

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 24th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held at Hampden House, Great Hampden on Sunday 19th April 2015

Present:

Mr Stephen Barriff (Chairman), Mr Sam. Hearn, (*Hon. Treasurer*), Mrs Anthea Coles (*Hon. Secretary*), Mr Brian Cox (*Membership Secretary*), and 17 members of the Society.

Introduction by the Chairman:

Steve Barriff welcomed everyone to the 24th AGM of the Society, and having ensured that everyone was aware of the whereabouts of the fire exits, he went on to explain that it had not been a easy year for the Society, due to problems created by a previous member, Derek Lester. These problems had mostly been resolved though there are still a few outstanding issues, but it is hoped that the worst is now behind us and we can move on to a more successful future.

Over the last year, despite these difficulties, talks have been given by our Patron, Lord Buckinghamshire at the Chiltern University of the Third Age, and further talks given by Roy Bailey at the University of the Third Age at Abingdon and Chartridge.

We have also been fortunate in forging a liaison with the Buckinghamshire Family History Society which has enabled us not only to sell more books, but also brings the Society to a wider audience. The Membership Secretary will, no doubt, advise everyone present of the financial benefits, which are not insignificant. This year, thanks to the endeavours of our Treasurer, Sam Hearn, and Vice President, John Bercow. we should be able to lay a wreath at the John Hampden statue in the Palace of Westminster. This is a significant coup since our colleagues in the Cromwell Association have been holding a service at Cromwell Green at the side of Cromwell's statue for a number of years. Regrettably the powers that be at Westminster will only allow us to lay the wreath at 9 am on 24th June, due to security and other considerations. However, anyone wishing to attend the wreath-laying should see our Treasurer, Sam Hearn, after the meeting so that the appropriate names can be taken for security and other reasons.

He continued: "At the risk of turning this introduction into an Oscar-like acceptance speech, I am going to mention a few of the Committee members who have undertaken valiant work over the last year. Brian Cox, as you know, whilst still remaining a member of the Society, has reluctantly come to the conclusion that he can no longer stand as membership secretary on the Committee, a job that involved far more than the title implies, dealing not only with members, but storing and sending out publications to all and sundry. Roy Bailey, as ever, keeps the flame burning with the publication of *The Patriot* and updating the website; Sam Hearn, the Society's Treasurer, who with his inexhaustible energy seems to have a finger on every facet of the Society; and not forgetting Anthea Coles, without whom the Society would collapse in a heap. With the loss of Brian from the board of Trustees, we are lucky to find a successor in Gerald McGregor, whose extensive business knowledge brings considerable benefits for the Society. Running a Society is never easy and should any of the assembled company wish to assist us, I, or for that matter, any of the Committee would be happy to talk to them. Lastly we were saddened to hear of the death of Gloria Smith, who will be greatly missed. She has been a longstanding member of the Society and regular attendee at the AGMs; and also of Angela Rodda, the wife of one of the Society's long-standing members, Jim Rodda. Angela kindly bequeathed a sum of money in her Will to the Society with which the Trustees plan to set up an educational fund. On which note I will commence the main body of the meeting."

1. Apologies for absence:

Received from Lord Hollenden, the Countess of Buckinghamshire, Marion Wierszyki, Michael Morris, Phil Storr, Jim Rodda, Mary Dodkins, Charles Harvey, Jenny Stevens and John Seal.

2. The Minutes of the previous AGM:

These were agreed to be true record of the meeting. Proposed by Beatrice Dobie and seconded by Sam Hearn..

3. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

4. Reports from Officers:

Hon. Treasurer

Sam welcomed several new faces to the meeting and was very pleased to report that it had been a successful year for the Society. The surplus of income over expenditure was £680 and cash in the Society bank accounts at the end of the year amounted to £6,733. At that date the Society bank accounts showed a balance of £7,660 with some cheques to be banked and a few outstanding invoices. The accounts that were sent out with the papers for the AGM showed a surplus of £626; due to an error on Sam's part as he had failed to account for the £56 due from book sales by Bucks Family History Society on our behalf. One of the benefits of this arrangement is that they have a much more secure payment system than we were using (Sage) and they hold onto the money until we request it, so there was £56 there that Sam had forgotten about when compiling the accounts.

Membership subscriptions collected in the year amounted to £1,607, which included £282 of reclaimed Gift Aid. The Gift Aid was for 2013, and Sam was completing a claim for 2014 subscriptions for submission and would then be in a position to deal with the submission for 2015. Donations for the year of £251 were mainly the bequest by Angela Rodda. The previous year we had £369 in donations which was exceptional except for occasions when we had some special activity for which we had asked for

donations. Sam just reminded everyone that 2013 was the year we had changed the subscription rate, not having changed it for a number of years previously and some people had paid twice, some of whom were extremely generous (or embarrassed that they had paid twice without noticing) and told us to keep the overpayment by way of a donation.

