

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 20th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held at Chalgrove Village Hall, Chalgrove on Saturday, 9th April 2011.

Present:

Mr Sam Hearn (*Chairman*), Mrs Anthea Coles (*Hon. Secretary*), Mr Derek Lester (*Treasurer*), Mr John Gabbitas, Mr Maurice Kirtland, and 13 members of the Society.

Sam Hearn, Chairman welcomed everybody to Chalgrove and commented that we were experimenting with the use of a microphone this year. He asked for feedback on this after the meeting.

Sam then circulated the accounts, apologising that he had had been unable to produce them in time to send out with the AGM paperwork on this occasion and hoping this had not caused too many difficulties.

He mentioned everyone had had the opportunity to see the Grampound DVD which Roger Paynter had sent along with the suggestion that we could investigate producing something of a similar nature. This needs to be fully discussed but the quality of the DVD is very good. We had looked, a number of years earlier, at the possibility of producing a video but once it became apparent what the likely cost would be this project had been put on hold. It has now become very much cheaper to produce a DVD than it was to produce a video in those days.

Sam reported that Jim Rodda had recently had a stroke and was in Amersham Hospital and if anyone wished to get in touch with him via his wife, we could facilitate that. We were all very sad at the news but fortunately Jim did seem to be making a good recovery.

1. Apologies for absence:

Received from Richard Pushman, Angela Feaviour, Lesley Boatright, Janet Toms, John Seal, Roy and Annabel Bailey, Roger and Pat Paynter, June Wailling, Jenny Stevens, Steve Ede-Borrett, Sarah Barrington, Jim Rodda, Colin Mills, Michael Morris, John Walker, Robert Stone, Howard Deane, William King, David Snowden and Anne Kirtland.

2. The Minutes of the previous AGM:

These were agreed to be true record of the meeting.

3. Matters Arising:

Sam stated that there were comments from one or two members that holding the AGM at Oxford had made it difficult for some people to attend. One of the reasons for holding it there was that there is a substantial membership in that County and as we were trying to encourage more people to attend, it was hoped that it would make it more accessible for some members. The meeting was held rather too close to Easter, which may have made it difficult for people who had holidays planned.

The Society does now have a library and Derek Lester is the custodian/librarian. We have catalogued everything and books will be available to borrow. One of our charitable objectives is to facilitate research and the catalogue of books is available on the website.

4. Reports from Officers:

Chairman's Report:

This had been an amazing year for the Society and also a good one for John Hampden, who has clearly been moving across North Africa. There are now quite a few John Hampdens standing up against tyrants and tyranny and with similar effects and similar problems, and it is a reminder to us all of the example of the Patriot, whom we commemorate, that the need for Hampdens remains and there are still tyrannical regimes which are not even vaguely democratic, so the enterprise that we are engaged in is a worthwhile one. The Society had packed a lot into the year, though Sam was not sure how it had been done. A year previously we were at Mansfield College, which was a most interesting venue, with stained glass windows and a portrait of Hampden. The speaker lived up to all our expectations and we hope to invite him back again.

A few of us had represented the Society at 'The Spirit of Prestwood' fete, which was an unusual village gathering in a field. The weather went from hail through strong wind to sunshine in the space of about 3 hours, but luckily we had been prepared and had anchored our gazebo though some others were not so fortunate. We had some interesting and interested visitors to the Hampden display, including local MP Cheryl Gillan who said she was very pleased to see the John Hampden Society there and also a lady visitor to Prestwood who announced that she remembered John Hampden!

In June the Society was at Chalgrove under the good auspices of Derek Lester, who had organised a wreath-laying ceremony at the monument, which he and Gill do every year on behalf of the Society. On this occasion we involved the school, and pupils, who had been briefed on Hampden, marched from the school behind Standards from the John Hampden Regiment, to the monument and laid the wreath. The Earl of Buckinghamshire gave a short talk and each child was presented with a copy of *John Hampden, The Patriot* signed by the Earl of Buckinghamshire. Sam commented that during the march through the housing estate, as it was World Cup time, a number of houses were displaying St. George's flags, which he felt was very fitting. We would like to repeat this event at some time in the future but will not make it an annual event.

The annual dinner at The Spread Eagle had not been well attended despite the fact that Julian Humphreys, who is very entertaining, was speaking. He brought us up to date on the Battlefields Trust projects. We do work closely with the Trust and hope to continue to do so. It was a shame that a few more members did not attend and Sam wondered whether a change of venue would be beneficial. He is not certain whether Oxfordshire is the best place to hold this event and asked for ideas as to where we should hold it in future. In October we held another event, organised very ably by Gillian Goodall, at Hampden House. This took the form of talks by a couple of members of the Battlefields Trust, followed by tea. This event was not restricted to members and was very well attended, resulting in one or two new members for the Society. The Church was also open at the same time so that people who wanted to have a look round the Church were able to do so.

