



THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of The John Hampden Society

No. 39 - Summer 2004

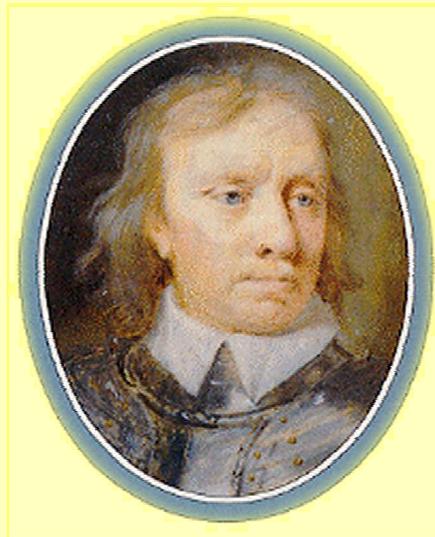
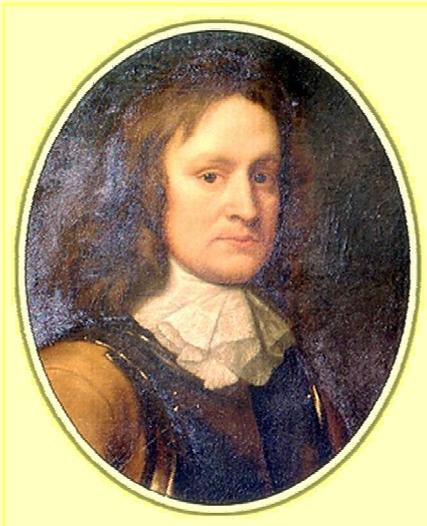


The John Hampden Society is a registered charity which exists to bring together people with an interest in John Hampden, and to encourage wider knowledge of this great 17th century Parliamentarian, his life and times

SOCIETY TO HOST JOINT CONFERENCE WITH CROMWELL ASSOCIATION

Following discussions between the John Hampden Society and the Cromwell Association, a Day School has been arranged for Saturday 27th November at The Spread Eagle Hotel in Thame.

opportunity to walk the battlefield of Chalgrove the following day, under the guidance of **Derek Lester**, and a chance to see an exhibition of paintings entitled *The Civil War in Bucks* at the County Museum in Aylesbury that same afternoon.



Entitled *Patriot and Protector*, the event will be composed of a series of lectures tracing the respective careers of John Hampden and his more famous cousin, Oliver Cromwell (*right*), and discussing the similarities and differences between the two men.

The speakers will include **Professor Ian Beckett**, **Julian Hunt** and **Roy Bailey** from the John Hampden Society, and Professors John Morrill and Blair Worden from the Cromwell Association. The conference will be chaired jointly by our Patron, **the Earl of Buckinghamshire** and Dr Peter Gaunt of the CA.

The cost will be £28.00 to members of the Society and £30.00 to non-members, and will include a light lunch and refreshments. There will also be an

It is almost certain that the Hampden portrait by Robert Walker, from which our picture on the left is taken, will be shipped up from Port Eliot in Cornwall for the occasion.

A programme and booking form is enclosed with this newsletter, and interested parties are advised to make their booking as soon as possible, as places are limited.

This scholarly venture, which has been pursued by Hon. Treasurer **Sam Hearn** and **Mike Portsmouth**, who is also a member of the Cromwell Association, is the first of what is hoped is a series of such events.

MONEY FROM GIFT-AID

by

Sam Hearn - Hon. Treasurer

The Society has made its first gift-aid return to the Inland Revenue and has received and banked a cheque for £265. 97.

The Executive Committee would like to thank all those members who have made this possible by completing a gift-aid form covering their annual subscriptions, or their donations for the Hampden Plaque.

Gift-aid will in future make an important contribution to the funding of the Society. This should enable us to maintain the membership subscription at its present rate for longer than would otherwise have been possible or to bring forward new projects.

There is a delicious irony in the fact that a Society dedicated to the memory of a man who refused to pay a tax levied upon him by a tyrannical government is now receiving monies from the Inland Revenue!

However many members have still to complete and return to the Treasurer a gift-aid form covering their annual subscriptions. Until the Society receives your gift-aid form the Treasurer is unable to include your subscription/donation on the claim forms sent to the Inland Revenue.

