

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the 28th Annual General Meeting of the John Hampden Society held at Hartwell House, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire on Saturday, 24th March 2019

Present:

Mr Roy Bailey (Chairman), Mr. Sam. Hearn, (*Treasurer*) & Mr. Philip Broomfield (*Membership Secretary*), Mrs. Anthea Coles (*Hon. Secretary*), and 17 members of the Society and guests.

1. Introduction by the Chairman:

Roy Bailey opened the proceedings by first of all welcoming John and Katy Hobart from the Isle of Wight who had travelled up that day to join us, with the intention of becoming members of the Society. John is heir to the title of Lord Buckinghamshire.

2. Apologies for absence:

Apologies had been received from Lord and Lady Buckinghamshire, Lady Helen & Mr Hughes Motteux, Mr. Michael Morris, Mr John Seal, The Revd. and Mrs. Hambly and Mr Peter Osborne

3. The Minutes of the previous AGM:

These were agreed to be a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

5. Reports from Officers:

Chairman's Report:

[Welcome to the Society's 28th AGM in these splendid surroundings of Hartwell House, which has associations with the Hampden family. I hope you all enjoyed a good lunch and found Bruce Alexander's talk as fascinating as I did.]

The last 12 months have been a quiet time for the Society. We have the problem of a falling membership and a lack of members to take on any responsibilities for running the Society.

However, this is an improvement on the previous year, when a poorly attended AGM at Amersham resulted in no one willing and able to fill the posts of Chairman and Honorary Treasurer. Fortunately, both Steve Barriff and Sam Hearn were prepared to carry on in these posts on a temporary, caretaker basis, but it was a very unsatisfactory situation.

Although I retired from the committee in 2016, I stood for election as Chairman last year because there was an air of defeatism around and I felt that there was a danger of the Society folding up – and I was not prepared to countenance that. I wanted the Society that I had helped to found to continue in its objective of honouring John Hampden, even if we could not be the force we were some 15 years ago. I am happy to say that Sam agreed to be elected as Honorary Treasurer again, and Steve took on the post of Webmaster, although off the committee and undergoing serious medication. Anthea Coles also carried on as Honorary Secretary and Phil Broomfield as Membership Secretary, so we had a small but experienced team. But we still need more members to serve on the Executive Committee and drive the Society forward.

There has been the inevitable wastage of members during the year; most notably the sad death of our former Membership Secretary Roger Paynter in Cornwall. Long-standing members will remember Roger well from our visit to Grampound in 2001.

Our main event of the year was a ceremony in Thame on 24th June to mark the 375th anniversary of John Hampden's death. Although on a much smaller scale than the one held exactly 25 years earlier, our Patron, Lord Buckinghamshire, repeated his action of laying a wreath at the memorial plaque on the wall beside Hampden House. We were pleased to have in attendance the Mayor of Thame, Councillor Mrs. Ann Midwinter, who said that John Hampden was very much a part of Thame's history. Although extensively advertised in the media, there were

relatively few spectators. We must thank our member Maurice Kirtland who arranged for the production of the wreath and its delivery to the site.

For 2019 we are planning a talk by a Civil War historian in June, and details will be published in due course.

The Society was given a lead tobacco jar found some years ago on the battlefield of Chalgrove, and this was loaned to Thame Museum as a permanent exhibit to join the plaster plaque.

An issue of *The Patriot* was produced in the summer - the first for over a year - and was well received, demonstrating that members look forward to this account of the Society's activities. We have decided to discontinue *Hampden Voice*, and concentrate on the newsletter, although we cannot guarantee 4 issues a year.

We only managed to give one talk on John Hampden during 2018, when I spoke to the members of Beaconsfield Probus Group in July. The venue was a glitzy club called *Revolution* – quite unsuited for an illustrated presentation. The audience were all businessmen of a certain age and unreceptive to details of the Patriot's life and career. We also received a request for a talk to Croxley Green U3A, near Watford, and Sam gave this earlier this month.