Sam wanted to say a little more about the bank accounts for the information of members. Last year we agreed that we would stay with the Co-op Bank despite their various financial and Government issues. The thought of changing Bankers again was just too much of a nightmare. We had changed Bankers when the new subscription came in as most people would remember, and there was a lot of administration that went along with that. In the event it seems that this was the right decision, although some members have reported that when their subscriptions leave their bank account it seems to take an excessive time before the money shows in the Co-op Bank account. However, Sam was happy that the money was getting there eventually, but he will be talking to the Co-op about those incidents. Because of the hiatus over the Co-op Bank, we agreed to move money into the Deposit account with our old Bankers. The interest rates were derisory but it was decided that it would be safer to leave the money with Lloyds Bank for the time being. Two of our members have continued to pay their subscriptions into the old Lloyds Bank account at the old rate. They have been written to and it would seem sensible at this point to leave that Bank Account open until we are sure that those members understand that they should be paying a different amount of money into a different bank account, so we have a plethora of bank accounts at present.

Paperwork had been sent out relating to legacies, from which one could see the benefit that even a small legacy can provide to the Society, and if anyone does want advice on this Sam would suggest that they should consult a Solicitor. He is happy to go through that with anybody. He would suggest that there are many different lines of interest with Hampden that members can pursue. A general legacy enables the Society to use it as they choose, but if anyone has a particular interest, as long as it fits with the objectives of the Society a member can suggest that and make it a requirement of their legacy.

In the short term, Sam reported that he was going to be taking over the role of Membership Secretary as well as Treasurer. He commented that some people would remember that he stood down as Treasurer and Derek Lester took over, because of his responsibilities as a Councillor, added to working full time causing him to feel that it was a good time to hand things on. In his view, though this view was not held by all of the Trustees, the role of Treasurer and Membership Secretary should be kept distinct. It means that there is a double check on the Treasurer and on the Membership Secretary and if anything happens to one or the other, not all the information is with one person, so Sam is very keen to find someone to take on the role of Membership Secretary. If anyone is interested, he has transferred the Society's accounting package back on to a proprietary accounting software known as 'Quicken Books' which originated in the USA. The Excel spreadsheets that the previous treasurer used and devised himself were fine but were not to Sam's liking. Sam then asked whether anyone had any questions prior to asking members to vote on the adoption of the accounts with the amendment mentioned above. However there were no queries, so Sam took votes on adopting the accounts. Anthea Coles proposed that the accounts be accepted, seconded by Annabel Bailey, and voted unanimously.

Steve Barriff then called upon Brian Cox to give the Membership report.

Membership:

Brian reported as follows:

"We currently have 101 members in good standing for 2015, compared with 105 at the same time last year and 116 at the end of 2014.

The Treasurer or myself have contacted the 15 members who have lapsed, to obtain renewal for this year and several members have indeed indicated that they are about to renew.

It would be a kindness if those members who do not yet make their annual membership subscription by standing order the society's bank would adopt the method. A standing order payment to our bankers on the 1st January each year provides seamless renewal, saves our society postage and members being bothered with my renewal letters.

NEW MEMBERS:

Since the last AGM in 2014 we have gained 10 new members:-

- 378 Mrs. Beryl Vickery
- 379 Phillip Emery
- 380 Mrs Sally Appleby
- 381 Philip Broomfield
- 382 Helen Sturmeir (wife of the above)
- 386 Anthony Broomfield
- 387 Michael Broomfield
- 383 David R. Gillie
- 385 Mrs Lilian Gillie
- 384 Simon Marsh

LOST MEMBERS:

Alas we have lost 6 members:-

- 324 Brian Richardson
- 184 Mrs. Gillian Lester
- 380 Mrs Sally Appleby
- 352 Colin Cartwright

and including two members who sadly died recently
Mrs Gloria Smith
Ms Joy Bone

PUBLICATIONS

Most orders are now placed with the website of BUCKSFHS but are warehoused and distributed by our society. There is a small display of our publications here for members to browse amongst during the tea break.

I will not be standing for election to the Executive Committee this year due to advanced years, but I will of course continue to be a member of the Society.”

Steve thanked Brian for his report and proposed a vote of thanks for the work he has done over his time as membership secretary and called on the Webmaster, Roy Bailey, to give his report:

Webmaster:

“The project of upgrading the Society’s website continues – though, I must confess, hardly apace. The rather grandiosely-titled Website Sub-committee – which comprises Steve, Sam and myself – had several meetings last year and are still trying to finalise a style for the new site and decide on a designer/website builder who will give us what we want at the right price.

