

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 8th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held at Hampden House, Great Hampden on Sunday 7th May 2000.

Present: The Earl of Buckinghamshire (*Patron to the Society*), Lady Buckinghamshire, Lord Hollenden (*Chairman*) Mr Roy Bailey (*Vice Chairman*), Mr Sam Hearn (*Hon. Treasurer*), Mrs Anthea Coles (*Hon. Secretary*), Miss Elizabeth Morris (*Membership Secretary*), Mr Maurice Kirtland, Mrs Marion Wierszycki, Mr Derek Lester and seventeen members of the Society.

Apologies for absence: Mr Graham Barfield, Sir Leonard Figg & Lady Figg, Mrs Olivia Pemberton, Mr Frederick Tildesley, Mrs Angela Feaviour, Mrs Annabel and Miss Alice Bailey, Mr David Snowden, Dr Paul Hooper, Mr Charles Woodd, Mrs Gileon Holroyd, Mr John and Mrs Caroline Abel Smith, Mrs Sarah Barrington, Mr David & Mrs Caroline Hickman, Mr Michael Morris and Mr Terry Gibson.

Lord Hollenden opened the Meeting by welcoming all members.

The Minutes of the previous AGM had been distributed and further copies were available at the meeting.

Matters Arising: There were none.

Vice Chairman's Report: Mr Bailey gave a report as follows:

1999 was more a year of preparation for 2000, when a number of interesting activities were planned. Firstly it was hoped that Thame Council would decide to erect a statue of John Hampden on the Millennium Circle in the High Street. Unfortunately this proposal was eventually dropped. During the summer the roof of Hampden Church needed urgent repair at a cost of £150,000. Mr John and Mrs Gillian Goodall raised £522 towards this and the Society made a donation towards this and publicised the project. The sword on the statue of John Hampden in Aylesbury Market Square was removed by vandals. Chiltern Brewery brewed a special Millennium Ale, the inauguration of which was attended by Lord Hollenden and Mr Roy Bailey, who both took the opportunity of sampling the product. The Society had recruited several new members through the web site, two of whom lived in Chalgrove, though one of these is also a member of a Royalist Group. Mr. Bob Hammond of Wendover has taken on some of the lectures the Society is asked to give and has made good use of the new slide projector purchased during the year. Mr Graham Barfield works from his office in the Midlands and has been in touch with Grampound Parish Council in Cornwall with a view to erecting a plaque there to commemorate John Hampden's association with the village. The Council is interested in this proposal and has identified the house in which John Hampden lived, formerly known as Hampden House. Mr. Bailey intended to visit Grampound during August 2000, and discuss possible arrangements for a short ceremony to be attended by members of the Society.

Grampound Council had suggested that this might take place this year, but it was felt that, with the Millennium Exhibition to be staged in Thame, the Society would prefer to defer it until 2001.

Other events had included a Battlefield Study Day at Brasenose College with a trip to Chalgrove Battlefield where Mr Derek Lester conducted a very informative tour of the site and gave an interesting talk despite the extremely cold weather.

Mr Derek Lester and Mrs Gillian Blackshaw were engaged in producing a book about the controversy surrounding the death of John Hampden, and this was almost ready for publication. They had both spent an enormous amount of time researching the facts and the book promised to be well worth reading.

The Society was also working on an unusual publicity stunt – Mr Bailey was putting forward the suggestion that Downing Street should be renamed. This being the site of John Hampden's mother's London home, the suggestion is that he would be a more worthy person for the street to be named after than George Downing. It is acknowledged that this is not likely to come about, but the resulting publicity in the national press and local papers, is drawing attention to the Society.

The major event for 2000 will be the Millennium Exhibition to be held in conjunction with Thame Historical Society at the Masonic Hall in Thame High Street. This has been arranged for 17th/18th June, which marks the commencement of a week of Living History, the heavy involvement of Mr Derek Lester and the John Hampden Regiment. The following weekend, Saturday 24th June, will see Society members once again congregating at The Spread Eagle for the Society's annual dinner. The date is auspicious, being the date of John Hampden's Wedding Anniversary and also of his death. The Society have been fortunate enough to book Lord Saye & Sele from Broughton Castle to attend the dinner and give a talk on his family's connections with John Hampden.

