

THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

No. 99 - Autumn 2021



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

BACK TO THE FUTURE!

One small indication that life is beginning to get back to normal was seen on September 11th, when members forsook their Zoom programs and supported the Ride and Stride charity event, which involved visiting as many local churches as possible by bicycle and on foot. Chairman Beth Rogers reports:



St Nicholas Church, Great Kimble, was one that was open, and several members visited it to see the John Hampden artefacts on show. This beautiful church is kept open by dedicated and friendly volunteers, including our new member, Roger Howgate.

Roger and his family have done a marvellous job restoring a handmade 19th century facsimile of the Vestry Minutes of 1635 (right), when John Hampden and others refused to pay their Ship Money Tax. Members were interested to note some women on the list of signatories, and an apparent conflict of interest for the assessors and constables.

The restored church 'pub sign', also known as the St Nicholas sign as the main figure on the sign is the saint, was also on display. The saint's banner refers to John Hampden and the opposition to the Ship Money Tax which started at the church. There was a booklet available at the church explaining the painstaking work needed to restore this sign. I am delighted to announce that Roger will be giving a Zoom talk about this work in November.

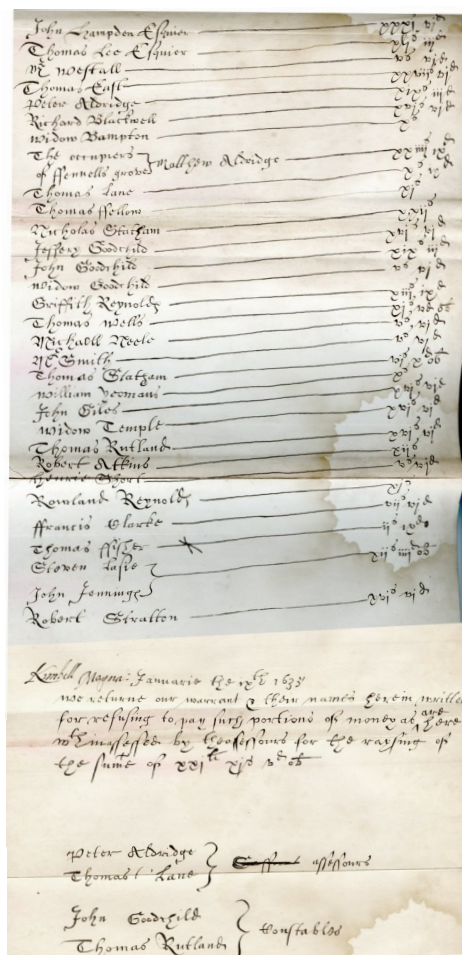
Relationships with the Hampden descendants have not always been positive. There is a 12th century 'Aylesbury' font (below) in excellent condition, despite having been hidden in the local pond and churchyard to save it from the hammer of John Hampden's son, Richard, who had religious objections to it. Fortunately, good relations were restored in 1885, and there is a Hobart-Hampden chapel (above, left) with the heraldic symbols of the Hampden and de Vere families. This was designed and built by The Rev. Arthur Hobart-Hampden, grandson of the 6th Earl of Buckinghamshire, who was Rector from 1891 to 1909.



The church is worth visiting and so is the website <http://www.kimblesjourney.uk> where you can buy Roger's excellent book about the history of the Kimbles (all proceeds to local charities).

Members of the Society were also on duty at St Mary Magdalene's, Great Hampden. Elizabeth Rodda welcomed visitors, and husband Jim, clad in cycling lycra, hi-vis jacket and helmet, arrived from Great Kimble church with his daughter Katy.

It was good to see members out and about promoting the Society in person again.



The Editor writes ...

The talk I gave to the Kettner Society at the National Liberal Club in London on 15th August was the first face to face one I (or anyone else from the JHS) had done since October 2019. Fortunately, I had not forgotten how to ride my bicycle, so to speak, and the presentation was well received.

Kettner Society chairman Peter Whyte told me a very interesting story about John Hampden and the NLC. (see *The Sword of Hampden*)

Meanwhile our new chairman, Beth Rogers, has got a firm grip on matters and is pressing ahead with ideas for meetings, talks, etc. By the time you read this many of her plans will have come to fruition. Already the date of next year's AGM has been decided. Details of these events can be found elsewhere in this issue.

Members of the Society visited John Milton's cottage at Chalfont St Giles in early October, and Sam Hearn's two-part article (*right*) provides an insight into the poet's radical background.

A reminder that the Executive Committee are very keen that the next issue of *The Patriot* - no. 100 - should be a special one; much larger than usual and containing a wide variety of interesting articles,, news items and photos.

If you have anything that you would like to submit, the address is below. Shall we say a tentative deadline of 6th January, to give you time to recover from Christmas/Hogmanay!

