



# THE PATRIOT

Quarterly Newsletter of the John Hampden Society  
No. 27 - Winter 1999/2000



The John Hampden Society 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

## LATEST BOOK SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON OLD MYSTERY

The Society is all set to publish its second book about John Hampden.

As reported in the previous issue, **Derek Lester** and **Mrs Gill Blackshaw** have been collaborating on an investigation into the mystery surrounding Hampden's death - and specifically the events of Lord Nugent's infamous exhumation of what he supposed was the Patriot's body in 1828.

The authors have spent a considerable amount of time investigating original documents, and their conclusions may well cause some controversy among professional historians.

One professional historian who approves of their work is our President, **Professor John Adair**, MA, BLitt, PhD, F.R. HistS., who has written the following pre-publication review of the book, which is entitled *The Controversy of John Hampden's Death*:

'By this time Hampden had suffered his fatal wound. A Cavalier trooper had ridden up and shot him from behind with a double-loaded carbine or pistol. The two balls bit deep into the flesh behind his shoulder blade. Shocked and growing weaker as his blood stained his shirt and buff-coat, Hampden found it difficult to stay upright on his horse ...'

Readers of my *Life of John Hampden - The Patriot* may recall that passage. Not long after publication one reader wrote to me challenging that account, claiming that Hampden's fatal wound was caused by an overloaded pistol exploding in his hand. Familiar with that story, in fact I had both considered it and discounted it. But my reader had raised what judges call 'a reasonable

doubt' in my mind. Hence I went back to the sources about it, those known and available to me, and wrote an article in *History Today* covering Lord Nugent's attempted exhumation of John Hampden's

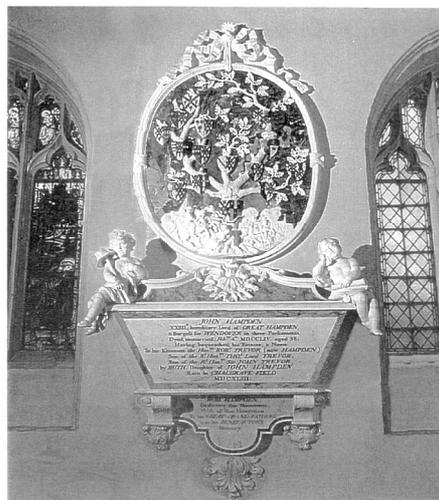
*Hampden's Death*, we have a really thorough and satisfactory account of this most unsatisfactory and yet intriguing episode. The authors have uncovered many more sources than I used in my article, and their discussion of the evidence is both judicious and fair. The writing is vivid, and it makes you think that you were actually there on that July day in 1828. At last the matter can now be safely said to have been resolved. May I add that it is extremely pleasing, speaking as your President, to see two younger members of our John Hampden Society producing such a scholarly yet readable monograph as this one: it is a significant contribution to our studies of the great man and his age. Indeed it reads like a short detective story, so I couldn't put it down.

"Yes?" "Yes what?" "You haven't told us the end. Did they really find John Hampden's body? If so, had his hand been blown off?" "No, I didn't tell you that - but why spoil a good story? For a modest sum you can find out the answer!"

The modest sum referred to by **Professor Adair** will be £3.50 plus postage & packing (50p in the British Isles; 75p overseas) when the book, which now has a full colour cover (*illustrated*) and runs to about 36 pages, is published shortly.

Members of the Society, both home and overseas, can obtain pre-publication copies at the same price but post free up to 31 March. Send your order (quoting your membership number) and remittance, made out to 'The John Hampden Society', to 8 Margaret Close, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1PZ.

### THE CONTROVERSY OF JOHN HAMPDEN'S DEATH



DEREK LESTER & GILL BLACKSHAW

body. This he undertook to establish beyond shadow of doubt the exact cause of Hampden's death. I cannot pretend it totally cleared up the matter in my mind. The whole affair was so confused and botched that I wasn't convinced that it established the 'exploding pistol' story. Was I wrong?

