



THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society
No. 81 - Spring 2015



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

MAKING HISTORY AT THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER



The Speaker of the House of Commons, The Right Honourable John Bercow MP, has given the John Hampden Society permission to lay a wreath by the statue of John Hampden (*left*) at the entrance to the Central Lobby in the Palace of Westminster. This event will take place on the anniversary of Hampden's death on Wednesday 24th June 2015. Unfortunately, because this is the day of Prime Minister's Questions the only time we have been allocated is 9am! However, any member who would like to take part in this special occasion is requested to contact the Hon. Treasurer or the Hon. Secretary.

In the past the Society has laid wreaths at the Chalgrove Battlefield Monument, by the plaque in Thame marking the site of Hampden's death, and at the statue of Hampden in the Market Square, Aylesbury. The Westminster wreath-laying event will provide an opportunity to commemorate Hampden's legacy and to draw it to the attention of a far wider audience. It will also provide an advert for the activities of the John Hampden Society itself.

The statue of John Hampden in the Palace of Westminster stands only a few paces from the spot where Charles I stood at the door of the old House of Commons and demanded that the Speaker identify Hampden and four of his colleagues so that they could be arrested.

John Bercow, MP for Buckingham, is a Vice-President of the Society, and has already very kindly assisted us by attending and speaking at our event in Aylesbury in June 2012 and by organising a visit by members of the Society to Parliament in 2013. He also arranged for a small group of members to sit in the Speaker's Gallery during Prime Minister's Question Time.

MEMORIAL MYSTERY

In issue number 80 of *The Patriot* we reported that the Ship Money memorial at Prestwood was erected by Lord Nugent, Hampden's first biographer. However, research by longstanding member Valerie Horne has called this commonly-held belief into question.

Valerie had long wondered why the inscription on the monument ended with the cryptic letters WE. All was made clear when she unearthed a significant entry in Robert Gibbs' book *Buckinghamshire, a Record of Local Occurrences and General Events*. The entry explains that the 'principal promoter' of the monument was Lord Chief Justice Sir William Erle (*pictured*).

More information will be published in the next edition of *The Patriot*.

Sam Hearn



CONVERGENCE AT KIMBLE

I wanted to attend the talk given by our Patron at Great Kimble Church last autumn, since it was in this church on the ninth of January 1635 that his great ancestor John Hampden had instigated his public opposition to the payment of Ship Money, and also gained the support of those there, known as Defaulters, including the Assessors and Constables - thirty one in all.

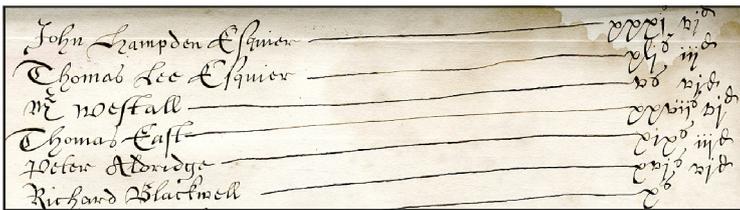


So this was a chance to hear the Earl of Buckinghamshire, John Hampden's descendant, talk about his great ancestor, 379 years after the event, in the same surroundings to mostly Kimble people. That was too great a historical coincidence for me not to want to take a small part in it.

It was rather a dull and windy September night but St Nicholas was well lit at the top of Smoky Row. Inside was a blaze of welcoming light and the building was crammed full of people dressed to enjoy a social gathering - £800 was given to support the upkeep of the two churches in Kimble.

Miles, Earl of Buckinghamshire, took his place in the pulpit, where as Society members well know he looks eminently at ease. At this point a hush fell on the audience. I will not go into the minutiae of the talk which was about John Hampden's life as a young man, as a Member of Parliament and - when hostilities began - as a renowned leader for Parliament.

At the start of his lecture Miles made a very powerful affirmation of his love for Hampden; saying that he held none of his ancestors in the same high regard that he had for John Hampden. During his talk Miles reminded us of the praise of others, such as Clarendon, and also of Hampden's support for Sir John Eliot. During all this time he had the rapt attention of the audience. Towards the end he spoke about the funeral of Hampden and one had an impression of the scene with banners of relatives and friends in the cortege. His remarks on the singing of the two psalms, the 90th and 43rd, made a strong ending, and he did not forget to mention Arthur Goodwin's letter to his daughter.