A tremendous amount of work was being put into sorting out the photographic and other exhibition material for the Millennium Exhibition, and this was proving to be a much more difficult task than had been anticipated. However, once the material has been sorted out and good copies of relevant photographs made and mounted, these can be used to good effect with the travelling exhibition, which had proved extremely popular when June Wailing promoted it in various libraries in Buckinghamshire. Following the Exhibition, Mr Maurice Kirtland will be doing the same in Oxfordshire, where it is hoped it will be equally well received. With regard to the Millennium Exhibition, it was hoped that the Society will be able to borrow certain artefacts from the County Museum, and to this end, lockable cabinets were being hired for the event in order to safeguard such items. The Society had also been promised the loan of a carved wooden chest, purported to have been carved by John Hampden whilst awaiting the result of the Ship Money trial, which is owned by a local member. The comment was made that it would be interesting to carbon date the wood from which this chest was made. It was also hoped that Lord Saye & Sele might be persuaded to lend the silver christening cup presented by John Hampden to his family, and there were various items at Hampden House which the Society would be able to borrow and display.

The Chairman, Lord Hollenden, thanked Mr Bailey for his enthusiasm and hard work on behalf of the Society.

Hon. Treasurer's Report: Mr Sam Hearn's report was short and sweet. A copy of the accounts had been circulated, which showed that the Society had a closing balance at the Bank of £1,279.46. as against the previous year when the balance was £857.57. This would give the Society the ability to do certain things such as making a loan towards the initial expense of publishing the book which Mr Lester and Mrs Blackshaw were working on. It was noted that Mr Graham Barfield had also offered an outright donation towards this project.

A vote of thanks was offered to Mr Derek Lester and Mrs Gillian Blackshaw for the hard work they had each put into the research and writing of this book.

Acceptance of the Accounts as drawn up by Mr Sam Hearn was proposed by Lady Buckinghamshire and seconded by Mr. Leonard Barker, and carried unanimously.

Membership Secretary's Report: Miss Liz Morris reported that last year the membership list showed 145 members, and this had risen this year to 154, with 16 Life Members and 14 Honorary Members, with only six members failing to renew their subscriptions. Membership is therefore going in the right direction and it is hoped that publicity and the web site will lead to further increases in numbers.

Election of officers and committee members: The Society's President, Dr John Adair, continues without election. The election took place as follows:

Chairman: Lord Hollenden had indicated that he was prepared to stand. Proposed by Mr Dennis Hargreaves, seconded by Lord Buckinghamshire. There were no other nominations for the post of Chairman. Carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman: Mr Roy Bailey was proposed by Lady Buckinghamshire, seconded by Mr. Leonard Barker. There were no other candidates for the post. Carried unanimously.

Hon. Secretary: Mrs Anthea Coles was proposed by Mr Derek Lester and seconded by Mr Roy Bailey. There were no other candidates for the post. Carried unanimously

Hon. Treasurer: Mr Sam Hearn was proposed by Mrs Gillian Blackshaw, seconded by Mrs June Wailling. There were no other candidates for the post. Carried unanimously.

Membership Secretary: Miss Elizabeth Morris indicated her willingness to stand and was proposed by Mr Roy Bailey and seconded by Mrs Marion Wierszycki. There were no other candidates for the post. Carried unanimously.

Other officers: - comprising Mr Graham Barfield, Mr Maurice Kirtland, Mr Derek Lester, Mrs Marion Wierszycki. Mrs Gillian Goodall and Mr John Goodall - were proposed en bloc by Lord Buckinghamshire and seconded by Mrs Gillian Blackshaw. One additional member was proposed and indicated his willingness to join the Committee, i.e. Mr Bob Hammond. He was proposed by Mrs Marion Wierszycki and seconded by Lady Buckinghamshire. Carried unanimously.

Millennium Celebrations: This topic has been covered in Mr Bailey's report. The Exhibition will be publicised in '*The Patriot*'. The event is being run in conjunction with Thame Historical Society and it was hoped that this would result in good publicity for both societies. Volunteers were needed to man the exhibition and a request would be included with the forthcoming issue of '*The Patriot*'. It had also been agreed that the annual wreath-laying at the Chalgrove Battlefield monument would this year incorporate a short service and this was arranged for 2.30 on the afternoon of Sunday, 18th June. It was hoped that there would be a good turn out for this service.

Lady Buckinghamshire reported that she wished to make a presentation to the School and it was wondered whether this could take place at the time of the Exhibition.

Mr. Hargreaves enquired as to the position regarding the proposed video, but Mr Bailey confirmed that he had not had time to organise this and it would not be possible for this to be ready for the Exhibition.

Annual Subscriptions: There was a long discussion on whether or not to raise the level of the annual subscriptions. There were two schools of thought in this connection. Lady Buckinghamshire was strongly of the opinion that we should raise the subscription as too low a subscription could make people feel that the Society would not be worth joining. It was noted that it is several years since we had an increase. Mr Barker asked whether the Society needed the money and it was noted that currently the Society has a reasonable balance at the Bank, but increased subscriptions would enable more to be put into future projects. One fear was that if the subscriptions were raised we would lose members and therefore not benefit from the increase. After some discussion it was decided that this should item should be carried over to a future Committee Meeting, but that in general the Society should be thinking in terms of a small increase. There is a need to produce more Society Leaflets and this would be the obvious opportunity to increase the subscriptions and incorporate the new figures in the leaflet.

