



# THE PATRIOT

Quarterly Newsletter of the John Hampden Society  
No. 28 - Spring 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

## CHANGE DOWNING STREET TO HAMPDEN STREET, SAYS SOCIETY

The John Hampden Society has launched a campaign to get the name of Downing Street changed to Hampden Street.

In a letter to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, copied to Westminster City Council, the Society wrote:

*We would like to make the following requests to you:*

*1. That you will arrange for the name of Downing Street to be changed to that of Hampden Street.*

*2. That you will arrange for a commemorative plaque to be placed on the wall of No. 10 Hampden Street to mark the fact that it was once the London home of John Hampden the Patriot.*

*This Society was set up in 1992 to honour the name of John Hampden, one of the 17th century's greatest, yet sadly neglected, statesmen. I enclose some details about Hampden and the Society, and I would refer you to the article by Dr John Adair in The House magazine of 11 July 1994, but briefly he was a wealthy Buckinghamshire landowner who stood out against the tyrannical policies of King Charles I. Hampden's opposition to the illegal Ship Money tax made him the most famous man in the country, and he became right-hand man to John Pym, leader of the opposition to the King in the Long Parliament.*

*Hampden's activities led to him being one of the Five Members whom the King tried to arrest for treason in 1642, and he was*

*one of the leading lights in both Parliament and the Parliamentary Army during the Civil War. Had he not been killed early on in that conflict, the course of history might well have been very different. The execution of Charles I might never have occurred, we would have heard little of Hampden's cousin Oliver Cromwell, and*

*ter, changing sides just before the Restoration and treacherously delivering some of his former comrades-in-arms to execution. He was awarded a baronetcy for this.*

*During the Civil War he had acquired an interest in land and buildings to the west of Whitehall, but at the Restoration he was told that the properties had been taken back by the Crown.*

*He petitioned the King that the properties be restored to him on the grounds, unsupported by any evidence, that they had come to him in lieu of a debt. In 1664 the King reluctantly granted him the lease of the site and the*

*buildings on it, with permission to build, despite the fact that Elizabeth Hampden was still living there and paying a rent of £90 per year.*

*Her grandsons put up a fight as their lease still had 20 years to run, and Downing's attempts to get possession failed. Elizabeth died in 1665, but Downing doesn't appear to have gained possession until 1671. He then proceeded to pull down Hampden House and the surrounding buildings, and construct the world-famous street that bears his name.*

*Members of this Society believe that it is a disgrace that, for over 300 years, the official residence of the Head of Government of the United Kingdom should be named after a man so despicable as George Downing - a turncoat and*



*the constitutional settlement of 1688, which secured the future of Parliament, might have taken place much earlier.*

*Downing Street stands on the site of the Hampdens' London home, which was built by Sir Thomas Knyvet in the 1580s and inherited by John Hampden's mother in 1622, when her son was 28. At this time Hampden was an MP and would almost certainly have lived here when in London. I quote from an article in issue no. 6 of our newsletter, 'The Patriot', based on information from Christopher Jones's book:*

*George Downing was a Parliamentarian who became a Member of Parliament and acquired the post of Ambassador to The Hague under Cromwell, where he spied on the exiled Stuarts. He appears to have been a most unpleasant charac-*

## MYSTERY POEM

Membership Secretary Liz Morris has discovered the full text of the mysterious poem mentioned in the last newsletter.

It was found in *Country Like This*, published in 1972 by The Friends of the Vale of Aylesbury, and it reads:

King Charles the First to Parliament came,  
Five good Parliament men to claim;  
King Charles he had them each by name,  
Denzyl Holles and Jonathan Pym,  
And William Strode and after him,  
Arthur Hazelrigg Esquire  
And Hampden, Gent, of Buckinghamshire.