Roy Bailey
Editor

editor@johnhampden.org

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The John Hampden Society
Little Hampden
Cryers Hill, High Wycombe
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HAMPDEN AND MILTON

The Buckinghamshire connection

Part 1



While John Hampden's Buckinghamshire roots are well understood, and John Milton's brief sojourn in Chalfont St Giles (Bucks) in 1665/6 is common knowledge, far less has been written about Milton's time at Horton in south Bucks between 1635 and 1638. However, American academic Warren E Sephar, among others, has pointed out that south Bucks in the 1630s was a hot-bed of puritan-inspired political activism and that this may well have contributed to the development of Milton's strong republican beliefs.

In 1635, having secured his MA, Milton (*left, in 1629*) began six-years of self-directed study. He read extensively across a wide range of subjects including politics and history. From then until 1638 he lived either at Berykn Manor (*below*), a property leased by his father at Horton, or his father's new home at Hammersmith.

Whilst some have attributed Milton's radicalism and his rejection of the Stuart monarchy to his early academic studies and the influence of his teachers at St Paul's School, a strong case has been made by Sephar that his time in south Bucks would have strongly shaped his political outlook. Sephar identifies four crucial initiatives in the period 1637 – 1642 that were closely associated with Buckinghamshire.

He lists these initiatives as: (1) the Ship Money Controversy of the mid 1630's; (2) the Buckinghamshire offer to Parliament to raise a militia against the Crown's magazine at Kingston in January 1641- 42; (3) the Buckinghamshire petition to Parliament in January 1642; and (4) Charles' notorious attempt on 4th Jan 1642 to seize the five members. John Hampden was involved with all four initiatives.

The Ship Money writs of 1634 and 1635 would have the subject of local controversy when Milton arrived at Horton. Ship Money was levied on leading Horton families including the Hawkinsons, Bowdens, Mitchells and the Spensers. He found himself in the midst of some of the most resolute Puritans and opponents of the Crown in the whole of England.

Residing in south Bucks in the mid-1630s Milton would have been well aware that Hampden had emerged as the leader of the opposition to the payment of Ship Money in Buckinghamshire. Milton's 19th century biographer, David Masson, believed that Milton met Bulstrode Whitelocke, Hampden's friend, at Horton in the Spring or Summer of 1635.



Sam Hearn
(to be continued)

TALK REVIEW

Saints and Sinners: Oxfordshire Characters in the British Civil Wars

An online talk on 9th September by Stephen Barker,
organised by Thame Museum

We all know that Oxford hosted the royal court during the Civil Wars, but Oxfordshire was as divided as any other county between King and Parliament. There was significant Leveller activity; the Banbury mutiny in 1649 led to three Leveller leaders being executed in Burford. William Lenthall, Speaker of the House who defied the King in 1642 (and Cromwell in 1653) was born in Henley and buried in Burford.

Oxfordshire also produced some notable Royalists such as Lucius Carey, 2nd Viscount Falkland, born in Burford. He was an intellectual and a moderate, and dismayed by the war. He is perceived to have suffered from depression, and died at the First Battle of Newbury taking a 'suicidal' risk.

Interesting women in the collection of Saints and Sinners included Elizabeth Poole, a 'prophetess' from Abingdon who influenced Parliamentary John Lilburne; Ann Fanshawe, who wrote a memoir of her poverty in Royalist Oxford; and Jane Whorwood who lived at Holton House near Oxford and became a Royalist spy and (allegedly), the King's mistress.

Readers of *The Patriot* will be glad to hear that a member of the audience raised a question about John Hampden and the speaker referred to him as the 'de facto Leader of Parliament', admired as an organiser and a strategic thinker who had sensitivity and compassion.

The talk by Stephen Barker, who is an independent Heritage Advisor, was delivered with great pace which did not compromise attention to detail. It was very interesting and was a great example of the outreach of our friends at Thame Museum, which displays some John Hampden artefacts owned by the Society. Well worth a visit!

WHAT DISTINGUISHES A MARTYR?

In the 21st century, the word 'martyr' is either trivialised ('I'm a martyr to my lumbago') or demonised because of an association with terrorism. Most dictionaries define a martyr as someone who is killed because of their beliefs. Martyrs are important figures in religion, and in the 17th century they were extremely important to both Catholics and Protestants.

It is so hard for us to imagine living in a world where disease and poor weather were life-threatening and arbitrary, and in the absence of science, everything good and bad was attributed to faith. Having the right faith and the right amount of it obsessed everyone. Mary Tudor probably really believed that by burning Protestants she was being merciful, saving them from hell.

Much of the motivation for the English Civil War was religious, with Puritans convinced that the King (manipulated by the Queen) was trying to return England to Catholicism. They believed in creating a godly Protestant nation on earth, and went to war with a martyr's mindset – to die in the war would be dying for their belief, their faith.

We might think that the Royalists were less religiously zealous, but King Charles is regarded as a martyr and was for some time an Anglican saint. The Society of King Charles the Martyr explains that King Charles was offered his life if he would abandon episcopacy (rule by bishops) in the Church of England but he refused. Therefore, he was a martyr for the Anglican orthodoxy. Most history books today focus on his insistence on his divine right to rule being the main cause of his trial and execution.

