



THE PATRIOT



Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

No. 96 - Winter 2020/21

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

LOOKING AHEAD

The year 2020 has been a traumatic one, and only through the availability of computer software such as Zoom, Skype, Teams, Duo and WhatsApp have organisations like the John Hampden Society been able to keep in touch with members and supporters.



Happier times. Bruce Alexander delivering his after-lunch talk at the 2019 AGM at Hartwell House

Since lockdown back in March we have held three committee meetings via Zoom, and on two occasions members have been invited to an online get-together in the same way. We will be holding another one of these virtual meetings for members towards the end of January. (*see 'Diary Dates'*)

The relaxation of regulations by the Charity Commissioners has enabled us to avoid the necessity of trying to conduct an AGM by these means. Nevertheless, we need to hold one sooner or later in order to report to members, to present accounts, and to elect officers.

The committee is looking towards late April or early May 2021 to hold a physical AGM; hopefully combined with lunch at *The King's Head*, Aylesbury. Sadly, any thoughts of holding this meeting on the Isle of Wight have had to be abandoned.

However, this proposed 2021 AGM will be innovative in that we are proposing to make it both physical and virtual by installing a computer running Zoom and a big screen so that members who can't get to Aylesbury can take part. Such participants will be able to speak and vote in the normal way.

So those members who have not yet embraced the white-heat of the scientific revolution (© Harold Wilson MP!) have about 4 months to do so.

- Two other events proposed for 2021 and detailed in *The Patriot* no. 93 have become casualties of the Covid-19 pandemic. The plan to erect a plaque in St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden, to mark the last resting place of John Hampden has had to be abandoned and so has Jim Rodda's play about Ship Money - in both cases temporarily, we hope.

Roy Bailey
Chairman

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Since the passing of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018, the Society has been unable to issue detailed membership lists to members without breaking the law. The trustees consider this to be a serious drawback as we believe that members should have knowledge of the existence of other members, their location and how to contact them. This enables the interchange of ideas, opinions and information relevant to John Hampden and the 17th century.

To overcome this problem the Society decided to ask all members to confirm that they are happy to have such details as their name, address, postcode, telephone number (landline and/or mobile), and e-mail address published on a list that will be available to other members.

The task of canvassing everyone by both e-mail and letter with an explanation for this course of action and a suitable form has been undertaken by Beth Rogers of Fareham, Hants, and she reports a 67% response at the time of publication. If you have received an e-mail (check your Spam folder) or a letter from Beth and haven't replied, please do so ASAP.

When all returns are in Membership Secretary Phil Broomfield hopes to be able to publish an approved list in January.

FRIENDS WITH THE FRIENDS

Having acquired the locket with the lock of Hampden hair and other artefacts back in May, the Society's committee members have been trying to decide on the disposal of these items. It was decided to lend the locket to a museum, and discussions have been taking place as to which one would offer the best exposure and promotion of John Hampden and the Society. Hon. Treasurer Sam Hearn is pursuing this.

The other items, which comprise an annotated typescript of John Drinkwater's *John Hampden's England*, the text of part of a play about Cromwell, and two portraits thought to be members of the Drinkwater family, were of no real interest to the Society. However, Drinkwater was a member of the Dymock Poets, based in the Gloucestershire village, so contact was made with the Friends of the Dymock Poets to see if they were interested in acquiring this collection.



First-year students of the University of Gloucestershire on a visit to Dymock in November 2018

They were, and on a visit to Herefordshire in October, Chairman Roy Bailey handed over these items to Richard Simkin, chairman of the Friends of the Dymock Poets. They will be lodged with the FDP collection in the University of Gloucestershire museum, where we hope that John Hampden will be introduced to a new generation in an area not associated with him.

In addition the FDP have undertaken to publicise the JHS in general and this gift in particular, and have already published details in their newsletter. This can be viewed at:

https://www.dymockpoets.org.uk/FDP_Newsletter_Autumn_2020.pdf

So a useful exercise in co-operation which should benefit both organisations.

(Editor's note: Many of the pages of Drinkwater's 400-page typescript had notes written on the reverse in the author's very small handwriting. These referred to and amplified passages in the text, and were of great interest, so Annabel Bailey spent a number of hours transcribing these notes before the typescript was handed over. This transcription is now lodged on the Society's website at <http://www.johnhampden.org/notes-on-john-drinkwaters-john-hampdens-england/>

The Society is grateful to Annabel for undertaking this lengthy task, and the result must be one of the few benefits to come out of the Covid-19 restrictions!)