The man at the gate said 'Tickets, please,'  
Said Charles, 'I've come for the five M.P.'s.'  
The Porter said 'Which?' and Charles said  
'These:

Denzyl Holles and Jonathan Pym, ' And  
William Strode and after him,  
Arthur Hazelrigg Esquire  
And Hampden, Gent, of Buckinghamshire.'

In at the great front door he went,  
The great front door of Parliament,  
While, out at the back with one consent  
Went Denzyl Holles and Jonathan Pym,  
And William Strode and after him,  
Arthur Hazelrigg, Esquire  
And Hampden, Gent, of Buckinghamshire.

Into the street strode Charles the First,  
His nose was high and his lips were  
pursed,  
While, laugh till their rebel sides near burst,  
did  
Denzyl Holles and Jonathan Pym,  
And William Strode, and after him  
Arthur Hazelrigg Esquire,  
And Hampden, Gent, of Buckinghamshire.

HUGH CHESTERMAN  
*King Charles the First*  
'Speech Practice' ed. by G. Colson, 1959

By coincidence, **Liz Morris** contacted Aylesbury Local Studies Library to see if they could find the complete text, and a few days later one of the librarians found us via our web site and e-mailed to ask if we had any information about the very same poem!

● *Country Like This* contains much else of interest to students of John Hampden. There are Sir Ralph Verney's notes on the attempted arrest of The Five Members in January 1641/2, and a transcript of a letter from John Wittewrong and Thomas Tyrrell, dated May 1643, to Colonels Hampden and Goodwin, complaining about the depredations of the Royalists in the Vale of Aylesbury, and begging for help from the Parliamentary Army.

## AGM

The AGM was held at Hampden House on Sunday 7th May, and fuller details will be available in the next issue of *'The Patriot'*.

The most important decision was to raise the annual subscriptions for most categories of British Isles membership as from 1st January 2001. Overseas subscriptions will remain the same.

The possibility of holding a series of illustrated talks for members in the Thame/Great Hampden area during the winter was also discussed.

The committee for the coming year is as follows:

**LORD HOLLENDEN** (*Chairman*)  
**ROY BAILEY** (*Vice-Chairman*)  
**MRS ANTHEA COLES** (*Hon. Secretary*)  
**SAMUEL HEARNE** (*Hon. Treasurer*)  
**MISS ELIZABETH MORRIS**  
(*Membership Secretary*)

**GRAHAM BARFIELD**  
**MRS GILLIAN GOODALL**  
**JOHN GOODALL**  
**ROBERT HAMMOND**  
**MAURICE KIRTLAND**  
**DEREK LESTER**  
**MRS MARION WIERSZYCKI**

The new member, **Robert Hammond**, is a former district councillor from John Hampden's old constituency of Wendover, and an indefatigable researcher in the Bucks County archives in Aylesbury.

## GREENCOATS IN THAME

Colonel John Hampden's Regiment of Foote of the English Civil War Society ('The Greencoats') will once more be on show in Thame this June - and look set to repeat their impressive display of three years ago.

From Monday 19th to Friday 23rd they will be mounting a Living History display for the benefit of parties of schoolchildren at Thame Showground, and on Saturday 24th this will be open to the general public from 2 pm until about 5.30 under the title 'The English Civil War - A Matter of Life or Death'. This will also include two drill displays.

Prior to this the Regiment will repeat their march through the town at the head of the Carnival procession - but this time they will go from the Recreation Ground in Southern Road to the Showground, commencing at 1 pm.

On the afternoon of Sunday 25th the audience will be entertained by two skirmishes.

It is also hoped that some of the Regiment will be available to attend the service at Chalgrove on Sunday 18th, and perhaps add some colour to our exhibition in the Masonic Hall that weekend.

## ENCLOSURES

Members will find three important enclosures with this newsletter.

The first one, which will only go out to UK members, is a staffing form for the John Hampden Exhibition in Thame on Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th of June. We shall require members to be on duty in the Masonic Hall during the opening hours to show visitors around, answer questions, and keep an eye open for souvenir-hunters (we hope to have some valuable artefacts on display).

