

# THE PATRIOT

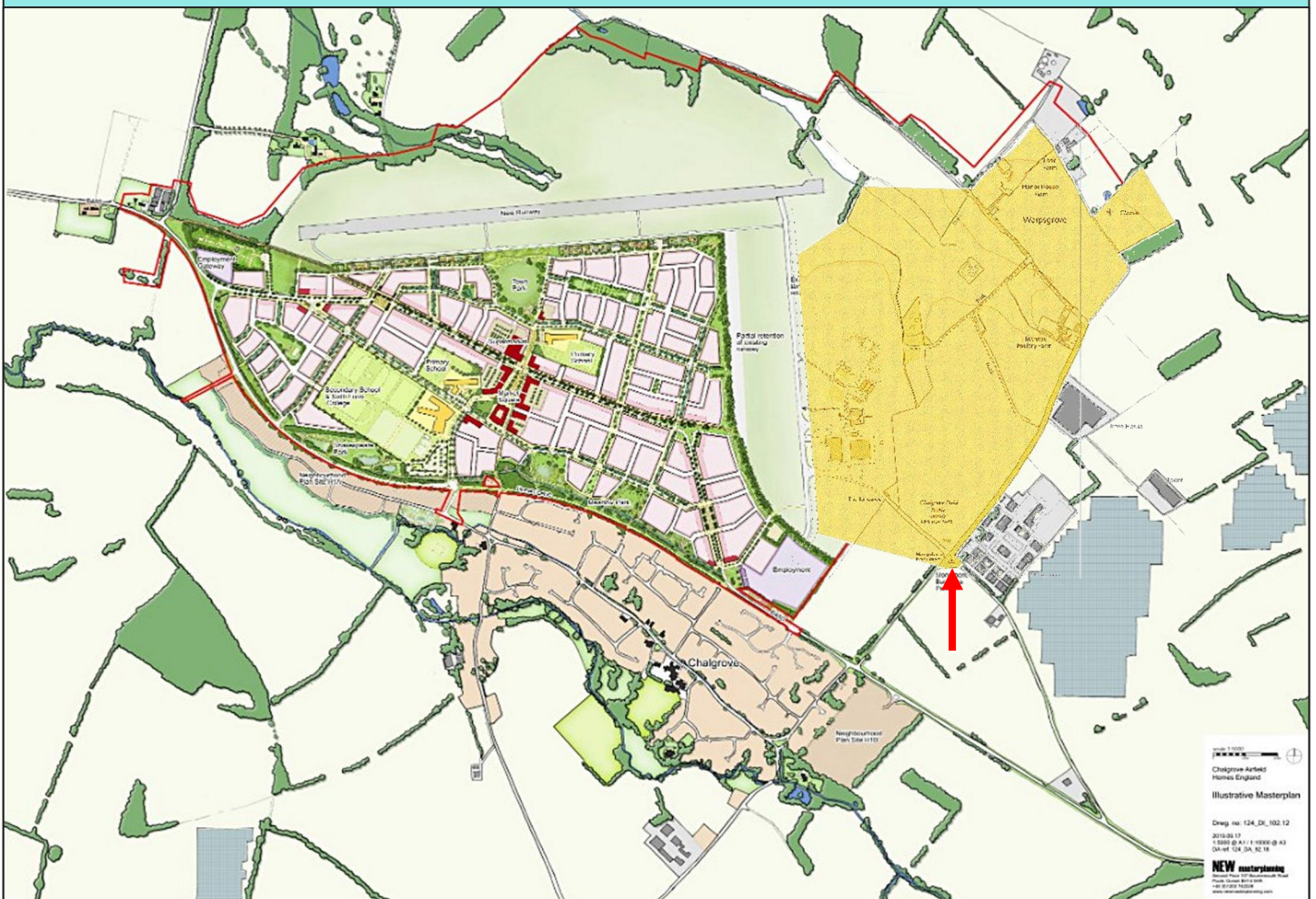
Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

No. 95 - Autumn 2020



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

## THE PROPOSED CHALGROVE DEVELOPMENT



Having purchased a swathe of land to the north of Chalgrove battlefield in 2019 (see *The Patriot* no. 91), the quango Homes England submitted a planning application in June of this year - but for development of the airfield instead. The above map shows the proposal, with Historic England's designated area of the battlefield in yellow. While none of the proposed development actually intrudes onto this area, the housing and the construction of a bund (embankment) along the eastern side would affect the vista of the area to the west, where Rupert's troops withdrew towards Chiselhampton Bridge.

