



# THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society  
No. 75 - Summer 2013



The John Hampden Society is a registered charity which exists to bring together people with an interest in John Hampden, and to encourage wider knowledge of this great 17th century Parliamentarian, his life and times

## HAMPDEN IN THE FIELD (but, after 370 years, which field?)



On the 18<sup>th</sup> June our new chairman, Lord Hollenden, laid the Society's annual commemorative wreath at the Chalgrove Battlefield Monument. He was supported by four of his fellow trustees (*left*). This Society event was preceded by a separate wreath-laying ceremony organised by members Gill and Derek Lester on behalf of various local organisations wishing to mark the forthcoming inclusion of Chalgrove in the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire.

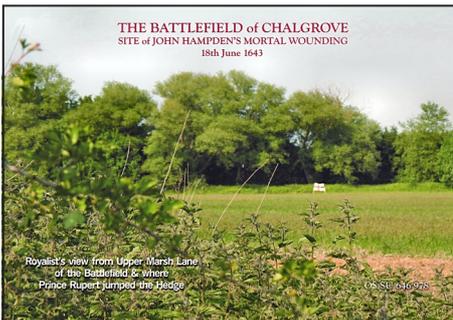
Following an oration at the Monument, Derek Lester handed cheque donations from several local organisations to a grateful Brigadier (rtd) Nigel Mogg, Vice-Chairman of the Victoria History of Oxfordshire Trust. Twenty people were in attendance for the wreath-laying and many subsequently joined the short and long walks of the battlefield organised by Gill and Derek.



Gill Lester, who led the shorter walk, provided a fluent and knowledgeable description (*above*) of the events leading up to the battle and the engagement itself. She explained that as result of the extensive historical research, that she and Derek had undertaken, they had concluded that the Ordnance Survey had placed its 'crossed swords', marking the 1643 battle, in the wrong field.



Derek Lester flanked by Chris Williams of Jennings Ltd, owners of the Monument Industrial Park, and Brig. Nigel Mogg, with members of the John Hampden Society as standard bearers



THE BATTLEFIELD of CHALGROVE  
SITE of JOHN HAMPDEN'S MORTAL WOUNDING  
18th June 1643

Royalists' view from Upper Marsh Lane  
of the Battlefield & where  
Prince Rupert jumped the Hedge

In addition, the Lesters also believe that the battlefield monument itself is sited several hundred yards from where Royalists and Parliamentarians actually came to blows and where Hampden received his mortal wounds.

To mark what they believe to be that particular spot they erected a large flag bearing the red cross of St. George (*left*).

In their opinion the origins of these location errors can be traced back to flawed research by Lord Nugent, Hampden's nineteenth-century biographer

Members can find out more about the work of the Victoria History of Oxfordshire Trust and how to support it via their website [www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/oxfordshire/vch-oxfordshire-trust](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/oxfordshire/vch-oxfordshire-trust)

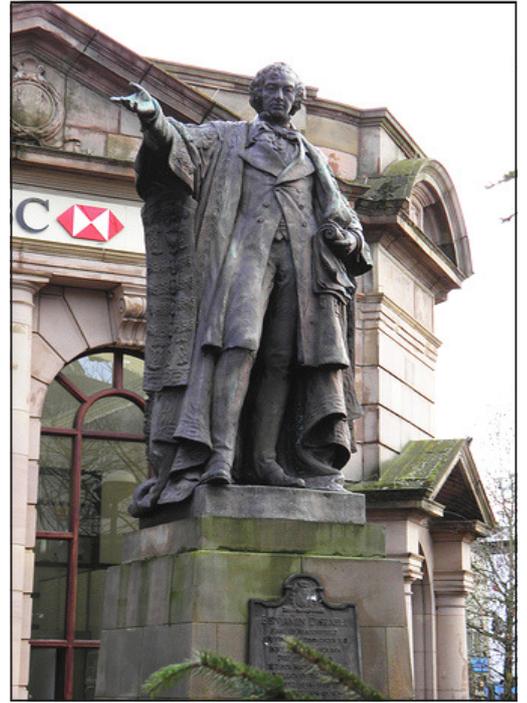
Sam Hearn

## DISRAELI AND HAMPDEN



By a happy coincidence the statue of Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield, now stands facing that of John Hampden in Aylesbury's Market Square. Disraeli, who sat as an MP for the County seat, never tired of speaking of the history of Bucks and was clearly in awe of Hampden's reputation.

