

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 13th Annual General Meeting of the Society held at Hampden House, Great Hampden, on Sunday 24th April 2005.

Present: Lord Hollenden (*Chairman*), Mr Bob Hammond (*Vice Chairman*), Mr Sam Hearn (*Hon. Treasurer*), Mrs Anthea Coles (*Hon. Secretary*), Miss Elizabeth Morris (*Membership Secretary*), Mr Maurice Kirtland, Mr Derek Lester, Mr Roy Bailey, Mr Michael Portsmouth, eighteen members of the Society, two visitors and two speakers.

1. Apologies for absence: The Earl of Buckinghamshire, (*Patron to the Society*), Lady Buckinghamshire, Mr Graham Barfield, Mrs Sarah Barrington, Mrs Anne Kirtland, Mr Mike Malone, Mrs Angela Feavior, Professor Ian Beckett, Miss Marie Endean, Mr Jonathan Morgan, Mr Charles Harvey, Sue Hetherington, Lady Helen Motteux, Mrs Marion Wierszycki, Mr Christopher Hobart, Mrs June Wailling, Mr Michael Morris and Mr Gordon Knight.

Lord Hollenden opened the Meeting by welcoming all members.

2. The Minutes of the previous AGM had been distributed and further copies were available at the meeting. They were agreed to be true record of the meeting with the exception of one deletion relating to membership numbers.

3. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

4. Reports from Officers:

Lord Hollenden (*Chairman*) reported as follows: We have had another busy year in the life of the Society and I would like to mention one or two of the more important events that the Society has organised during the past year. Following fund raising last year the Society was able to purchase a plaster cast believed to be about 160 years old and believed to have been taken from the marble original that forms part of the Chalgrove Battlefield monument. Here again, because of our Charitable status, Gift Aid was recovered on most of the donations received. The cast has been on display at the temporary Civil War in Buckinghamshire exhibition at the County Museum in Aylesbury and we are hoping that it will find a permanent home in the Museum in Thame. Probably the most important event of the year for the Society was the first joint Day School held in November last year in partnership with the Cromwell Association. The event, entitled "Patriot and Protector" attracted over 70 participants and the four lectures delivered on the day are to be published by The Cromwell Association toward the end of the year, so anyone who was unable to attend can read what was said.

The Patriot continues to be as good a read as ever, informative, factual and very professionally edited and printed by the Society's Secretary, Mrs Anthea Coles. I am sure you will join me in thanking Anthea for all the hard work and dedication that go into each copy. I know that the copy comes from all parts of the Society and Roy, I know, adds a lot of the reporting to it, but Anthea is the person who puts it together. It was pointed out at this point that the task is shared, with Roy producing two issues and Anthea producing two issues a year. The cost of printing has increased in the last two years, mainly because the last four editions were published in 2003 instead of three. One of these was a special full colour publication reporting on the unveiling of the Memorial plaque in Wendover and various associated events.

I am very pleased to tell you that membership subscriptions have risen during the current year, from just over £1,000 to £1,200. This is almost entirely due the Society's newly acquired status as a registered charity and the ability to recover gift aid from the Inland Revenue where members have completed the necessary forms.

Sales of books and publications declined from £893 to £475. In 2003, of course, sales were substantially boosted by the popularity of the reprint of John Adair's book and the sales of the cards featuring Gladys Cook's picture of John Hampden's statue in Aylesbury. In conclusion the year has been one of solid progress for the Society in which not only has its charitable purposes been energetically pursued, but a healthy surplus of income over expenditure has also been achieved."

Hon. Treasurer's Report:

Sam reported

"You have all had a copy of the accounts. There are some minor changes. I had missed some £38 of expenses and misallocated some of the subscriptions. Financially it has been a good year for us. We have had a surplus of £765, which is more than in 2003. We paid for the republication of the John Adair biography in 2003 but had had no similar expenditure in 2004. The Day School Event 'washed it's face' financially. The Wendover edition of the Patriot being a large edition in full colour was expensive - £386. A claim for Gift Aid based on the 2005 subscriptions was being prepared. Less gift aid will be claimed this year because we have not run anything like the plaque campaign. A reclaim of around £200 is expected from The Revenue. This additional income means that we do not have to contemplate increasing membership fees this year. The income from membership subs will pay for four newsletters a year. At the end of 2004 we had £1,786 in the Bank. Currently there is just under £3,000 in the Bank. There are a variety of things that this could be spent on but no firm decisions have been made by the Executive Committee. We currently use a borrowed display board for exhibitions in schools and libraries. We might buy boards of our own so that we have a permanent display that we can pick up and use at any time. When the Thame Museum is closer to opening we may want to buy one or two items to go on display in the Hampden section. There are various projects under discussion: We would for example like to publish more books and booklets on things connected with Hampden. There are many things that we could do with the money that we have and I certainly would do not believe that we should reduce the subscription rate."