We managed to produce four editions of *The Patriot* during the year. This keeps those members who do not have access to the Society website up-to-date with activities of the Society. We would welcome contributions to this publication and members are invited to send to the editor for publication anything they think might be of interest. The Society is now using more up-to-date software to produce the newsletter and is working very hard with the printer to get the quality of the publication up to as high a standard as possible and this new software has made this easier to achieve. Sam congratulated Anthea and Roy for the standard the newsletter had reached.

With regard to the campaign to have 10 Downing Street given an alternative name, Sam felt that the Society had been unfortunate that the Coalition Government had run into difficulties, particularly locally with the High Speed Rail project and with the connection of John Hampden to Buckinghamshire, they would find it difficult relating 10 Downing Street to a Buckinghamshire hero. This campaign, will, therefore, not proceed. One of the good things that to come out of this, is that it is theoretically possible for the Society to get permission to lay a wreath on the Hampden Statue in the Houses of Parliament and this is an idea that the Society will be following up. This would certainly result in interest being shown in the Society.

Sam then mentioned the visit to The Chiltern Brewery, which had taken place earlier in the year. The Society had been very keen to make a further visit to the Brewery as we had not been for some time, and this visit proved to be very successful.

All in all a busy year, especially when taking into account the talks given by the Society in response to requests from various organisations

Hon. Treasurer's Report:

Sam explained that Derek had asked him to lead off with the Treasurer's report with Derek finishing the report. He commented that at the end of the year we had more money than at the beginning. He suggested to the executive committee and the membership that the Society might use some of the money in trying to enrol more members. Postage was up over the year and this was one reason that the Society would be seeking to increase the membership subscriptions at some time in the future, probably around 2013. Sam had not yet filed the Gift Aid Return, but would do so shortly so there would be some more money to come in from that source. He then asked if anyone had any questions, before handing over to Derek Lester to make comments as he has just reached a good stage to take on the full role of Treasurer.

Derek noted that it was 2 years since he had accepted the role of Treasurer and it had taken all that time for him to learn what it was that Sam had done in his spare time! Sam had provided a professional software package which the virus checker on Derek's computer refused to recognise, so Derek, refusing to be defeated, had written his own package and next year he would be presenting the accounts.

Membership Secretary's Report:

Anthea then read out the Membership Secretary's report on behalf of Roger Paynter, who was unable to be present:

"Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen, I had very much looked forward to meeting you all and delivering this, my third membership report. Regrettably, however, my doctor was not prepared to sanction my journey from Cornwall, so I can but look forward to next year. I can report to you that membership of the Society at the date of this meeting is 114. This total comprises 14 Life Members, 2 Honorary Members, 2 Adult overseas members, 2 joint overseas members, 26 joint members, 63 adult members and 5 family members".

In fact there are one or two other members who slipped through cracks when Roger was ill and, although we knew that they existed, he did not, so I think that there are probably another 3 members, making the total probably about 117, rather than 114. Roger also asked me to say that he realises that he lives at a distance from the Society headquarters, and, if anybody would like to take over as Membership Secretary, he would be very happy to hand over the reins, although he is equally happy to carry on. Therefore, if anybody is interested in taking on this role, please let us know. John Gabbitas proposed that a vote of thanks be accorded to Roger for carrying on this position in very difficult circumstances.

5. Election of officers and committee members:

The following officers and committee members were individually voted onto the committee by a unanimous show of hands:

Chairman:	Sam Hearn: proposed by Derek Lester, seconded by Anthea Coles.
Hon. Treasurer:	Derek Lester: proposed by Sam Hearn, seconded by Anthea Coles
Hon. Secretary:	Anthea Coles: proposed by Sam Hearn, seconded by John Gabbitas.
Membership Secretary:	Roger Paynter: proposed by Anthea Coles, seconded by Sam Hearn.
Committee Members:	Lord Hollenden: proposed by Sam Hearn, seconded by Anthea Coles
	John Gabbitas: proposed by Anthea Coles, seconded by Sam Hearn.
	Roy Bailey: proposed by Anthea Coles, seconded by Sam Hearn.
	Brian Cox: Proposed by Roy Bailey, seconded by Anthea Coles.

Ian Hollenden had indicated that he is keen to be involved with the Society and to do what he can but he realises that he has not been able play an active part over the last year or so. He is happy to remain on the committee for the coming year, but would probably prefer to stand down at the next AGM. On this understanding he was re-elected for the coming year.