All UK tax payers may complete such a gift-aid form regardless of whether or not they complete a year-end tax return. It is sufficient that you have paid some tax in the year, for example by deduction from bank or building society interest, dividends or even a company pension.

If you would like to complete a gift-aid form to cover your future annual subscriptions please e-mail me on treasurer@johnhampden.org or contact me on 020 8995 2666 or download the form from the web site (click on 'Documents'). A retrospective claim cannot be made.

Please act now!

THE HANDLEY-PAGE HAMPDEN BOMBER

by
Graham Barfield

The Royal Air Force's thinking for attack purposes during the 1930s was concentrated on medium bombers, so Britain entered World War II with several designs, of which the Hampden was one. By today's standards the design was fairly basic, but Hitler's intentions in Europe at that time were plain and the prototype was approved for mass production within weeks of its unveiling in 1936. However it took a further two years for the first aircraft to enter service.

It had twin 1000 horsepower engines, a top speed of around 250 mph, could climb nearly 1000 feet a minute and had a range of either 1900 miles with a bomb load of 2,000 lbs or 1,200 miles with a 4,000 load.

RAF needs had moved on in the six years between the aircraft's conception in 1932 and its service introduction, so that by the time Hampdens were being supplied in volume they were perhaps no longer ideal for the job they were expected to do. But, in the usual British way, as 'Bomber' Harris said, "the crews made the best of it and being strong and reliable, the aircraft did a sterling job".

Over 1400 Hampdens were built between 1938 and early 1942; 500 by the designers Handley-Page, 770 under licence by English Electric and a further 160 by a Canadian maker. Its advantages were its relatively high speed, long range and good bomb carrying capacity. But to achieve these, it lacked effective defensive armament and was rapidly found to be very vulnerable to German fighter planes. The Hampden did not have power-operated turrets and the manually-traversed guns had poor arcs of fire which gave the aircraft many blind spots along which it could be attacked. The crew of four was grouped in a rather small fuselage, tending to induce fatigue on long missions.

However, it was quick off the mark when war started, seeing action on day one, 3rd September 1939 with attacks on German shipping, a raid in which Commander Guy Gibson of subsequent Dambuster fame, took part. The Hampdens were used, along with other types of medium bomber, during the 'Phoney War' of early 1940, in the rather futile practice of leaflet raids.

The Hampdens' defensive shortcomings soon showed up and only 15 weeks into the war they were taken out of daylight service and confined to night bombing, which was thought to be less hazardous for the crews and aircraft. They were re-equipped with twin machine guns in their two rear-facing turrets, instead of the single guns first fitted. This did not cure the problem of blind spots.

Hampdens were used in the ill-fated Norwegian campaign - mostly dropping mines against German shipping - and they took part in the first air attack on the German mainland in May 1940 and the first raid on Berlin. Perhaps their most useful contribution was in support of the Battle of Britain

when, repeatedly nipping at low altitude across the Channel they attacked and destroyed many of the invasion barges which were being assembled in northern French and Dutch ports for the German invasion of Britain.



Ian Allen Ltd.

Two flyers won the V.C. in Hampdens, within a month of each other between mid-August and mid-September 1940. One, Flight Lieutenant R. Learoyd, was the first Bomber Command pilot to win the decoration. The other, Sergeant John Hannah, won his for putting out a fire in his aircraft during a raid on invasion barges at Antwerp.



Flight International

The Hampden bomber (top) and (above) the unveiling by Viscountess Hampden. Viscount Hampden is second from the right

Hampdens took part in strength in the famous 1,000 bomber raid on Cologne, but their days were numbered as larger, four-engined bombers came on stream, better armed and able to carry more bombs longer distances. In mid-September 1942 Hampdens operated with Bomber Command for the last time. A limited number of them saw active service for a further fifteen months; a few squadrons were moved to Coastal Command as it had been found that the planes could carry a torpedo.

Operating from bases in Scotland they harassed German shipping in the North Sea and also undertook protective duties with the Arctic convoys taking supplies to Russia around the north of Scandinavia. One squadron for a time operated from a base near Murmansk. Finally in December 1943 they were withdrawn from active service, though it seems likely that the residue

would have been used on basic flying training for bomber crews before they moved on to larger machines.