At this point Valerie Horne suggested that some of the surplus funds might be utilised to provide Anthea Coles with a dictating machine to record Minutes and make life a little easier, not realising that Anthea had already thought of that one and acquired the requisite article. The kind thought was appreciated.

Sam continued – “we have opened a second bank account with Lloyds-TSB because, after 12 years, they have decided that we have got the wrong bank account. All of your subscriptions are paid into the original account and for the time being there is no point in changing the existing arrangements. The bank has also managed to charge our account with the cost of an E-Bay transaction about which we know nothing. Lloyds have finally admitted that it was their fault and have repaid the money.”

Jim Rodda then suggested that perhaps it would be advantageous if the Society changed to a higher interest-bearing savings account such as those operated by The Charities Aid Foundation. Sam said that he would look into this.

Membership Secretary’s Report: Liz Morris reported as follows

“At the AGM last year Membership stood at 130 with 16 Life Members and two honorary members. This year the Society made a net gain of 13 Members. 21 people have joined during the year. The reasons for not renewing included lack of money and being too far away to participate in activities etc. Finally after four years all standing orders have now been adjusted to take account of the increase in subscription rates.

5. Election of officers and committee members:

Lord Hollenden stated that he was pleased to see that a nomination had been received for Roy Bailey to join the Committee, proposed by Valerie Horne and seconded by John Seal. He felt it would be easiest to take the election of Committee members en bloc, first enquiring whether there were any members of the Executive Committee who would like to stand down or whether there were going to be any changes. As there was no response he asked for a proposer for the Committee as it stood at present. At this point Roy Bailey asked whether all Committee members were present, or had stated their willingness to stand again. It was noted that June Wailling was absent, but Anthea had received a telephone call that day giving her apologies due to a migraine and she had not expressed a wish to stand down. Anthea had received no indication from any committee member that they did not wish to be re-elected. Therefore a decision to re-elect the Committee en-bloc was proposed by Annabel Bailey and seconded by Derek Lester.

6. Annual Awards:

Lord Hollenden reported that this is still a project that is being looked into by the Executive Committee. He reminded members of the theory behind the scheme, which is to find someone, possibly of primary school or secondary school age, who had written a piece about John Hampden or the life of John Hampden, to receive an annual award. The Society are still in the process of talking to various schools in the area and have not decided whether we should be piloting the scheme in a number of schools or a single school, but we are very much open to suggestion about this. He thought the idea was that we might try a single local school initially, hopefully with a school that was willing to take the scheme forward with us and see how it goes. He asked for the forbearance of members and stated that any ideas or suggestions would be gratefully received.

7. Fund Raising:

Lord Hollenden pointed out that fund raising is important if the Society, is to keep moving forward. He commented that the Committee were eager to appoint someone to the position of Fund Raising co-ordinator, either an existing Committee Member or a member of the Society who might be interested in joining the committee in this role. Fund raising can be enjoyable, allied to social events. Some members have said that we ought to have more events specifically for the members. Roy Bailey wondered whether, now that the Society is a registered Charity, it would be possible to hold an annual draw to raise funds. Sam Hearn felt that we might be too small for this to be effective, but that it would nevertheless be worth looking into. It was also suggested that we should be seeking to increase the sales of the Society’s books and publications. We had been successful this year with the Aylesbury Museum selling books on our behalf, but it was difficult to keep the momentum going after the end of the Civil War Exhibition. Lord Hollenden stated, in conclusion that in his opinion fund raising should be channelled towards specific events or items rather than for general purposes.

8. Programme of Events:

The Annual Dinner at the Spread Eagle will take place on Saturday, 18th June. Professor Malcolm Wankling, was prepared to deliver a talk but this needed to be discussed by the Executive Committee. Sam Hearn commented that the speaker this year will have a hard act to follow Maija Jansson who gave such an excellent talk last year.

9. A.O.B:

Mrs Gloria Smith told the meeting that she had visited Broughton Castle and had found the visit very interesting, having been shown the room at the top, ‘the room that has no ears’. She had also noticed, whilst there, a portrait which she felt might be of John Hampden, although it was not labelled as such and she was told that there was no portrait of Hampden there. She wondered if the Society might be interested in arranging a visit to Broughton. The Committee told her that a visit had been made to Broughton some years ago, and that it is hoped that a further visit will take place before too long. It was considered that the portrait, which some members did remember seeing, was of Hampden and the name is apparently on the back. Roy Bailey told Mrs Smith that Lord Saye and Sele has a miniature of John Hampden, but the most interesting artefact was a small silver cup which John Hampden is said to have given to John Fiennes after the Battle of Edgehill. Sam Hearn reported that there had been a poor response to the questionnaire asking members to indicate what outings they would be interested in.

