



# THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

No. 61 - Winter 2009/2010



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

## DOWNING STREET CAMPAIGN



A number of ways of attracting new members to the Society were discussed at the workshop held after the last AGM. The Executive Committee subsequently decided that if more people knew about the Society, then more would be likely to join. It was agreed that, in order to raise the public profile of the Society, we should reactivate the dormant campaign to rename Downing Street as 'Hampden Street'. As most members know, the London home of John Hampden's mother, Hampden House, was demolished by George Downing when he built Downing Street.

Government officials had complained that since Downing Street is so well known, our previous campaign would, if successful, have caused great confusion. We therefore decided to modify the campaign objective. Our new aim is to provide 10 Downing Street with an alternative official name, 'Hampden House'. This would be similar to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue being generally referred to as 'The White House'.

The Executive agreed that, once we had achieved the backing from some influential and well known public figures, we would place an electronic petition on the No.10 Website (see [www.petitions.number10.gov.uk](http://www.petitions.number10.gov.uk)). We plan to launch the petition at one or more well advertised public events that would be covered in the local and national media. However progress in attracting the support needed has been slow.

Most local Bucks and Oxfordshire MPs, with the notable of exceptions of Cheryl Gillan, John Howell and John Bercow (The Speaker), have offered only lukewarm support. Howell and Bercow have offered to take the matter up with the Prime Minister. Mrs Gillan has actually written in support of our campaign to Margaret Hodge, the appropriate minister. Mrs Hodge, whilst acknowledging that "*John Hampden was admired by members of all political parties [sic] at the time as an MP of honour and integrity*", has balked at any idea of changing the name of 10 Downing Street, "*an address recognised the world over*".

Members of the Executive will continue to work on the campaign so that after, the General Election in May, we should be in a position to launch the petition and achieve as much publicity for the Society as possible. Members who are interested in helping should contact any member of the Executive but particularly the Chairman and the Honorary Secretary. We would like to have the active support of at least one high profile public figures, e.g. a TV historian, journalist, playwright, or author. Our campaign would obviously benefit from the support of a 'Joanna Lumley' type figure. All suggestions and contact details welcome.

**Sam Hearn**



## THE WONDERS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

The internet is becoming more and more a part of everyday life and, like many other organisations, the Society is making good use of it.

We have our website at [www.johnhampden.org](http://www.johnhampden.org), and this continues to be a valuable source of information about John Hampden and the Society. The Diary page is regularly updated with information about our events, and a copy of this newsletter is posted online immediately after members receive their postal copy. A number of members save the Society postage by downloading the pages to read on their computer or to print out. The site also has a facility to join or renew membership or purchase our products online and pay by PayPal.

We also have a Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com>, which, like the website, has worldwide access for anyone with a free Facebook account (and there are many millions!) Only 16 of those millions have shown their support by becoming members of the page, but we are exploring ways of attracting more people – especially young people - to learn about John Hampden. Membership of the Facebook page is not confined to paid-up members of the Society.

These are both public outlets; of more importance to members are the mailing list and the Members' Page. The former is like a bulletin board to which you e-mail to just one address rather than to a long list. Your message then goes out to 50 of the Society's members who can respond in the same way. This is invaluable for informing members of events occurring at short notice which cannot be published in *The Patriot*, or for matters that do not concern the public. If you have e-mail you are strongly urged to subscribe to this service; send me an e-mail via the link below. You will need to subscribe to a free Googlegroups account, but you don't need website access. So useful is this facility that we have set up a smaller separate list for the members of the committee.

The Members' Page is only available to members with both e-mail and web access. A link on the website takes you to a page where a password has to be entered. You are then presented with another page containing links to AGM and committee minutes, annual accounts, a current membership list, etc. The password is sent out to members on the mailing list and is changed regularly as a security measure. Again, contact me if you wish to be added.

We are always looking for ways to use modern technology in the cause of John Hampden. If you have any good ideas, let us know.