The John Hampden Society was unable to object on planning grounds, but we have joined with the Battlefields Trust in calling for an extensive archaeological survey of the site, and for a line of native trees instead of the bund. In addition, we want the developers to fund restoration of the Hampden Monument (*arrowed in red*). The Society's submission can be seen on our website at:

<http://www.johnhampden.org/chalgrove-airfield-development-submission/>

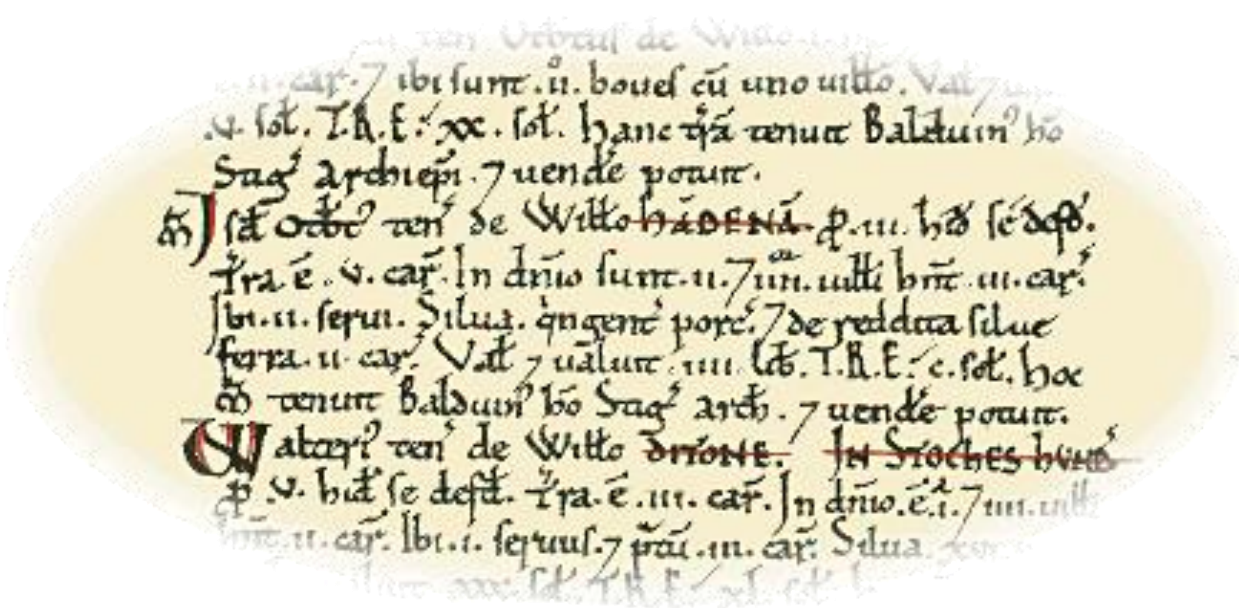
There have been a huge number of submissions to the South Oxfordshire District Council's planning website - most of them objecting violently to the proposal - and the end of the consultation period was 1<sup>st</sup> September. The target decision date is 9<sup>th</sup> October, and the result will be published on the Society's website when we know it.

## SETTLED IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE BEFORE THE CONQUEST?

The legend that the Hampden family had held land at Great and Little Hampden since Saxon times played neatly into political ideas fashionable in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. For Whigs/Liberals, it seemed appropriate that the family roots should be in a golden age before the imposition of Norman feudal tyranny. John Hampden could be presented as the inheritor of an ancient tradition that opposed absolutist monarchy and all manifestations of the so-called Norman Yoke.

John Hampden's first biographer, Lord Nugent, began his seminal work, *Some Memorials of John Hampden*, with the intriguing statement that 'The family of Hampden is one of the few which may be traced in an unbroken line from the Saxon Times'. In a footnote he cites as evidence of this a pedigree (or family tree) in Hampden House. Lord Nugent explained that the Hampden family had received 'the grant of the estate and residence in Buckinghamshire' from Edward the Confessor. He noted that the Domesday Book records the estate as being in the ownership of one Baldwin de Hampden.

The eminent historian Thomas Babington Macaulay reviewed Nugent's biography of Hampden soon after its publication in 1832. Macaulay picked up the theme of pre-conquest ancestry and claimed that the family was 'settled in Buckinghamshire before the Conquest'. He speculated that Baldwin de Hampden's name might suggest that he was one of the Norman favourites of the last Saxon King, Edward the Confessor.