Roy had also indicated that he would be happy to remain on the committee but unfortunately he was unable to be at the AGM on this occasion.

There was one new nomination to the Committee, and a warm welcome was extended to Brian Cox who has been a member of the Society for a number of years and is well known to the Committee.

Unfortunately Maurice Kirtland, who had served on, and worked very hard for the Committee for a number of years, had decided not stand for re-election this year due to pressure of other interests. He will remain a member of the Society and will be happy to help in any way he can. Sam commented that he had always been very impressed with the quiet manner in which Maurice had carried out his duties and he had been an absolute joy to work with on the Committee. Sam proposed a very big thank you to Maurice for all he had done for us over the years.

Sam stated that, when looking at the Executive team it was noticeable that there are gaps in its expertise. We always need more active members and he told those present that the continuation of the Society depends upon some younger people coming on board, with time and energy to take things forward. It is vital that we reconfigure the executive committee and he suggested that the members might know of people, not necessarily society members, who could be useful to the Society in one way or another, even just organising events, in which case, please let us know. We would be happy to contact people and talk to them and he suggested that those present might talk to friends and relatives about John Hampden and see if anyone was interested in becoming involved in any way.

6. Fund Raising & Forthcoming Events:

As in previous years we could look at the fund-raising done in the year which has been relatively successful. We generated £106-worth of money from various events which had cost the Society only £43. These events did take time and effort and the more we are involved with, obviously the more time and effort is required by the same people. We are open to suggestions for fund-raising and we have certainly considered a number of ideas over the years. This does bring us back to the question of the subscriptions and we have decided not to recommend an increase in the coming year, but will be bringing forward a proposal at the next AGM. As we have discussed before, this causes particular problems for the Membership Secretary who has to organise it, explain to everybody that their membership subscription has gone up and to make sure that the correct subscription is received, so with Roger's current health problem we do not want to drop this on him but realistically we cannot hold off much longer from increasing the subscriptions, so Derek, Sam, Roger and Anthea will have to work on this. We believe that this will be a trigger to losing a few members, but this appears unavoidable.

Valerie Horne commented that it costs £2.50 a week to be a Beaver or a Cub Scout, so the Society subscriptions appear very low taking that into account. She suggested that we might possibly look to doing a 3-year subscription, meaning the Society would have the money in advance and the members could be offered the opportunity to hedge off the price increase by buying in advance. Sam felt this was an interesting suggestion and commented that, having looked at other Society's subscriptions, we were at the lower end of the scale. We should not increase our subscriptions unless we had something extra to offer, which was one reason for developing a strategy, following which it would be easier to go back to members with a reason for the increase. We had discussed taking the money in advance as suggested by Valerie, but the complication there was the problems this would cause the membership secretary, who would have to sort out who had paid for three years and who were still paying annually and would have to ensure that, in three years time, those paying in advance had a standing order in place to renew their subscription. The advantages of this system are that the Society benefits from having the money in advance and it would save on administration and postage, but unless the Membership Secretary was happy that he could keep on top of who paid when, it could become an administrative nightmare. We had also considered increasing the subscription significantly with the promise that it would not then rise again for a considerable number of years. We had not had the opportunity of discussing these ideas with Roger and before making any decisions this would have to be gone into with him. Sam mentioned the benefit to the Society by members who were happy to download *The Patriot* from the website with a consequent saving in printing and particularly postage, which is one of the big expenses. It was understood that about two thirds of the members now pay by standing order, which aids administration as it does away with the need for reminders that their subscriptions are due, but will, of course, bring its own problems when the subscription increases as members will have to be reminded to change the amount on the standing order.

Valerie wondered whether we should be opening some of our events to non-members, and Sam replied that we have already done this and the event at Hampden House had attracted a large number of non-members. Gillian Goodall had taken names and addresses of people attending on the day and Anthea had written to them all asking whether they would be interested in joining the Society. We are happy to welcome non-members to any event, though members do tend not to bring guests with them.

7. Programme of Events for the coming year:

We were planning to hold the annual dinner at The Spread Eagle on 18th June, the anniversary of the Battle of Chalgrove. Sam pointed out that it would be nice to have a good turn-out of members as the event was very good value and gave everyone a chance to meet and talk, which was something that he had appreciated having the opportunity to do that morning.