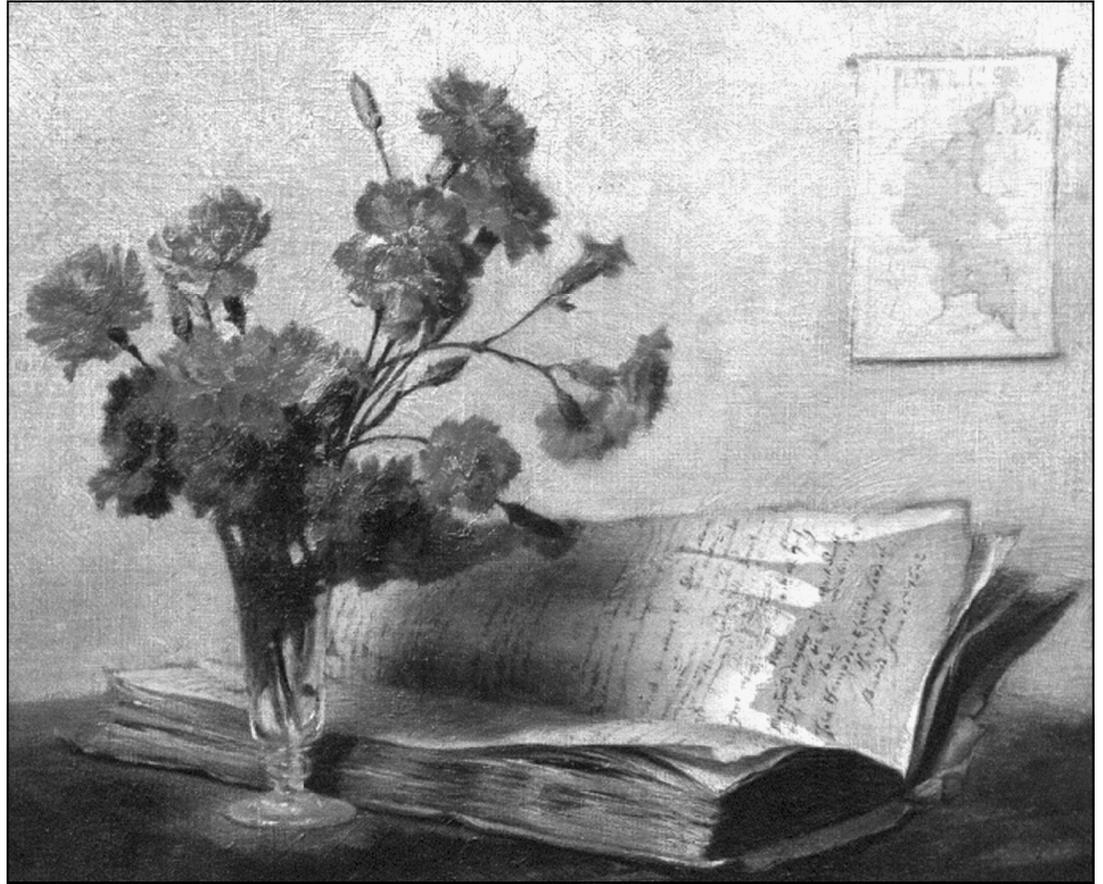
Now at last, in Derek Lester's and Gill Blackshaw's *The Controversy of John*

## MYSTERY PICTURE

A new member, **Mrs Joyce le Naimaster** of Mill Hill, has sent us photographs of a mysterious picture connected with John Hampden.

Painted by the Victorian artist Edith Augusta James (1857-1898), the picture is of a bunch of red carnations sprinkled with blood (*invisible in our black-and-white reproduction*), said to represent the drops shed by Hampden after his mortal wound at Chalgrove. His name appears on the bottom of the parchment document (*inset*), and the map on the wall is that of Buckinghamshire.

