



THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

No. 64 - Autumn 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

A FULL HOUSE AT GREAT HAMPDEN

The Society experienced a triumphal return to Hampden House on the afternoon of Sunday 3rd October for the *Tea and Talk*. Gillian Goodall's organisational and publicity skills ensured a successful event and a large turnout of over eighty members and guests. The weather was kind to us and those who wished to do so were able to wander in the grounds of the house and visit the church that had kindly been opened up for us.



The Great Hall, Hampden House

The main event of the afternoon was a talk by Simon Marsh and Stephen Porter on the battles of Brentford and Turnham Green. The talk drew on material in the speakers' newly published book *The Battle for London*, reviewed later in this newsletter. For many in the audience the talk was a revelation. The story of the battles is, sadly, not well known. The Society is, however, committed to ensuring that there is a wider appreciation of these battles and Hampden's important role in both of them. The speakers will be leading walks on the battlefields on the 7th November. (see 'Diary Dates')

Roy Bailey gave a hearty vote of thanks to the two speakers, to Gillian and John Goodall for organising the event, and to Tim Oliver for allowing the Society's members to use the Great Hall and to have access to other rooms in the house for the light tea that followed. It was heartening to see so many new faces and to listen to the animated conversations that accompanied the consumption of the tea and cakes.



Hampden House



St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden

The star of the show was, of course, Hampden House, with its rich patina of historical associations and its eclectic mix of architectural styles. The house and gardens looked wonderful in the golden glow of Autumn. Several members expressed the view that we should not wait too long before returning once again.

Finally, it would be churlish not mention Derek Lester's sterling work in the church. He provided an enthralled audience with an ad hoc account of the conflicting stories surrounding the cause of Hampden's mortal wounds and the site of his final resting place beneath the floor of the church.

Sam Hearn



THE FLIGHT OF THE FIVE MEMBERS

Members will be aware of the picture of Charles I attempting to arrest the Five Members in the House of Commons in 1642, which is on our website. However, another one of the same incident has come to light.

In February 2008 I had a meeting with my MP, Richard Benyon, at the Palace of Westminster. Knowing my interest in John Hampden he told me that there was a picture in one of the corridors of the Five Members. This was not, apparently, the same as the familiar one.

Initial enquiries went unanswered, but eventually I acquired a link to the Art In Parliament website and a quick search revealed a painting executed in 1915 by John Seymour Lucas. This shows the accused members about to board a boat for their flight down river to refuge in the City of London.

There is no identification of the Five Members in the painting, but I sincerely hope that the quiet, dignified figure on the right in the tall black hat is meant to be John Hampden, and not the pompous figure at the top of the steps who appears to be reluctant to get into the boat. Perhaps this is meant to be William Strode, who was reluctant to leave the Commons chamber and had to be dragged away!

Strangely enough, the more familiar picture mentioned above doesn't appear to be in the Parliamentary archives.

As a registered charity the Society now has a licence to use Parliamentary copyright material for *The Patriot*, the website, and the exhibition, so we may find some more useful and informative material.

- Another hitherto unknown painting featuring John Hampden has come to light, and we hope to feature this in the next issue.

Roy Bailey

SOCIETY THANKS

The decision was taken, at a recent meeting of the Executive Committee, that the Society should show appreciation for all the help and support received from Society member, Sarah Barrington, prior to her departure from The Spread Eagle Hotel.

It is due to her help that the Annual Dinner, held each June, has come to be such a popular event, and Sarah was always quick to offer, at no charge, a venue for executive committee meetings. It was decided that the best way to express our thanks would be to offer her honorary membership of the Society, and it is with much pleasure that we can announce that Sarah has accepted our offer.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

We are pleased to report good news in respect of Roger Paynter, following his coronary earlier in the summer, which necessitated by-pass surgery. We have now heard that Roger is feeling more like his old self and hopes to be able to return to membership duties fairly soon.

This is a great relief to us all and the best wishes of the Society are sent to Roger with the hope that his recovery will continue apace. However, it is stressed that he must not consider taking up the reins again until he is really back to full health.

GRATEFUL THANKS

At the Tea and Talk at Hampden House on 6th October I was approached by someone whose face I can remember but whose name I have forgotten.

He mentioned an article I wrote in *'The Patriot'* no. 29 about the supposed death of John Hampden's eldest son in a skirmish at Chenes Manor in late 1642.

