

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 14th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society, held at Hampton Court Palace on Sunday 23rd April 2006.

Present: The Earl of Buckinghamshire and Lady Alison Buckinghamshire, 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 Mike Malone, Mr Roy Bailey, Mr Michael Portsmouth, and fifteen members of the Society and visitors.

1. Apologies for absence: Mr Graham Barfield, Mrs Anne Kirtland, Professor Ian Beckett, Mr Charles Harvey, Andrew & Sue Hetherington, Mrs Marion Wierszkycki, Mr Michael Morris, Mr Charles Woodd, Mr Jim Kelsall and Mr John Seal.

The Society were welcomed to Hampton Court by Pat Sweet on behalf of HRP prior to the commencement of the meeting, following which 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 no amendments necessary.

3. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

4. Reports from Officers: Lord Hollenden reported as follows:

“Chairman’s Report 2006:

I am pleased to report that the Society has had another active year, promoting understanding of the life of John Hampden. One of the highlights of the year has certainly been the recent lecture about the life of Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, a descendant of John Hampden in the time of King George II. The talk was held in the beautiful surroundings of Hartwell House, near Aylesbury, and was considered a huge success by all those who attended. Our grateful thanks must go to Sam Hearn who worked extremely hard in organising this very popular event. I think I can say I certainly enjoyed it although I was not feeling very well, but it was well worth attending and a very informative and enjoyable day.

Membership subscriptions have risen from £1,253 to £1,365. The Society is, of course, now able to use its charitable status and these figures include an amount of Gift Aid recovered from the Inland Revenue for both 2004 and 2005. In 2005 we were very fortunate in having the costs of printing *The Patriot* borne by a sponsor. This resulted obviously in considerable savings, but unfortunately this will not be repeated in the current year unless another sponsor comes forward.

The Society earned less from sales of books and publications in 2005 than 2004. Income from this source fell from £495 to £436, not a huge drop but it is significant. Income from talks also fell slightly, or actually rather more than slightly, significantly, from £255 in 2004 to only £40 in 2005. I understand more talks have been booked in 2006, so I hope very much that these figures will increase then. The Society has taken advantage of a generous offer from the Publisher of the reprinted version of John Adair’s biography of John Hampden to replenish its stocks. The Executive Board believes that it was very important to secure the Society’s supply of this very informative publication. After much debate the Executive Committee decided to approve the purchase of a set of exhibition display boards. They can be seen downstairs on the floor below with the exhibition plaques on them and I must say it looks extremely smart. It is a very useful tool for members giving lectures or talks about John Hampden or any exhibitions that we have and I think it is an extremely good asset for the Society. The boards can be used, for example, to support talks and have already done so.

The replenishment of the book stock and the purchase of the exhibition display boards have meant that expenditure actually exceeded income this year, but the Society was able to draw on its cash reserves to finance the shortfall.

Talking of books, can I also commend to you, as per these pieces of paper in front of me. Gill & Derek are to be congratulated on producing a compilation of newspaper reports and Lord Nugent’s speech, at the unveiling of John Hampden’s memorial at Chalgrove in 1843. Copies can be purchased from the Society at a special price today. Please see Derek or Gill if you would like to buy one. There are plenty of copies available there.

The Society continues to publish its quarterly newsletter, known as *The Patriot*. I am sure you will be joining me in thanking both Anthea and Roy for their unstinting hard work in producing this very readable and informative publication.

In conclusion, the Society made steady progress over the year, combining the last AGM with a talk by members of The Battlefields Trust and continuing its support for the Bucks History and Archaeology Fare.”

Hon. Treasurer’s Report: Sam Hearn reported

“Lord Hollenden has already covered lots of financial information, so rather than repeating this, I will just add a few bits. Our Bank Accounts at the moment, as of today, stand at £1,991, so the Society is in good heart financially. The Gift Aid in 2005 amounted to £192 and in 2004 amounted to £175. This year we have got a few new members that we do not have forms for, and we have lost a few members, so will have to make an effort to catch up on gift aid. This helps, for example, to hold down

subscription rates. There was a question raised at the last AGM about Charity Aids Bank Accounts, which give a special rate of interest to charities. I have had a look into this and think it is something that we should be taking advantage of. One of the initial problems is that to open an account you need to have a balance of £2,000 and I have just told you that we have a balance of £1,991. However we will probably be getting another £150 or more for Gift Aid, but we are still not actually at that level. I think this is something that we should be thinking about as you do get a very much better rate of interest on account. I think we should resist the temptation to copy some political parties and ask for loans.

We did make some money on the Hartwell House event. I set the prices before I realised how popular it was going to be and was just trying to cover the cost of the speaker's meal and so, hopefully next year we will have a little more profit on that. Thank you to everyone who attended, and it was still, I thought, very good value at £28.