MORE ON THE PRE-CONQUEST HAMPDENS

As mentioned in the last edition of *The Patriot*, the idea that the Hampden family have held land at Great and Little Hampden since before the Norman Conquest is deep rooted. The report recently published by the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust on Hampden House's park and gardens quotes the story contained in the *Victoria County History of Bucks*:

A vellum roll of 1579 details, 'The original begyninge and lynneall Petegree of the name and familie of Hampden and the severall descentes....Hampden being a Lordship and Mannoir scituat on Chiltern Hille, within the Hundred of Aylisbury hath contynned in the possession of one race of Gentleman, the space of six hundred years... takynge the name of the place whereof they were Lordes'.

The Domesday book certainly records that in 1066 the land was held by Baldwin a man of Archbishop Stigand. The name Baldwin occurs several hundred times in the Domesday Book but according to the Hull University Domesday project these are in fact references to only a handful of individuals.

Baldwin is a continental not an Anglo-Saxon or a Scandinavian name. This allows us with some confidence to identify two pre-Conquest landowners - Abbot Baldwin of Bury St Edmunds and Baldwin, son of Herlewin. Together with Baldwin of Exeter and Baldwin of Flanders they account for almost all the Baldwins mentioned in the Domesday Book. The remaining ones are minor landowners.

The Baldwin holding land at Great Hampden is likely to have been one of these minor landowners and his name suggests that he originated from somewhere in Francophone Europe. Thomas Macaulay's speculation that he was one of the Norman favourites of Edward the Confessor might not be that far off the mark.

There is no contemporary evidence that Otbert who held the Hampden lands in 1086 was Baldwin's son, although the so-called Hampden pedigree, quoted above, says that he was. There are no other Otberts mentioned in the Domesday Book. It is possible that Otbert is a misspelling of Osbert or even Robert. The clerks producing the Domesday book worked at great speed and words could easily have been misheard by someone whose native language was Norman-French. Osbert is an obviously Anglo-Saxon name whilst Robert is a name introduced by the Normans.

Sam Hearn

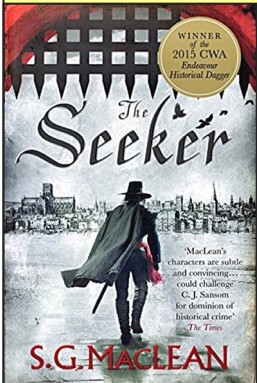
BOOK REVIEW

The Seeker

by S.G. McLean

Published in 2015 by Quercus Publishing

ISBN: 9781782068433 432 pp



This historical novel is a whodunnit set in the time of the Protectorate (1654) and is one in a series of books with Damian Seeker as the main character. He is both a detective and a spymaster, and a devout Parliamentarian who has the favour of Oliver Cromwell

In this book, a senior Army man is murdered in Whitehall. The man with a knife in his hand standing over the corpse is a Leveller who has continued to accuse Cromwell of betraying the Revolution. It is assumed that he was on his way to assassinate Cromwell and was stopped by the victim.

But of course, this is a whodunnit and the case is much more mysterious than that. Seeker sets out to find the truth. After all, how did a known troublemaker get into Whitehall; why was such a senior man the first one to come across him; and why did the 'assassin' apparently stand there waiting to be apprehended instead of hurrying to attack Cromwell?

The centre of intrigue is a coffee house run by an injured Parliamentarian soldier, where all the main characters, suspects and clues come together. What role do the Royalist lady, the merchant and his Dutch wife, the pedlar and the Scottish Presbyterian minister play? Along the way, we encounter the atrocities of the Civil War, the beginnings of the slave trade to the colonies and the disillusionment with the personal power and trappings of power that Cromwell is assuming.

The book is well-written and definitely a page-turner. It has all the tools and techniques of a well-crafted mystery, with well-researched historical detail. It also explores the human condition in exceptional times, how good people can do bad things and vice versa. Seeker is an engaging character without the clichés of modern detectives. Overall, the book is an entertaining read.

Beth Rogers

MORE ON CHALGROVE

South Oxfordshire District Council have received the Inspector's report on their Local Plan 2011-2035, which includes the planning application for Chalgrove Airfield. (see *The Patriot* nos. 91 and 95)

The supplement to the report, which can be viewed at <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/Schedule-of-Main-Modifications-November-2020-V1.pdf>, broadly supports the proposal to develop the site with 3,000 homes and other facilities.

SODC approved the Local Plan in December, but the Society has been advised that Homes England not only have to gain planning approval but also secure control of the lease of tenants Martin Baker via compulsory purchase order proceedings.

So there is still a long way to go.

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info@sarsenpress.com

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DIARY DATES

2021

Sunday 24th January An online members' meeting via Zoom, commencing at 4pm (1600hrs) GMT. Login details will be e-mailed to members.

April/May Annual General Meeting. (Date and venue to be advised.)

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

www.johnhampden.org/

WHO'S WHO

If you have ever wondered about the people who run the John Hampden Society, wonder no more.

