



THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

No. 88 - Winter 2018/19



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

VISIT TO THE NATIONAL CIVIL WAR CENTRE, NEWARK



Phil's wife Helen viewing the exhibits



In August last year, whilst up in Lincolnshire on a week's holiday, we crossed the border and visited the town of Newark. I had heard quite a bit about the new National Civil War Centre and was keen to see the exhibits.

The museum itself had a modern façade which led to a 16th century hall and courtyard. It had clearly been remodelled over the years and was not the original site of the museum, with recent expansion and modern facilities and fully accessible for all.

On our arrival we were warmly greeted by a friendly member of staff who proceeded to tell us what was on during the day. There was a video retelling the story of Newark during the Civil War from three different points of view: the Queen's; a soldier's; and a serving girl's, all of which blended well together. Throughout the summer, the museum was hosting a range of activities exploring secret messages, disguises, codes and espionage during the Civil War. We also heard from an anonymous spy, who told us about the inventive methods used to smuggle secret messages to Newark during the war.

Following this there was then free time to explore the various exhibits within the museum. This comprised a timeline of events with exhibits and interactive tasks for adults and children to embrace with props, films, pictures and games, including a set of questions which by the end would decide whether you were a Roundhead or a Cavalier. We were taken aback that there was no mention in the entire museum of John Hampden's influence and involvement. Other areas included a section on democracy through the ages and the changing tools of war which included a chance to put on a pocket jacket and fill it with bags of weights to see how heavy an armour you would be capable of wearing.

The activities are creative yet educational, the exhibitions reveal a fascinating portrait of the turbulent Civil War, and the building is pleasant and well equipped. It is well worth exploring Newark further if you haven't yet been. Within the town you can also see the ruins of Newark Castle which is included in the town trail – in all an enjoyable day out.

Phil Broomfield

(The Trustees are looking at ways of engaging with the Centre and its lack of any mention of John Hampden.)

For the Centre's opening times and admission fees, go to <http://nationalcivilwarcentre.com/visitus/>

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019

Information about this can be found page 4 and a lunch menu and booking form is on the Society's website.

THE OLD RED, WHITE AND BLUE



The naval engagement, pictured left, depicts the East India Company's ship *Bridgewater* successfully defending her cargo from an attack by the American privateer *Hampden*. The encounter took place in mid-Atlantic on the 8th March 1779 and lasted for around three and a half hours.

The *Bridgewater's* Captain Parker held his ship's fire until the *Hampden* came alongside. At this point he put his ship's helm over and raked the *Hampden* (as in the picture) causing havoc and killing Samuel Pickerin(g), the captain of the *Hampden*.

James Fennimore Cooper, in his history of the US Navy, described this as "one of the most closely contested actions of the War [of American Independence]". The *Hampden* limped into her home port of

Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the 19th April and a week later was put up for sale by her owners. She was transferred to the New Hampshire Navy in June 1779. The *Bridgewater* was not badly damaged and reached home waters on the 23rd March. The Directors of the East India Company paid the officers and seamen a gratuity of £2,000.

Parker's heroic defence of his ship was widely reported and he decided to commemorate his victory by spending some of his share of the reward on a painting by Francis Holman (1729 - 1784). Holman was an experienced artist of maritime scenes. His father was a master mariner and his brother a sea captain. Much of the detail must however have come first hand from William Parker. These included the presence of a third ship, the brailed up sails, and the flags of the opposing vessels.

The *Bridgewater* flies the blue ensign, but the *Hampden* is flying what was described at the time as 'American colours'. Until the USA's Flag Act of 1777 the flag used was remarkably similar to that of The East India Company: thirteen red and white stripes quartered with the British Union flag. The Flag Act replaced the Union flag element with thirteen white stars on a blue background. When the painting was inspected under ultra-violet light it was confirmed that Holman had indeed painted thirteen stars although their distribution is not clear. Perhaps Captain Parker did not get a clear view in the heat of battle. Interestingly Holman has placed the 'American colours' in the centre of the of the painting.