The picture was given to the late Mr le Naimaster by Kate Chandler Thompson in 1942, and **Mrs le Nairnaster**, who grew up in Henley and has been interested in John Hampden since reading Edna Lyall's novel *To Right The Wrong*, is keen to find out anything she can about it.



## E-MAIL MATTERS

The Internet continues to be a very useful way of publicising John Hampden and the Society, and we have received a number of interesting e-mails and postings on our web site guestbook in the past few months.

**Mark Evans** has advised us that there is a picture of John Hampden in the National Liberal Club in London, and has promised to obtain a copy for us. David Hammond, of West Drayton, enquired about the Hampden family tree, as he claims descent from Mary Hampden's first husband, Col. Robert Hammond.

Nikos Leverenz, of Sacramento, California, contacted us to inform us of his admiration for John Hampden. He wrote:

'I came across the name of Mr. Hampden while reading Harvard historian Richard Pipes' wonderful book *Property and Freedom*. Mr Hampden's courage and persistence in the face of unrestrained royal prerogative makes him a hero to all those across the world who love liberty - to sacrifice his own personal freedom for refusing to remit 20 shillings, when his annual income exceeded 1500 pounds! He should be the patron saint of tax opponents everywhere ..

Susan Hunt, also from the USA, wanted to know, for a school project, if we had any

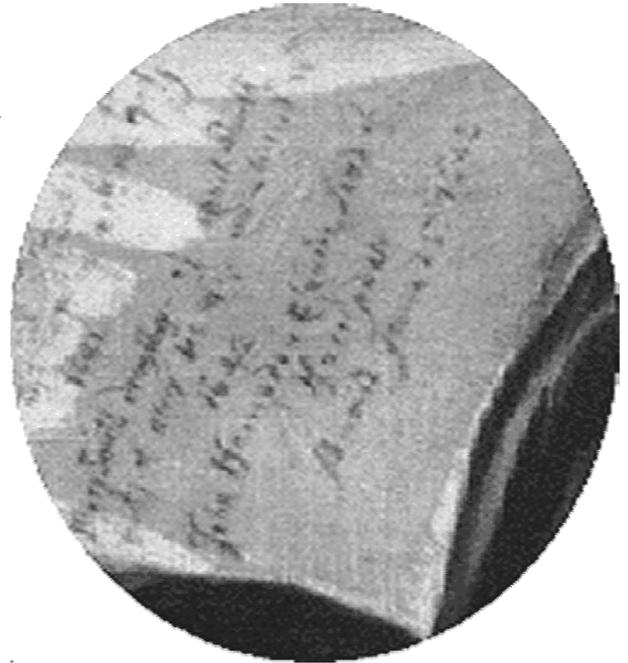
information about John Hampden ever staying at Blenheim Palace. Jennifer Carswell of Nova Scotia, Canada, e-mailed to ask where she could find some information on Hampden House where her mother, Wendy Jennifer Price, was a pupil at the girls' school.

More and more members are acquiring e-mail addresses, which are useful if we wish to circulate information in a hurry, and cheaper than Royal Mail. For instance, agenda and minutes of committee meetings are routinely e-mailed to some committee members, and a regular note about the latest online version of *'The Patriot'* goes out to interested non-members by this method.

If you have an e-mail address which did not appear on the last membership list or has not been communicated to the Membership Secretary, please send an electronic note to:

**jhs@westberks.demon.co.uk**

Like other information, this will not appear on the membership list unless you so wish.



## COMPETITION

There were only two entries for our picture competition in the last issue.

**Mrs Pat Kingsnorth** of Thame and **Mrs Jan Thoms** of Freshwater, Isle of Wight, both win Battle of Chalgrove mugs and tea towels for correctly identifying the mystery man as Colin Dexter, author of the 'Inspector Morse' novels.

A light-hearted attempt on the part of Richard Jenkinson of the Chiltern Brewery to enter the competition by telephone was ruled out of order!

## AGM

Members should note that this year's Annual General Meeting will be held on a Sunday. See *Diary Dates*.