And the name? RAF and Air Ministry thinking was for alliteration of the names of makers and their marques. Thus Avro Anson; Bristol Blenheim; Hawker Hurricane. So Handley Page were stuck with H and the further requirement that the name must be that of a town in the British Empire with historical associations.

Society members might be disappointed to learn that our hero's name - or rather that of his estate - did not spring immediately to everyone's lips, and in fact there seems to have been a lucky dip approach with various departments at Handley Page being invited to submit suggestions. In the end, as the account succinctly puts it, the rules were bent to admit the small Buckinghamshire village of Hampden, because of its association with the outstanding 17th century defender of civil liberty, of the same name.

And a fitting final note. The first aircraft off the production line was christened at the Handley Page Radlett factory/airfield on 24th June (*coincidence?* - Ed.) 1938 by the then Viscountess Hampden, accompanied by Viscount Hampden. The present Viscount is a member and Vice-President of the John Hampden Society, so there is, by association, a link between the Society and the perhaps under-appreciated aerial workhorse of the first part of World War II - the Handley Page Hampden.

Editor's Note: This article about the Hampden bomber is dedicated to the memory of the late Wing-Commander Alan Walker, for some years a member of this Society, who suggested it as a subject for an article on more than one occasion. The author also served in the RAF, but as a National Serviceman in a rather less exalted rank!

What is probably the last Hampden in existence has been restored and can be seen at the Lincolnshire Heritage Aviation Centre, East Kirkby, near Horncastle.



The Spread Eagle Hotel

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ACCOMODATION, RESTAURANT
& BANQUETING

THE PLAQUE IS OURS!

The year-long saga of the John Hampden plaque has been successfully concluded with its acquisition by the Society.

This story started in July last year when we received an e-mail from a Mr Robert Horlock of Mistley in Essex, offering the Society the plaque on behalf of a client. The asking price was £800 - well beyond the Society's financial capabilities at that time - but the Executive committee were interested, and Mr Horlock was prepared to loan the plaque to the Society so that we could evaluate it and see if we wished to buy it.

The plaque (pictured) turned out to be an oval bas-relief of John Hampden's head in plaster, and is about 30 inches by 24 in size. The head is identical to the one on the Chalgrove Battlefield Monument; to the memorial at the entrance to Greyhound Walk, Thame; and to the one at the John Hampden Primary School (which originally came from the Girls' Grammar School). There are also strong similarities to the bas-relief above the fireplace in Pyrton Manor, the home of John Hampden's first wife.

The plaque's only provenance was Mr Horlock's information that it had apparently lain undisturbed in the attic of a 16th century farmhouse, formerly a part of the Duke of Westminster's estate, at Ketteringham, Norfolk, for the past 25 years.

It's resemblance to the head on the Chalgrove Monument lent weight to the possibility that it had been made at the same time as the construction of the Monument in 1843. **Sam Hearn** enlisted the help of the Victoria and Albert Museum, but they pointed out that plaster artefacts are notoriously difficult to date.

However, the Executive Committee felt that this was something that should not be allowed to escape from our grasp and disappear from view, especially as Mr Horlock had indicated that he could easily find a buyer in America. As the Society had insufficient funds to purchase it, approaches were made to the Scottish Football Museum at Hampden Park, Glasgow; the John Hampden Grammar School at High Wycombe; and **Tim Oliver** at Hampden House, but none of these were in a position to purchase it at the asking price. **Sam Hearn** offered Mr Horlock £500, but this was refused and it was indicated that there was a deadline to the original offer.

Fortunately that offer had been made just after the Society had acquired charity status, so **Sam** launched an appeal based on the Society's new-found ability to attract gift aid. Donations came in steadily; the most interesting from the Inland Revenue! (see 'Money From Gift-Aid') On behalf of Thame Historical Society, Chairman **Maurice Kirtland** gave £100 and reported that they would be able to provide the plaque with a home in the new Thame Museum, now almost certain to happen.

When it appeared that the deadline imposed by Mr Horlock could not be met,

members of Col. John Hampden's Regiment offered to match anything that the Society had so far raised. This gesture was made at **Derek Lester's** 60th birthday party at Chalgrove back in January, and may have been prompted by a surfeit of John Hampden's Ale! As it happened the Society did not need to take up the offer, but we are grateful to our friends in the Greencoats for their generosity.