In a speech at Amersham during one of his early election campaigns he said, "The County of Buckingham has always taken a lead in the political fortunes of this country. The parliamentary constitution of England was formed in the bosom of the Chiltern Hills ..... The parliamentary constitution of England was formed when Mr Hampden rode up to Westminster. Buckinghamshire did that for England."



Disraeli is renowned as a giant of nineteenth-century British politics but he also achieved considerable success as a writer and made significant contributions to literary fiction. His book *Coningsby*, published in 1844, is often described as the first political novel in the English language. It proved to be a publishing sensation and had to be reprinted three times in three months. More than 50,000 copies were printed for the American market alone.

*Coningsby* is set in the previous decade in the aftermath of the 1832 Reform Act and follows the early careers of the hero, Coningsby, and his Old Etonian school friends. The world was changing about them and ancient institutions and ideas were being challenged and overthrown. The extract below with its references to Hampden and his political motives may be of interest to members of the Society;

'I certainly shall not assume the Conservative Cause, instead of the cause for which Hampden died in the field and Sydney on the Scaffold' said Lord Vere.

'The cause for which Hampden died in the field and Sydney on the scaffold' said Coningsby 'was the cause of the Venetian Republic.'

'How, How?' said Buckhurst.

'I repeat it' said Coningsby. 'The great object of the Whig leaders in England from the first movement under Hampden to the last most successful one of 1688, was to establish in England a high aristocratic republic on the model of the Venetian, the study and admiration of all speculative politicians. Read Harrington, turn over Algernon Sydney [who stood twice for the Amersham parliamentary seat]; you will see how the minds of the English leaders of the seventeenth century were saturated with the Venetian type.'

Both Disraeli's parents were of Italian-Jewish stock and we can speculate on how this may have influenced the importance that Disraeli attributes to the Venetian political model. These ideas are, however, strikingly similar to those expressed so eloquently by Dr John Adamson in his book *The Noble Revolt*.

*Coningsby* was written at the same time as the Battlefield Monument at Chalgrove was being planned and constructed. The novel therefore provides us with a unique fictionalised account of some of the political, social and economic ideas circulating at this volatile period in our Nation's history.

You can visit Disraeli's old home, Hughenden Manor (*right*), set in beautiful grounds near High Wycombe. The property is now managed by the National Trust. The rallying cry of 'The cause for which Hampden died in the field and Sydney on the scaffold' was a standard Whig political toast.



**Sam Hearn**

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

### Bucks Family History Society Open Day - 27<sup>th</sup> July 2013



The Society was represented for the first time at the annual open day event run by the Bucks Family History Society. The venue this year was The Grange School, Aylesbury, where two large halls were filled with exhibitors' stalls and lectures were held in yet another hall. At least 600 people attended the event.

The Society was represented by Sam Hearn and Brian Cox (*left*). In excess of thirty people visited the Society's stand to pick up our new leaflet and ask questions. We are pleased to report that Mrs Anne Holmes and Ms Elizabeth Kirtland were impressed enough to join the Society on the spot.

Unlike the annual Bucks Local History Fair this event attracted many visitors and stallholders from outside the county. We met a number of visitors from West London and there were family history groups not only from neighbouring counties but also from as far afield as Lancashire, Suffolk, Wiltshire and even Ireland.

## THE HISTORY OF PARLIAMENT TRUST Hampden's entry on the website



An interesting short biography of Hampden can now be found on the Trust's website. It was written and researched by Christopher Thompson, a former Senior Research Fellow at the University of Buckingham.

His specialist areas of research are early Stuart Parliamentary politics, the economic fortunes of landowners and the development of English colonisation in the Caribbean and New England. His long term research on the career of Robert Rich, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Warwick

(1587-1658) may also be of interest to members of the Society.