**Roy Bailey**  
Webmaster

<http://tinyurl.com/yex8zlr>

## OBITUARY

Joan Portsmouth 21.2.1948 - 2.1.2010



Joan, Mike & John Seal at Grampound in 2001

We were saddened to hear of the unexpected death, after a short illness, of Joan Portsmouth, a longstanding and active Society member who at one time served on the Executive Committee along with Mike. Our thoughts are with her husband Mike, her three sons and their families at this difficult time. Six members of the Society were able to attend her moving funeral service at Waltham St Lawrence Parish Church on 14th January. Joan was held in high regard by her local community and the church was filled to capacity despite the bad weather. We shall miss Joan's sparkling personality and joy of life. It was always a pleasure to see her at John Hampden Society events. Joan was born within the sound of Bow Bells and was technically a cockney despite having strong ties with Cumbria. However, she grew up, married and raised her family close to where she is now buried. Joan will be sadly missed by her colleagues at the Landmark Trust, her family and friends and those of us in the Society who were fortunate enough to have enjoyed the company of this modest and beautiful lady.

## THE BROUGHTON PROJECT

After the Society's visit to Broughton Castle last year, my friend, Jeff Parker, the English Civil War Society's webmaster, and I were invited back to Broughton to take photos of several paintings and miniatures. The main purpose of the exercise was to verify if a certain miniature was that of John Hampden. But while photographing this image, Lady Saye asked about other paintings, so we duly obliged in taking photos of these.

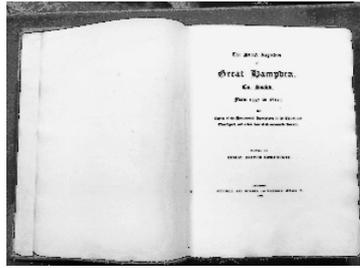
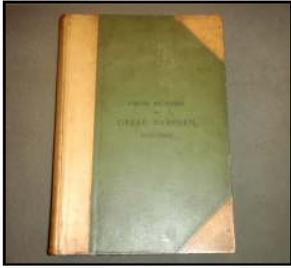
Discussions with friends in the ECWS regarding the 'Hampden' miniature (BC-8, the Image reference No. on the website) had already deduced that this was not Hampden, but more likely to be Richard Fiennes. "Ah" said Lord Saye, "there is another Richard Fiennes (BC-6) in the attic", and so there was, plus a treasure trove that would have amazed the Antiques Roadshow's experts.

Over a cup of tea, we were chatting about the history of the ancestors of the Saye family, when Lord Saye popped open a kitchen drawer and produced a miniature believed to be an unknown image of Oliver Cromwell (BC-11). Then out came Charles I (BC-10) followed by (possibly) John Pym (BC-12) and (maybe) the Earl of Strafford (BC-13). Would you know who they are?

You are invited to view these images at <http://jrparker.me.uk/broughton>. Please register your name as requested and you will be able to join in the discussions regarding these images. The object of the exercise is to accumulate detailed knowledge of each image. Who are they? What are they wearing and what is its significance? What are they holding and what is its importance? Of special interest is the meaning of imagery within the paintings, such as why is the lady in (BC-3) holding a dove in her left hand with its wing outstretched and clearly showing no rings on her fingers? Any detail or observation is welcome and when sufficient material is gathered the findings will be presented on a DVD to Lord & Lady Saye.

**Derek Lester**

## A WINDOW ON THE PAST



The Society has acquired, through the good offices of June Wailing, a Victorian copy of the parish registers of Great Hampden Church, covering the period from 1557 to 1812. It includes the entry for the burial of John Hampden, the Patriot, and the baptisms and burials of many of his relatives. The registers provides a unique window on the past through which to catch glimpses of the lives of the Hampden family, and their tenants and neighbours.

The copy of the registers, now added to the Society's library, is the eighth of a limited edition of one hundred published in 1888. The book was edited by Mr Ebblewhite, who was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a practising barrister. In his preface to the register, Ebblewhite comments that "much controversy has taken place" in respect of the entry for the burial of John Hampden, the Patriot. In his opinion "although it must be admitted that the line has the appearance of an interpolation, it will be seen on careful examination, that the handwriting is identical with other burials in 1643" i.e. the entry was contemporary and made by the Rector, Robert Lenthall.