Mr. Hearn commented that the proposed video would require much sponsorship, with a likely cost of between £10,000 and £12,000. Lady Buckinghamshire felt that it might be easier to attract sponsors if we were seen to have a reasonable level of subscriptions, as we would not be seen as being too cheap to be worth bothering with. It was suggested that a vote be taken to ascertain how those members who were present felt about this proposal. Mrs Rosalie Gibson felt that this would not be representative of the whole Society, and the ball was passed back firmly into the Committee's court. According to the Constitution the level of subscriptions must be set at an AGM. With regard to sponsorship for the video, Mrs Valerie Horne asked whether an approach had been considered to the Lottery Commission for funds. Mr Sam Hearn then brought up the subject of registering the Society as a Charity, which would make it easier to approach the Heritage Lottery Fund, but it might not be easy to register the society and he was looking into this possibility in depth and would report back. There are also Tax implications to be

considered, especially as we have been making a very small profit on the sale of books and promotional material. He would be considering all aspects of this and would bring his findings to a future Committee Meeting.

Another point discussed at this stage was whether to introduce a Junior Membership category in order involve youngster with the Society, and this was felt to be a good idea. This will be discussed more fully in the future.

At this point Mrs Gillian Blackshaw proposed and Mr Derek Lester seconded a proposal that membership subscriptions should be increased from 2001, as follows:

£7.50 should be increased to **£10.00** - £5.00 should remain at **£5.00** - £12.00 should be increased to **£15.00**
Overseas membership should remain at the same rate.

This proposal was carried by a majority vote.

Fund Raising: Mr Bailey asked that any Society member with ideas on raising funds should let them be known.

Affiliated Membership: The Society has been invited to become an affiliated member of Great Milton Historical Society. Mr Hammond commented that he was not certain what would be the value of this. John Hampden School at Wendover would also like to be an affiliated member of our Society and it was agreed that this would be one way of promoting the Society to the children. It was suggested that a copy of '*The Patriot*' should be sent to the Great Milton Historical Society with a request for reciprocal arrangements.

After discussion it was decided to sign up head teachers of local schools and send the schools information relating to John Hampden. A suggestion was made by Mr Bob Hammond that the Society should consider producing badges which could be sold at reasonable prices to the children, i.e. probably about 50p each – a sort of Junior Greencoats.

It was brought to the attention of the Society that Bucks County Museum has no display or mention of John Hampden, who is the most celebrated Buckinghamshire personality. Lord Hollenden and Lord Buckinghamshire decided to take this matter up with the Museum having expressed their surprise, as they are aware that the Museum holds huge archives of material.

Programme of events:

[a] Annual Dinner –24th June, at The Spread Eagle, Thame. Speaker – Lord Saye & Sele.

[b] Talk to Kidlington District Historical Society – 29th August.

[c] Talk to Oxford Senior Wives – to be given by Mr. Roy Bailey.

[d] Proposed trip to Grampound in 2001 to present a plaque commemorating John Hampden's association with Grampound.

Any further suggestions for future events were requested.

One suggestion was that meetings should be arranged for members of the Society to improve their knowledge about John Hampden. This suggestion will be followed up at a Committee Meeting, but it was agreed that this was a good idea, and that the meetings should be open meetings with a small charge being made for attendance. This would result in further publicity for the Society and might bring in additional membership. Lord Hollenden made the suggestion that these should be held during the autumn and winter months.

Any other business: Mrs Gillian Blackshaw reported that Millennium funding would be forthcoming for sign posting the Battlefield at Chalgrove.

Another picture of John Hampden is purported to be hung in Banbury Town Hall.

Mr Lester mentioned a memorial to Hampden dated 1634 in a pamphlet which had been sent to Mrs Blackshaw with a note written in Old English script, mentioning a date of 1639.

Mr. Hargreaves enquired about the Hampden tombs beside Hampden Church, which Mr Lester had expressed an interest in marking with a plaque containing the inscriptions. On further research it had turned out that these tombs were of the Trevor family, fairly far removed from John Hampden and also there were only two tombs there. Hampden Church had agreed to display leaflets publicising the book on Hampden's death, which hopefully would also encourage increased membership. A small donation will be made to the church for each copy of the book sold as a result of their publicity.

There being no further business the meeting was declared closed at 3.50 p.m. following a vote of thanks to:

[a] Mr Tim Oliver for allowing the Society the use of Hampden House on this occasion.

[b] All Society Members attending the AGM.

[c] All Committee Members for their work during the past year.