



# THE PATRIOT

Quarterly Newsletter of the John Hampden Society  
No. 22 - Summer 1998



## IS THIS JOHN HAMPDEN'S ELDEST SON?

by

Roy Bailey - Hon. Secretary

**A half-forgotten discovery may have uncovered part of the mystery of John Hampden's eldest son.**

All accounts of Hampden's life mention that the eldest of his 9 children was a son, John, who was born around 1621 and was killed early on in the Civil Wars. Some writers have suggested that he was a captain in his father's regiment of foot, but a recent study of Hampden's Greencoats does not list him (see 'Greencoats' History' - page 3).

However, in his 1976 biography of the Patriot, Dr John Adair states that the young Hampden probably served as a gentleman volunteer in Col. Denzil Holles' Redcoat regiment.

No other information concerning this missing Hampden has ever come to light, but when I was researching John Hampden in the Bodleian Library in Oxford about 30 years ago, I discovered a reference to the name in the parish register of Fritwell, which is between Banbury and Bicester. This contained an entry for the baptism of a John, son of John Hampden, in the 1620s

For some reason I failed to make a proper note of the details and the reference number, and when I took up my research again after a number of years, I could not find the entry in question.

I had actually begun to believe that I had dreamed or imagined the whole thing, until this year. During a meeting with Alan Creek of Netindex, who produce the Aylesbury and the Vale web pages on the Internet, he gave me a leaflet about the Buckinghamshire Genealogical Society, whose Secretary, Eve McLaughlin, lives at Haddenham, near Thame.

As there is currently interest among some of our members about their possible descent from John Hampden, especially those in the Barbados line, I arranged with Mrs McLaughlin to call and have a look at her

copy of the Hampden family tree when I was next in the area, in the hope that it might be more extensive than others I had seen.

It certainly was, and we spent some time discussing the various aspects of it. Needless to say, John Hampden Jr. was listed on it as having been born in 1621, and I told Mrs McLaughlin the story of my missing research material.

"Oh, I have most Oxfordshire parish registers on microfiche", she replied, and sure enough, Fritwell was among them. There was a wait of what seemed like hours while she loaded the relevant sheet of film into the reader, and then - bingo!

Under 'Baptisms' was the following entry:

1623	
Sep	17
Nov	6
March	15
	17

KILBEE Ann d. Robt  
HAMPDEN Jhon s. Mr. Jhon, born Oct 23  
HUBCROFT Francis s. William  
FOX Mathew s. Thomas

just as I remember seeing it in the Bodleian many years earlier.

Mrs McLaughlin kindly gave me a print-out of the page, and I later discovered why I could not subsequently find the information in the Bodleian. All Oxfordshire parish registers have been moved to the County Council archives in Westgate Street.

The re-discovery poses as many questions as it answers. Despite the common 17th century misspelling of the name, does this baptismal entry refer to the eldest son of John Hampden the Patriot and, if so, why was he born and baptised in this particular village?

Hampden certainly owned land in Oxfordshire, though none at Fritwell. In 1623 the two manors in Fritwell were owned by George Yorke and Richard Fermor - neither of whom appears to have had any connection with Hampden.

Were John Hampden and his wife Elizabeth travelling when she suddenly went into labour and needed to stop for the child's birth? If so, where did they stay, if not with the local landowners? If the child was premature this might explain the 14-day gap between the birth and baptism, and the fact that the latter occurred away from the ancestral home at Great Hampden.

If the mother was unwell and the child not expected to live, it would be normal for an emergency baptism to take place immediately, and a more formal one later. Perhaps after a fortnight Elizabeth Hampden was still too ill to travel, and it was decided to hold the formal ceremony where they were.

There is no question that this entry refers to a member of the gentry, and not to one of the local villagers. It is the only one on that particular page where the father's name is prefixed with the

title 'Mr', and where the child's date of birth is given.

The Hampden pedigree does not list another member called John at this time, and although it is possible, given the great age of the family, that there could have been another John Hampden around who was so distantly related as not to be included on the family tree, it seems too much of a co-incidence.

