

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 10th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held at Hampden House, Great Hampden on Sunday 28th April 2002.

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

Apologies for absence: Howard Deane, Mary McCornick, Charles Woodd, Cynthia Ettenfield, Professor Ian Beckett, David Snowden, Mrs Sarah Barrington, Lady Helen Motteux, Mrs Doreen Taylor and Mrs Gloria Smith.

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. They were accepted as a true record of that meeting.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report: Lord Hollenden reported as follows:

“I am pleased to report that the Society has had another very active year, promoting the aims of the Society and in particular, encouraging wider knowledge of the life of John Hampden. This coming year is an important milestone, as it is our 10th anniversary.

The highlight of this last year's activities, and probably the most successful P.R. exercise that the Society has ever carried out, was undoubtedly the Society's visit to Grampound in Cornwall. After months of preparation, and not a little gentle persuasion by members of the Committee, our Vice-Chairman and Graham Barfield in particular; local Council officials finally agreed to allow the Society to place a commemorative plaque to John Hampden in the local Church. They also agreed to a plaque being placed on the wall of the house in which John Hampden had lived, when he was the Member of Parliament for Grampound. One of the reasons for these arrangements taking rather longer than expected, was that a senior member of the local Council was apparently a staunch Royalist! The two ceremonies were subsequently scheduled to take place over a weekend, during Grampound's Carnival week. We were blessed with glorious late summer weather, and the whole exercise, as well as being most enjoyable, was an enormous success, and very well received by the people of Grampound and the surrounding area. I am sure that you will all join me in thanking and congratulating both Roy and Graham for all their hard work. I should add that they are both in the process of compiling a special colour edition of *The Patriot*, recording the principal events of the Grampound visit, which they hope to have ready for circulation very shortly.

The Society continues to promote itself with the extensive use of its 'Travelling Exhibition'. This consists of a collection of photos depicting the life and times of John Hampden. It has been very well received in, for example, town libraries, town and village halls (including Great Hampden). It proved particularly popular during the Grampound visit. In addition to this, numerous lectures continue to be given by members of the Committee to audiences in Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

The Society's website continues to attract an increasing number of 'visitors', if that is the right word to use. Our thanks must go to our Vice-Chairman, Roy Bailey, who regularly updates the site. I found the section illustrating the Grampound visit particularly interesting and impressive. Members' comments again are always welcome here.

There are two further subjects that I feel I should raise today, as they have occupied a lot of the Committee's time, and the views of members of the Society on these points, would be very welcome.

The first matter is the John Hampden Video. You will see from the Agenda for today that this is a separate item for discussion very shortly this afternoon. It may be useful however, if prior to this, I was to very briefly highlight a number of the principal points of the Committee's 'Mission Statement', relating to the video.

The video should last for approximately 20-25 minutes, and be aimed at those who have either never heard of John Hampden, or who know very little about him. 20-25 minutes would not permit a detailed specialist video, but would hopefully allow enough time for the most significant moments in his life to be addressed. It is hoped that the end product could be a source of income, from both sales and hiring out.

The second matter that I want to mention is the question of whether the Society should take up charitable status. This matter is also an item on the Agenda, and the Society's Treasurer Sam Hearn, who has very kindly devoted a considerable amount of time to studying the subject, will be speaking further in detail about this.

Finally can I remind everybody of a number of events that are coming up shortly. The Society is taking an active part in the Chalgrove Village Festival next weekend, and has been asked to give an illustrated talk, a battlefield walk as well as set up the Travelling Exhibition.

The annual dinner at the Spread Eagle Hotel in Thame, has also now been arranged for Saturday the 22nd June. Please could all those who wish to attend get in touch with Sarah Barrington using the forms that have been sent out with the Newsletter.

It remains just for me to thank my fellow Committee members for all their hard work throughout this last year, promoting and honouring the life of a great Englishman.”

Hon. Treasurer's Report: Mr Sam Hearn reported he felt the accounts were self-explanatory but stated that he would be happy to answer any queries raised during the meeting or afterwards. Subscriptions had been increased and this was reflected by an increase in income, though some members had still to pay, whilst a few members had actually overpaid. With regard to book sales, the Society has not produced a new book this year, but it is selling badges, which have proved quite popular, at £1.50 each. Printing costs are down this year, partly because of the fact that fewer editions of *The Patriot* have been produced for a variety of reasons, and the overall financial situation is actually better than shown in the accounts. Mr Hearn estimates that there is roughly £2,000 in the Bank at the time of the meeting, though one or two bills remain to be settled.