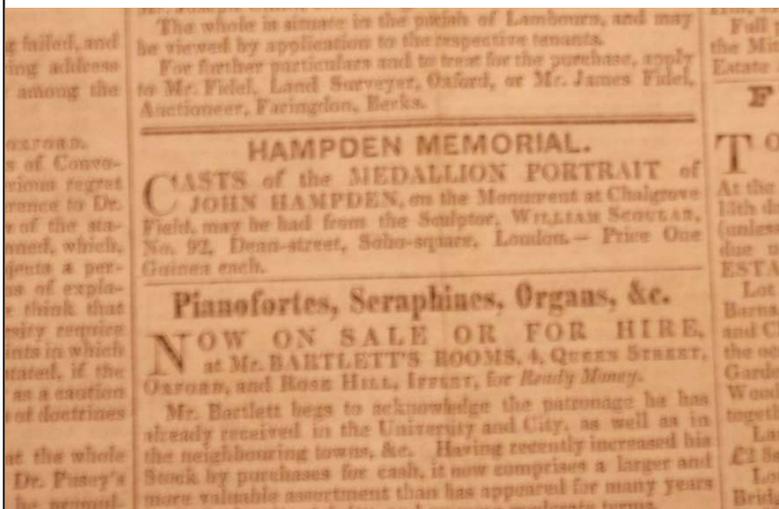
There is much else of interest in the registers, including some intensely personal entries by Robert Lenthall, who officiated at John Hampden's funeral in 1643: Between 11<sup>th</sup> August and 25<sup>th</sup> September 1647, Lenthall records the deaths, from the plague, of his 14 year old daughter Sarah, his wife Susanna, his 20 year old son Adrian, his 13 year old cousin John Pickering, and John Gardiner, a child who lived in his house. Ebblewhite notes that Lenthall remarried, and eventually died whilst Rector of Barnes in 1658.

## THE HAMPDEN MEDALLIONS

Members will remember that the large plaster medallion depicting John Hampden, now on display in Thame Museum, was purchased by the Society in 2004. It was known that two further plaster medallions were still in existence, one at Hartwell House and one at The John Hampden Primary School in Thame. The medallions appeared to be casts taken from the now badly decayed marble portrait of the Patriot on the Chalgrove battlefield monument.

There was speculation that the plaster casts may have been given to individuals who had made large donations for the erection of the monument. However, Maurice Kirtland has recently identified a more likely source. Maurice has discovered an interesting advertisement in the edition of the Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette in which the unveiling of the battlefield was reported. It reads "*Casts of the medallion portrait of John Hampden, on the monument at Chalgrove Field, may be had from the Sculptor, William Scoular, No. 92 Dean Street, Soho Square, London - Price one guinea each*"

**Sam Hearn**



The Society is sad to report that longstanding Society member, Miss Marie Endean of Upper Woolhampton, Reading, died on 9th January at the grand age of 93.

It is hoped to incorporate a fuller obituary in the Spring edition of *The Patriot*. Our thoughts are with her family at this sad time.



## DIARY DATES

### 2010

**Saturday 10th April** Annual General Meeting and self-guided tour of Magdalen College, Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TF, from 10.30 am, followed by lunch at Mansfield College, starting at 12.30 pm. The AGM will be held in the Seminar Room from 2 pm. After the AGM there will be a talk by the author and historian Adrian Tinniswood.

**Sunday 6th June** Battlefield walk of Chalgrove Field by the Battlefields Trust's custodians Derek and Gill Lester. Starting from Hampden's Monument (Grid ref SU 646972) at 10.30 am. (*see the brown road signs for 'Chalgrove Battlefield' off the B480 at Chalgrove*)

Retiring after the walk to The Red Lion, Chalgrove, for refreshments.

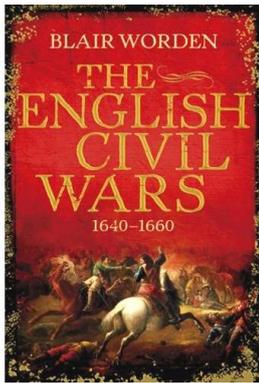
**Saturday 26th June** The Society's Annual Dinner. Time and venue to be arranged as the Spread Eagle may be having a refit in June.

**Saturday in October** A visit to the Chiltern Brewery for lunch and the launch of a Civil War book detailing the exploits of our hero.