All the evidence suggests that this is the Patriot's eldest son, and the slightly later date of birth would still mean that he was nearly 19 at the outbreak of the Civil Wars, and old enough to serve in some regiment, if not his father's.

Until someone proves conclusively to the contrary, we must assume that we have fitted another piece into the John Hampden jigsaw.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The sixth Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Hampden House on Saturday 18 April 1998, and was less well attended than in the past, with only 24 members present.

Before proceedings commenced, a one-minute silence was observed in memory of Lord Donaldson, Bishop Dick Watson and George Moris, whose deaths had all occurred in the past year.

Honorary Secretary **Roy Bailey** reviewed the previous year, the highlights of which were John Hampden Week in Thame, the 5th Anniversary Lunch, and the full establishment of the Society's web site. This year would see the Annual Dinner (for which there was, as yet, no speaker), a proposed function at the Chiltern Brewery, and a possible dinner at John Hampden's former college, Magdalen in Oxford.

Presenting the Honorary Treasurer's report, **Mrs Rosalie Gibson** said that the Society had had a busy year financially, with the publication of 'John Hampden of Buckinghamshire - The People's Hero' and the colour postcards. Although the annual accounts showed a small deficit, the Society holds a considerable amount of stock, all paid for, and therefore **Mrs Gibson** recommended that annual subscriptions remain unchanged.

**Graham Barfield** reported that 'John Hampden of Buckinghamshire' had now covered its costs and he would shortly be embarking on an extensive marketing exercise to sell it.

Membership Secretary **Miss Elizabeth Morris** reported that membership currently stood at 139, of which 16 were life members and 2 honorary. Of the remainder, 93 renewed each year by standing order, proving its value.

There were no amendments to the constitution, and the following officers were elected:

**The Hon. Ian Hope-Morley** (Chairman), **Roy Bailey** (Hon. Secretary), **Mrs Rosalie Gibson** (Hon. Treasurer), **Miss Elizabeth Morris** (Membership Secretary), **Graham Barfield**, **Mrs Anthea Coles**, **Mrs Gillian Goodall**, **John Goodall**, **Maurice Kirtland**,

**Derek Lester** and **Mrs Marion Wierszycki**. **Tim Oliver** had decided not to stand for membership of the committee, and the meeting passed a vote of thanks for him for all the help he has given the Society since its formation.

A number of suggestions for events and activities were made during Any Other Business. **Dennis Hargreaves** mentioned that Great Hampden are holding a Festival on 10/11 October this year to raise funds for the Millennium, and suggested that the Society participate. This was considered a good idea.

**Derek Lester** is hoping to produce two descriptive plaques; one for the now illegible inscriptions on the Hampden tombs in St. Mary Magdalene church, and a free-standing one at Chalgrove, describing the battle.

**Mrs Gill Blackshaw** undertook to place a wreath on behalf of the Society at the Hampden Monument on 18 June.

**Leonard Barker** suggested that schoolchildren should be targeted with information about John Hampden, as this would lead to better education of the public.

**Mrs Rosalie Gibson** had already suggested, in committee, that the Society's web page be reproduced as a colour booklet, and **Roy Bailey** said he had considered a bound version of all the issues of 'The Patriot' for the Society's 10th anniversary. He also felt that we should be concentrating on academic study, seminars, lectures and publications as a means of furthering our objectives.

**Tim Oliver** asked if there were any copies of John Hampden's speeches in existence, but he did not make any set speeches. It was thought that **Dr Maija Jansson** of Yale University, who is researching the speeches of the Long Parliament, might be able to help.

**Dennis Hargreaves** mentioned that there is a castle in Guernsey which houses a John Hampden museum.

The meeting ended with a tour of Hampden House and tea. The whisky raffle was won by the newest committee member, **John Goodall**.

