Hon. Treasurer Sam Hearn very sensibly went to the right place and e-mailed David McNeil, Director of Queen’s Park FC. Mr McNeil replied:

‘The first Hampden Park (there have been three) was named after the road which overlooked it, namely Hampden Terrace, which the builder of the houses had named after John Hampden.’

‘The name was kept as the home ground of Queen’s Park FC as they moved first to an area now occupied by Cathkin Park and to the third and final site at Mount Florida which is the home of the Scotland team and ourselves.’

So now we know!

CHARITY STATUS

The Society’s committee has decided that it would be advantageous for us to apply for charity status.

Hon. Treasurer Sam Hearn has done a considerable amount of research into the matter, and has written to all the members setting out the reasons for our proposal. The increase in subscriptions, agreed at this year’s AGM, is unconnected with the charity registration. Members paying by standing order will receive a new mandate form in due course.

NEW BOOK

Isle of Wight resident Dr Paul Hooper is following up his book Our Island in War and Commonwealth (reviewed in The Patriot no. 24) with a new project - John Hampden as a Parliamentary Tactician.

Dr Hooper has made contact with Dr Maija Jansson FRHS of Hamden, Connecticut, who as Director of the Yale Center for Parliamentary History has been working on a series of books about the Long Parliament, and a prolific interchange of e-mails has resulted.
ALL ABOVE BOARD?

As forecast in the Spring issue, the road signing and information board at Chalgrove have been erected.

The road signs are the usual brown ones for sites of special interest, and have been put up on the main Watlington-Oxford road beside of the lane leading to the Monument. They bear the ‘crossed swords’ symbol - the first in Oxfordshire - and are impossible to miss!

The information board has been erected near the Monument (left) and is double sided, with a description of Prince Rupert’s March on one side and details of the Battle of Chalgrove Field on the other (below). Both are in full colour, with portraits of the two protagonists and maps.

The board, which was put up by Chalgrove Battle Group and Chalgrove Parish Council with the help of a Millennium grant, contains a great deal of useful and interesting information and, sadly, two factual errors. If you live in, or are visiting the Chalgrove area, you are encouraged to visit the Monument and see if they can detect the mistakes.

We’ll give you a clue - they are on the side dealing with the Battlefield!

WRIST SLAP

The Society is always keen to receive newspaper cuttings, magazine articles, photographs, etc. for the archives, but the source of supply is not very reliable.

Having supplied The Bucks Free Press with material for an article on John Hampden, Vice-Chairman Roy Bailey was surprised to receive the relevant cutting from Graham Barfield of Derbyshire, who had been sent it by his daughter, a resident of Great Kimble.

Must we assume that none of our members in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire read the local papers?

NEW DOMAIN

Members will notice some changes to the little address box at the bottom of page 3.

The Society has spent a modest sum of money in registering a dedicated domain name - johnhampden.org. This means that the new web site address is www.johnhampden.org, which identifies the Society much better and looks more professional than the previous Demon address.

In addition, our main e-mail address now becomes enquiries@johnhampden.org, and we have the option to have 9 more in a similar fashion for various purposes.

The registration was done in a hurry earlier this year so that we could incorporate the new web site address on the new banner, and it is already appearing on our letterheads and other printed material.
MORE ON JOHN HAMPDEN JR.

by Roy Bailey

The co-incidence of making a Hampden contact at Chalgrove in June is not the only one that the Society has experienced recently.

Committee member Bob Hammond and I have been pursuing the mysteries of the birth and death of John Hampden’s eldest son over the past couple of years, and some interesting information has come to light.

Readers may recall that, in ‘The Patriot’ no. 22, I wrote how I had re-discovered a parish register entry for a John, son of Mr John Hampden, baptised at Fritwell, near Banbury, in November 1623, and in issue no. 24 put forward the theory that young John Hampden was probably killed at the Battle of Brentford on 12 November 1642.

Efforts to pinpoint the date and place of the young man’s death have included contacting the Archivist at St. George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle, because of an extract from Memoirs of the Reigns of King Charles I by Sir Philip Warwick, included by Professor John Adair in his 1976 biography of Hampden. This refers to the visit at the King’s command by Dr Nathaniel Giles, former parson of Chinnor, to the mortally wounded Hampden in Thame in June 1643.

Although Hampden and Giles had been neighbours and friends before the outbreak of the Civil War, Dr Giles was reluctant to go because, as he said to Warwick, ‘I have seemed unlucky to him (Hampden) in several conjunctions of time, when I made addresses to him in my own behalf: for he having been formerly so kindly my friend, before I came to Oxford, we the Prebendaries of Windsor being all turned out of our houses, in the carrying off of my goods my wagons were robbed and plundered, though warranted by passport, and I addressing to him for release, my messenger came in that very instant in which the news of his eldest son’s death came to him.’

We had hoped that the Archivist could give us an exact date for Dr Giles’s unfortunate experience, but the records do not appear to exist, so we cannot find out exactly when Dr Giles and his colleagues were evicted.

The good Doctor also goes on to say how, on the second occasion he sought redress from Hampden, the latter had just received news of the death of his eldest daughter Elizabeth, who was married to Sir Richard Knightly of Fawsley, Northamptonshire. Enquiries to Northants Records Office revealed that they had no record of either Elizabeth Knightly’s marriage or burial, suggesting that both had taken place elsewhere. Since Dr Giles places the two deaths in the above order, information as to Elizabeth’s death would have given us the latest possible date for young John Hampden’s, and therefore narrowed down the place.

However, at the July committee meeting, Bob Hammond made a fascinating announcement. He had been studying records in the County Archives in Aylesbury, and had consulted the Visitation of Buckinghamshire. This was a record of visits at various times by heralds from the College of Arms to ascertain the right of gentry to bear coats-of-arms. The entry above was on page 71.

Bob was greatly puzzled at this, since the entry for John Hampden did not make sense. He was not slain at anywhere called Cheney; he was not slain in battle but died later of wounds; and his death occurred in 1643, not 1642. It was obvious that ‘Cheney’ referred to Chenies, on the borders of Bucks and Hertfordshire and formerly the property of the Dukes of Bedford.

I recalled from my Sealed Knot days that there had been some kind of skirmish at Chenies during the Civil War, and Derek Lester later confirmed this, adding that it had been the site of a Parliamentary magazine. The skirmish had apparently occurred between 24 October and 7 November 1642. Records show that the Earl of Essex was at Woburn on 4 November and reached London 2 or 3 days later. The action at Chenies must have occurred between these two dates.

Bob Hammond suggested initially that the heralds may have made hasty notes and then written up the Visitation later over very strong coffee, thereby getting Chenies confused with Chalgrove because of the similarity of the first syllable, and entering the wrong date! I suggested that something much stronger and more alcoholic than coffee led them to confuse the two John Hampdens, father and son, and ascribe what was basically correct information to the wrong one. We know John Hampden Jr was in the Parliamentary Army and was killed around this time, and we must assume that this death entry refers to him, and not to his father.

The really amazing part of all this is that when Bob and I had finished retailing all this to the committee, our Chairman, Lord Hollenden said, ‘You have spoiled my story now! We had dinner the other night with the owners of Chenies Manor, who are friends of mine, and they told us this same story’.

We will keep members posted on this fascinating business, but if anyone has any other information, please contact either Bob or me.