



# THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

No. 69 - Winter 2011/2012



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 MODEST PROPOSAL FOR 2013

At the AGM in April members will be asked to vote on a proposal from the Executive Committee that all membership subscriptions should increase from January 2013. This will be the first increase for a decade and only the second since the Society was formed in 1992.

The main changes proposed will see the single membership rate rising from £10 to £12.50 a year for those receiving the quarterly newsletter by email, and to £13.50 for those who have the newsletter posted to them. For joint members the proposed increase is from £15 to £17.50 and £18.50 for those receiving the newsletter by post. Full details will be sent to members with the papers for the AGM.

We plan to change the Society's bankers in the near future and members will therefore need to alter their bank standing order arrangements before January 2013. Forms will be provided. Your cooperation in making the necessary adjustments in a timely manner will be much appreciated by the Membership Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer. The change in bankers should increase the amount that the Society can earn on any funds that it invests.

The additional income from subscriptions will, if the proposal is agreed, pay for increases in administrative costs and for running events that will both attract new members and raise the profile of the Society and its activities. Benchmarking exercises by the Executive have revealed that compared to similar organisations our membership subscription rates are now exceptionally low, or if you prefer really good value!

Please do not hesitate to contact either me or the Honorary Treasurer, Derek Lester, if you would like more information or if you believe that the changes will cause you particular problems. Your Executive Committee welcomes any suggestions on how to improve benefits to members, increase income and keep costs under control.

**Sam Hearn – Chairman**

## THE HAMPDEN CABINET

Further investigation into the fascinating Suffolk cabinet, featured in *The Patriot* no. 66, has proved disappointing to those of us who hoped that it would turn out to be a genuine piece of Hampden memorabilia.

In May last year Maurice Kirtland showed some of the photographs of the cabinet to a furniture expert at a Bonhams valuation day in Henley. The opinion, based on the construction and the design of the lock, was that it is a 19<sup>th</sup> century (circa 1840-1870) copy of a 17<sup>th</sup> century court cupboard. It did not have the overall aged look of a genuine 17<sup>th</sup> century piece.

It was suggested that this cupboard could have been made at the time of the unveiling of the Chalgrove monument (1843) as a dedication to John Hampden by someone who was associated with the monument, maybe a member of the Hampden family or Lord Nugent himself.



A disappointing verdict on such an interesting artefact, but it does suggest that there may have been an original - or a drawing of an original - from which this was copied. It doesn't explain the enigmatic date of 1623, which appears in several places on the carved front.

**Roy Bailey**



# THE ELIZABETH SYMEON MEMORIAL



Great Hampden Parochial Church Council recently commissioned Cliveden Conservation Workshop Ltd to carry out urgent conservation work on the memorial to Elizabeth Symeon on the south wall of Great Hampden church.

There was a danger that the whole memorial, which is made of Purbeck marble, would come away from the wall, so a breathing channel was carved around the outside and six bronze cramps inserted in the

wall to reduce the risk of any further detachment.

Cliveden Conservation, who are based at the Cliveden Estate at Taplow, report that cutting the channel around the memorial was extremely difficult due to the extremely hard nature of the flint used to construct the wall. They also had problems with the hard but brittle nature of what appeared to be a layer of neat cement covering the wall. This suggests some 'bodging' in more recent times.

The memorial was made in 1639 by Nicholas Stone and erected by John Hampden in memory of his wife Elizabeth, who had died in 1634. It is thought that it would have originally been laid into a floor. The central area has at some point had another piece of inscribed Purbeck marble inserted, which appears to contain an amended version of the first seven lines of the dedication. The whole memorial is surmounted by a limestone pediment with the arms of Hampden and Symeon on a cartouche.



The conservators recommend the removal of two unattractive cement repairs on the bottom corners of the memorial, and cleaning.

- It seems that this has been a problem for some years. In *The Patriot* no. 2 (Spring 1993) we reported how, at the Society's inauguration the previous October, similar problems with the two memorials on the north wall of the church were flagged up, and the

influence and efforts of the Earl of Buckinghamshire and the Hon. Ian Hope-Morley resulted in the required £14,500 being quickly raised. The front-page article went on to say, 'It is very gratifying to think that *The John Hampden Society*, by its very existence, has been instrumental in helping this very necessary work, but we should not rest on our laurels. The inscription on the large memorial on the other side of the chancel, erected by John Hampden in memory of his first wife Elizabeth, is also affected by damp ...'

**Roy Bailey**



## DIARY DATES

### 2012

#### Thursday 23 February

Executive Committee meeting starting at 7 pm at [The Wheel](#), Naphill.