## ANTIPODEAN ARRIVALS

Our farthest-flung members, **Hugh and Trixie Muldrew** of Hampden, New Zealand, are visiting the UK again this summer as part of a world tour which also takes in Australia, Canada and the USA. As well as touring England by bus and visiting Scotland for the Edinburgh Tattoo, they are planning to spend a couple of nights in Thame sometime between 11 and 22 August

Members may recall that **Mr & Mrs Muldrew** just happened to be in the area in 1993, when there was much activity to mark the 350th anniversary of John Hampden's death. Since then they have maintained their membership of the Society, and were assiduous in helping with the campaign to get Chalgrove on to the Battlefields Register in 1994.

Members of the Society within striking distance of Thame are planning to meet the **Muldrews** there, entertain them, and hear something about their town on the other side of the world which is named after the Patriot. Nothing has yet been organised, but anyone interested in participating in this welcome should contact either the **Hon. Secretary**, **Maurice Kirtland**, or **Mrs Rosalie Gibson** after 1 Aug.



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## AYLESBURY'98

In April of this year The Sealed Knot re-enacted the Battle of Aylesbury, which took place on 1 November 1642.

Apart from its militia, the town had been left largely undefended since the Civil War had started, and John Hampden warned the Earl of Essex of the danger. A body of troops, including some of Hampden's Greencoats, were despatched from Northampton under the command of Sir William Balfour. Hampden himself remained behind with the main body.



In the meantime Prince Rupert had descended on Aylesbury in search of booty to take back to Oxford and, when he heard of the approach of Balfour, marched out of the town and met the Parliamentary force at a ford over the River Thame, later to become Holman's Bridge. The modern roundabout leading to the Waternead estate now occupies the site.

With the help of the Aylesbury militia, who attacked the Royalists from the rear, the Parliamentarians won the day, and a second, more minor skirmish when Rupert returned the following March was dignified with the title of 'The Second Battle of Aylesbury'.

To mark this year's event, The Bucks Herald produced a full-colour, 16-page supplement (above) containing a wealth of interesting material and some superb pictures.

As well as information about the site of the battle and The Sealed Knot, who were mounting it, there are articles about The King's Head Centre, the Hampden statue in Aylesbury Market Place, and (of course) The John Hampden Society.

The only real criticism is that the introductory article makes the inevitable mistake of describing the Parliamentary forces attacking Aylesbury in 1642 as 'Oliver Cromwell's'!

The supplement's editor, Dave Truen, has kindly donated a large number of spare copies to the Society, and our overseas members will each be receiving one with this newsletter. Any UK member who wishes for a copy should send a self-addressed C4 (324 x 229mm) envelope bearing 31p in stamps to the Hon. Secretary.

• The details about the Battle of Aylesbury are taken from an article which was written by Mrs Eve McLaughlin and published in Netindex's monthly online magazine in April.

## ANNUAL DINNER

The Society's fourth Annual Dinner was held at The Spread Eagle Hotel, Thame on Saturday 20 June, and attended by about 30 members. The food was of the usual high standard that we have come to expect here, and the Society would like to thank **Mrs Sarah Barrington** for once again organising the function.

Because it proved impossible to find a guest speaker this year, the after-dinner talk was given by Hon. Secretary **Roy Bailey**. Under the title, 'The Search for John Hampden', **Mr Bailey** explained how he had become interested in John Hampden from a very early age after listening to a 'Childrens' Hour' programme, recounted some of his experiences in researching Hampden's life over the years, and pointed out that so much of it is shrouded in mystery and relies on legend and heresay. He concluded by calling on members of the Society to forward its objectives by engaging in serious research to discover as much as possible about John Hampden and his life.

This call was echoed by **John Goodall** in his vote of thanks to **Mr Bailey**.

**Mrs Barrington** and her husband David have decided to retire from running The Spread Eagle Hotel, and have put it on the market.

## BAYEUX AT BERKHAMSTED

Not relevant to the 17th century, but students of history might like to know that the recently-embroidered missing panel of the Bayeux Tapestry will be on display in Berkhamsted's Civic Centre from 5 to 10 October.

There will also be an illustrated talk about the Tapestry by Jan Messert, the embroiderer, on Tue 6 and Thur 8 Oct in the Town Hall - admission £3.00 each.

