

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held at Broughton Castle, Banbury on Saturday, 14th April 2012

Present:

Mr John Gabbitas (*Vice Chairman*), Mrs Anthea Coles (*Hon. Secretary*), Mr Derek Lester (*Hon. Treasurer*), and 19 members of the Society.

1. Apologies for absence:

Received from Sam Hearn, Colin Cartwright, Jan Toms, Paul Hooper, Bob Hammond, Colin Mills, Mary Dodkins, Robert Heasman, June Wailling, Brian Richardson, Michael Morris, Marion Wiersczyki and Alison Buckinghamshire.

2. The Minutes of the previous AGM:

These were agreed to be true record of the meeting. Proposed by Valerie Horne and seconded by Miles Buckinghamshire.

3. Matters Arising:

The DVD is still being worked on and is still an active project. Roy Bailey commented that the DVD that was produced for Grampound was suitable for a village, but would be more difficult to adapt for our purposes and we really need someone with the expertise to assist us to produce something similar that would be suitable for our purpose.

John Gabbitas commented, with regard to the annual dinner held every June, that these had not been well supported over the last few years and for the forthcoming year we had made a change and were looking at having a rather interesting day on 23rd June comprising a wreath-laying ceremony in Aylesbury coupled with a lunch at The Kings Head. It was hoped that having a different twist to the annual get together will mean that more people will come along and participate.

The next thing John noted was that the Downing Street petition had been dropped, as reported in the last Minutes, but there was a feeling that we should pursue the possibility of laying a wreath at the Houses of Parliament which he felt should be listed on the agenda for the next committee meeting.

Lastly, as a Committee we would welcome members with different areas of expertise and would like to encourage anybody who thinks that they have any talents from which we could benefit should put their names forward. We had been lucky that Brian Cox had joined the committee and proved a valuable member in view of his area of expertise. John mentioned that, although it was a bit late for nominations to the committee at that meeting, it would be in order to co-opt new members at any time.

John mentioned that we were hoping to repeat the Church Service at Hampden Church later in the year, the date for which had been set as 14th October, and he suggested that people might put this date in their diaries. Further information will be circulated in due course.

The suggestion was made that we try to arrange a visit to the Houses of Parliament and John said we would certainly look at this, although it might not be easy to organise. Miles mentioned that they are very happy to support charitable causes and he would be happy to help with the organisation of such a visit.

4. Reports from Officers:

Chairman's Report:

In the absence of Sam Hearn as Chairman, John referred those present to the Chairman's Report attached to the accounts and highlighted the section entitled 'Activities'. John felt that, where Sam had summarised the activities that the Society had organised over the last year, it indicated that, as a small society, we pull our weight and the number of activities that we organise is a reflection that we do that. The activities over the past year included a visit to the Chiltern Brewery on 22nd January, the AGM at Chalgrove Village Hall and all the activities that went with it, the annual dinner which was not well attended, but nevertheless was very much enjoyed by those who did attend, including the wreath-laying ceremony which took place at the same time. We have Gillian Goodall to thank for the meeting at Hampden House. We had a meeting at Hartwell House with Adrian Tinniswood giving a talk. We had representatives at various local history fairs and functions and we also produced four quarterly editions of the newsletter, which John thought was of a very high quality.

Hon. Treasurer's Report:

Derek Lester commented that this was his third year as treasurer but the first year that the accounts and accounting had been all his own work. His mentor, Sam, had marked his work and given him 9½ out of 10. He had lost half a mark because the figures were too accurate! He had set up the accounts to automatically update all sheets when making an entry and the figures shown are accurate to the penny as of 31st December 2011. Roger, our Membership Secretary, will be sorely missed. He had kept Derek in order when recording membership details. As reported, we had many events last year, and as Treasurer, Derek could reveal that they all made a profit, even though the events income shows income of £1,084 and expenditure of £1,096. Outstanding monies for 2011 events were paid in February 2012 which put the figures back in the black. The healthy net surplus shown is partly due to the way the account items have been treated. Gift Aid continues to help our finances but if we are to expand our activities as the Committee intends and keep up in the modern world, an increase in the subscriptions is essential. This will require that all who pay by Standing Order change their mandate. With such an opportunity for change, the society has decided to consolidate its banking. After so many years of poor service from Lloyds, the Committee has decided to open an account with the Co-op Bank. What to do and how to make the change will become clear to the membership throughout the year. Derek announced that the Society's finances are healthy and sound and he invited questions. In the absence of queries, John asked for a proposal that the accounts be adopted – proposed by Roy Bailey and seconded by

Annabel Bailey.