#### Saturday 14 April

AGM to be held at [Broughton Castle](#), to include Castle tour and talk by Dr. Vivienne Larminie. Meet at 1.30 pm at the Castle.

#### Thursday 19 April

A talk by John Hampden Society member Marion Wierszcki about the Girls' Grammar School at [Thame Museum](#), 9 High Street, Thame, Oxon OX9 3AE, commencing at 7.30 pm.

#### Thursday 17 May

A talk by the Society's Chairman, Samuel Hearn, entitled *Sybil Penn, dry nurse to Henry VIII*, at [Thame Museum](#), 9 High Street, Thame, Oxon OX9 3AE, commencing at 7.30 pm.

**Admission charge for either of these talks is £5. Tickets can be purchased from the Museum or reserved by phone on 01844 212801.**

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)

## **AGM - 14<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2012**

**Don't miss this excellent opportunity to combine business with pleasure. Broughton Castle is well worth a visit and a private tour of the castle, which is steeped in history and boasts connections with John Hampden, is a delightful experience.**

**Add to this the opportunity to attend the Society's AGM, enjoy a talk by Dr Vivienne Larminie, followed by tea and you must agree that it is set to be an enjoyable day.**

**If you need a lift please contact me and I will endeavour to arrange this.**

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# 'He serves all, who dares be free' \*

## by Rev Colin Cartwright



When I first started to research the 'Votes for Women' cause in Buckinghamshire, I had not expected to come across so many references to John Hampden. However, the educated suffragettes of this movement not only had a keen nose for injustice, but they also had a thorough knowledge of British history. Given that the Patriot was such a significant figure in the Victorian pantheon of historic British worthies, it is not surprising that John Hampden was such a popular touchstone in their own struggle against unrepresentative government and unfair taxation. These women were being expected to pay taxes without having a say in how this money was being spent. No wonder their stand could be presented, not as law-breaking but as law-making; as a patriotic fight against injustice and a defence of democratic principle.

No wonder then that, when Women's Tax Resistance League (WTRL) was first formed in October 1909, there was a prompt response to the appeal for tax resisters.

No wonder then that it became quite fashionable to make pilgrimage to key John Hampden sites. Second in command to Mrs. Pankhurst, Mrs. Emmeline Pethwick-Lawrence visited the Chalgrove battle monument in October 1910. Editor of *Votes for Women*, Mrs. Pethwick-Lawrence went directly from Chalgrove to address the first autumn meeting of the Women's Social and Political Union in the Queens Hall, London. Quoting the Hampden family motto, she

called for, 'A Bonfire of the Tax Papers'.

No wonder that the Australian suffragette, Miss Muriel Matters, undertook a caravan tour of 'Hampden's county' in the summer of 1911, including Great Kimble.

Wendover was one particular tax resistance hotspot. *The Red Lion* pub, standing in the town in Hampden's day, provided the venue for a distraint of goods of local resident Mrs. Hamilton in both 1911 and 1912. One of the leaders of the WTRL played the John Hampden card skillfully at the 1911 meeting, and no objections were raised to the call for others to take up this form of protest. Many similar distraints of goods were held, followed by protest meetings and marches. In one case, a cow was sold in Henley-on-Thames in 1912, the property of a Miss Lelacheur.

Another tax protest hotspot was Hastings, perhaps thanks to the involvement of the daughter of Frederick Hobart-Hampden, Lady Isabel Margesson, in the WTRL branch there.

But arguably the most significant point in the WTRL's identification with John Hampden came fittingly in Aylesbury in 1912, at the unveiling of his statue there (*above*). Originally thwarted by the town council, the women tax resisters were ultimately able to present their wreath, which honoured the four local women who joined Hampden's original protest. On that day the women were able to sell all 200 copies of the booklet telling John Hampden's story. Written by Mrs. Darent Harrison of Hastings WTRL, the source material for the booklet was most likely provided by Lady Margesson herself.

Thanks to Anthea Coles' transcribing skills, this booklet, obtained from the Women's Library, is now available for renewed study, and thanks to the generosity of the John Hampden Society, a booklet of six heritage trails will be available in March from JHS. This includes two trails with particular relevance to John Hampden's story: a 3 mile town trail around Aylesbury and a 12-mile cross-country circular trail from Wendover.