Tickets and information can be obtained from:

**Berkhamsted Arts Trust**  
Amberley  
Graemsdyke Road  
Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 3LZ.

## GREENCOATS' HISTORY

A study of the history and composition of 'Collonell John Hambden his Reg' (the original, not **Derek Lester's** lot!), has come into our hands via the indefatigable **Graham Barfield**.

This is a 30,000 word dissertation submitted by Michael Pearson, a student at the University of Wales, in support of a Certificate of Higher Education, and is a remarkably detailed account of Hampden's Greencoats from the time of their formation in 1642 until their incorporation into the New Model Army in 1645. As well as the carefully-researched text, there are maps of campaigns, graphs of company and regimental strength, photocopies of pay warrants from the Earl of Essex, and copious references.

As mentioned in the lead article, the name of John Hampden's eldest son does not appear anywhere in the list of officers, so the tradition that he was a captain in his father's regiment appears to be just that.

Mr Pearson, who was a member of Col. John Hampden's Regt. of the ECWS in the early '80s, hopes to find a publisher for his paper. As this is likely to be of interest to members of this Society and other students of the English Civil War, we shall keep in close touch with the author and report progress.

## NEW VP

The Countess of Buckinghamshire, wife of our Patron, has kindly agreed to become a Vice-President of the Society, in succession to the late Lord Donaldson of Kingsbridge.



Like her husband's illustrious ancestor, **Lady Buckinghamshire** (above) is both a Justice of the Peace and a Deputy Lieutenant of the county, although the chances of her having to lead a detachment of the Greencoats to arrest the Earl of Berkshire are remote!

• The Society's President, **Dr John Adair**, and one of our other Vice-Presidents, **Professor Ian Beckett**, have both finished their terms of service as Trustees of The Battlefields Trust.

## MILLENNIUM MATTERS

As reported in the previous issue of *'The Patriot'*, the Society is committed to participating as fully as possible in the Millennium Celebrations, and we are making plans for an exhibition about John Hampden and the Society in Thame.

We are therefore repeating our call for anyone who has any artefacts or memorabilia relevant to John Hampden and/or the 17th century to get in touch as soon as possible.

It has also been proposed that the Society produce a video about John Hampden.

**The Spread Eagle Hotel**  
THAME  
OXFORDSHIRE  
OX9 2BW  
TELEPHONE (01844) 213661

ACCOMMODATION, RESTAURANT  
& BANQUETING



### 1998

**Sat 11/Sun 12 Oct.** Great Hampden Village Festival.

**Fri 6 Nov.** Talk to Cholesbury-cum-St. Leonards Local History Group at St. Leonards Parish Hall, commencing at 8pm.

### 1999

**Fri 5 Mar.** Talk to Chinnor Historical and Archaeological Society.

## WHERE THERE'S A WILL . . .

**Mrs Lilian Bowler** of Christchurch has spent many years trying to prove her family's descent from John Hampden, and has collected a considerable amount of research material. She has kindly presented the Society with full-size photocopies of the wills of John Hampden, his father William, and his grandfather Griffith.

These will provide a valuable source of information - once we have deciphered the 17th century script! Professor Ian Beckett has undertaken to transcribe one of them, but he is a very busy man and we need volunteers from among the membership to deal with the other two. Contact the Hon. Secretary if you have the necessary skills.

## TOUR DE FORCE

Expatriate Scotsman William Reid of Holmer Green, Bucks, recently embarked on a special cycle ride with a group of like-minded enthusiasts, intending to visit a number of local sites connected with John Hampden.

Starting at Hampden House, the party proposed to proceed via the Ship Money Memorial at Honor End, The Plough Inn at Lower Cadsden, Thame, Chalgrove, Pyrton, Lewknor, Sydenham and Emmington, finishing up at the Moat Farm in the parish of Stoke Mandeville for which John Hampden was assessed 20 shillings Ship Money.

Unfortunately, Mr Reid had no idea of the whereabouts of this farm, and he contacted the Society for information. Red in face, we had to admit to a similar ignorance, as there are a number of Moat Farms in the Chilterns, and a number of places where moats still exist.