To me there was a quality of magic about this talk; mainly I suppose because of the place and the people involved - St Nicholas, Kimble people and Miles Buckinghamshire. I wouldn't expect others to view it like that; but I believe this was a first because all the convergences. Where I think most would agree is that we are fortunate to have a Patron who gives so much of his time and feeling for the John Hampden Society.

I should mention that Miles' wife, Alison, a Vice-President of the Society, was also present; Valerie Horne assisted with visual aids; and Libby Hardy was there as proxy for Jim Rodda. All the attendees stayed on for some time enjoying chat and refreshment.

The Church is well used to visitors; at one time people from all over the world, especially the then British Empire, used to come to pay a kind of homage to the courage of Hampden and those who stood with him to earn Britain a name for democratic government which, still by no means perfect, is probably the best to be had.

Bob Hammond

- Our pictures show Lord Buckinghamshire, not in the pulpit of Great Kimble church, but at the lectern in Great Hampden church in October 2012, and a part of the replica Ship Money Roll which hangs in Kimble church, with John Hampden's name at the top.

MEMBERSHIP

The annual membership subscription to the Society, payable on 1st January each year, is:

Single members	-	£15.00
Joint members	-	£20.00
Junior/students	-	£10.00

This newsletter is published quarterly and distributed free to members.

Published by

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Website: www.johnhampden.org

Registered charity no. 1098314

JOHN HAMPDEN AND THE WORLD WIDE WEB

'There are more things in heaven and earth, John, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy', to misquote the Bard. To be fair, Hampden could never have imagined in his wildest dreams the vast amount of documentation and data that is now available on line.

Up until a few years ago it was relatively easy to inspect old documents in the old British Museum reading room or the Public Records Office in Chancery Lane, but now, in order to see the same documents one almost needs a signed letter from the Pope and a blood sample! Fortunately the age of the internet has come to the rescue and with a few clicks of the keyboard ancient documents and letters can magically appear before you on the screen. By judicious searching most of these documents can be accessed for free but some do require a fee in order to cover costs.

The one everyone knows, and by far the simplest, is the ubiquitous Google search (<https://www.google.co.uk/>). By simply typing in a name, or a few words of a document or book one is led to a veritable labyrinth of sources.

If one is after a particular out-of-print book there are two sources worth looking at: The Books Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/>) which is a free U.S. based web site, as is a similar site (<https://www.mocavo.com/>). Other books can be found on the British Library web site (<http://www.bl.uk/>) but there may be costs associated with these searches.

Some British documents can be found at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/> and others at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/> but here there can be an annual fee for some searches. If, however you are interested in well known individuals, such as John Hampden, then the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/>) is a good starting place since you just need your library card number to gain access. There are also excellent biographical details of MPs on the History of Parliament website (<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/>).

If there is a portrait associated with that individual then look at the National Portrait Gallery (<http://www.npg.org.uk/>) for portraits.

Less well known individuals can, of course, be researched on the many genealogical web sites such as Ancestry (<http://home.ancestry.com/>) but here a fee is required. A free resource can however be found at Family Search (<https://familysearch.org/>).

In some cases it may be worth taking a quick look on YouTube since relevant videos are sometimes posted on this site. Just go to <https://www.youtube.com/> and type in the key word or words to find out if there is anything of interest. As was mentioned recently a recreation of seventeenth-century London can be found on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-W-8YA5uQo>.

Newer sites come on line at regular intervals and it is well worth keeping an eye open for them. A good example of which is The 1640s Picturebook (<https://the1642goodwyfe.wordpress.com/>). This site is a veritable bran tub of paintings, drawings, and articles on the early part of the seventeenth century and is well worth browsing through.

This list is far from exhaustive. There are many more sites of which readers will no doubt be aware but it is always worthwhile rummaging around on the computer to find out a little more about the time in which John Hampden lived.

Steve Barriff



DIARY DATES

2015

Sunday 19th April The Society's Annual General Meeting, to be held at Hampden House, Great Hampden HP16 9RD commencing at 2pm.