The exact date of Holman's painting is not known but in all probability it is the second oldest representation of the now famous Stars and Stripes and the oldest representation of it in maritime art. Framed copies of the painting can be purchased from Christies - see www.christies.com. The painting itself was last sold at auction for £64,850.

Sam Hearn

Editor's note: A very detailed account of this action can be found in The Trafalgar Chronicle by Peter Hore, available online in Google Books at <https://is.gd/aSrBpR> - page 20.

THE HAMPDEN

Constructed: Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Owner: Woodbury Langdon et al (Plymouth NH)
Displacement: 400 tons
Armaments: 22 guns (with six 9-pounders, fourteen 6-pounders and two 4-pounders)
Crew: 120 (in 1779)
Task: To prey on British shipping

THE BRIDGEWATER

Constructed: London
Owner: The East India Company
Displacement: 850 tons
Armaments: 26 guns
Crew: 84 (including many sick before the action)
Task: To carry trade goods to and from south east Asia.

THE EMBROIDERERS' GUILD COLLECTION: A NEW HOME AT THE BUCKS COUNTY MUSEUM

The Embroiderers' Guild collection is of national importance and comprises several thousand items of historical and contemporary embroidered costume and textiles from around the world. Selected highlights are displayed on a rolling basis in a dedicated gallery at the County Museum in Aylesbury. The remainder of the collection is permanently stored and cared for by a professional team of curatorial staff and volunteers at the Museum Resource Centre, Halton.

The beautiful embroidered wedding gloves of John Hampden's wife Elizabeth are in the collection of the County Museum and the staff of the Embroiderers' Guild are aware of their existence and their historic importance.

BOOK REVIEW

Peterloo - The Story of the Manchester Massacre

by
Jacqueline Riding

Publisher: Head of Zeus **Published:** 18/10/2018
Format: Hardback **Pages:** 400 **ISBN:** 9781786695833

THE STORY OF THE MANCHESTER MASSACRE

PETERLOO



Jacqueline Riding
FOREWORD BY MIKE LEIGH

This year sees the 200th anniversary of a defining moment in the development of British democracy. On 16th August 1819 a crowd of 60,000 from all over Lancashire gathered in St Peter's Field in Manchester. Their mood was happy and their purpose was to demand fundamental reform of a corrupt electoral system.

By the end of the day fifteen people, including two women and a child, were dead or dying and 650 injured, hacked down by the yeomanry after local magistrates panicked at the size of the crowd.

In the years preceding the massacre political discussion groups known as Hampden Clubs were established first in London and then in the Midlands and across the north of England. The author explains the role played by these Clubs in bringing together disparate radical groups and in the popularising of support for political reform.

Sam Hearn



DIARY DATES

2019

Sunday 24th March.

The Society's Annual General Meeting to be held at Hartwell House Hotel, Aylesbury. (*see details on page 4*)

Saturday 22nd June.

A talk by Professor Ian Beckett entitled 'The Military Historian's Civil War'. Time and venue to be advised.

For up-to-date information, see the Diary page on the Society's website at:

www.johnhampden.org/diary.htm

GETTING IN PRINT

The Society is always happy to receive contributions to *The Patriot*; either from members or non-members.

These contributions can be in the form of articles, letters, photographs, etc., and should be sent to Honorary Secretary Anthea Coles at:

theseecretary@johnhampden.org

Members can find a style sheet in the Members' Area of the website which gives advice on submitting contributions.



Battlefields Trust – East Midlands
& Friends of the National Civil War Centre

**SECOND ANNUAL
JOINT CONFERENCE**
18th May 2019 – 10.00am to 4.30 pm

Events of 1643
(including the Battle of Chalgrove)

For more information contact
friendsncwconference@gmail.com or eastmidlands@battlefieldstrust.com



MEMBERSHIP

The annual membership subscription to the Society, payable on 1st January each year, is:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--------|
| Single members | - | £15.00 |
| Joint members | - | £20.00 |
| Junior/students | - | £10.00 |

This newsletter is distributed free to members.

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

e-mail: *see website*
Website: www.johnhampden.org
Registered charity no. 1098314