Membership Secretary's Report:

In the absence of Roger Paynter, Anthea Coles read the Membership Secretary's report, which had been written by Roger, who had tendered his resignation from the post, and which Brian Cox had agreed to take on. Roger reported on current members as follows:

Honorary Members	2	
Life Members	11	
Joint Members	26	
Adult Members	70	giving a total of 118 members.
Overseas Corporate	1	
Overseas Adult	3	
Family	5	

A number of memberships have not been renewed to him as yet. Mostly they are people who are a little bit slow in paying up and need reminding occasionally. They will be contacted and asked if they wish to remain with the Society. There are three members who have resigned since the last AGM.

Derek made one comment on this report to the effect that he had gone through the list with Roger and found that it was not quite accurate as there are 19 life members, and one or two of those listed as not having paid, had actually paid. There were one or two anomalies that were in the process of being sorted out.

Mrs Jean Gabbitas hoped that, especially in view of the distance that Roger Paynter had to travel, a vote of thanks for all his efforts would be recorded. Derek proposed, as had been suggested, that for all the work that Roger had done, he would be offered honorary membership of the Society. This was seconded by Jean Gabbitas.

5. Election of officers and committee members:

There being no other nominations the following officers and committee members were voted onto the committee by a unanimous show of hands:

Chairman:	Sam Hearn
Treasurer:	Derek Lester
Hon. Secretary:	Anthea Coles
Membership Secretary:	Brian Cox
Committee Members:	Ian Hollenden
	John Gabbitas
	Roy Bailey

John stated that we had received a nomination form from a Society Member, Mr Charles Barton. He pointed out to Charles that we do have a certain amount of formality to go through in terms of the appointment of new committee members, and having heard what he had to say earlier, he did not want to put anything in the way of new blood on the committee. However, the nomination form was not, technically, one that the Society could accept as it was not received within the time limit and had not been seconded, but he suggested that the committee invite Charles to the next convenient committee meeting, so that he could put forward his skills and expertise and get to know us. Then if we were all agreed, the nomination procedure could be put in motion. John felt that this was one way of getting round the problem and this idea was considered acceptable to everyone present. Charles indicated that he was happy with this idea and on that basis the committee was confirmed as reappointed for a further year.

6. Increase in Subscriptions:

This had been flagged up in *The Patriot* and John just reminded members of what was being suggested, which was that we were hoping to try to simplify things. We have not had an increase in subs. for a very long time. Also it coincides with one or two events which make it convenient to carry it out now rather than at any other time, one being Roger's resignation, meaning we effectively start with a clean sheet with Brian. We are changing the Bank, which means that everyone will have to change their standing orders, and it seems a very appropriate time to make this proposal which can be effected in an administratively convenient way. The proposal is that we simplify the membership rates so that we have a single membership rate which will be increased to £12.50 per year, rising from £10, for slightly reduced rate of £12.50 for those who are receiving *The Patriot* by e-mail. If those members wish to have the newsletter posted to them, then the single membership rate would be increased to £13.50 p.a. For joint members the increased rate would be from £15.00 to £17.50 for those who receive the newsletter by e-mail and £18.50 p.a. for those receiving the newsletter by post. This gets rid of some of the details that previously applied to subscription rates and hopefully will make life a bit easier for our new membership secretary and also for the society. John then asked whether anybody would like to speak, either for or against the proposal. One member stated that he belongs to another Society with a similar differential between postal and e-mail members and given what postage rates are going to be like, he was surprised that the difference was so small. John felt that maybe we should consider whether there should be a greater difference between the two rates. It was suggested that we go back to the drawing board and notify members of our decision after the matter has been discussed more fully. Valerie Horne wondered why the subscriptions were going up by so little and this theme was taken up by several other members, who felt that they would be happy to pay a higher subscription which they felt would make more sense. Valerie also felt that, if the subscription was more realistically priced, there should be no need to differential between e-mail and postal members. John asked whether this was the general opinion of the members

present. It was agreed by everyone present that the committee should discuss this at their next meeting, notify the members of their decision in time for implementation at the beginning of 2013. Roy commented that it was very encouraging that members were in favour of a larger increase in the subscription. There was a unanimous show of hands in respect of the proposal that the single rate should be increased to £15 and joint membership to £20, so it was agreed that these rates should be implemented for 2013.