## OBITUARIES

We regret to announce the death, on 6 February at the age of 81, of **Gerald Bradford**, of Ashmore Green near Newbury.

Gerald was born on 26 March 1918 in Newbury, and he went to work as a draughtsman for Southern Electricity. He married Gladys Dickson on Boxing Day 1940 and, having joined the TA, was called up into the Berkshire Yeomanry, although he did not serve abroad. Riding was in Gerald's blood; his father



was a coachman who had served in the Royal Horse Artillery in the Great War.

After the war Gerald returned to work for Southern Electricity, where he later became a surveyor, but much of his spare time was taken up with music, which he learned to appreciate at a very early age. He played double bass in symphony orchestras, dance bands and jazz groups; finally forming his own band, called Gerry Bradford and his Music Makers. He was also an accomplished saxophonist, both tenor and alto, and entertained his guests with a recital on the instrument at his and Gladys's Golden Wedding anniversary party in 1990.

Vice-Chairman **Roy Bailey** writes:

I first met Gerald back in the early '70s, when I was a member of the Sealed Knot. As I was doing a bit of riding in those days, I was given permission to raise and command a troop of horse in the Roundhead Association, which was known as John Hampden's Troop.

Though this was historically inaccurate, it gave us the opportunity to wear nice green uniforms and flaunt a green guidon bearing the Hampden crest and motto. This was carried by Gerald, who, though turned 50, was a much better horseman than me and was given the rank of Cornet.

John Hampden's Troop of Horse took part in a number of battle re-enactments, including one at Cropredy Bridge in Oxfordshire, where we had the pleasure of charging over the same ground as our 17th century predecessors. Somewhere I have a photograph of the troop in action, with Gerald wearing a long and rather fetching wig!

When I left the Sealed Knot Gerald took over the troop and, conscious of the historical inaccuracy, renamed it Sir William Wailer's Troop, after the Parliamentarian general for whom he shared a deep admi-

ration with our President, Professor John Adair. He even went to the expense of having a local dressmaker produce a fine suit of black corderoy, with gold bands on the sleeves, and our picture shows him wearing this. After he left the Knot he bought a piece of land and four horses, and continued riding until quite an advanced age.

Gerald was greatly interested in history, both national and local, and could talk at length about this subject and almost any other. In fact, he was the most delightfully garrulous person I

have ever met, and I remember the difficulty I had in terminating a telephone conversation with him a couple of years ago! He could be very scathing about some aspects of modern life, and his political views led him to be an enthusiastic supporter of the Campaign for an Independent Britain. A fascinating man.

Gerald and Gladys joined the John Hampden Society in 1994, and although they were unable to get to most of the Society's functions, they did attend the Annual Dinner in 1998. Before joining the Society, Gerald was kind enough to lend us some of his beautifully fashioned armour for Derek Lester to wear at the ceremony in Thame in 1993.

We are also sad to announce the death of **Mrs Rosamund White** on 7 November 1999 at her home in Edinburgh.

**Mrs White**, who was 85, was a member of the Barbados Hampden family through her mother, Audrey Woods, and was a first cousin of Mrs Moira Calvert, former owner of the Hampden Monument at Chalgrove.

**Rosamund White** was proud of her descent and gave both her sons, David and Michael, the middle names of Hampden.

### RHYME AND REASON

Membership Secretary Liz Morris has received a letter asking us to help identify a poem, the first two lines of which are:

King Charles the First to Parliament came  
Five Good Parliament Men to Claim

So far our enquiries, which have included posting on three history newsgroups on the Internet, have proved fruitless, but perhaps members can help. The tone of the two lines suggests that it is a children's poem.



### 2000

**Wed 15 Mar** An illustrated talk to Great Milton & District Local History Society at the Sports Pavilion, Great Milton, commencing at 7.30 pm.