Help will also be required to set up and take down the display, and to remove some of the more valuable exhibits to a place of safety on the Saturday evening. It would also be desirable to see a good turnout at the Memorial Service at Chalgrove on Sunday afternoon.

If you have some time free on those two days and wish to help, please indicate your availability on the form and return it as soon as possible to the Vice-Chairman. You will then be contacted nearer the time and allocated a slot.

The second form will enable us to keep the Society's database fully up-to-date by collecting information which, of necessity, does not appear on the membership application form. Please return this to the Membership Secretary.

Finally, of course, there is the menu and booking form for the Annual Dinner at The Spread Eagle Hotel, which this year will be held on the anniversary of John Hampden's first marriage and of his death. Guest speaker will be Lord Saye and Sele, who will talk about his 17th century ancestor; a close colleague of John Hampden.



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ACCOMMODATION, RESTAURANT &  
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# HAMPDEN STREET CAMPAIGN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

*hypocrite. In contrast, all of his contemporaries praised John Hampden's character and capabilities. The Earl of Clarendon, a Royalist, wrote, '... his reputation for honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided that no corrupt or private ends could bias them'. And later, '... he was a very wise man, and of great parts, and possessed with the most absolute faculties to govern the people, of any man I knew'.*

*In the 1,000 days since the last General Election, your Government has taken a radical look at many entrenched attitudes that have prevailed in our public life for so long. Renaming Downing Street after a man known in his time as 'Patriae Pater - The Father of the People' would emphasise to the world that Britain's ability to evolve new democratic institutions whilst defending its citizens' ancient rights has deep historical roots and would be a most appropriate way of marking the new Millennium.*

A reply was received from the Building, Monuments and Sites Division of the DCMS pointing out that, even if he thought it appropriate or desirable, the Secretary of State had no powers to change the name, which was the responsibility of Westminster City Council. Their Head of the District Surveyors Office replied:

*I always approach with sympathy any suggestion for marking the links of famous historical persons with the City and I know that the Council shares my attitude. At the same time my experience compels me to say that renaming of any street in the City*

*more often than not provokes opposition, particular from the occupiers of premises in the street who, of course, suffer the inconvenience of altering their stationary and making all their correspondents acquainted with the change of address.*

*I have no doubt that changing the name of Downing Street will result in opposition for the same reason. Furthermore, the existing name is associated at home and abroad with the London residence of not only the political leader of the country but also the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There would in my opinion be a considerable opposition to such a change.*

Despite this, copying of our letter to the media resulted in a good deal of publicity. BBC Three Counties Radio did an interview; there was a short piece in the London Evening Standard; but the best response was from *The Bucks Herald*, who made it the front page story in their issue of 22nd March. They asked for suggestions from readers, one of whom proposed that, rather than renaming the street, No. 10 should be known as 'Hampden House' instead.

Aylesbury MP David Liddington, although he did not agree with the name-change proposal, stated that he would support the Society in its request for a plaque in Downing Street.

We have not given up and have some more ideas for this campaign, one of which was unveiled at the Society's AGM in May



## 2000

**Thur 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. Opening times: Saturday 10 am - 5 pm; Sunday 10 am - 4 pm. (see 'Enclosures')

**Mon 19 to Sun 25 June** A Living History by Col. John Hampden's Regiment of the English Civil War Society at Thame Showground. (see 'Greencoats in Thame')

**Sun 18 June** A Memorial Service and Wreath Laying by members of the Society at the Hampden Monument, Chalgrove at 2.30 pm.

**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 & District Historical Society at the Baptist Church Hall, Kidlington.

**Mon 23 Oct** An illustrated talk to the Oxford Senior Wives Fellowship at St Andrews Hall, Linton Road Oxford, commencing at 2 pm.

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

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I am writing a biography inclusive of family origins, and I wonder whether your Society includes a genealogical section which might assist me? Many people must claim direct descent.