The cost of postage was discussed and it was pointed out that over the last few years the Society have stocked up on stamps just prior to price increased by Royal Mail and as a result held quite a good stock, so the current price increase would not be felt for some considerable time to come.

7. Fundraising:

Apart from the fact that the Society is always looking at ways to raise money, there were no specific points to be discussed under this heading. Derek pointed out that this was all tied in with raising the subscription to increase the Society funds in order to be able to stage more events, which in turn would increase funds. John asked whether anyone had any fundraising ideas that they would like to see us organise. Charles suggested that we consider running stalls at fairs and going into schools, etc. and John pointed out that we do have stalls at various seminars, fetes, etc. but it was a question of finding the organisations that would like us to have a presence at their events. We also need more volunteers to come along and help man the stall at events. Roy and Sam receive requests to go along to different organisations and give talks on John Hampden and the Civil War, etc, for which a small fee is usually paid, and they really need a Society member to go along with them to sell books whilst they are answering questions and talking to the audience.

Derek mentioned the library, which he is housing, some of which books are available for loan to members doing research. Alternatively if anyone wants to research a particular point, they can ring Derek, who will look up the appropriate books and relay the appropriate information. These books are listed on the website.

Valerie Horne notified the meeting that her son-in-law can produce flags, banners etc. and if anything of this nature is required for a particular event, he would be worth talking to. He can also print, embroider etc. so could be a useful contact. Derek commented that Sam Hearn was looking for something of this nature in connection with the event to be held in Aylesbury in June

Forthcoming Events:

13th May: Derek reported that he was doing Battlefield Walk in association with the Battlefields Trust, commencing at 10.30 at the Chalgrove monument this would consist of a walk round the battlefield and a talk and then back to the Red Lion for 12.30.

23rd June: Wreath-laying ceremony at the John Hampden statue in Aylesbury followed by a buffet lunch in The Gatehouse Chamber at the Kings Head. This is to celebrate a significant anniversary (centenary) of the commemoration of the statue in the Market Square, which was funded by those who were in favour of the Women's franchise. The wreath laying will take place between 12 and 12.30 and lunch will be available at The Kings Head following that. Details will be sent out with the next issue of *The Patriot*. This will replace the annual dinner of the Society, which has not been well attended of recent years and it is hoped that this event will be somewhat better attended. Derek reported that Sam had told him, prior to his holiday, that he had obtained the services of John Bercow, Speaker of the House of Commons, and several other local councillors and MPs to attend this event, and also the National Trust have agreed to open up the Gatehouse Chamber, which is somewhat larger than the other rooms at the Inn for our use.

14th October: Memorial Church Service at St. Mary Magdalene, Great Hampden, followed by lunch to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Society. Further details will be notified to members once they have been firmed up.

8. The Patriot:

John reiterated that he felt that, for such a small Society, the quality of the newsletter is extremely high. The content is very interesting and he thanked those involved with its production. He pointed out that we are always open to suggestions for content and anybody who has any particular interest should feel free to put them through to Anthea in the first place.

The suggestion was made that if the newsletter were to be produced as an A5 size, it would probably cost less to post as it would be possible, provided the weight was within 100 grams, to post it for an ordinary 2nd class stamp, at which point Anthea pointed out that we have a large stock of the large 2nd class stamps in hand, but we could bear this in mind for when the stocks run low.

9. A.O.B:

A vote of thanks was proposed to Lord and Lady Saye and Sele for allowing the Society to hold the AGM at Broughton Castle and for their warm welcome and kind hospitality. Their continued interest in the Society is greatly appreciated.

There being no other items to be discussed, the meeting was declared closed and all present were informed that tea was available in the tea room.