This will be followed by a talk on London during the Civil War.

Wednesday 24th June 9am. Wreath laying at the House of Commons.

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

www.johnhampden.org/diary.htm

GLORIA JARVIS SMITH

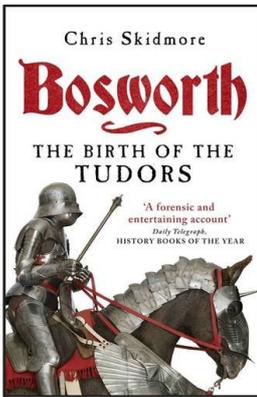


We are sad to announce the death of member Gloria Smith, who died on 15th November 2014 at the age of 89.

An appreciation by Bob Hammond will appear in the next issue of *The Patriot*.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members of the Society will find the paperwork for this year's AGM at Hampden House (see *Diary Dates*) enclosed with this newsletter.



BOOK REVIEW

Bosworth: The Birth of The Tudors

by Chris Skidmore

Published in paperback by Phoenix - an imprint of Orion Books.

ISBN 978 0 7538 2894 6

437 pages with eight pages of illustrations and photos.

This book is dedicated by the author to the memory of Lesley Boatwright, a much respected member of the Society and an indefatigable researcher. Because of her hard work we now know the names of six of the men of Bucks who travelled to Bosworth Field. Three were Hampdens and one was the son of a Hampden mother. However, despite the well-documented adherence of certain members of the Hampden family to the Lancastrian cause, the role that the family played in the events of 1485 remains tantalisingly opaque.

A group of prominent men, including Thomas Hampden of Great Hampden, are recorded as dying on the 20th or 21st of August 1485, just before the battle itself on the 22nd. The author comments that it is possible that they were travelling together from Essex with the intention of joining Henry Tudor and might have been intercepted and killed by Richard's forces. Thomas Hampden held lands at Theydon Bois in Essex. Lesley Boatwright suggested an alternative view that the deaths on the 20th and 21st were simply a legal fiction devised in order to prevent the men's estates being confiscated under an Act of Attainder by a victorious Henry Tudor.

The truth about Bosworth Field has long been obscured by ancient misunderstandings and Tudor political spin. Work at the battlefield sites by our friends from the Battlefields Trust and the recent excavations in a Leicester car park have produced new archaeological evidence that has altered many long held views and perceptions. Skidmore sensibly never strays too far from the archaeological record and contemporary written sources but still manages to write in an entertaining style. It is unlikely however that this will be the last scholarly book on this fascinating battle.

Skidmore creates an impressively detailed picture of life at the courts of both Richard III and the exiled Henry Tudor. The author is an MP and life in these courts must have had some similarities with his own experiences within the UK's coalition government: Who can you trust, who is your friend and who is your mortal foe? Who can you rely on to stand fast and deliver when the battle is at its height?

Sam Hearn

LIGHT SHINING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AT THE ROYAL NATIONAL THEATRE (15TH APRIL TO 22ND JUNE)

The National Theatre is reviving this controversial play by prolific playwright Caryl Churchill. The play is an examination of events in the England of the 1640s and "tells the story of the men and women who went into battle for the soul of England". It is apparently "passionate, moving and provocative, [and] it speaks of the revolution we never had and the legacy it left behind." The name of the play refers to the title of a radical Digger pamphlet.

As part of the NT's ongoing series of 'Platforms' three one-off early evening events are scheduled in support of the play.

Thursday 30th April. 6.00 pm in the Lyttleton Theatre: The director Lyndsey Turner discusses the play *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*.

Thursday 7th May in the Temporary Theatre: *The Putney Debates* - 1pm and 6pm. NT actors read from the 1647 debates about how this country should be run for the benefit of all. This is on the day of the General Election.

Thursday 21st May. 6 pm in the Temporary Theatre: *Civil War: Ancient and Modern*. Guests will include historian Diane Purkiss (author of *The English Civil War: A People's History*) and political activist John Rees (co-author of *A People's History of London*).

Tickets can be purchased over the phone on 020 7452 3000 or via the Royal National Theatre's website at <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/>.

Printed by Sarsen Press

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