Brief biographical details of the Society's Trustees are now available on the website at <http://www.johnhampden.org/trustee-profiles/>

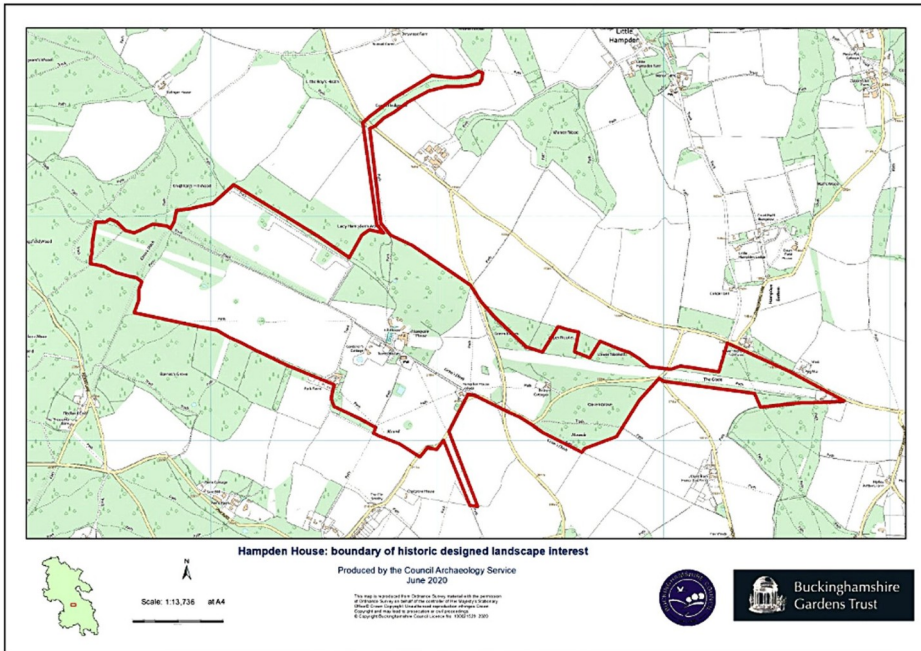


The disappearing inscription on the Ship Money monument at Prestwood

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The John Hampden Society
Little Hampden
Cryers Hill, High Wycombe
Bucks HP15 6JS
Tel: 07543 054335
e-mail: [see website](mailto:see@johnhampden.org)
Website: www.johnhampden.org
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A GARDEN OF DELIGHT

HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY



In 2014 the Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust began a Research and Recording Project to produce a detailed register of the designed gardens and landscapes within the county which were of historic interest.

In September 2020, in association with the County Council and a number of charities, the Trust published their report on Hampden House – and fascinating reading it makes. Running to 26 pages, it contains a wealth of historical and geographical detail about the house and its grounds, as well as a large number of photographs (past and present), maps, extracts of accounts and references to other sites.

The BGT kindly sent the Society a copy of the report, and this can be seen on their website at:

<https://bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hampden-Ho-BGT-RR-dossier-30-Sept-20.pdf>

A PROSPECT TO DELIGHT

The various monuments and memorials to John Hampden serve many purposes, not least as a way for those with curious minds to find out more about his life and times. The Ship Money monument erected in 1863 near Prestwood by Lord Chief Justice William Erle has the finest location, with superb views across the valley. It is managed by the Chiltern Society, and through the efforts of JHS member and Chiltern Society volunteer Jim Rodda we have encouraged the Chiltern Society to improve the visibility of the site, initially by cutting back the hedges to open up the view and throw more light on the monument itself. Progress has been made but more work needs to be done. Our pictures show the view before and after.



We are now looking at the adjacent footpaths so that we can perfect one or more 'Hampden Walks' which will take in the house and church as well as the monument, with one more extensive loop which crosses the valley towards Little Hampden. The Chiltern Society have come up with some excellent roundels to attach to gates along the footpaths. These point the way to the monument. We also plan to install a watertight box on the site which will contain the leaflets which promote the Society.

We are now actively considering what to do about the inscription on the monument itself. It is made of sandstone and Erle's text is gradually disappearing (*see picture on page 3*). Incidentally, thanks to member Valerie Horne (*see The Patriot no. 81*), we now know that Erle financed the monument; something often erroneously credited to Lord Nugent.

Although the text has been transcribed on the information panel at the site we think it is important that the inscription itself be restored. Jim and I and other interested parties are now looking at how this might be done appropriately and, of course, how to finance the work.

We are also planning to promote the cycle route which connects the monument to the Chalgrove site. It is a lovely ride of some 50 miles there and back across the Chilterns and down into Oxfordshire, mostly on quiet roads. I did the trip last summer but didn't quite have the time or energy to complete a monument trilogy and head back via Aylesbury. The route is on the Chiltern Society's list of cycle rides at <https://chilternsociety.org.uk/chilterns-cycleway/>



Peter Osborne