In 1857 my great-grandfather Edward Henry Chawner married Sidney Frances, the daughter of John Hampden Gledstones of Cheshunt, whereupon successive Chawners adopted the great name. However I would prefer evidence of this link in the female line to be firmer than family tradition and unfortunately, standard books have not been helpful.

Therefore I will be grateful for any assistance you or your members might be able to provide.

**Philip M. Hampden Chawner**  
27 Beauchamp Avenue  
Leamington Spa  
Warwickshire CV32 STD



Following correspondence with Grampound Parish Council in Cornwall (see 'The Patriot' no. 27) we have been sent this picture of Trevail House. This was formerly known as Hampden House, and John Hampden is said to have lived here when he was MP for Grampound in the 1620s.

## A WALK ON THE COLD SIDE!

The Battlefields Trust's Study Day and Chalgrove Battlefield Walk took place on the weekend of 25th and 26th March, and was highly successful.

The Study Day on Sunday was held in the Junior Common Room of Brasenose College, Oxford, and featured expert speakers on such subjects as the New Model Army; Cromwell's campaigns in Scotland and Ireland; archaeological research relating to Civil War battles and sieges; and the Worcester campaign. Members of Lord Robartes' Regiment of the Sealed Knot gave a demonstration of Civil War uniform, weaponry and drum calls, and an excellent buffet lunch was served in the Great Hall of the college.

All this was in sharp contrast, comfort wise, to the battlefield walk on the previous afternoon. The organiser of the weekend, Dr Alistair Bantock, had very sensibly contacted the John Hampden Society to see if we had someone who knew enough about the battle of Chalgrove to act as guide. Strangely enough, we did!

**Derek Lester**, accompanied by **Mrs Gill Blackshaw**, was the obvious choice, and they were joined by **Roy Bailey** and **Mrs Angela Feaviour** from the Society and eight members of the Battlefields Trust. The walk commenced at the crossroads at Clare Hill, where **Derek** pointed out the route of Prince Rupert's force from Chinnor via Aston Rowant and South Weston along a road no longer in existence.

The party then drove to Golder Manor (still looking much as it does in the drawing on the 17th century map), where the vehicles were parked. The routes and tactics of the two forces were described in great detail by **Derek** as the walk progressed by means of public paths down past Round Hill and the tiny hamlet of Easington to the line of the Great Hedge - some of which still exists today.

This was followed to the Monument Trading Estate along a path known as Lower Marsh Lane, and then to the site of Warpsgrove House. Permission had been kindly granted by Mr Roy Brown for the party to enter his land to view the site of the hedge over which Prince Rupert jumped to engage the Parliamentarians who had been galling his troops.

Here the walk ended with a vote of thanks to **Derek Lester** from Dr Bantock. It was richly deserved, as **Derek** had demonstrated his thorough knowledge of the battle and 17th century military tactics, making the whole afternoon fascinating and informative.

It was also bitterly cold, as the north-east wind whipping across the open fields between Clare Hill and Chalgrove made the area resemble the steppes of Siberia without the snow!

*Our pictures show (top) Derek Lester discussing a point with one of the Battlefields Trust members near Easington, and (below) the party trying to find the former line of the Great Hedge on the map.*



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## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Mrs Gill Blackshaw, Clerk to Chalgrove Parish Council, informs us that her Council, via Chalgrove Battle Group, has obtained an award from The Millennium Fund of £2,296.

This will finance road signing to the battlefield site, and explanation boards about the battle. The road signs will bear the 'crossed swords' symbol, and will be the first to do so in Oxfordshire. The information boards will be erected near the Monument, and will give a pictorial account of Prince Rupert's raid from Oxford to Chinnor and back via Chalgrove Field and also ground and location plans for the battle itself, with an explanation of the action.

If possible the signs and boards will be erected before the Society's commemorative service at the Monument on 18th June this year.