(continued on page 4)



DIARY DATES

2021

Saturday 23rd October. Bucks Local History Network – Conference & Fair to be held at Wycombe Abbey School, Frances Dove Way, High Wycombe HP11 1PE or online. 11am to 4pm.

Sunday 7th November. A Zoom talk by Roger Howgate on the restoration of the Great Kimble artefacts, commencing at 7pm.

2022 (pending)

February. A Zoom talk by Dr Ismini Pells of Leicester University on Civil War medicine.

March/April. A visit to Hampden House and Church.

Sunday 27th March. The Society's Annual General Meeting. (*Venue and time to be advised*)

Friday 24th - Sunday 26th June. Wreath-laying in Thame followed by the Sealed Knot re-enactment and Thame History Fair.

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

www.johnhampden.org/

LOOKING AHEAD

The Diary (*above*) mentions the forthcoming Sealed Knot re-enactment in Thame next June. Long-serving members may remember the events of John Hampden Week in June 1997.

The Society mounted its exhibition in the John Hampden Primary School, where the playing field was devoted to a Living History exhibition by John Hampden's Greencoats, who later marched through the town with drums beating and colours flying. (see *The Patriot* no. 19)

The Greencoats are members of the English Civil War Society, but perhaps they might be invited to co-operate with their rivals the Sealed Knot and put on a really impressive display.

Something to look forward to.

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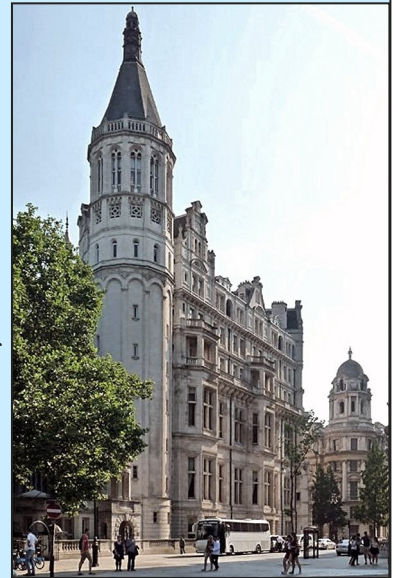
THE SWORD OF HAMPDEN

My invitation to give a talk about John Hampden at the National Liberal Club in August was one I was happy to accept, as I had only visited it once very briefly many years ago. My hosts, the Kettner Society, hold their monthly lunches here in the elegant and ornate Lady Violet Room, named after Herbert Asquith's daughter Lady Violet Bonham Carter. I was welcomed by KS chairman Peter Whyte, and given a guided tour of the building before lunch.



The National Liberal Club (*right*) was established by Prime Minister William Gladstone in 1882 to provide club facilities for Liberal Party campaigners among the newly enlarged electorate following the Third Reform Act in 1884.

Designed by Alfred Waterhouse, it is a superb Italianate building with a dining room, a bar, function rooms, a billiards room, a smoking room, a library and a beautiful long outdoor riverside terrace. It is very accessible, being located at the bottom of Northumberland Avenue, just 2 or 3 minutes walk from Embankment tube station. In a dark alcove in the Smoking Room is a statue of John Hampden (*left*); a smaller version of the one in Aylesbury by Henry Fehr. Underneath is a small brass plaque, erected by subscription in 1921, which reads:



John Hampden 1594 -1643 by H.C. Fehr

"A great and terrible crisis came. The nation looked round for a defender. Calmly and unostentatiously, the plain Buckinghamshire esquire placed himself at the head of his countrymen and right before the face and across the path of Tyranny."

Lord Macaulay

Later Peter sent me details about a mystery surrounding the statue:

I understand there were talks on Hampden at the Club up to the 1950's and nothing until now, so a talk on the great man was well overdue. As you see he is commemorated with this statue, and his sword was on the wall in a showcase next to it until 1952, when it disappeared during a military conference. It appears that there were a lot of military conferences held here after the Second World War because of the NLC's close proximity to the Old War Office and the MOD. I will ask the Hon. Archivist to find a photograph of the sword in situ; I remember seeing a photograph of it in a former club magazine. I believe Hampden was placed in a pantheon of liberal figures by eminent Victorians including Lords Macaulay and Trevelyan, who were related.

Peter later told me that he thought the missing sword was now in the possession of Her Majesty the Queen; a possibility which I took (and still take) with a very large pinch of salt!

Roy Bailey

(continued from page 3)

WHAT DISTINGUISHES A MARTYR?



Protestant martyrs being burned at the stake in Newbury in 1556

This has some religious significance - the idea that God appoints rulers was the basis of many absolute monarchies. The connection with defending governance of the church by bishops seems tenuous, but Puritans certainly wanted to get rid of bishops and Charles would have believed that bishops were critical to the right way of worship.

We celebrate John Hampden as a great patriot, who did lose his life defending a cause. In his time, belief in 'no taxation without representation' was just a symptom of a religious view of godly governance. While he might not have been claimed specifically as a martyr by Parliamentarians, would he be seen as one of the many 'martyred dead' claimed by Radicals in other contexts since?

Beth Rogers