I think that is all I have to report, unless anyone has any questions. I have got all details of the accounts here.

Membership Secretary's Report: Liz Morris reported as follows

“At the AGM last year Membership stood at 143 with 16 Life Members. This year Membership stands at 139 with 16 Life Members and 2 Honorary Members. So overall we have lost 4 members.

During the year 17 people have joined the Society.

Again, as last year, the reasons for not renewing membership include having to cut back on spending, e.g. retiring, and unable to get involved in the Society because they were living too far away. I do chase up those who have not renewed by cheque and they are usual very grateful for that reminder. I do not follow up standing orders.”

5. Election of officers and committee members:

Notification had been received that Roy Bailey would like to stand for election to the Committee, proposed by The Earl of Buckinghamshire and seconded by Mr Barry Keating, and this was taken as read, with all present being in agreement. No other nominations had been received and all other committee members were willing to stand for a further term. There was general agreement to this.

6. Annual Awards:

Nothing has actually happened in this regard, except that, at a recent committee meeting, it was decided to put this idea out to the general membership to see whether they had any views or ideas on how to progress this idea. At present it is still rather in the melting pot. The general idea behind it is to try to find a suitable school in the Buckinghamshire area that would be prepared to put forward a pupil at the school who has written something in connection with John Hampden or John Hampden's time. No one has come forward as yet. A suggestion was made that The Society should decide exactly what it wants to do and involve the local press. The John Hampden School Head of History, when approached a couple of years previously, had been less than encouraging and could not see where to fit it into the National Curriculum.

Roy Bailey mentioned that the Society does do lectures and wondered whether it would be possible to send details around to the schools and offer to give lectures to the schools to the senior students, which might encourage some interest.

Richard Pushman offered to speak to one of the schools officials who lives in Wendover and is very keen and supportive, to see if she could make any recommendations or be of help. Valerie Horne had already approached the John Colet School who were originally enthusiastic until it was discovered that this would not fit in with the National Curriculum.

Lady Helen Motteux wondered about approaching a University, and Sam agreed that he might speak to Professor Ian Beckett.

7. Fund Raising:

Sam reported that we have no new innovative ideas. We make money on the sales of books and have pushed the John Adair book during the year. This sells at a very reasonable price and, provided people giving talks remember to take a supply of books along with them, they do sell quite well. The committee have talked about having a member responsible for fund-raising, which would make a difference, and perhaps someone to organise social event for members to come along to, organising venues etc. We are a small Society and unfortunately people do not always have time on their hands. We are always open to applications by members who would like to become a bit more active. Ian has always made the point that, when we have a project in mind, something to spend money on, we have always been pretty successful at fund raising for a specific project. At the moment the Society has a number of ideas, but no specific project for which to raise funding.

Roy Bailey commented that it is very good to hold events such as the lunch and talk at Hartwell House, promoting John Hampden and at the same time making a little money out of them, rather than holding events and just breaking even. We were fortunate with Hartwell House with the number of people who attended.

The point was made that, after attempting to raise money from members of the public, the question is often asked “Why do you not apply for funding from the Lottery?” The question was asked whether this line had been explored. Sam answered that if we

had a particular project we could look into it. He suggested that, if someone wished to look into the rules and regulations relating to a Lottery grant, it would be interesting to have this information. He told the meeting that The Battlefields Trust, who gave the talk at last year's AGM, have just secured £15,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to mark the Battlefield Trail for the Battle of Brentford and the Battle of Turnham Green, and you may remember that John Hampden was there, so Sam is staying in close contact with them to see how they intend to spend this money. He will be attending a meeting on Tuesday and from the Agenda it would appear that they would be giving a lot of talks, so indirectly the Society will probably benefit from this, as there will be publicity for John Hampden's name in talks given to schools and the general public. Sam might also pick up some hints on what is actually required. He does know that it has taken them a long time to get to the stage where this money is forthcoming. It would therefore be quite a commitment, if we did have a project, to get everything together.

It was suggested that the proposed Video might be a suitable project for such a grant. Sam stated that one of the problems with regard to the video was getting one member who would be prepared to run with it, although difficulties of financing it was the thing that actually caused it to be shelved for the time being. It would be worth bearing in mind for the future.

8. Programme of Events:

Lord Hollenden pointed out that we have the annual dinner at The Spread Eagle in Thame on 24th June, and are very lucky in having Dr Maija Jansson, Director of Parliamentary History at the University of Yale, to speak, which should be interesting. Other events are currently being discussed. The Society has been offered the opportunity of a guided tour of Hartwell House by Eric Throssell, the Architect who was heavily involved in the reinstatement of the House following the fire some years ago. He attended the lunch and has joined the Society. It was agreed that this would be worth following up.

A visit to Chenies Manor is also being investigated and the suggestion was made that lunch and a talk might be arranged for that venue. The Chiltern Brewery is overdue for a lunchtime visit.