This kind soul told me that he had a programme from the Sealed Knot's re-enactment at the Manor in July 1970 which mentions the story, and that he would send me a copy. When it arrived, however, it proved to be an original - and very interesting, too.

The programme states that, 'the house was, by a very credible tradition, garrisoned by the Parliamentary Army, and a skirmish took place there in 1642' and further states, 'here in a combat whose details are obscured in the mists of time, a son of the great patriot John Hampden, a captain in his father's regiment, was slain'.

The programme of the Knot's version of the siege has Captain Hampden in charge of the detachment, but later mortally wounded in a sortie.

I am obliged to acknowledge the sender of this programme through this medium because he neglected to enclose any name or address and the postmark was obscured, so I have absolutely no idea who the Good Samaritan is.

But thank you, anyway.

Roy Bailey

• A full version of the article mentioned is on the Society's website at www.johnhampden.org/jhjn.pdf.



DIARY DATES

2010/11

Sunday 7 November

Battlefield Walks - Brentford and Turnham Green. To be led by Stephen Porter and Simon Marsh. Meet at Brentford Magistrates Court, 11 am; Turnham Green Tube Station, 2 pm.

Chiltern Brewery visit

It is hoped that the Society will be making an overdue return visit to The Chiltern Brewery during February. This visit will include a talk and lunch, and once finalised, further details will be notified to members.

AGM

This is scheduled to take place on 9 April 2011. Further details are set out on the back page.

Annual Dinner

The date for this annual event has been set for Saturday 18th June - venue to be announced nearer the time.

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

BOOK REVIEW

The Battle for London
by Stephen Porter and Simon Marsh.
ISBN 978-1-84868-847-6

146 pages plus 43 illustrations including 10 colour prints.

Published, in hardback, by Amberley Publishing in 2010.

A book that has been eagerly awaited by many members of the Society. Some of us know the authors well having had the pleasure of working with them on the successful HLF funded project to mark the battlefields at Brentford and Turnham Green in west London.

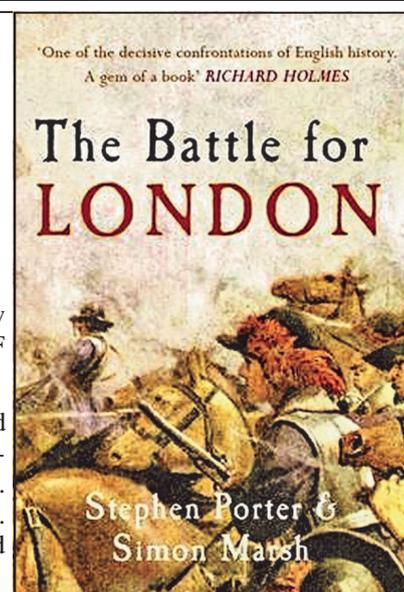
This book is a thorough account of the battles at Brentford and Turnham Green that occurred on successive days in November 1643. But it is more than just a narrative of military manoeuvres. It also explains the battles' political and military context and reassesses their significance. Strangely, many historians have either ignored or played down the importance of these battles. This book is a long overdue corrective that draws on both extensive new research and a re-examination of previously held assumptions and conclusions.

Society members will be interested to read that the authors believe that the involvement of Hampden and his regiment at the end of the battle of Brentford was longer, more extensive and bloodier than previously thought. Without Hampden's timely and decisive intervention the road to London would have been open and events might have unfolded very differently.

Military historian and TV personality Richard Holmes says of the battles that they were "one of the decisive confrontations of English history" and that this publication is "a gem of a book".

Stephen Porter: Author of eight books on London's history, including *The Great Fire of London*. He is a member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Historical Society. He now lives in Stratford upon Avon.

Simon Marsh: A Civil Servant with a strong interest in the military aspects of the Civil War, he is an active member of the Battlefields Trust and is Chairman of its Mercia Region. He now lives in Princes Risborough.



Sam Hearn

RESPECTED ROYALISTS

Our admiration for John Hampden and his Parliamentary colleagues sometimes leads us to forget that there were many admirable men on the other side who are worthy of our respect. They were guilty only of making a different choice from their opponents; in many cases loyalty forced them to choose their side. This is what I hope will be the first of a series of brief portraits of some of these paladins, and I start with a soldier who is one of my favourites.

