



THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

No. 62 - Spring 2010



The John Hampden Society is a registered charity which exists to bring together people with an interest in John Hampden, and to encourage wider knowledge of this great 17th century Parliamentarian, his life and times

The Dreaming Spires of Oxford



I would like to thank all those who made it to Mansfield College, Oxford, for making it such a wonderful occasion. AGMs, as we all know, can sometimes be a little tedious but our first visit to Oxford turned out to be rather special. Few members will forget dining at the top table in the college's hall and entering the hallowed portals of the senior common room.

Before the start of the formal AGM, Ed Mayne, an ex-Mansfield student, led members on a lively guided tour of the College. He provided a fascinating insight into the College's unconventional non-conformist roots and its high Victorian-gothic architecture. Ed was keen to show members the pride of place given to a copy of the Robert Walker portrait of Hampden in the college library.

The more adventurous members were able to explore for themselves the college's chapel and marvel at the representation of Hampden in a stained glass window. Hampden clearly held a special place in the pantheon of late nineteenth-century Nonconformism.

The existing Executive Committee was re-elected at the AGM. Derek Lester was confirmed in the post of Honorary Treasurer. In

Derek's absence Roy Bailey presented the Treasurer's report on his behalf. Roger Paynter, the Membership Secretary, reported a serious decline in members renewing their subscriptions in 2010.

The Chairman's report reprised the activities of the Society in another busy and eventful year. Roy Bailey remains on the Committee, but has indicated that he longer wishes to serve as Vice-Chairman.

Following the AGM, historian and author Adrian Tinniswood delighted us with an amusing and informative talk on the Verney family. I think it likely that several members will be investing in Adrian's book on the Verneys or even his new book on the Barbary Pirates of the seventeenth century.

Full marks to Mansfield College for the good value three course lunch and the quality of discreet waitress service.

Full marks also to member Mrs. Gloria Smith who made the effort to travel from her home in Canterbury to attend.

Those who tried to visit Hampden's old college, Magdalen, in the morning were disappointed. Unfortunately Magdalen does not open its doors to tourists until 1pm. Looking on the bright side, there is somewhere else for us to visit on another day!



The pictures show (top) the chapel's stained glass window portraying Sir Harry Vane, Oliver Cromwell and John Hampden, (centre) the copy of the Walker portrait, and (bottom) Adrian Tinniswood giving his talk

John Hampden and The Borough of Grampound

John Hampden represented Grampound in the House of Commons between 1621 and 1625. He is certainly the most distinguished in a long line of members who sat for the constituency between the reign of Edward VI and 1821 when, as a result of gross corruption, the Borough was deprived of its parliamentary representation.

When the Grampound with Creed Parish Council initiated the Heritage Project in 2006 it was given the primary objective of researching, recording and displaying in the Heritage Centre all aspects of the history of the locality. The work of the volunteers has ranged



across the political, economic, social and cultural, and a wealth of information has been gleaned from written records, photographs and the recollections of village people. The lives of most of our past MPs have been explored and several information banners similar to that on John Hampden have been produced.



The Grampound Heritage Centre (above) and (top) the historical display

It has to be admitted that Grampound's MPs have been a mixed bag; a respected counsellor to Queen Elizabeth I, a notorious stock-market fraudster and a reviled slave trader have represented the Borough! John Hampden however, with his illustrious role in the constitutional developments of the 17th century, stands apart and Grampound is very proud of its association with him.

Roger Paynter and Peter Wootton

Any members who would like to visit Grampound Heritage Centre are advised to contact Roger Paynter on 01726 882594, who will be happy to arrange admission.

Chalgrove Wreath Ceremony 18th June - 10 am

This year the event will have a different twist, in that Derek and Gill Lester are not able to be present (it is they who normally lay the wreath) and so have enlisted the aid of Chalgrove School. Pupils from the top form will march, with their teachers and anyone who wishes to join in, from the school to the monument, where the wreath will be laid and the Earl of Buckinghamshire will give a brief history of the Battle.

This event will commence at 9.30 am when two standard bearers will lead the procession from the school to the monument. All attendees are invited back to the school for refreshments after the event.



Roger Paynter showing the Hampden Banner which he brought to the AGM to display to members

Chalgrove Battlefield Walk 6th June 2010 from 10.30 am

We meet at the John Hampden Monument, Monument Road, Chalgrove, Oxon OX44 7RW, but if all else fails follow the brown road signs on the B480 to the Battlefield.

