

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 24th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held at Broughton Castle, Nr Banbury, Oxfordshire on Saturday, 9th April 2016

Present:

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

1. Introduction by the Chairman:

Steve Barriff welcomed everyone to the 25th AGM of the Society, and reported as follows:

“Activities:

The 2015 AGM was held at Hampden House, Buckinghamshire on 19th April 2015 and was attended by twenty two of the Society’s members including three from the United States of America. An excellent speech was given by Gerald McGregor, one the Society’s trustees, on London’s defences during the English Civil War. This year for the first time the annual wreath laying ceremony to commemorate the death of John Hampden was held in the Palace of Westminster. The wreath lay for one week at the foot of Hampden’s statue close to the Central Lobby. This is a significant step forward in raising the profile of the Society and was only possible due to the good offices of Mr Speaker Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP, one of the Society’s Vice Presidents.

Work on developing the new web site is well under way. When fully implemented the new website will offer a number of significant new facilities for both members and casual visitors and it will be easier for us to update and amend the site.

It was unfortunately necessary for the trustees to initiate legal action during the year for the recovery of the Society’s book collection from the previous librarian. We can report that the books have now been returned and the Society’s legal costs have now been recovered in full.

The retirement of the Membership Secretary, Brian Cox, from the Executive Committee has left a significant gap that we have so far been unable to fill. Trustee and founder member, Roy Bailey had advised the Society that he would not be standing for re-election at the 2016 AGM. Roy will be sadly missed by his fellow trustees and alternative ways of producing The Patriot newsletter and managing our website were being actively investigated. Only three editions of The Patriot were produced in 2015 but these were to the usual high standard. As usual, members have written a number of interesting articles and we are always on the lookout for relevant material particularly from new contributors.

The sale of the Society’s publications is currently handled by the Buckinghamshire Family History Society. This has proved successful allowing us to reach a wider audience”.

Steve then called on Miles to make a presentation to Roy Bailey. Miles told Roy that the presentation was being made with heartfelt thanks of the Committee and Members and also himself, for all his hard work over the years. Roy expressed his delight on opening the parcel which contained a replica of the Hampden portrait”. Sam commented that the Society could have this framed for Roy, but felt it appropriate to take his advice on the type of frame he would prefer.

2. Apologies for absence:

Apologies had been received from Jim Rodda, Lady Alison Buckinghamshire, Michael Morris, Lady Helen & Mr Hughes Motteux, Mrs Betty McBean, Mrs Marion Wyerszicki, Mr John Seal and Mr Gerald McGregor

3. The Minutes of the previous AGM:

These were agreed to be true record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

5. Reports from Officers:

Treasurer:

Sam started by saying that, “It has been an interesting year for the Society and the accounts reflect expenditure on certain unusual items. Regrettably, the trustees were forced to incur some legal costs in order to recover possession of the Society’s collection of reference books. The legal costs have now been recovered in full and the books returned. The accounts also record the initial expenditure on the long anticipated new website project. The Society has purchased a wreath made of artificial flowers that can be reused when appropriate. Income for the year was lower than in 2014 mainly because the gift-aid return to the HMRC was not submitted until after the year end.”

Membership:

Sam next reported on Membership matters:

“At the end of December 2015 the Society had 121 members compared with 114 at the end of 2014. Eleven individuals were admitted to full membership in the year and seven members resigned and/or ceased paying their membership subscriptions.”

Web-master's Report:

Roy reported as follows:

"It has been decided that it would be convenient for me to give both the Editor's and Webmaster's reports, so we'll start with the former. We advertised quite extensively for someone to take on the editorship of the newsletter but no one came forward to take on the task although we have a good DTP software program which works rather like a word processor. So the committee decided to experiment by getting our printers to put the newsletter together from text and pictures which we sent them. Sadly, this was not a success. They took a long time; the result needed a great deal of correction; and it actually involved me in more work and hassle than if I had done it in the normal way. The trouble was that people with no knowledge of the 17th century and the Civil War in general and the way we in the Society think and work in particular cannot be expected to produce a specialised newsletter such as The Patriot. It has to be done in house, so the committee has decided that in future the newsletter will be produced using a system called MailChimp, which is used to produce a lot of newsletters and mailing lists. I haven't used it myself but I believe it is easier to use than most such programs. This does mean, however, that The Patriot is likely to cease as a printed newsletter sent out by post, but this is a decision for the incoming committee to make. Many organisations only produce an online newsletter these days, for the simple reason that most people have an e-mail account or access to e-mail at libraries and cyber cafes, and also have a simple colour printer. So they can do what some of our members do already – view The Patriot online and/or download it and print it out. It means that you won't get the beautifully-printed version on high-quality paper folded into four pages delivered by post, but this is the 21st century; life and technology move on and we have to keep up with them. Just because we are a Society devoted to the study of the 17th century doesn't mean we have to stay rooted in it. The important thing is that members will continue to be informed by various means.

