



THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society
No. 101 - Spring 2022



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

A HYBRID SUCCESS

The 2022 AGM heralded a welcome return both to Hampden House and to face-to-face meetings. And it was a first for the Society as well; being a hybrid meeting with several members participating online from distant parts.



The AGM in progress, with Dr Beth Rogers participating by Zoom
Photographs by Sam Hearn

Sunday 27th March was also Mothering Sunday, and a number of members attended the special morning service in St Mary Magdalene Church. In fact, the JHS membership equalled (or possibly exceeded!) the local congregation, rather to the surprise of the Rector, the Rev. Deniol Heywood. However, he rose to the occasion by including references to John Hampden's character in his sermon.

After coffee and biscuits members gathered in the Great Hall, where Hon. Treasurer Sam Hearn had installed a computer, projector and screen to enable distant members to participate by Zoom. This proved essential, as Chairman Dr Beth Rogers was unable to attend in person for family reasons.

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The Editor writes ...

It has been interesting to watch the John Hampden Society weather the storms of the Covid-19 pandemic, and then prosper.

Using modern technology such as Zoom, the committee has kept the Society running and members informed, and has now held a hybrid AGM that combined the best of both worlds. Attendees revelled at being back in the magnificent surroundings of John Hampden's ancestral home and being able to talk face-to-face.

Abolition of virtually all restrictions means that the Thame weekend in June promises to be a memorable one, and we hope to see a good turnout of members.

At the AGM I was obliged to announce that I intend to give up the editorship of *The Patriot* at the end of this year.

With the occasional help of Anthea Coles and Sam Hearn, I have been involved almost continuously with the production of the newsletter since I launched it in early 1993. The Winter 2022/23 issue, following our 30th anniversary, will be my swan-song.

Producing *The Patriot* is not difficult but rather time-consuming, and I want to concentrate on other, more personal, projects.

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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

Printed by Sarsen Press
22 Hyde Street, Winchester
Hampshire SO23 7DR
Tel: 01962 854281
info@sarsenpress.com

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A HYBRID SUCCESS

17 members, including the Society's Patron Lord Buckinghamshire, were present in person and several more from the USA via Zoom, The usual procedure of officers' reports and election of the committee took place, and in addition Roger Howgate and Bob Hammond made useful and interesting contributions.



Roger (*above*) informed the meeting of the events scheduled to take place at Great Kimble on Sunday 19th June, while Bob made a plea for the Society to pay more attention to John Hampden's second wife, Lady Letitia Vachell, who cared for the Patriot's children after his untimely death. The Editor of *The Patriot* immediately commissioned Bob to write an article about her, and this will appear in a later issue.

Sadly, the planned tour of Hampden House did not take place.

Next year's AGM may be on the Isle of Wight. Watch this space!

A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER!

The weekend of 18th/19th June in Thame promises to be as memorable as that of June 1997. (see *The Patriot* no. 19.)

Saturday 18th June

Sealed Knot re-enactment of local Civil War action, including a role for John Hampden. This will be located at Thame Rugby Club grounds.

Sunday 19th June

9.30am. Wreath-laying at the John Hampden plaque in Thame High Street, with a Sealed Knot guard of honour. All JHS Members are welcome.

10.00am. Sealed Knot activities continue at the rugby club.

10.00am. Thame Local History Fair at Thame Town Hall.

4pm. Ceremony to celebrate the restoration of John Hampden artefacts at **Great Kimble Church**, including a tour of local historical sites associated with John Hampden.

We are grateful to the Sealed Knot, Thame Museum and Great Kimble Church for involving us in these events.

Please come, and pass on the information to friends and family who might be interested. Help in running our stall at the Thame Local History Fair would be much appreciated.

Timings are provisional and some activities are subject to approvals. We will update the website with more details as they become available.