Parking in the lane to the airfield, opposite the Monument, we will assemble around the Monument's information board for a short talk on the events of the 18th June 1643. Just a point - had we not gone to the Gregorian calendar we would actually walking on the 367th anniversary.

Parking at Easington is limited so please load as many people into your car as possible. Depending on the weather I will find the best place to park at Easington. After walking back to the Monument those who had the luxury of a lift to take their driver back to Easington.

The walk is 1.5 miles across fields, if it has been wet then good boots are required. If hot then hats and water is a must. At a leisurely pace and with questions taken at the end of the walk we should be in the Red Lion in the centre of Chalgrove Village by 13.15pm.

We will follow closely in the line of Prince Rupert's troopers' retreat with the speaker pointing out features in the landscape from *The Late Beating Up*. Copies of this document and the Earl of Essex's letter will be made available to those wishing to attend by sending an email to chalgrove@johnhampden.org. For those members without a computer please telephone 01865 890451 for copies of the documents.

A Legendary Royal Visit

One of the great events in the history of Hampden House was the visit by Queen Elizabeth I. A number of writers record that Griffith Hampden, John Hampden's grandfather, played host to Queen Bess but until recently I have never found any mention of when the visit actually occurred. It was whilst browsing in the Buckinghamshire Archives in Aylesbury that, at the suggestion of member June Wailling, I had a quick glance at *The Genealogical Memoir of the extinct family of Chester of Chicheley*.

The memoir is a labour of love by Robert Edward Chester Water. On page 89 the author states that Elizabeth visited Griffith Hampden in 1563. This would have been within a few months of the death of his aunt, Sybil Penn, a Lady of the Queen's Bedchamber. Sybil died of smallpox on 6th November 1562 at Hampton Court Palace. She had probably contracted the illness whilst nursing Elizabeth through the same disease in late October.

Sybil Penn (nee Hampden) had served the Tudor royal household on and off for twenty four years. She and her husband David had as a result benefited hugely from grants of former monastic lands by Henry VIII. Her brother Richard Hampden, Griffith Hampden's uncle, was also part of the Queen's household, having been appointed to the responsible position of Clerk of the Queen's Kitchens. The visit to Great Hampden could perhaps be seen as an act of condolence by the Queen for the loyal Sybil. On a later royal progress Elizabeth stayed at Denham with the Peckham family. Mary Peckham was one of Sybil's daughters and therefore a first cousin of Griffith Hampden.

Local legend says that the ride or Great Avenue leading down through the woods from the great house to the main road, and still visible today, was cut in order to provide the Queen with either an interesting view or a place to ride during her short stay. The work was, according to the story, all done in the course of one day or, some say, one night. My grandfather told me this so it must be true.

Sam Hearn



Queen Elizabeth I, aged around 13 years (1546)



DIARY DATES

2010

Sunday 6 June

A battlefield walk of Chalgrove Field by the Battlefield Trust's custodians Derek and Gill Lester. Starting from Hampden's Monument (Grid ref SU 646972) at 10.30 am. (*see the brown signs for 'Chalgrove Battlefield' off the B480 at Chalgrove*)

Retiring after the walk to The Red Lion, Chalgrove, for refreshment.

Friday 18 June

Wreath-laying ceremony commencing at 10 a.m. at Chalgrove Battlefield monument. This will be carried out by Chalgrove School with an address by the Earl of Buckinghamshire. All members welcome to attend.

Saturday 26 June (6.45pm for 7.15)

The Society's Annual Dinner at The Spread Eagle Hotel, Thame. Speaker: Julian Humphreys, Development Officer of the Battlefields Trust.

Sunday ? October

A visit to the Chiltern Brewery, near Aylesbury, for lunch and the launch of a Civil War book detailing the exploits of John Hampden. (*Date to be arranged*)

All meetings commence at 8 pm, unless otherwise stated.