However, **Mrs Gillian Goodall** sprang into action and established that it is almost certainly the ancient farmhouse still known by that name which stands about 2 miles east of Hampden House on the edge of the large village of Prestwood.

In return for this information, we asked Mr Reid if he could find out why Hampden Park football ground in Glasgow is so called. There is no record of John Hampden having any contact with that city, although he was one of the Commissioners appointed by Parliament to wait upon King Charles I at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh in 1641.

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# THE DEATH OF JOHN HAMPDEN

by

Dr John Adair

continued from 'The Patriot' No. 21

Hampden died on Saturday June 24<sup>th</sup>, which happened to be his wedding anniversary, and he was buried, probably two days later, at Great Hampden Church, which stands a stone's throw from his manor house high on the escarpment of the Chiltern Hills amid the Buckinghamshire beechwoods.

A gold medal, which bears an engraved portrait of Hampden on the face and a battleaxe on the reverse, with the motto *Inimica Tyrannis* (Enemy of the Tyrant), was struck to commemorate his name. Yet those who were his contemporaries needed 'no medallion to remember him. As late as 1659, Richard Baxter could recall John Hampden as 'having the most universal praise of any gentleman that I remember of that age'.

Much as the Tories revered King Charles as a blessed martyr, so their opponents the Whigs - the political heirs of the 'good old Cause' - looked upon Hampden as their perfect martyr, the man who had laid down his life to preserve the essential liberty of all true Englishmen against the inroads of royal despotism. For his spirit, although usually it remained dormant, was in every English breast. Thomas Gray would see among those 'rude forefathers' in the country churchyard of Stoke Poges

Some village-Hampden,  
that with dauntless breast

The little tyrant of his fields withstood.

This transformation of Hampden into a universal image of the English patriot found its most elegant expression in Macaulay's review of Lord Nugent's biography of John Hampden, a work that was received with such acclaim that it ran through four editions.

George Grenville, Lord Nugent, was a passionate Whig, who sat in Parliament for Aylesbury from 1812 until 1832, and died in 1850. As second son of the first Marquess of Buckingham, Grenville was steeped in the Hampden tradition. Moreover, his connections gave him a rare opportunity. When he heard that the floor of Great Hampden Church was being relaid, he asked his elder brother, the Marquess of Buckingham and patron of the living, for permission to open Hampden's coffin.

The purpose of the disinterment was to establish the exact cause of Hampden's death. Henry James Pye, an undistinguished Poet Laureate, had reproduced in print the following story which purported to have come from the Harley family. Two of the Harleys and a Foley had dined with Sir Robert Pye at Faringdon House in Berkshire. Their host told them that Hampden had died because his pistol burst and shattered his hand in a terrible manner. From his deathbed Hampden sent for Sir Robert Pye, then a young captain of a troop of horse, who had married his daughter Anne when she was seventeen.

When Sir Robert stood by Hampden's bedside, the story continues, the dying man exclaimed, 'Ah, Robin, your unhappy pistol has been my ruin'.

Sir Robert assured Hampden that the brace of pistols he had given him he had bought himself in Paris from an eminent maker, and that he had proved them himself. On examining the other pistol, he found it was loaded to

the muzzle with several charges, owing to the carelessness of the servant who was ordered to see the pistols were loaded every morning, and who had done so without drawing out the previous charge.

In order to disprove this story, Lord Nugent set out from London on Saturday July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1828, accompanied by his friends William James Smith and the Common Serjeant of London, who later became Lord Denman. The party halted at Chalfont to see the church and the house where Milton had once resided, and then journeyed on to Aylesbury where they visited the county gaol.

'Upon that occasion', recalled Smith some thirty-five years later, 'I made my first, and I hope my last, appearance on the treadmill, in company with the future Lord Chief Justice of England'. That evening they stayed at Lilies, Lord Nugent's house.

On Monday morning, they arrived at Great Hampden Church and were met by the rector, Lord Buckingham's steward and a handful of invited guests, servants and grave-diggers. Nugent was in a buoyant mood; he regarded it as a 'foregone conclusion' that the exhumation would disprove the Pye story.