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

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

## BOOK REVIEW:



### The English Civil Wars 1640-60

By Professor Blair Worden

Weidenfeld & Nicholson;

165 pp; Cloth £12.99



This must have been a difficult book to write, even for one of the doyens of seventeenth century English history. Imagine the instructions from his commissioning editor at Weidenfeld and Nicholson – “OK Blair, that’s a History of the Civil War Period 1640-60, for the intelligent general reader, but assuming no close knowledge of the period, so it will have to include a lot of narrative, and there’s no room for notes or references because it’s all got to be done in 50,000 words.” “Can I at least have an index?”, “OK - but nine pages max.”

I am not so sure that Professor Worden ever really overcomes the stifling need to compress and simplify. As a result, and notwithstanding the debate that the book sparked off in the letters pages of the London Review of Books, I don’t think he expresses a wholly coherent point of view. On page 1, we are told that “The political upheaval of the mid-seventeenth century has no parallel in English history...no other forcible convulsion... has been so far-reaching, or has disrupted so many lives for so long.” But by the end, he’s not so sure, wondering whether the Restoration didn’t mean that the real revolution was in fact 1688-9. He finishes the book with Dryden’s famous aphorism “Thy wars brought nothing about”.

I think the last chapter is a shame – up to that point, the book has largely succeeded in providing a well written, punchy narrative of events, at least up until the regicide in 1649. It is, in truth, very hard to make the Interregnum period seem coherent. In addition, I think Worden makes it pretty clear that the Civil War period was hugely important, in advancing the whole debate about political and religious freedom, and the nature of sovereignty and government. Yes, the Restoration took place: yes, you could argue that Anglicanism triumphed over Puritanism, but in each case these successes were on wholly different terms to those of the 1620’s and 1630’s, because of the thoughts and actions of the key players during the 1640-60 crisis.

The limitations of space, and the absence of notes and references, mean that Worden asserts plenty of things he doesn’t back up (e.g. Puritanism’s millenarian tendency), and leaves many important questions unanswered: for example, in 1641 why did Charles not seek to disengage the ends from the means in his attempts to reach a compromise with Parliament; and how was it that the New Model Army came to wield such huge political power from 1646 onwards? Against this, there is a really good outline of the entropic way that the crisis developed, with several forces colliding to deliver a chaos for which neither King nor Parliament was at all ready. Once Parliament had moved to fill the vacuum in sovereignty created by its direct challenge to the King, we have to agree with Worden that things could never be the same again.

This is not a great book for Hampdenites. He only gets four mentions, and in the first of these (p25, ref the Ship Money crisis), he is introduced as “the Buckinghamshire gentleman John Hampden”, although later on, Worden remarks how the deaths of Pym and Hampden in 1643 “accentuated [Parliament’s]...problem of authority”, with Oliver St John lacking “Pym’s or Hampden’s stature”. I don’t think Worden thinks badly of our hero, it’s just that facing a huge subject, and limited space, he doesn’t have time to linger.

If I were reviewing this book for a general readership, I would be recommending it strongly, because it sheds much light on a complex period, and does so in a clear style that is easy to read. For a specialist audience, I think it could prove frustrating. Worden doesn’t have the space to develop his arguments, and display his evidence; and he gives JH rather short shrift!

**Allan Wright**

July 2009

## AN INVITATION TO VISIT PORT ELIOT, CORNWALL IN 2010



Jo Buchanan, the events co-ordinator at Port Eliot, has emailed the Society to confirm that the house is open from March 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, every day except Fridays. Opening times are 2.00pm to 6.00pm (last admission at 5.00pm). The famous Robert Walker portrait of John Hampden, dated 1643, is on view in the upper lobby. More information is available at [www.porteliot.co.uk](http://www.porteliot.co.uk)

Port Eliot has the rare distinction of being a Grade I Listed house with a Grade I listed park and garden. This is due in part to Sir John Soane’s work on the house, and the work of his contemporary Humphrey Repton, who created the park and gardens. The house has 11 staircases, 15 back doors and 82 chimneys. The roof covers half an acre and has not, according to the present Earl of St Germans, been completely watertight in living memory. The Earl is a descendant of Sir John Eliot, Hampden’s friend and political ally. Members who have visited the house can confirm that the contents of the house, accumulated by the Earl’s ancestors over 400 years, have to be seen to be believed.

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