Our member Jim Rodda is also a member of the Chiltern Society and has been acting as liaison between the two bodies. The Chiltern Society are in the process of improving the Ship Money Memorial site near Prestwood; the undergrowth and grass has been tidied up, a new information board has been erected with input from Jim and Sam Hearn, and a rustic bench has been installed, with the JHS being consulted as to the design. So you see that, despite our small size, we still matter.

We try to promote John Hampden and publicise the Society when the opportunity arises. In September a historian suggested in the *Sunday Telegraph* that Cromwell's statue should be removed from outside the Palace of Westminster. We weighed in with a tongue-in-cheek letter suggesting that it should be swapped with the one of John Hampden inside!

We continue to hold Executive Committee meetings; not at regular intervals but when required. These take place at the Shillingford Bridge Hotel on the Thames near Wallingford. The hotel kindly allows us to use a small side room for these meetings where we can erect a laptop and include Phil Broomfield via Skype from his home in Bournemouth. We must express our thanks to the hotel management.

As well as Skype, we use other examples of modern technology. We use an online service called Doodle to indicate availability for meetings. The committee has set up its own WhatsApp group which enables quick and easy communication by mobile phone. As there are currently only four of us we call it *The Rump!* We also have a committee Google group which has proved essential for more detailed communication and the exchange of documents, pictures, etc. Those of you who have e-mail addresses will know that there is also a members' Google group which we use to keep you informed. We have a Society Facebook page which allows us to post photos and videos, and which attracts responses from interested parties all over the world.

The website also continues to inform; all issues of *The Patriot* are now available on it and the Diary page is regularly updated. As we have members in other parts of the world besides the UK, these methods of communication are vital.

Thanks to the financial expertise of Sam Hearn we maintain a healthy bank balance and are always looking for ways to spend the money in the cause. Suggestions are welcome.

I must acknowledge the help and support of Sam Hearn, Anthea Coles, Phil Broomfield and Steve Barriff during the past year. Last but not least, my grateful thanks go to our Patron, Miles Buckinghamshire, who has always given and continues to give his unfailing support to the Society. It is thanks to these stalwarts that I am inspired to put myself forward for election as your Chairman for another year.

The Hampden family motto – *Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum* – can be translated as 'No Backward Steps'. Let that be our motto too.

The Treasurer's Report:

Sam commented that, as Roy had outlined, it had not been a year of activity where we had been required to spend a lot of money. The membership subscriptions had subsided a little but only really by a couple, though he anticipated that there will be a drop shown in the next year's accounts, due in part to natural wastage, due to the unfortunate death of a few members. Normally we lose a few members and gain a few members and the numbers stay fairly static. We were paid quite generously for the one talk that we were able to give. In 2017 we held the 25th anniversary celebration and pushed the boat out for this prestigious event. However, over the

course of the year we showed a surplus of income, so there is no need to consider an increase in subscription rate at present. This was last increased some years ago, when it was set at a rate that we felt would cover our costs for several years to come, because of the complexities of dealing with an increase in rates. As Roy mentioned, we are looking for ways to spend the money but do need to increase membership and are always looking for innovative ideas

Sam offered to answer any queries about the accounts but stated that they are really very simple, and he would be happy to talk to anyone who felt they would like to take over the Treasurership of the Society.

There being no questions, Roy asked if anyone would propose acceptance of the accounts. Charles Harvey immediately proposed that they be accepted. This proposal was seconded by Steve Barriff and carried unanimously.

The Membership Secretary's Report:

Since the last AGM in April 2018 there have been the following updates to the membership:

Members we have sadly lost:

Roger Paynter (Nov), an Obituary is featured in the most recent Patriot newsletter

New members include:

Dr Peter Aschenbrenner of Columbia, Maryland, USA (Jan)

Mrs Fiona Sheppard of Benson, payment not received as yet (10th Mar)

Renewals:

20 lapsed members of which telephone calls and e-mails been made to aim to bring all members into the system of renewing on 1st January. 15 of which have renewed by cheque/standing order or PayPal payment. 1 resignation received from Pat Claus, USA.

Awaiting responses from:

Colin Hampden-White

Gerald McGregor

Beryl & Angus Vickery whom I spoke to on 5th March and assured cheque would be sent

Current live membership (those that have paid for this year) stands at 85. The membership list has been updated accordingly.