Lord Buckinghamshire asked whether the Society was likely to have a problem with the Inland Revenue as we have not notified them about the book sales, etc. Mr Hearn replied that the sum involved was not large. It is possible that, since the last budget, the Society may not be liable for tax on this income. He quoted other organisations in the same situation as ours, where the Inland Revenue had decided that the amount of tax due was insufficient to make it a viable proposition to collect it and absolved these societies from the necessity of making Tax returns. Mr Hearn felt that this would probably apply in our case. It was felt that the changes brought about by the Budget, made it less imperative for the Society to register as a Charity, but on the whole, it appeared that the advantages of such registration would outweigh the disadvantages.

The Accounts have yet to be audited, as Mr Hearn required further information in order to complete the paperwork, but this will be done as soon as possible.

It was proposed by Mr Roy Bailey, and seconded by Mr Bob Hammond, that the accounts to accepted as presented. The vote was carried unanimously.

Membership Secretary's Report: Miss Liz Morris reported that last year the membership stood at 146, with 16 Life Members. This year membership stands at 134, again with 16 Life Members and two Honorary members. Overall we have lost 12 members. During the year only 9 new members had joined the Society, which was very disappointing, especially considering our success in Grampound, which only produced 2 new members.

Miss Morris reported that 12 people had failed to renew, 6 of which had notified her that they were not renewing, but without giving a reason. She also reported that some standing orders are still going through at the old rate in spite of the fact that in April 2001 she had sent out details and new forms concerning the increased subscriptions. She will shortly be sending further forms to those who are still paying at the old rate.

Election of officers and committee members: The Society's President, Professor John Adair, continues without election. There being no nominations for the under mentioned positions, the election of the existing officers took place as follows:

Chairman: Lord Hollenden indicated that he was prepared to stand and was proposed by Mr Tim Oliver and seconded by Mr Derek Lester.

Vice Chairman: Mr Roy Bailey was proposed by Mrs Anthea Coles and seconded by Lord Buckinghamshire.

Honorary Secretary: Mrs Anthea Coles was proposed by Lord Buckinghamshire and seconded by Mr Roy Bailey.

Honorary Treasurer: Mr Sam Hearn was proposed by Mrs Anthea Coles and Seconded by Lord Buckinghamshire.

Membership Secretary: Miss Elizabeth Morris was proposed by Mr Bob Hammond and seconded by Lord Buckinghamshire.

The remainder of the Committee were elected en bloc and Mr Bailey proposed that Mrs June Wailing be elected to serve on the Committee. Mrs Wailing indicated her willingness to stand and this proposal was seconded by Marion Wierszycki.

Voting was unanimous in favour of all of the above proposals.

John Hampden Video: A start has now been made on preparations for the video. The Committee had met with Jim Rodda and Roger Crittenden of the National Film and TV School, who had advised us to go away and think about what we really wanted to do. The cost of making the video will be high – this can reach £1,000 per minute - but until we have something on paper by way of a script it will not be possible to start canvassing for sponsors. A colleague of Mr Bailey's by the name of Ken Pockett, attended a further meeting with the Committee and agreed to help with the script. He has since produced an outline for a possible script, but needs input from the committee in order to progress this, following which Mr Hearn can commence the search for sponsorship. In the meantime Mr Bailey had taken advantage of the fact that Dr Maija Jansson was in the country and Dr Paul Hooper, another historian, was visiting the area, to arrange a day's filming outside the Houses of Parliament. This footage had been seen by Mr Pockett and pronounced very useful. Mr Hearn can use this when seeking funding. As the Society is designated an 'Educational Society', it was absolved from having to pay the usual £250 fee for filming outside the Houses of Parliament. Several society members put forward suggestions for raising funds and finding material for the video and Lord Buckinghamshire's daughter in law, a Producer for Channel 4, has suggested that we contact the Open University. It may be possible to obtain Lottery funding if The Society becomes a charity. It is also possible that funding might be forthcoming from Bucks County Council.