Both Nugent and Macaulay refer to the entries in the Domesday Book (*above*) and it is therefore worth considering a modern rendering of the passage relating to the Aylesbury Hundred:

**Otbert holds land of William [Great and Little Hampden]. It is assessed at 3 hides. There is land for three ploughs. There are 2 slaves, woodland for 500 pigs, and from the rent of the wood, iron for two ploughs. It is worth £4: TRE [i.e. in the Time of King Edward] 100s [i.e. £5]. This land Baldwin a man of Archbishop Stigand, held and could sell [in the Time of King Edward].**

The William mentioned is William Fitz Ansculf. His father, Ansculf de Picquigny, was a companion of William the Conqueror. Ansculf died shortly before the Domesday Book was completed in 1086. His son William inherited the lands at Great and Little Hampden along with a hundred or so other estates spread across twelve counties. In 1086 Otbert 'holds land' at Great and Little Hampden 'of' William Fitz Ansculf. The Domesday Book does not say if Otbert and Baldwin are related.

We are therefore left with the evidence found in the pedigree in Hampden House and cited by Lord Nugent. This dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and unfortunately it is in a poor state of preservation. A modern transcription was used to create the family tree available on the website of the John Hampden Society. The pedigree states that Baldwin was Otbert's father.

There is no hard evidence to support the idea that Baldwin was one of the Norman favourites of Edward the Confessor. The fact that Baldwin is described in the Domesday Book as a man of Archbishop Stigand would suggest that he belonged to a political faction that was often at loggerheads with the King.

Some members may be familiar with the story that the lands at Great and Little Hampden passed into the hands of the Hampden family through the marriage of either Baldwin or Otbert to a daughter or possibly a sister of William Fitz Ansculf. There is no documentary evidence to support this. It seems unlikely that a powerful landowner like William Fitz Ansculf would have consented to the marriage of a close female relative to an obscure individual such as either 'Baldwin, a man of Archbishop Stigand' or Otbert.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary it is possible that the Hampden family did descend from Otbert (or Osbert). However we cannot be certain that Otbert was the son of Baldwin.

**Sam Hearn**

(continued on page 3)



(continued from page 2)

(Editor's note: In 1996 one of our members, Mrs Gladys Hargreaves, donated a collection of personal memorabilia to the Society. Gladys was born and brought up and went to school in Great Hampden, and a part of her collection was her Local History notebook, dating from November 1937. In it the young Gladys Saunders wrote how the Hampden family managed to retain their lands after the Norman Conquest:

**The reasons they kept it when so many Saxon lords lost their lands at the time of the Conquest, was this. When William came he gave the estate to one of his Norman followers. This man had lands in Normandy as well so he had to appoint a bailiff for his estate in England. He very wisely appointed its former owner, who of course understood the people. Now this Norman lord had a daughter, a very beautiful daughter, and the bailiff fell in love with her, and she fell in love with him. So they were married, and the Norman lord left the Saxon lord his lands when he died, and they have been in the hands of his descendants until today. The present Earl is one of his descendants'**

*A lovely story; probably a local tradition that has been passed down in Great Hampden.)*

## GOOD GOVERNANCE

As mentioned in the last two issues of *The Patriot*, the Society has adopted the video conferencing technology Zoom in order to conduct its business during the lockdown and afterwards..

As well as the members' online meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> May, we held another one (rather less well-attended!) in June to discuss the Chalgrove airfield proposal and formulate a submission from the Society. We have also held three Executive Committee meetings in this way.

While we would like to have held a belated physical AGM and lunch at *The King's Head*, Aylesbury, later this year, it appears that this is not a viable proposition. The Charity Commission has confirmed that, as an unincorporated charity, we are not bound by the regulation that requires this year's AGMs to be held by 30<sup>th</sup> September.

Consequently, the Society will continue on the present course, probably holding another online members' meeting later in the year, and planning for a proper AGM in Aylesbury next April/May.

We believe that this is the safest and most efficient course of action.

**Roy Bailey**  
Chairman



## DIARY DATES

**2020**

**Saturday 24 October**

Buckinghamshire Local History Network free online half-day conference. The subject is Bucks brewers through 3 centuries. 1.30 - 5pm. Full details of how to register and take part are on the Society's website.

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

[www.johnhampden.org/](http://www.johnhampden.org/)

## HAMPDEN IN SCOTLAND

The Society recently received an enquiry from a Scottish journalist, Russell Galbraith, who was writing an article about Hampden Park football ground in Glasgow for an online current affairs magazine, *Scottish Review*.

Russell was interested in the connection with John Hampden, and we were able to supply him with details of Hampden's visit to Edinburgh in August 1641 as one of the Parliamentary Commissioners keeping an eye on Charles I. The article was published on 19<sup>th</sup> August, and when we circulated this information to members, our Patron, Lord Buckinghamshire, wrote:

'As you may know I lived and worked in Glasgow for 9 years in the 1970s and early 1980s and we lived within hearing distance of the 'Hampden roar'.