At the closing of the deadline at the end of May contributions had amounted to £779.00, so the Society met the balance from funds and the plaque became ours.

It has already made two guest appearances; at the AGM of the Thame Grammar School for Girls Association and the Society's own AGM, but unfortunately there is no way of putting it on permanent public display until the Thame Museum opens at Easter 2005. At present it is residing under the Hon. Treasurer's bed!

ROLL OF HONOUR

The following contributed towards the cost of acquiring the plaque. The Society's Committee would like to express its thanks to them:

- The Earl of Buckinghamshire
- Lord Hollenden
- William Brueton (Col. John Hampden's Regt.)
- Mrs Anthea Coles
- William Eason
- Sir Leonard Figg
- Robert V. Hammond
- Samuel Hearn
- Christopher Hobart
- Barry Keating
- Maurice Kirtland
- Derek Lester
- Michael Malone
- Miss Elizabeth Morris
- Robert Shirley
- Mrs Doreen Taylor
- Thame Historical Society
- Inland Revenue (Gift-Aid)



2004

Saturday 9th October The Bucks Local History Network (BLHN) Fair and Conference at The Civic Centre, Aylesbury commencing at 9 am. (Details enclosed)

Saturday 27th November A Joint Day School to be held with the Cromwell Association at The Spread Eagle Hotel, Thame, commencing at 10 am.

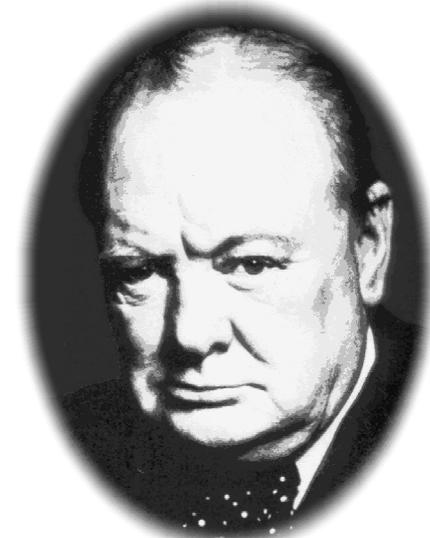
All meetings commence at 8 pm, unless otherwise stated.

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

www.johnhampden.org/diary.htm

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust is offering travelling fellowships in a number of categories, in order to: 'enable men and women in all walks of life and every corner of the United Kingdom to acquire knowledge and experience abroad. In the process they gain a better understanding of the lives and cultures of people overseas, and their expertise, effectiveness at work, and contribution to the community are all greatly enhanced'.



Applicants must be British citizens, but there is no age limit and no special qualifications are required. One of this year's Fellowships is in the field of History, and application forms can be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Trust at 15 Queen's Gate Terrace, LONDON SW7 5PR, or completing the online form at www.wcmt.org.uk. Closing date for applications is 21st October. The grant awarded normally covers the cost of a stay of 4-8 weeks overseas.

Members of the Society may well be interested in applying, bearing in mind that Churchill, recently voted the Greatest Briton and the man to whom his country looked for leadership in 1940, was an ancestor of John Hampden, recently voted Buckinghamshire's Greatest Son and the man to whom his country looked for leadership in 1640.

ANNUAL DINNER

The Society's 10th Annual Dinner, held at the Spread Eagle Hotel at Thame on 23rd June, was considered by those who attended to be the best yet.



Professor John Adair, Derek Lester and Gill Blackshaw listen intently as Dr Maija Jansson delivers her talk

Held in the enlarged Fothergill's Restaurant, now complete with air-conditioning, the meal was enjoyed by more than 30 members and a number of distinguished guests. These included the Mayor of Thame, Councillor David Dodds, our Patron, **Lord Buckinghamshire** and our President, **Professor John Adair**, with their respective ladies, and - from the USA - **Dr Maija Jansson**, her husband Dr Paul Bushkovitz, and her son and daughter-in law, John Cole and Acha Lord.

Dr Jansson, who is Director of Parliamentary History at the University of Yale in Connecticut, was this year's guest speaker, and, following the excellent meal, gave a fascinating talk entitled 'John Hampden - An American Symbol' on the influence of John Hampden on the founders and early statesmen of the American Republic.