As the website works well and attracts a certain amount of attention and enquiries, we do not intend to rush this. One thing we did last year was to take advantage of a 50% off upgrade offer from our hosting provider, which doubled the amount of space available to us. This means that the new site will have such features as a photographic gallery, a Hampden family genealogy connected to other sites, and other new facilities.

We also took up an offer by the BFHS to have our books available for sale on their website. This means that buyers can purchase using their shopping cart, and we get the payment every so often. This may be something that we will be able to take back in house with the new website.

At last year’s AGM a member suggested that we should make more use of e-mail to send literature or notifications to members. Actually, I think we do pretty well in this respect. We have the members Googlegroup mailing list to which 67 of our 101 members are subscribed. We use this to send out notification of *The Patriot* being posted online, as well as other news and information. Those 67 members will have received all the AGM paperwork by e-mail – either directly or by being directed to the website Members’ Area. This contains AGM minutes, annual reports and accounts, and minutes of committee meetings – as well as an up-to-date membership list.

We also have a similar, much smaller Googlegroup list just for the committee members, which enables us to keep in touch, discuss matters, and make decisions more quickly. I would like to see us use Skype.

Using e-mailing this way saves the Society money, as postage is getting expensive – especially to overseas. So I would say that if you have an e-mail address you haven’t told us about, and you are happy to receive *The Patriot* online, let me know.

We also have a Facebook page which has attracted a certain number of ‘likes’, which is the jargon for supporting the organisation by clicking on a link. Many of these come from overseas, especially the USA, and are from people interested in the Civil War and military history. I am aware that you don’t look like a group of avid Facebook users, but if any of you do use it, please support our page.”

Roy asked if there were any questions, but there were none and before sitting down he made an announcement to the effect that he had advised the Committee that, at the AGM next year, he intends to stand down from membership of the Committee and from the post of Webmaster and also editor of *The Patriot*. He has been involved in helping to run the Society on the Committee since it was founded in 1992, except for four months when he was in New Zealand, and thinks it is about time that he passed on the baton to someone else. He commented that he could see a lot of younger faces around the room and, like Brian said earlier on, he is not as young as he used to be, so this time next year he was standing down.

We next came to the election of officers:

5. Election of officers and committee members:

Nominations had been received from five members and Steve ran through them individually as follows:

Chairman:	Stephen Barriff.	Proposed by Roy Bailey	Seconded by Anthea Coles.
Treasurer:	Sam Hearn.	Proposed by Gerald McGregor	Seconded by Anthea Coles.
Hon. Secretary:	Anthea Coles.	Proposed by Gerald Coles	Seconded by Sam Hearn
Committee Members:	Roy Bailey.	Proposed by Annabel Bailey	Seconded by Steve Barriff
	Gerald McGregor	Proposed by Sam Hearn:	Seconded by Anthea Coles.

As only a few members had met Gerald McGregor he was asked to speak a few words by way of introducing himself. which he did, commenting on his interest in history. He is a colleague of Sam Hearn’s on Hounslow Council, both representing Chiswick.

There being no other nominations individual votes were taken on the above proposals and all were individually voted unanimously into office.

Beatrice Dobie stated that she had not received any papers relating to the AGM and had not sent in a nomination form for that reason. This was difficult to understand as she had received *The Patriot* and the AGM paperwork had been sent out with the newsletter in the same envelope. Everyone else seemed to have received the whole package. Sam pointed out that, if appropriate, any member could attend committee meetings, the dates of which are published on the website, and could be co-opted onto the committee at a later meeting, but that under the constitution it was necessary to have submitted a completed nomination form to the Hon. Secretary at least two weeks prior to the AGM in order for this to be considered and voted on. It was not possible to make an exception to this rule. Steve said that we would let Beatrice know when the meetings were going to be held. It was noted that no nomination form had been received from Lord Hollenden and it was therefore presumed that he did not wish to stand for the committee in the coming year.

6. Plans for future Activities:

There are currently no talks booked for the Society. The Society hoped to be able to attend the Thame Charities Fair in November, the Bucks Local History Network conference in Aylesbury and possibly the Bucks History and Archaeological Society which is normally held the first week in October. The dates of the last two needed to be checked out as nothing had been heard about these two events as yet.