Sam stated that we had several events planned for later in the year and thought we might be able fill a gap with Adrian Tinniswood, who did not want to be an after-dinner speaker, but would be happy to do another talk for us. Sam asked whether anyone else had ideas for venues. Valerie wondered whether we could produce a sheet along the lines of "we would come to your school/club and do a three-quarters of an hour talk on John Hampden etc", stating how much it would cost and that we could include a slide show, answer questions, etc., which she felt would bring in some bookings. She also mentioned a venue in Aylesbury where she had been to a very well-attended meeting and thought we could probably get a booking there. Sam asked her for details so that he could follow up on this lead. Sam pointed out that we desperately need someone who could liaise with schools on our behalf. It was also noted that we now have only three members who are able to give talks and ideally require one or two other people able and willing to do this. Valerie offered to bring out her display boards and material when necessary but agreed that what is really needed is volunteers to man a stall at different events, as it is difficult for one person to do this on their own. Also when doing a talk, it is difficult for the speaker to answer questions and man the display/sell books, etc. without additional help, and it would be invaluable to have back-up from a Society member on such occasions. Without more back-up it is not possible for the Society to have a presence at more fetes and events, so any volunteers would be welcome. Valerie asked whether we have approached museums and Sam responded that the Regiment is set up to deal with this type of display work and we had co-operated with the Buckinghamshire museum in connection with the Civil War exhibition they had done, but the museum is under a lot of financial pressure at present, with very little scope to do more of this nature. He was trying to find out whether it would be possible for the Society to go into the museum, hold a meeting there and view some of the artefacts there that are not normally on view to the public.

The questions was asked about how and how members were recruited when the Society was formed and Valerie explained that an advertisement was placed in local newspapers inviting interested parties to apply for tickets to the inaugural event at Hampden House.

Sam explained that one of the things we are considering is how to get ourselves better known. We had considered advertising in newspapers and magazines, but the charges are high compared with the funds we have available and without knowing that the results would be good enough to justify the outlay, the idea was shelved at present.

Another suggestion made was whether the Society could run an event based on genealogy, which always arouses a lot of interest. Sam stated that the Society was working on trying to add a genealogy section to the website, but could not, at present, source the necessary software to enable this to be done effectively.

Reference was made to the Church Service held at Hampden and the fact that apart from members of the Society, there were very few other people present. It had been thought that the service would have included the normal congregation. This was a shame as it was a beautiful service. Unfortunately the local people felt that the service was purely for the Society. We are hoping to hold another service at some time in the future and will make certain that it is well publicised as being open to all.

Sam asked whether anyone had any comments to make on the Strategy, which had been drawn up to focus the Society on its aims and objectives. Derek stated that 'Hampdens' means not just John Hampden. There is much more behind the scenes. There was a Hampden who left England in the 1620s, and probably others in the 1630s, and to complete the circle we have Renn Dickson Hampden who came back to England 100 years later. There was much going on in between and Derek is trying to sort out the genealogy to show what events took place in the intervening years and is eager to include the American side with the idea of increasing the American membership.

Paul Hooper thought the strategy document was brilliant and gave rise to one or two thoughts. Two aspects of the current Parliamentary action are quite different to what they were in the 17th century and he explained the differences. In the last 2 or 3 months he has done some work on John Hampden's son and his grandson John. Richard Hampden was a Member of Parliament from 1660 until 1688, and in December 1688, did what Paul considered to be one of the most important events of English History. He chaired a committee of the whole House which considered the state of the nation and which concluded that the throne was empty - the first time it happened in English history and the last. It paved the way for the arrival of William of Orange. There is much speculation as to what would have happened had John Hampden had not been killed at Chalgrove. Paul mentioned that the Cromwell Association have an annual meeting around the Cromwell Statue outside the Houses of Parliament and wondered whether we could hold a similar meeting around the state of John Hampden in the House of Commons.

Sam responded that the Society were very remiss with Paul's work on The Long Parliament and would check whether we had actually put it on the website, and he would consider publishing it. Paul was not certain whether it would be financially worth having it published but felt it should be available on the website. With regard to the more recent works on Richard Hampden and John Hampden Junior the proposal from the Executive Committee was that we circulate them to members via the Google Group so that they can read it, and if there is any more information they have to offer, they can get back to us. These works can then be published on the website.

8. The Patriot:

Sam felt that the general comments we normally make about the newsletter still apply. He stated that a very small number of people contribute regularly to *The Patriot* and we, though we are not desperate for copy, those of us that do write would welcome input from more members, including book reviews, recipes or anything else that might be of interest. One suggestion was that members who visit places connected with Hampden, might come up with some material for the newsletter.

9. A.O.B:

Derek asked those present whether, if the AGM were to be held at Broughton Castle, that would be something that they would enjoy. It was his intention to try and arrange this for the following April.