For up-to-date information, see the Diary page on the Society's website at:

www.johnhampden.org/diary.htm

Battle for London

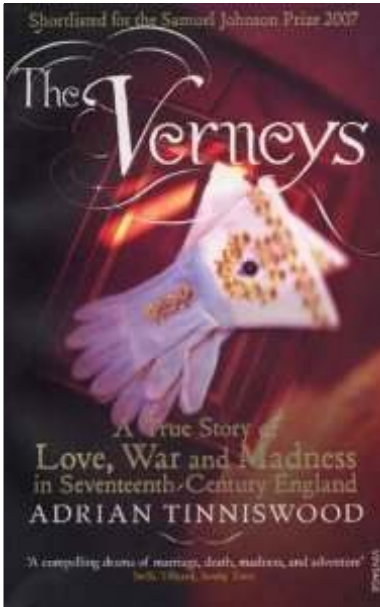
Stephen Porter and Simon Marsh's long awaited book on the Battle of Turnham Green and the Battle of Brentford is scheduled to be published by Amberley on 1st May.

Members will remember the two talks that Simon has given to the Society as his researches on the twin battles progressed. Simon and Stephen will be walking the battlefields on 7th November.

Contact Simon Marsh on sifial@hotmail.com for details if you wish to join them.

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BOOK REVIEW...

The Verneys

A True Story of Love, Madness and War in Seventeenth-Century England

by Adrian Tinniswood

One critic summed up this book as “a surprisingly readable page-turning insight into how an aristocratic family copes with being torn apart by the Civil War, with parallels in today’s world”. This is a rather bland but accurate summary.

The tale begins with Sir Francis Verney who ran away from his teenage wife in 1608, sold off much of the Verney property, converted to Islam and became one of the most feared pirates on the Barbary Coast.

The author has produced a gripping story of life during the Civil War and Restoration. The individual family members are all too human with frailties and aspirations that many readers will recognize. Sir Ralph Verney tries to maintain the family fortunes, and have his sons shoulder responsibilities and marry women with large dowries. The Verney women rebel in several different ways against the expectations of their relatives and Society at large.

The narrative is based predominantly on the extensive records of the Verneys, particularly on hundreds of letters kept by Sir Ralph Verney (1613-96) who presided over Claydon House in Buckinghamshire for over 50 years.

If you strip away the history, you are left with a story of the lives, loves, triumphs and tragedies of an extraordinary family. It reads like a soap opera with happy and unhappy marriages, people struggling to make ends meet, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, criminality, birth, premature death, love, laughter and grief.

As another critic has written of the book “This is history at its best - it's readable, compelling and thoroughly enjoyable.” What more can I say?



ANNUAL DINNER 2010

This year’s Annual Dinner is booked for Saturday, 26th June at The Spread Eagle, Thame, meeting in the bar at 6.45, the speaker commencing at 7.15 and the meal at 7.45. A booking form is enclosed with this publication and early booking is recommended for this popular event.

Our speaker this year is Julian Humphreys who was appointed last year as the Development Officer of The Battlefields Trust.

Julian is ideally qualified to take this work forward. He read history at Emmanuel College, Cambridge and, after spending a post-graduate year at the Polytechnic of North London and qualifying as a Blue Badge Guide, he joined the staff of Chelsea’s National Army Museum. He worked there for twelve years, researching, writing and staging a number of Special Exhibitions and was spokesman to the media on a wide range of historical matters.

His TV and radio appearances have ranged from Sky News to *The Generation Game*, and he has made a number of appearances on BBC Radio 4’s Ramblings Series. As well as guiding battlefield tours in the UK, France, Belgium and Spain, Julian undertook three expeditions to Bosnia during the civil war to record the British Army’s activities there and to obtain objects for display in the Museum, setting up a major exhibition on his return.

In 2002 he began an ongoing association with English Heritage, developing and then leading its *Tours Through Time* programme of guided visits to historic properties and its popular series of battlefield hikes. Julian is a regular contributor to BBC History Magazine and is the author of a number of books, including *Clash of Arms: Twelve English battles and Enemies at the Gate: English castles under siege from 12th century to the civil war*.

Julian’s priority at the Trust is working with English Heritage on their 43 registered battlefields in England and especially on the eight identified last year as being ‘at risk’. He is working with and setting up local ‘custodian groups’ for each battlefield and developing and strengthening the Trust’s branch structure. He will be building on success; some custodians such as Derek and Gill Lester are already appointed and there are new branches in the offing. Although the priority is England’s registered battlefields, Julian also works with Historic Scotland and their proposed ‘inventory’ of battlefields and he is also looking at the very many unregistered but important battlefields to develop their heritage potential.