Personally, I hope in a small way to fulfill the wish expressed by Lord Russell at the John Hampden Dinner at the Hotel Cecil in December 1911. He said, "I hope it will not be long before the pioneers of the suffrage movement are honoured as John Hampden is today". It would be especially good if both the original tax resister and the suffragettes who followed, could be honoured in our generation. This would be a fitting way to celebrate our democracy and our right to political protest. Anyone interested in discovering more, can pre-order a copy of my book, *Burning to Get the Vote: The Women's Suffrage Movement in Central Buckinghamshire, 1904-1914*. This is due to be published in 2013. Pre-ordered copies attract a 20% discount (£12 instead of £15 RRP). To order or find out more, contact Colin Cartwright: [colin@chesham4fairtrade.co.uk](mailto:colin@chesham4fairtrade.co.uk) / 01494 775651.

\* My title is taken from the slogan proudly displayed beneath a picture of John Hampden on a banner of the Mid-Bucks branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. I would be interested to hear from any reader who knows the original source of this quote.



## THINKING CAPS ON!

We hope to meet these gentlemen on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April at Broughton Castle during the AGM.

They probably had associations with John Hampden in the 1630s, but who are they?

Your answers to Derek Lester at: [dereklester@waitrose.com](mailto:dereklester@waitrose.com) or 01856 890451.



## RESPECTED ROYALISTS

### Sir Edmund Verney

(1590-1642)



The life of Sir Edmund Verney graphically demonstrates the tug of conflicting loyalties and family divisions which affected many Englishmen in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in London, second son of Sir Edmund Verney and Mary Blakeney, and was a descendant of Sir Ralph Verney, who had been Lord Mayor of London in 1465. The young Verney studied briefly at St Alban Hall, Oxford in 1603-4, and visited the French and Italian courts. In 1611 he was knighted by James I and sent to Madrid, from where he returned as ‘an accomplished gentleman’ to join the household of Henry, Prince of Wales.

After Henry’s untimely death in 1612, Verney was appointed a gentleman of the privy chamber to Prince Charles; a connection that engendered deep loyalty in the young courtier but did not produce the expected monetary benefits. Verney’s financial sense was poor; following his marriage to Margaret Denton in 1612 he paid almost £4,000 for the surrender of the lease of the ancestral home at Middle Claydon although it had only 15 years to run. Several later business ventures failed and he was never out of debt.

In 1623 Verney went with Charles and the Duke of Buckingham to Madrid

to negotiate the marriage of the prince with the Infanta Maria. There Verney proved his Protestant credentials by protecting a dying Englishman from the attentions of a Catholic priest by punching the latter in the face. This did not endear him to the Spaniards. Verney also gave Charles an expensive jewel which helped the prince to extricate himself from the Spanish alliance.

On the accession of Charles in 1625 Verney was made knight marshal for life, with responsibility to preserve order within 12 miles of the court. He also entered Parliament and was later the member for Chipping Wycombe in both the Short and Long Parliaments. Here he sat with his eldest son Ralph. They were both committed Protestants who disliked the practices of Archbishop Laud and opposed the King’s policies. Verney said, “I do not like the quarrel, and do heartily wish that the King would yield and consent to what they desire, so that my conscience is only concerned in honour and in gratitude to follow my master. I have eaten his bread, and served him near thirty years, and will not do so base a thing as to forsake him; and choose rather to lose my life - which I am sure to do - to preserve and defend those things which are against my conscience to preserve and defend: for I will deal freely with you - I have no reverence for bishops for whom this quarrel subsists”.



Yet when the civil war broke out Verney raised the royal standard at Nottingham and accompanied the King. His younger sons Henry, Edmund and Thomas all served in the Royal army, but Ralph supported Parliament, and the family division was one of the most poignant of the conflict.

Edmund Verney’s prediction was only too accurate. He was killed defending the royal standard at the battle of Edgehill in October 1642. He fought fiercely and on being surrounded and offered his life if he surrendered the standard, answered that his life was his own, but the standard was his and their sovereign’s, and he would not deliver it while he lived. Of his body only his hand, bearing a distinctive ring, was found, and this was taken back to Claydon for burial. It is said that at dusk, on the anniversary of his death every year, an apparition of the battle itself appears on the lawns of the great house.

Like John Hampden, Sir Edmund Verney died for his beliefs; in his case loyalty. He was described as, ‘one of the strictness of a Puritan, of the charity of a papist, of the civility of an Englishman’. His son Ralph was equally

admirable, preferring exile rather than sign the Solemn League and Covenant. Despite their differences, Ralph never lost his love and respect for his father, and on return from exile erected this magnificent memorial to his parents in Middle Claydon church.

**Roy Bailey**

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