One amusing incident was when I had ordered a taxi using my name of 'Hampden'. The taxi driver when picking me up said it was just as well my name was not 'Mr Wembley' otherwise he would not have bothered!'

## A NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER



The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that Peter Osborne (pictured) was co-opted as a member on 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Peter, who lives in Great Missenden and has been a member of the Society since 2018, is an art dealer and a director of the Osborne Samuel Gallery off New Bond Street, London. In this capacity he was instrumental in helping the Society to secure the locket of Hampden hair and other artefacts by auction on 28<sup>th</sup> May.

As well as promoting the Society in the Missenden area, Peter has also been co-operating with Jim Rodda in trying to persuade the Chiltern Society to reduce the height of the hedge surrounding the Ship Money Memorial at Prestwood. (see LETTER TO THE EDITOR on page 4)

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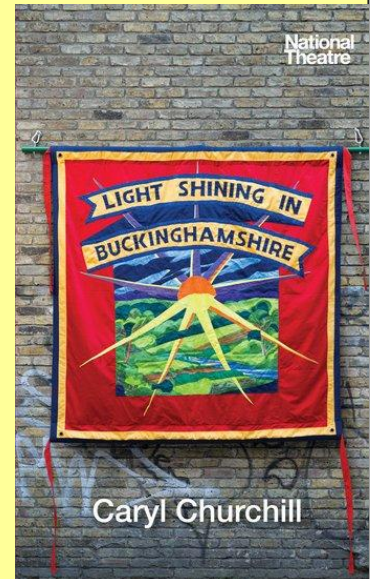
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## WHY WAS THE LIGHT SHINING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE?

The pamphlet *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1648) was made famous by the 1976 Caryl Churchill play of the same name about the Levellers and Diggers which was revived and performed at the National Theatre (*below*) in April 2015.

It is often associated with Gerrard Winstanley, leader of the Diggers, and certainly it has his style of selective and extensive Biblical quotes to criticise the Tyrant King and make claim to lands and rights for the poor. The Diggers had a vision of laws and taxes being formulated and overseen by all – including the poor. There are several passages about unfair taxes and tithes.



John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell had fought against Ship Money as an unjust tax. The English Revolution, like others before and after, had followers who stretched the cause of the revolution further and further. Cromwell is alleged to have said about the Levellers and Diggers, 'You must cut these people in pieces or they will cut you in pieces'. As in other revolutions, the leader eventually suppressed his extremists.

There is some mystery to me about why the light was shining so specifically in Buckinghamshire in 1648. The pamphlet was not claimed by Winstanley, who seems to have been living in Surrey in 1648. It was published anonymously by 'the well-affected of that county' (Buckinghamshire), which in their context meant those affected by slavery in England. It was addressed to 'poor-oppressed countrymen'. Were the authors particularly proud of being in or of Buckinghamshire? There is some evidence of a short-lived Digger commune at Iver, so perhaps the authors were based there. Or did the county have some other significance to the people likely to read it, such as being the place where the origins of the opposition to the King had been rooted?

Where had the authors' views come from? The 'inner light' of God in every man was a Quaker theme which might explain 'light shining'. There was some history of ultra-Protestant groups in Buckinghamshire. Much earlier in the Reformation (1511), Lollards, who wanted to read the Bible in English, had been burned at the stake in Amersham. The Quaker Meeting House at Jordans was not built until 1688 but it was there because of longstanding local support.

It is unlikely that farm labourers who might be affected by slavery-like conditions would be literate, so perhaps the authors were religious radicals from the local traders or junior officers in the New Model Army stationed in Aylesbury. Or perhaps an anecdotal story about Winstanley regularly visiting Aylesbury to preach is the answer. Do any members have any ideas?

**Beth Rogers**

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am a keen cyclist and am interested in local history.

Every time I pass the John Hampden memorial at Prestwood the more I have to look and peer to find it. This is not good enough.

John Hampden played an important role in English history and it is right that he should have a memorial here close to where his estate and farms were. But anyone passing along Honor End Lane in a car or bike would not notice this monument unless they were looking for it as it is surrounded by a high hedge and two tall trees.

Since the end of chair and furniture making in the area trees have been allowed to grow wild, so surely taking down two trees and trimming the hedge down to half its size should not pose a problem. And then, deservedly, John Hampden can be brought back to life here in his homelands as well as in Aylesbury.

Best wishes

**William Reid**