TALK REVIEW

Holes in the head, imbecilic legs and a 'woolfe' in the arm:

The evidence for Civil War medical practice from maimed soldiers' petitions

An online talk on February 28th 2022
by Dr Ismini Pells, University of Oxford

Dr Pells began her fascinating talk by pointing out that, to the modern mind, early medicine is regarded as barbaric and superstitious. However, her research indicates that the surgeons of the Civil War period did save many lives. As often happens in wars, there were improvements in knowledge and treatments. Patients spoke well of their doctors and put their faith in them. Royalist army surgeon Richard Wiseman and Parliamentarian army surgeon James Cooke produced manuals which indicates that they were particularly noted for their competence.

Dr Pells' research into the petitions for pensions from wounded soldiers indicates the type of wounds that men survived, and is an indicator of the general competence of the medics serving the armies. There are about 4,000 surviving records. First of all, they give an indication of how wounds were received, and gunshot wounds were the most numerous (from musket fire) followed by limbs being lost to cannon fire. Wounds from blades also occurred, and general accidents, such as being crushed by a falling horse. In the petitions for pensions, it is wounds in the hands, arms and legs which are most mentioned, as wounds to the torso and head were usually fatal. However, surgery to the skull and torso was sometimes successful and we were treated to some gory detail!

Of notable interest to members, given John Hampden's gunshot wound, is that surgeons knew how difficult it was to extract a bullet near a joint where tendons, ligaments and nerves meet. In the questions after the talk, Dr Pells mentioned that the bullet would often carry fragments of fibre into the wound as well, which could cause sepsis, and this may be why John Hampden initially rallied after his injury but then succumbed to it.

Beth Rogers

CHALGROVE BATTLEFIELD WALK

If you are not too exhausted from all the activities in Thame on June 18th/19th, then why not join Simon Marsh, a member of both the Battlefield Trust and the JHS, who will be leading a guided walk of the Chalgrove Battlefield on Sunday 31st July. The walk will take around one and a half hours, and will include plenty of time for questions before, during and afterwards.

Those wishing to take part should meet at the John Hampden Monument, Monument Road, Chalgrove, OX44 7RW at 10.30am. There is space to park your car close to the monument. Contact mercia@battlefieldstrust.com for more information or call 07742 958888. Chalgrove's three pubs, *The Red Lion*, *The Lamb* and *The Crown*, all serve Sunday lunch. Booking may well be advisable.

Some of you may wish to visit other local historic sites at same time. The wall paintings at Chalgrove's St Mary's church are a hidden treasure. The church should be open on a Sunday but give church warden Patricia Hunt a call on 01865 891 200 to make sure.

The medieval church and alms houses at nearby Ewelme are also well worth a visit. The two-tier tomb of Chaucer's grand-daughter, Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, is particularly special - if a little macabre.



DIARY DATES

2022

Saturday 11th June. A talk on the Battle of Chalgrove via Zoom, commencing at 14.30 BST. Details below.

Saturday 18th & Sunday 19th June. A weekend of activities in Thame and Great Kimble involving the Sealed Knot. See page 2.

Sunday 31st July. Chalgrove Battlefield Walk. Details below.

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

www.johnhampden.org/

ESSAY COMPETITION

An international study organisation has announced an essay competition on a military topic.

The Pike and Shot Society <<https://www.pikeandshotsociety.org/>>, which promotes interest in the warfare of the Early Modern period (roughly from 1400 to 1721), runs the annual Bill Braham Memorial Essay Competition, and is offering a prize for an essay of between 2,500 and 3,000 words on a military topic within that time period.

The P&SS is one of the societies involved in the British Civil Wars Memorial Project, and their Chairman is JHS member Stephen Ede-Borrett.

Full details can be found on the JHS website at:

<https://tinyurl.com/yyz8c4f4>

CHALGROVE BATTLEFIELD TALK

Under the auspices of the Bucks Archaeological Society, Chalgrove resident Derek Lester will give a talk via Zoom entitled *John Hampden and the Battle of Chalgrove* on Saturday 11th June at 14.30 BST.