Probably he expected he would find a clearly named coffin in a family vault, with a skeleton inside to corroborate the contemporary newsletter accounts that Hampden had died from enemy bullets that had shattered his shoulder.

From the various reports of the exhumation on July 21<sup>st</sup> we can piece together what actually happened. To begin with, there was no family vault. After examining several of the initials and plates on the coffins under the chancel floor, the party came on one bearing a plate so corroded that the name could not be read, which had originally been covered with wood and velvet.

One account suggests that some thought it to be older in style than those of Hampden's period; but Nugent and his friends resolved to open it. The coffin lay four feet below the surface, on one side of the chancel, probably somewhere close to the wall between the memorial to Elizabeth Hampden and the Communion table.

The parish plumber descended, cut open the lead and peeled it back. Then Nugent took his place in silence and unwrapped the numerous folds of cerecloth, a material impregnated with wax used commonly as a winding-sheet. It was full of sawdust, which had evidently helped to preserve the corpse.

Although the features were somewhat flattened by the pressure of the cloth, Nugent could see the firm white flesh of the face, the blood vessels still etched upon it. The eyes were filmed over, but the teeth looked perfect. The auburn-brown hair hung down some seven or eight inches long, fastened on top with a black ribbon. It came away from the skull when lifted and revealed the worms at work. A small brownish moustache could be seen, and a light stubble on the shaven chin.

As Nugent could not examine the shoulders, the coffin was raised and laid on trestles in the chancel. After measuring the corpse, it was concluded that 'he was five feet nine inches in

height, apparently of great muscular strength, of a vigorous and robust frame; forehead broad and high; the skull altogether well formed, such an one as the imagination could conceive capable of great exploits'.

The body was placed in a sitting position, with a shovel to support the head; and a careful examination of the shoulders revealed no sign of gunshot wounds. In order to satisfy himself, there being no surgeon present, Nugent borrowed Smith's pocket-knife and made several incisions, but found no fracture or displacement. Nugent was evidently disappointed, Smith recalled; for 'he did not care to establish the fact that Hampden's death was occasioned in any other manner than by a shot from the King's troops'. Smith himself had favoured the tradition as related by Sir Robert Pye; and so he examined the hands of the corpse:

'When I took up the right hand it was contained in a sort of funeral glove like a pocket. On raising it I found it was entirely detached from the arm: the bones of the wrist and hand were much displaced, and had evidently been splintered by some violent concussion, only the ends of the fingers were held together by the ligaments. The two bones of the fore-arm for about three inches above the wrist were without flesh or skin, but there were no marks of amputation. The left hand was in a similar glove, but it was firmly attached to the arm, and remained so when the glove was drawn away. There were slight portions of flesh upon the hand; the bones were complete, and still held in their places by the ligaments which supported them.'

Believing that his discovery had confirmed Pye's account, Smith, with the rest of the party, walked from the church early in the afternoon, to a meal in the adjacent manor house. The corpse was left propped up by the shovel, and not re-interred until the following day, having been seen by several hundred sight-seers in the meantime.

Some, like Smith himself, cut off locks of the reddish-brown hair. Two years later, when a writer named Mrs Grote visited the parish, she was able to purchase three or four samples from the sexton and the neighbouring innkeeper's daughter.

Robertson, a servant in Great Hampden House, returning from the exhumation, claimed to have seen a portrait on 'the best staircase' that he recognised as the face in the grave. On being taken down, it was found to have inscribed on the back 'John Hampden, 1640. A present given to Sir William Russell, and afterwards given to John, Lord Russell'.

to be concluded

## BIOGRAPHY

Derek Lester has acquired a copy of Dr John Adair's now rare 1976 biography, *A Life of John Hampden*, which he is happy to pass on to any interested member at cost.

Unfortunately, the cost is £21.

This much sought-after book occasionally pops up at book sales, especially those at Civil War re-enactments, and the Society is interested in acquiring any copies (at cost!) to pass on to members.