Councillor Richard Pushman, representing The Chilterns Conservation Board, an organisation formed within the last 7 months or so, reported that he is a member of the Board, which now has the same status as a public authority and is tasked with maintaining the Chilterns ANOB and co-ordinating planning in order to obtain some consistency.

Councillor Pushman stated that the CCB is eager to promote the historical aspects of the area. Since John Hampden is an important part of the area's history it had occurred to him that it might be useful for the John Hampden Society to liaise with their Promotions Officer and also to promote some historical information and publications to the benefit of both organisations. The Society felt that this would be a useful connection and this will be followed-up as soon as possible. Councillor Pushman stated that they produce a quarterly newsletter advertising events in the Chilterns. Derek Lester asked whether the CCB would be interested in the complete Chalgrove Battlefield Trail, the Royalist and Parliamentarian route from Chislehampton, through Little Milton, Tetsworth, Postcombe, Chinnor Aston Rowant etc. to Chalgrove. Councillor Pushman thought this likely.

Roy Bailey was concerned to hear Liz Morris say that some people had given up membership of the Society because they had moved out of the area, commenting that, although some people join the Society just because they live in the immediate area, it is, in fact, an international Society, having members as far away as New Zealand. He felt that we should get across to people that we are not a parochial, Great Hampden Society but one with an international spread. He suggested that perhaps a suitable letter could be drafted for use when such comments were received. Liz responded by saying that it is mainly people from far up north and down south, who have been members of the Society for a few years and then suddenly decide that they can't get involved. It was pointed out that a lot of Societies have members who do not get involved.

Roy Bailey commented that the Society's old slide projector has seen better days and he felt we should consider purchasing a digital projector, such as that being used by the speakers for the talk that was to follow the meeting. These are quite expensive new, but he wondered whether it might be possible to purchase a second hand one. Valerie Horne mentioned a fund that might be prepared to assist with the purchase of such an item, if it could be proved that it would be used for educational purposes. She was not certain that evening lectures to adult groups would qualify, but felt that we might make a case for the provision of such a projector if it were pointed out that its use would allow us to give lectures to pupils in local schools, which we are unable to do with our present equipment. The suggestion was also made that the Society should become more active in seeking organisations that would be prepared to pay a fee for one of the Society lectures in order to raise funds.

Richard Pushman pointed out that he was past Chairman of the Bucks County Council and could give us a link with the schools in Buckinghamshire if we wished. Derek commented that he had already given to two talks on John Hampden in local schools.

It was mentioned that Derek Lester has not been adequately thanked for organising the Battlefield walk following the Day School, which had made a great impression on those taking part. The thanks of all present were duly offered. Sam stated that the money Derek raised on the walk had been retained by the Society.

Lord Hollenden commended a book - *The Household Book (1510-1551) of Sir Edward Don* - which the Society had purchased to present to Derek and Gillian as a wedding gift. He suggested that all members who wished to do so, should sign it before leaving.

Charles Woodd, a member of the Society, had brought to the meeting a glass case containing a lock of hair reputedly belonging to John Hampden removed at the time of the opening of his coffin on 21st July 1828. Mr Woodd, who owned the artefact, explained that he did not really know much about it except that it had come down through his family, which is related by marriage to John Hampden. Hampden has been very much part of his family, his father being Frederick Hampden Basil Wood. He felt that it would be appropriate for it to go on display, possibly in the new Museum in Thame.

His family also own a miniature that purports to be of John Hampden, having the name inscribed on the back. This has been examined by experts at the National Portrait Gallery and they believe that it was painted by Richard Gibson who painted miniatures in the 17th Century. Unfortunately they are pretty sure that John Hampden was not the sitter. He also mentioned that his family also has Royalist connections. A direct ancestor by the name of Captain Basil Woodd, who was a staunch Royalist. He acquired Charles I's Star of the Garter which has passed down through the family and which is now owned by his brother. This is the only Star that is not in the possession of the Crown. Mr Woodd ended by stating that his sympathies are with John Hampden. Lord Hollenden thanked Mr Woodd for bringing the lock of hair with him to the meeting and Roy Bailey proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Woodd.

There being no other items to be discussed the meeting was declared closed at 3.25 pm with thanks to Tim Oliver for once again so generously allowing the use of Hampden House.

After the AGM members enjoyed an interesting talk about the Battles of Turnham Green and Brentford, given by Simon Marsh and Stephen Porter from The Battlefields Trust.