Sir Jacob Astley, first Baron Astley of Reading

(1579 - 1652)

Jacob Astley was born at Melton Constable in Norfolk, and volunteered for military service with the Earl of Essex at the age of 18. From then on he was almost continually involved in the wars on the continent; firstly under Prince Maurice of Nassau in the Spanish Netherlands and later in the service of the exiled Elizabeth of Bohemia, daughter of James I. Because of his small stature she referred to him as 'honest little Jacob', or 'little monkey', and it is said that he gave military instruction to the Queen's son, Prince Rupert.



Astley was knighted by King James in 1624, and when the Scottish wars broke out in 1638 he was appointed sergeant-major general by Charles I. At the outbreak of civil war he chose the Royalist side, unlike his Norfolk cousins, and his was one of the first commissions granted by Charles. By Edgehill he was in command of some 10,000 infantry, and it was here that, famously, just before the battle he knelt and prayed, 'O Lord! thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget thee, do not thou forget me ... March on, boys!' - demonstrating both a simple piety and a shrewd awareness of military necessity.

When Oxford became the Royalist headquarters Astley was appointed governor and a member of the King's Council of War, and was created Baron Astley of Reading in November 1644. He fought at Reading, the siege of Gloucester, First Newbury, the siege of Lostwithiel, Second Newbury and Naseby. His final battle was at Stow-on-the-Wold in March 1646, where he was defeated and captured by a much stronger Parliamentary force. Seated on a drum head surrounded by his captors he said, 'Well, boys, you have now done your work and may go play, lest ye fall out amongst yourselves' - an uncannily accurate prophecy.

After a period of imprisonment, Jacob Astley spent his later years living in Kent. He died on 27 February 1652 and is buried in Maidstone church. In his entry for Astley in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Ian Roy writes:

'He occupied for the royalists a role similar to that of Philip Skippon, another Norfolk man, for parliament: they were both veteran infantrymen, trained in the Dutch school, largely non-political but unswerving in devotion to their respective causes. Honest, trustworthy, and God-fearing, they inspired loyalty in their subordinates, won the respect of their enemies, recruited converts, and rose above the petty squabbles which marked the progress of their parties during the war.'

Not a bad epitaph for The Winter Queen's 'little monkey'.

Roy Bailey

• If you have any nominations for inclusion in this series, or would like to contribute an article on your favourite Royalist, please contact the Editor.

AGM Saturday 9th April 2011

The AGM next year will be held at the John Hampden Hall, High Street, Chalgrove, Oxon. OX44 7SS at 2.00 pm for 2.30. At a suitable time complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits will be served and later a short talk about Chalgrove in the Civil War. Prior to the meeting a number of activities have been arranged for those who wish to enjoy a full day; see below.

Meet at 10.30am in the car park of St Mary's Church, Church Lane, Chalgrove, OX44 7ST where you will be greeted by Derek Lester. The Church has world renowned wall paintings encircling the chancel. Bob Heath-Whyte will lead an authoritative talk describing their historical significance, for which there will be a small charge for the Church funds. He will also offer his book *An Illustrated Guide to the Medieval Wall Paintings*, for £10. It is well worth the money.

At around 11.30am the party will venture to John Hampden's Monument, Monument Road, Chalgrove OX44 7RW. Derek Lester will impart his knowledge to date regarding events concerning the edifice.

At around 12.30pm those who wish can visit **The Red Lion** or **The Lamb** for lunch. Booking for either venue is advised. www.redlionchalgrove.co.uk or phone 01865 890625. Ian or Des at The Lamb, Mill Lane OX44 7SL, 01865 890295 will be pleased to take your booking. Both serve excellent food.

Those who wish an overnight stay in Chalgrove can call Margaret Duxbury on 01865 890298, a friend of mine and Tourist Board accredited B & B. She has two double rooms at modest prices, so book early to avoid disappointment. When booking mention that you are John Hampden Society members.

Please acknowledge as soon as possible to Derek Lester or 01865 890451 your intentions of taking advantage of the above itinerary or for further information.

Derek Lester

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The John Hampden Society
Little Hampden, Cryers Hill
High Wycombe, Bucks HP15 6JS
Tel: 07543 054335
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Tel: 01865 400040