Members learned that John Hampden's name and fame had resounded down the years across the Atlantic, whereas other Eng-

lish 17th century revolutionaries, such as Cromwell, Pym or Heselrige, were largely forgotten. In the 1760s a series of weekly articles appeared in the *Boston Gazette* apparently written by John Hampden, William(?) Pym and Clarendon - the latter a pen name for John Adams, later second President of the USA.

In 1789 Thomas Jefferson, later third President, tried to acquire a portrait and a bust of Hampden, and at the end of the 19th century Lord Macaulay's shorthand essay on Hampden was on sale on book stalls in Boston. Young gentlemen of the time could even buy cigars with a picture of the Patriot on the band (pictured below).

Dr Jansson went on to detail how the split with Britain was brought about by the colonists' distaste for the corruption and tyranny in 18th century parliamentary government in Britain, which had abandoned the ideals of Hampden and his contemporaries. The Americans' cry of

'No taxation without representation' was an echo of Hampden's stand against the illegal Ship Money that no Parliament was in existence to debate.



Following her talk, **Dr Jansson** was presented by **Professor Adair** with a copy of the new reprint of his biography of Hampden. He humorously pointed out that this was to rectify the situation of **Dr Jansson** possessing an illegal photocopy of the book in her office!

It is possible that eventually **Dr Jansson's** talk will be published, perhaps on our web site.

WEB SITE UPGRADE

Hon. Treasurer **Sam Hearn** and Webmaster **Roy Bailey** have been conducting a re-vamp of the Society's web site, to bring it up to date and make it more user-friendly, although the present version continues to receive its fair share of compliments.

Members accessing the site will now find that the front, or 'home', page has been simplified and a button menu added, making it easier to navigate around the various pages. Some of these have already been improved with additional pictures and information. The work is ongoing and it is intended to completely revise the history of the Society's activities, to add pages of documents, and a section of Frequently Asked Questions. The Society's new constitution is already up there, together with the Gift Aid form and some scholarly articles.

One of these is an investigation by Vice-Chairman **Bob Hammond** into the possibility that Oliver Cromwell may have been present at the Battle of Aylesbury in November 1642. There is not enough space for this in the current issue of '*The Patriot*', but the web site makes a good permanent home for this and other similar articles.

To read this and other items of interest, go to the web site and click on the button marked 'Archives'. The various articles are listed and clicking on the title in blue will display them. You will need to have Abode Acrobat on your computer for this, but a free copy can be easily downloaded. Any suggestions for additions and/or improvements to the website should be sent to webmaster@johnhampden.org.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

● The possibility of the John Hampden video being produced has surfaced again, now that we have charity status. One of the tenants of the Hampden Estate in Princes Risborough is Mike Pritchard of Lantern Film and Video, and his landlord **Lord Hollenden** is trying to set up a meeting with interested members of the committee. Mr Pritchard has experience in making historical videos, and has kindly agreed to give the Society advice and help. Watch this space!

● A certain Justin Arnold from somewhere in Australia appears to have finally caught up with our Downing Street campaign and its comments about the street's builder. He recently sent us the following e-mail, reproduced as received: '*how dare you insult my ancestor George Downing. If it wasn't for good old George and his Revolutionary Republican ideology you would be worship Satan in Catholic Church wake up to yourself and grow up George kicks ass and one day soon we will run the whole world and finally do away with the evil anti-christ in Rome show some due respect boy.*' Comment would appear to be superfluous!

● Membership Secretary **Liz Morris** reports that earlier this year she received a membership standing order for one S. Oram, despite no one having any record of a member of that name. **Liz** is also still receiving a number of subscription standing orders in the old annual rate of £7.50, despite repeated reminders that it went up to £10 several years ago. Please check your bank statements! **Liz** can be contacted at 01296 482488 or membership@johnhampden.org.

● A lifestyle magazine for the Thame area, *Thameside*, recently published a short article about John Hampden. Based partly on the details on our web site, and incorporating some pictures we supplied, this is probably one of the best short resumes of the Patriot's life and achievements that we have yet read. Unfortunately, the publishers forgot to mention the Society, but have promised to rectify the error in the next issue. A copy of the magazine can be obtained from the publishers, WOW Publications, PO Box 946, OXFORD OX4 1WD; tel: 01865 200666; e-mail: thameside@wowpub.co.uk. Ask for volume 6.

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