**Sun 7 May** **The Society's Annual General Meeting at Hampden House, Great Hampden, commencing at 2.30 pm.**

**Thus 15 June** An illustrated talk to Chinnor & District University of the Third Age at Chinnor Village Hall, commencing at 2.30 pm.

**Sat 17 & Sun 18 June** The John Hampden Exhibition (in association with Thame Historical Society) in the Masonic Hall, High Street, Thame. (*Admission times to be advised*)

**Sat 17 to Sun 25 June** A Living History by Col. John Hampden's Regiment of the English Civil War Society in Thame. (*Full details to follow*)

**Sun 18 June** A Memorial Service and Wreath Laying by members of the Society at the Hampden Monument, Chalgrove. (*Time to be arranged*)

**Sat 24 June** The Society's Annual Dinner at the Spread Eagle Hotel, Thame - 7.30 pm for 8.

**Tue 29 Aug** An illustrated talk entitled 'John Hampden The Man' to Kidlington and District Historical Society at the Baptist Church Hall, Kidlington.

(*All meetings commence at 8pm, unless otherwise stated*)



THAME  
OXFORDSHIRE  
OX9 2BW

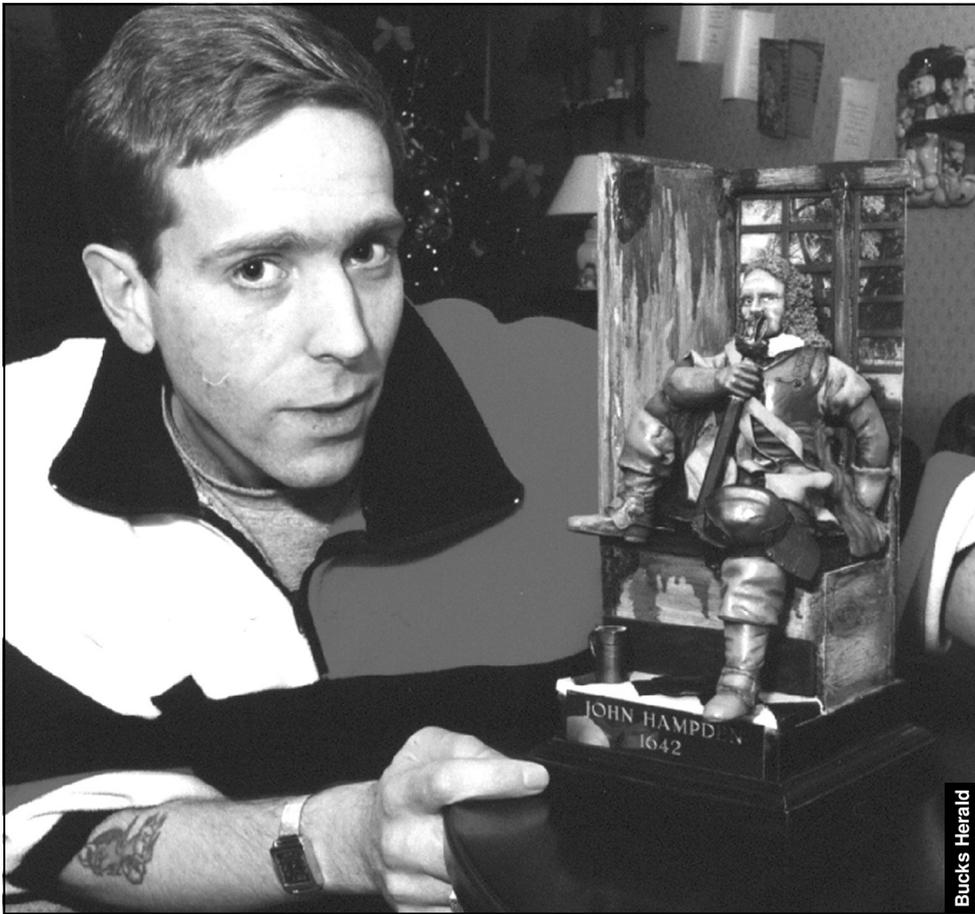
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Published by

**The John Hampden Society**  
**The Malt House, Great Shefford**  
**Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 7ED**  
**Tel & Fax: 01488 648441**

**E-mail: [jhs@westberks.demon.co.uk](mailto:jhs@westberks.demon.co.uk)**  
**<http://www.westberks.demon.co.uk/jhs/>**



Bucks Herald

## A MODEL PATRIOT

A Thame man has produced a model of John Hampden to celebrate the new Millennium.