Charity Status: No decision has yet been reached on whether to apply for registration. Mr Hearn felt that our case was borderline, with some advantages and some disadvantages. Mr Tim Oliver confirmed that, if the Society is hoping to raise the sort of money required for the video, it would definitely benefit by becoming a Charity as there are many sources of funding open to charities and educational organisations, and a lot of organisations with very small incomes do become. If we do go down that road, a new Constitution will have to be drawn up and Mr Hearn has made a start on drafting this, having obtained a standard document and building it around our current Constitution. The main problem would seem to be that under Charity Commission

rules, no members under 18 can vote, whereas under our present constitution this is allowed. This would mean that members under 18 would become full, non-voting, members. Trustees would have to be appointed, and these are normally Executive Committee Members. Mr Hearn will find out more about the roles and responsibilities of such Trustees.

Such new Constitution must be agreed by the Society at a meeting of the members, which would either require an Extraordinary General Meeting to be called later in the year, or it would have to be held over until the next AGM. Lord Hollenden asked the assembly whether anyone felt strongly against following this route and everyone seemed to be in favour. The question was raised about the possibility of allowing postal or proxy votes for absent members, and it was agreed that this should be written into the new Constitution. A suggestion was made by Mr Derek Lester that an EGM might be scheduled to coincide with the 10th Anniversary Celebration Banquet. Lord Hollenden wondered what legal fees would be involved and was informed that, as the Society is able to complete the documentation itself, and the Charity Commission are very helpful in this respect, there would be no legal fees.

Fund Raising: Last year the Society produced badges, which sell for £1.50 each, and these proved very successful. Mr Graham Barfield has produced a leaflet entitled *In the Steps of the Patriot*, which sells for 75p which is an illustrated 'walk' around places of interest connected with John Hampden. The illustrations are line drawings by Mrs Gillian Goodall. All of our other publications are still selling well.

Mr Lester reported that he will be taking orders for another publication he has produced, which is a copy from 5 contemporary newspapers of the time concerning the erection of the Chalgrove Monument. It is his intention to produce copies to order and this will be publicised in *The Patriot*.

Mrs Beatrice Dobie suggested that we might consider producing a cookery book with recipes indigenous to the area. Mr Hearn commented that we have a lot of good stuff to sell, which only needs promoting, and our publications normally sell well at Lectures. Miss Amanda Avery suggested that we should publicise our books to all the local schools, as she felt that they were not aware of them. It was also suggested that Graham Barfield's leaflet should be marketed through Tourist Information Offices, though there can be problems doing this on a sale or return basis. However it was felt that the Society might look on these leaflets as a 'Loss Leader'.

Mrs Valerie Horne spoke to the meeting about the work that she had done, in conjunction with Graham Barfield and Bob Hammond, on the 'Wendover Project' and explained that Wendover Parish Council appear to be quite enthusiastic about this and are to discuss the matter at a meeting on 7th May. The proposal is that a plaque is commissioned extolling the virtues of John Hampden and that this be displayed in a prominent position in Wendover. Funding for this project will have to be found and it is hoped that this will be forthcoming from Society members and local organisations.

Programme of Events: It was reported that Chalgrove Festival was scheduled to take place on the first weekend in May and Graham Barfield was giving a talk on Saturday, 4th May, whilst Derek Lester was doing a 'Walk and Talk' around the Battlefield on Sunday, 5th May. On Bank Holiday Monday the Society is holding an exhibition in Chalgrove Village Hall.

The Annual Dinner has been arranged for 22nd June at The Spread Eagle Hotel in Thame and those members who have not already booked were encouraged to do so.

The 10th Anniversary of the Society will take place in October and the suggestion has been made, and is being followed up, that a banquet be arranged, to take place at Hampden House (if a suitable date can be arranged with Mr Tim Oliver).

A.O.B: Miss Amanda Avery suggested that the society should write to Aylesbury Vale District Council concerning the green paint, which vandals had daubed on the John Hampden Statue in Aylesbury. It was felt that, as the Queen was due to visit Aylesbury, it was likely that more effort would be made to remove this.

Mrs Marion Wierszycki produced an original article from the Thame Gazette written at the time the plaque was placed on the school, emphasizing that people should be encouraged to recognise the qualities of John Hampden. She suggested that Mr Bailey should reproduce this in *The Patriot*.

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm. Thanks were once again being expressed to Mr Tim Oliver, for allowing the Society to hold the AGM at Hampden House.

The meeting was concluded by a short talk by Mr Roy Bailey on the background of the Society and what has been achieved in the past decade.