One area where we are doing this is with the new website. This has been designed by a young lady called Sarah Large who runs her own web design company in Newbury, so it has been convenient for the sub-committee members to meet her for discussions although, naturally, most of these have taken place online. We have made haste slowly on this, but the site is now virtually finished and we hope to demonstrate it to you later this afternoon. There are a number of important improvements. A genealogical section has been added which will eventually incorporate the whole of the Hampden family tree and will link to other family history sites. Perhaps the most important change affecting members is the system for logging-on to the Members' Area. Instead of having a password sent to you at intervals which some members then lose or forget and ask me to send it again, you will register by setting your own user name and password. Then if you lose or forget the password, you click on the appropriate link and the facility to set a new one will be automatically e-mailed to you. This is actually much more secure than the present system.

There is a new Search facility, and all the previous issues of The Patriot will eventually be available on the site, together with a Gallery of the pictures of the Society's activities over the years. There are still a few teething troubles to be ironed out to make the site really user-friendly, so please be patient. At present I shall continue to be responsible for two other pieces of technology – the Society's Facebook page and the Googlegroup mailing lists, although these virtually run themselves. Anyone can access the Facebook page and read its content and anyone (even members of the committee!) with a Facebook account can post comments, articles, pictures and even videos to it. We have two Googlegroup mailing lists – one just for the committee members and one for the general membership. You have to have an e-mail address and be added to the list to be able to send and receive the postings, but apart from doing that, removing non-members, and ensuring that the facility is not misused by people posting irrelevant or offensive messages or using it for one-to-one communication, it requires little policing."

There were one or two queries regarding security and Roy reassured everyone that only members would be able to access certain items on the website, such as membership lists and minutes of meetings, etc. There was also a facility whereby a member who subsequently leaves the Society, can be excluded from gaining access once he/she has left.

The question was also asked about links to other websites and whilst some links are in place, it was noted that there is currently no link to the Parliamentary website. This will be noted and dealt with in due course.

6. Election of officers and committee members:

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

Chairman:	Stephen Barriff.	Proposed by Sam Hearn	Seconded by Anthea Coles.
Treasurer:	James Rodda.	Proposed by Sam Hearn	Seconded by Anthea Coles.
Hon. Secretary:	Anthea Coles.	Proposed by Sam Hearn	Seconded by Gerald Coles.
Membership Secretary	Philip Broomfield	Proposed by Sam Hearn	Seconded by Anthea Coles.
Committee Members:	Gerald McGregor	Proposed by Sam Hearn	Seconded by Anthea Coles.
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There being no other nominations individual votes were taken on the above proposals and all were individually voted unanimously into office.

7. Programme of Events and Plans for future Activities:

1. The Battlefields Trust will be holding a series of talks at Aylesbury Museum later in the year, commencing with a talk in January by Professor Ian Beckett. Further details of this will be available on the website.

2. The Society are hoping to once again lay a wreath by the statue of John Hampden in the Palace of Westminster. Further details will be published on the website once this has been verified. At present there is a slight problem over dates, our first choice clashing with something else we have arranged and the following day clashing with the Referendum, so a date later in the year will probably be

more appropriate on this occasion. Hopfully we will be able to keep this event going and Sam thinks it is brilliant that we get to lay our wreath inside Parliament, whilst the Cromwell Society can only do so outside!

Sam told those present that, because of some strange rule in Parliament, it being a historic building, we were not allowed to use a wreath comprising of real flowers as they do not allow this. Therefore we had to provide a wreath of artificial flowers, which would not have been our first choice. However, it does mean that we can probably re-use this wreath, either here or elsewhere, in the future. The wreath is allowed to remain in situ for one week only, and fortunately ours was retrieved by someone from the Speaker's office and made available for collection by us after that time was up.

3. The Society will celebrate its 25th Aniversary in October 2017 and is hoping to mark this, probably with some form of party/lunch. Ideally this would be held at Hampden House and permission will be sought from Tim Oliver. Failing that, another venue will have to be sought, but once arrangements have been finalised, further details will be published on the website.

4. Sam had a talk scheduled to take place at Tingewick in July.

8. The Patriot:

Some discussion took place concerning future editions of the Society newsletter, '*The Patriot*', which will be produced using MailChimp and e-mailed to those members who have e-mail addresses, copies being posted to those members who do not. Any member receiving a copy by e-mail, who would prefer a printed copy, should notify the Hon. Secretary, Anthea Coles, and she will arrange to reinstate that member on the mailing list. In view of the high cost of overseas postage, it was hoped that as many overseas members as possible would be agreeable to receiving their copy by e-mail. Each edition is published on the website as it is produced, and Roy Bailey will be adapting all back copies for inclusion thereon.

9. A.O.B:

It was reported that Simon Marsh of the Battlefields Trust intended to arrange more guided walks of the Chalgrove Battlefield Site.

Roger Paynter reported that the plaque on the 'Hampden' house in Grampond, installed by the Society on its visit there in September 2001 has become very difficult to read, and he wondered how it could be improved. The plaque is on a black background with brass lettering. It was agreed that this should be looked into and hopefully steps will be taken to rectify the problem.

There being no other items to discuss, the meeting was declared closed. A tour of the house was conducted by Lord & Lady Sele's son Martin, this was followed by tea in the tea rooms, with those present having the opportunity of previewing the new website and commenting thereon.