Alan Webb, who only took up the hobby of model-making five years ago, has built the historically accurate and hand-painted figure (left) from putty around a frame made from a coat hanger. This is the latest of 50 models Alan has made, mostly of soldiers and wartime equipment.

When we learned that Alan was looking for suggestions as to where the figure could be put on permanent display in the town, we considered mischievously suggesting the Millennium Circle! However, we have learned that a permanent home has been offered at (appropriately enough) the John Hampden Primary School, but we hope that Alan will be prepared to lend us the model for our exhibition in June.

## HAMPDEN AND FRANKENSTEIN

by  
Sam Hearn

I wonder if many members realise that there is a reference to John Hampden in *Frankenstein*?

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (later Shelley) began to write the book in 1816 when she was not quite nineteen. It was first published in 1818 and has formed the basis for hundreds of 'schlocky' horror movies. In its own time it was a best seller and Mary Shelley probably never wrote anything as good.

On page 160 of the Oxford World's Classics edition we find Victor Frankenstein recounting his grim tale .....

"We passed a considerable time at Oxford, rambling among its environs, and endeavouring to identify every spot which might relate to the most animating epoch of English History. Our little voyages of discovery were often prolonged by the successive objects that presented themselves. We visited the tomb of the illustrious Hampden, and the field on which that patriot fell. For a moment my soul was elevated from its debasing and miserable fears, to contemplate the divine ideas of liberty and self sacrifice, of which these sights were the monuments and remembrances."

There can be little doubt that this section is based on an actual visit by Mary Shelley to Great Hampden and Chalgrove Field. The opinions expressed are also most likely her own thoughts put into Frankenstein's mouth.

- Mention of 'schlocky' horror movies reminds us that Hammer Films are to start producing this genre again. Needless to say, they will not be returning to Hampden House, where many of the Hammer House of Horrors productions were shot after it ceased to be a school.

## WAY OUT WEST

Members will be aware that John Hampden's first constituency as an MP was Grampound in Cornwall, which stands on the A390 between St Austell and Truro. We haven't yet ascertained why he should have been selected for an area so far from Buckinghamshire, but his father was MP for East Looe, and the rotten boroughs system was very much in operation in the 17th century.

Graham Barfield has been working hard on a scheme for members of the Society to make an official visit to Grampound to mark the fact of John Hampden's representation, and perhaps unveil a commemorative plaque. There is a house in Grampound that was formerly known as Hampden House, and this is thought to have been where John Hampden lived. It is unlikely that Hampden would actually have lived for any length of time in Grampound, but he would almost certainly have visited the place for his election in 1621.

The owner of the former Hampden House is willing for the Society to place a plaque on the building, and Grampound Parish Council are eager for us to go ahead with this visit. It was suggested that this should take place during their Carnival Week this year, but as we are heavily committed to events in Thame, it has been decided that it would be more appropriate to postpone the trip until next year.

We shall continue to liaise with Grampound Parish Council, and we may even organise a coach to take members to Cornwall if there is enough support.

## NO TRUST

The Battlefields Trust are holding a weekend seminar in Oxford sometime in March, and we have heard that, like Frankenstein, they are planning a visit to Chalgrove battlefield as a part of this.

Sadly, they seem reluctant to impart any details to the John Hampden Society, despite the fact that we have indicated that we are interested in meeting them at the battlefield and discussing our latest research.

If anyone finds out the time and date, please let the Society know.



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