Sam confirmed that it was hoped to lay a wreath at Westminster on 24th June but this had to be at 9.30 in the morning. He could put up a couple of people if they wished to attend but were unable to get there in time in the morning. He reported that we could not take many people into the Houses of Parliament. It was hoped that it would be possible to take some good photos for the website and *The Patriot*. The Cromwell Association lay a wreath at the Cromwell Statue outside the Houses of Parliament every year and it is hoped that it might be possible to get permission to do the same for Hampden.

7. The Patriot:

Steve stated that Roy is always nagging the rest of the committee about articles for the newsletter and it always ends up with the same old faces providing the articles. He made a plea to all those present to come up with anything they could think of that was relevant to John Hampden and his times. A short piece would be fine, it does not have to be a long epistle, but anything of interest would be helpful and would get some different names in the newsletter, rather than the same ones as at present. The only proviso is that it must in some way relate to John Hampden. Roy confirmed that the next edition was due to be published in May, and he asked for photographs to support the article where appropriate (of as good a quality as possible).

8. A.O.B:

Steve invited anyone who wished to raise any matters to do so at this point. David Gillie and Beatrice Dobie took the opportunity to speak. Sam then mentioned that we were less than a mile away from the Ship Money Memorial if anyone was interested in seeing it. We have developed a link with the Chiltern Society, who are spending money on refurbishing the information board there and at some stage re-carving the inscription. The memorial is purported to stand on the site where John Hampden made his stand against the payment of Ship Taxes, and Valerie Horne had done some very interesting research into the memorial. Sam invited Valerie to tell those present a bit about this.

It appeared that the John Hampden Society and the Chiltern Society had been going off on the wrong tangent. Valerie took the opportunity to explain that she was first taken to see the memorial when she was seven years old, having been indoctrinated into Hampden quite early. The subject had always interested her and some people would even say it was an obsession. In 2002 she was getting an article ready to send to Anthea to put in the magazine. Valerie said that the easiest thing would be for her to read it through, which she did, describing the location of the monument and its style.

The inscription reads "For these lands in Stoke Mandeville, John Hampden was assessed 20 shillings Ship Money levied by command of the King without authority of law. 4th August 1635. By resisting this claim of the King in legal strife he upheld the right of the people under the law and became entitled to grateful remembrance. His work on earth ended after the conflict in Chalgrove Field, 18th June, 1643, and he rests in Great Hampden Church". Underneath were the letters "W.P". In the early days when Valerie went to see it, it also said 1863, but that seems to have eroded completely.

It is popularly thought that Lord Nugent was responsible for erecting this monument, but Valerie asked whether this was correct. It would surely have taken a committee to bring the idea to fruition, with the co-operation of the Earl of Buckinghamshire to allow the use of the land. Valerie trawled through miles of information from newspapers of the time, searched archives in libraries, both public and private to find any mention of an unveiling ceremony, for surely there must have been one, with local dignitaries arriving in carriages. She could not imagine it was a clandestine affair carried out under cover of darkness in secrecy. If the information was out there, she was going to find it.

The other burning question was, who was W.P. and why only his initials? He was eloquent but concise and Valerie felt that no-one could improve on his inscription. At that time Valerie had a family illness to deal with and was then involved with organising the event at Wendover when a plaque was placed on the wall of the Library. This took a lot of time, so research stopped. Later she heard that new people were taking over care of the memorial and were going to produce a new information board, so she decided to try again to see what she could find out.

She discovered a tiny book written by Robert Gibbs, was a newspaper editor in Aylesbury in the 1840s-1860s, which was full of little tidbits and she came across: "September 11th 1863, a monument was erected at Priestwood in Stoke Mandeville on a piece of ground on which Ship money was levied which ended in the Civil War. The principal promoter was the Lord Chief Justice Erle." Valerie had thought this and actually had a picture of him, but she could not justify it until then. It was not surprising really that the author of the wording only recorded his initials, as being Lord Chief Justice, he represented the King and therefore would probably not want to be known to be supporting and even lauding someone who was regarded as a rebel!

So who was he? Erle, Sir William, 1793 - 1880. He was the third son of the Revd Christopher Erle of Gillingham, Dorset, and his wife Margaret. William was born on 1st October 1793 and was educated at Winchester and Oxford, graduating in 1818. He was called to the Bar of the Middle Temple in 1819. He was admitted member of the Inner Temple in 1822, married Amelia Williams in 1824 and took silk the same year. He was a Member of Parliament from 1837 to 1841, but did not seek re-election after being appointed counsel to the Bank of England in 1844.

There being no other business, Steve pronounced the meeting closed at 3pm. Members were invited to partake of refreshments and a visit to the Church which was opened for us by the Churchwarden. Following this Gerald McGregor gave a short but interesting talk on London in the Civil War.