Members may like to peruse the entry on the HPT website and forward their comments and suggestions to Sam Hearn at [vicechairman@johnhampden.org](mailto:vicechairman@johnhampden.org). The Society will be preparing a combined response. There is some new information in this article including a few stray comments that require further investigation.

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/hampden-john-1595-1643>



## DIARY DATES

### 2013

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> Aug.** Executive Committee Meeting at 9 Mulberry Drive, Wheatley, commencing at 2pm.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> Sept.** Visit to the Houses of Parliament for Prime Minister's Questions. We have been fortunate enough to secure passes to allow 4 members of the Society to attend this session. For further details see enclosed sheet.

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> Sept.** Tour of the Houses of Parliament. We have been allocated 20 tickets for this visit. Please see enclosed booking form for further details.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> Sept.** Bucks Local History Network Annual Conference and Fair to be held at Dr Challoner's Girls High School, Little Chalfont HP7 9QB, commencing at 10 am.

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> Nov.** Visit to Fuller's Brewery, Chiswick. There are 30 places available for this event and further details are available on the website and also on the enclosed flyer. Please book early to avoid disappointment. £10 per person.

This will be followed by a talk by Councillor Gerald McGregor entitled 'The Civil War defences of London'.

For up-to-date information, see the Diary page on the Society's website at:

[www.johnhampden.org/](http://www.johnhampden.org/)

The picture on the left shows the former Lord Williams's Grammar School at Thame as it was in 1966, when the building was used as a furniture repository.

See the article 'Hampden's School Days' on page 4.

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## HAMPDEN'S SCHOOL DAYS

It has traditionally been assumed that John Hampden attended Thame Grammar School, which had been established by a bequest of Lord Williams in 1559. Here in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the pupils would have read the English Bible, studied Latin Classical authors and the Greek New Testament, which would have prepared John to go up to Oxford University in 1610 and to become a member of London's Inner Temple from 1613.



At the school the boys attended the morning and evening services at the nearby parish church, where Lord Williams's tomb stands before the high altar. Ironically it was Thame where Hampden came to spend the last few days of his life, dying there on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 1643, after being mortally wounded in a battle against Royalist forces at Chalgrove Field, a week earlier.

Unlike many grammar schools of this period Lord Williams's School did not later develop into a fashionable Public School, but today still flourishes as the local co-educational secondary school on a larger site at the edge of Thame, while the town's primary school is named after John Hampden himself.

- Our pictures show (*left*) the school building in Victorian times and (*right*) as it is today - head office of Booker Tate Ltd.

*Brian Cox*

## ON THE HAMPDEN TRAIL

### A charming detour to Ewelme



Following the wreath-laying ceremony at the Battlefield Monument on 18<sup>th</sup> June I decided to treat myself to a long-postponed first visit to Ewelme. The village is located about four miles from Chalgrove and is famous for its fifteenth-century complex of church, almshouses and school. The picturesque village seemed strangely familiar perhaps because, as I later discovered, it has featured in a number of episodes of the interminable *Midsomer Murders* TV series.

Having parked at the rear of the beautifully maintained timber-framed almshouses (*left*), I walked through a central courtyard and entered the church via a connecting covered way. The interior of the church is famous for the intricately carved wooden 'spire' that surmounts its font and the magnificent tomb of Alice, Duchess of Suffolk (*right*), the granddaughter of Geoffrey Chaucer.



The Duchess is portrayed in effigy on top of the tomb, fully robed with her hands clasped in prayer and the Order of the Garter draped around her arm. The tomb is constructed in two layers. On the 'bottom bunk' there is a gruesome likeness of Alice as a naked cadaver. Alice lived a long and eventful life and played an important role in the nation's history but unfortunately there is insufficient space to expand upon it here. Before inspecting Lady Alice's tomb my eye was drawn to the wall-mounted funeral monuments on the north side of the church. Imagine my surprise when I found myself staring at the memorial to Renn Dickson Hampden, the controversial Victorian Bishop of Hereford. When appointed Oxford University's Regius Professor of Divinity, in 1836, he automatically became Vicar of Ewelme. The Bishop was proud of his Hampden antecedents and provided the land on which the Chalgrove Battlefield monument now stands.

*Sam Hearn*

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