Book via the BAS or at

<https://bas1.org.uk/lectures-and-talks>

A WITCH (FINDER'S) REPORT

A situation comedy about witchfinders? Really? *The Witchfinder*, a situation comedy broadcast on BBC2 in March/April 2022, was more of a redemption story as aspiring witchfinder Gideon Bannister gradually falls in love with the unfortunate woman he has picked up in an East Anglian village and is taking to Chelmsford for trial for bewitching a pig. Gideon is a bit of a buffoon, decent at heart, but desperate for a career other than the military. Eventually, his captive Thomasina manages to persuade him to do the right thing. He helps her to escape from her trial and they go on the run. Although it is designed as entertaining tosh rather than history, it is based on real-life events in East Anglia in 1645-47.



John Stearne and Matthew Hopkins from Manningtree (who feature in the series) instigated hysteria and were responsible for many bogus trials and the deaths of innocent people. For them, it was a money-making scheme - they charged for ridding villages of their witches. To the village elders, it was perhaps a useful means of social cleansing of the disabled, elderly or 'different'. The vicar of Great Staughton published an exposure of Hopkins' methods in 1647 and the witch hunts ceased. The comedy certainly sends up the witch-finding 'industry' and the villagers and gentry who were looking for scapegoats for natural misfortunes.

Should we welcome some entertaining tosh that might interest people in 17th century history? *The Witchfinder* got poor reviews and was compared unfavourably to the sharply witty, much-loved historical sitcom *Blackadder*. Nevertheless, given how little attention is given to the 17th century on television (compared to the saturation of dramas and documentaries about the Tudors), at least it reminds TV viewers that 'stuff happened' in this period.

Beth Rogers

THE BRITISH CIVIL WARS MEMORIAL PROJECT

An exciting new project has recently been launched to record memorials associated with the British Civil Wars.

This is a collaborative project involving a number of interested societies including (among others) the John Hampden Society, the Battlefields Trust, and the Cromwell Association. The aim is to record all forms of memorials, plaques and information boards associated with events during the Civil Wars and the soldiers who fought in them.

Simon Marsh (Battlefields Trust Research Coordinator and JHS Member) said, 'We want this to be a resource for the public so they can see which Civil War memorials are in places they visit, but also for researchers looking at how memorialisation of the Wars has changed over time'.

Initially, members of participating organisations are being asked to help populate the database via an online form. If you are able to make a submission to the database, please use the online form at <https://bit.ly/BritishCWMemorials>.

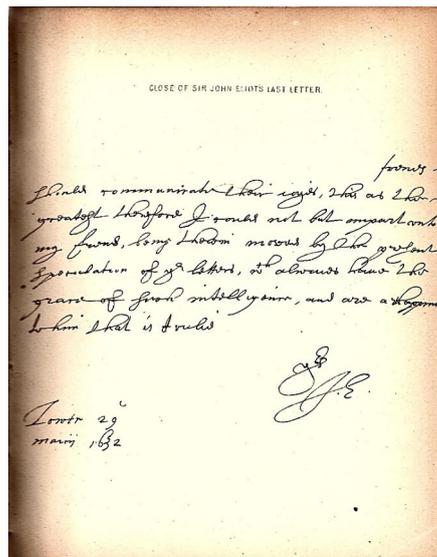
Sam Hearn

ELIOT'S LAST LETTER

Having read, in the review of John Adair's biography in *The Patriot* no. 100, about Sir John Eliot's correspondence with John Hampden from the Tower of London, member John Seal sent us a poignant reminder of their close friendship:

I thought that it might be appropriate to have a small remembrance of Sir John Eliot, the man who no doubt had an influence on John Hampden at the time of Charles I's early parliament.

A man who was a close friend of Hampden until the very end of his life and whose final letter from the Tower was sent to his trusted friend.



A copy of the last paragraph of this letter is attached, written in Eliot's own hand, taken from the *The Letter Book of Sir John Eliot*, being part of the 2nd volume of Eliot's *De Jure Maiestatis or Political Treatise of Government (1628-1630)*. Along with the transcript, spelling is as it was written.

John Seal