Julian Humphreys, who accompanied Dr Tracy Borman to Hartwell House, is very knowledgeable about Marble Hill House and has offered to do a guided tour, which should be interesting. Sam will follow this up.

Bob Hammond had learned that a few years ago a re-enactment had taken place at Chenies and Lord Holland agreed to try to find out who had organised this.

Mention was made of the Thame Museum and Maurice explained that the intended opening date had been put back due to the necessity to carry out additional work to the property, which was easier to do before it was occupied. The Museum is now expected to open in July, with an official opening ceremony later in the year, possibly November. The plaque that had been purchased by the Society, being identical to that on the monument at Chalgrove, will be incorporated in a display dedicated to John Hampden, as will a lock of his hair loaned to the Society at the previous years' AGM, and those present were asked to let Maurice know if they were aware of any other artefacts that might be suitable for the display. Humidity and security are well in place, so anything on display should be safe. There will be a shop in the museum, which will sell items for the Society with a percentage of the profits going to the museum. The suggestion was made that, once the Museum is open, it might be possible to arrange a private visit and talk, and Maurice agreed that this would be possible.

Sam proposed a motion to thank Maurice for his work on behalf of the Society. Seconded by Anthea.

9. A.O.B:

Valerie Horne drew to the attention of the meeting, the letter published in the Bucks Herald, written by Bob Hammond, suggesting that, as the Council had funding to spare, it should consider removing the John Hampden Statue from Market Square to Kingsbury, where it would stand in solitary splendour. She was opposing this suggestion in the papers and by all other means at her disposal. She found it very embarrassing because the man who thought Hampden was worthy of a statue when neither the town nor the county did, James Griffin, was the great uncle of the man who helped her greatly in organising the plaque for Wendover, and she was loathe to see him upset or embarrassed.

Bob replied that he realised his letter would provoke strong feelings. He thought the worst thing would be that no one responded, but his suggestion would at least prove to be welcome publicity for the Society. His reason for writing to the Press was that the present position of the statue is not good, the statue having been removed from its original position in 1988 to facilitate pedestrianisation of the area. He felt that the statue would be much better placed in a less crowded position in Kingsbury.

Valerie strongly disagreed with this and stated that it should remain where it is next to the War Memorial and that people visiting the War memorial can still see the Statue – Hampden's fight in the Civil War and against unjust taxes, losing his life fighting for what he believed in, was just as important as losing life on foreign soil fighting for ones country. The comment was made that people could also still sit at the feet of Hampden's statue [i.e. sitting at his feet was where one should be, looking up to him], and the statue should not be in Kingsbury, because the Market Square is in the heart of the town. Most people do not venture into Kingsbury unless they have a good reason to do so.

Liz Morris, who was born in Aylesbury and has lived there all her life stated that she has only been to Kingsbury three times in the last three years. Not everyone even knew where Kingsbury was located, although it is only a very short distance from the Market Square. The discussion continued for some time with Bob stating that Kingsbury is a very old part of the town, possibly more so than the Market Square, although this fact was disputed.

Gloria Smith mentioned a programme televised the previous week entitled the Curious House Guest, about a property named Hampden Great House in Jamaica. This property stands in Parish in Jamaica called Hampden and she wondered whether anything was known about this and whether there was any connection with John Hampden. Roy Bailey felt that this might be worth researching as nothing was known about a possible connection at present, though it was known that there is a connection with Barbados. Gloria Smith mentioned that this is a series of programmes and she wondered whether it would be possible for the company to visit Hampden House. Lord Hollenden felt that historically they might be interested and said the company might be contacted and asked about this.

Roy Bailey stated that it was a happy coincidence that the AGM of the Society devoted to a great Englishman should be held on St. Georges Day, but he abhorred the fact that there were only three members present who were wearing a rose!

Valerie Horne mentioned that when trying to raise funds for the proposed video, she enquired who one approached at Parrott and Coales to obtain funds from the Hardings Charity. She was given a name that she passed to Sam, but has now heard that Elizabeth Dodds Charity has now come to an end and has been absorbed into Hardings Charity and the sum of £100,000 has now arrived in that Charity. If you have an address in Aylesbury it may be possible to obtain help from this charity towards something educational. She was not sure whether that would extend so far as Hampden House or Hampden Estate, and whether it would be possible to pursue this as there are now more funds available from this Charity which might be available to the Society for education purposes, for which the video/ DVD might qualify.

There being no other items to be discussed the meeting was declared closed at 3.25 p.m, and was followed by an illustrated talk given by Sam concerning Sybil Penn, born a Hampden, an ancestress of the Patriot and a lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Elizabeth I.

Following the talk, refreshments were served and members had the opportunity to view the Society exhibition, which had been set up in a separate room.