During our Summer 2018 visit to the National Civil War Centre in Newark, I left a supply of leaflets and suggested that the Centre join the Society. I was hoping for some new membership enquiries from this. I will be liaising with my contact there, Kevin Winter.

Over the past year, the new leaflets have been distributed across the County and to affiliated organisations as a means to boost interest in attracting new members.

In February, we heard from Jonathan Taylor, who was the named contact at the ECWS, who advised of his retirement and therefore his Honorary membership of the Society discontinuing. Roy would be making contact with his successor.

Prepared by Phil Broomfield

The Web-master's Report:

Steve reported that we had had one or two issues with the website, which had been sorted out. Roy asked whether, if any member had ideas on how the website could be improved, they should contact either Steve or himself with their suggestions.

6. Election of officers and committee members:

Nominations had been received from four members as follows:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Proposed by:</u>	<u>Seconded by:</u>
Chairman:	Roy Bailey	Steve Barriff	Anthea Coles
Treasurer:	Sam Hearn	Anthea Coles	Steve Barriff
Hon. Secretary:	Anthea Coles.	Roy Bailey	Sam Hearn
Membership Secretary:	Philip Broomfield	Anthea Coles	Gerald Coles
Committee Member & Webmaster:	Steve Barriff	Sam Hearn	Anthea Coles

There being no other nominations, Roy asked whether anyone objected to the above listed nominees being elected nom pen. Sam felt they should be dealt with individually and this method was accordingly adopted. In the event all were voted in unanimously and were confirmed as the Executive Committee for the coming year.

7. Programme of Events and Plans for future Activities:

The Society are planning a talk by Professor Ian Beckett possibly at Aylesbury Museum, on 22nd June, and details will be circulated in due course once confirmed.

If any member has an idea for future events they should speak to a member of the Executive Committee. It would be good to organize another event for the autumn, possibly a talk, but suggestions would be welcomed.

8. The Patriot:

We have had difficulties in producing this quarterly but hope to get one out shortly and would welcome suitable articles from anyone who would like to contribute. We are encouraging members to view this and download it from the website in order to keep the costs down, but there are still members who wish to receive a printed copy and we are providing these where necessary.

9. The Website:

Roy asked whether anyone present had not looked at the new website. This was revamped a few years ago and Sam and Steve have been uploading material to it and Phil has been dealing with the genealogy section which is very interesting, but there is still a lot of work to do and he will plough on with it as fast as possible. This is a valuable resource. Because we are a registered charity, we do not have to pay website hosting charges, which saves the Society a little money.

10. A.O.B:

Charles Harvey stated that he has four boxes each containing 33 of John Adair's biography. There are several other boxes available and a copy is supplied free to all new members. Elizabeth Rodda suggested giving copies to local schools, though we had tried this in the past but if that era is not on the school curriculum they are not interested. Another suggestion was to offer copies to the local public libraries and several offers were made to contact a library and see whether they were interested in stocking them. Valerie offered to ask Aylesbury library, Anthea will try Princes Risborough, Roy will contact the History of Parliament Trust. John Hobart would be only too pleased to do the same on the Isle of Wight.

Maurice Kirtland told the meeting that Thame Museum is intending to forge closer ties with local organizations, including the John Hampden Society, which would be good.

Jim Rodda gave a brief resume of the progress at the Ship Money memorial at Prestwood, where a rustic seat has now been placed along with the new information board. Anthea reported that, when driving past the

memorial on the way to the meeting that morning, she had noticed a couple with a young baby making good use of the seat.

Jim wondered whether a dramatic presentation revolving around the life of John Hampden might be something worth considering and it was agreed that it was worth looking into, possibly involving Bruce.

Valerie suggested contacting Buckingham U3A to see if they would like someone to do a talk on John Hampden, as they are often looking for interesting speakers and usually have a good turn-out. She will talk to them and see if they would be interested. Roy told her that we ask for moderate travelling expenses and a contribution to a charity of their choice, rather than making a charge for the talk.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 4 p.m.

John and Katy Hobart were then presented with JHS badges and completed a membership application form which was handed to Phil.