



# THE PATRIOT

Newsletter of the John Hampden Society  
No. 105 - Spring 2023



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 CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

Perhaps it was appropriate that, in the year of the coronation of our new Sovereign, the John Hampden Society should return to *The King's Head* for its AGM.

Fulfilling a promise made when the proposed 2020 AGM there had to be cancelled because of the Covid pandemic, around 2 dozen members gathered in the Gatehouse Chamber at this ancient hostelry in the centre of Aylesbury to review the events of 2022 and plan for the coming year.



The AGM in progress (above) and guest speaker Charles Cordell in operation (right)

Prior to the meeting a splendid buffet lunch was enjoyed by the assembled company. The meeting was again a hybrid one with members able to participate by Zoom. Sadly, on this occasion only one person took advantage of this facility – committee member Rich Howell from the USA. Our Isle of Wight member John Hobart made the long journey together with his son George and brother Robert.

The usual items were discussed; the most significant of which was a report by Dr Beth Rogers on the Society's Risk Assessment. She explained the effort that had gone into producing a risk register and a strategic plan, which are recommended by the Charity Commission for governance purposes. The work done by the committee also served to accentuate that, while the Society is sustaining itself, more volunteers are needed to undertake roles such as editor and webmaster, and to respond to requests for talks on John Hampden.

Beth went on to say that there is a Plan B for survival, but the health and age of committee members means that there is an urgent need for new, active contributors. (At the time of writing no-one has come forward.)

All members of the outgoing committee were re-elected nem con on a show of hands, and the meeting concluded with a fascinating talk by historian Charles Cordell (pictured), whose novel *God's Vindictive Wrath* was reviewed in the last issue of *The Patriot*.



## The Editor writes ...

This will be the last issue of this newsletter that I shall edit. Having been intimately involved with the Society since its formation over 30 years ago, I feel it is time to step back and let new blood with new ideas take over.

I shall watch events with great interest and hope to make the occasional contribution to this publication.

It seems appropriate - and a tribute to her - to end with the catchphrase that Betty Boothroyd would use to close Prime Minister's Questions each week - 'Time's up!'

**Roy Bailey**  
**Editor (retired)**  
[royhbailey@btinternet.com](mailto:royhbailey@btinternet.com)

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

I am a school librarian by profession and would like to make John Adair's biography of John Hampden available to a wider audience

I recently posted on the Secondary School Librarians Facebook page asking if any colleagues would like a free copy of John Adair's biography of John Hampden for their libraries. I received seventeen positive responses and have sent copies of the book to them.

No doubt, many JHS members belong to organisations such as local historical societies, reading clubs etc., that have a Facebook page. It might be worth posting on it and offering copies to them. If you want copies to distribute, please get in touch with me. My contact details are:

Email: [charles.harvey@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:charles.harvey@hotmail.co.uk)

Phone: 020 8455 5174 or 07961 194771

**Charles Harvey**

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## OBITUARY

**Baroness Boothroyd, OM, PC**  
**1929 - 2023**



Carmela Levene

Longer-serving members of the Society were saddened to learn of the death of Baroness Boothroyd on 26<sup>th</sup> February at the age of 93.

As Betty Boothroyd MP she became famous as the first female Speaker of the House of Commons; a post she occupied with distinction for more than 8 years. She was hailed by Prime Minister Tony Blair as 'something of a national institution'. She was invited to attend the launch of the John Hampden Society in October 1992, but was unable to accept. However, she sent the Society a splendid letter extolling the virtues of John Hampden and his work to defend the freedom of Parliament. This was published in *The Patriot* no. 1.

Betty Boothroyd was born in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, and as a teenager was for a while a member of the Tiller Girls dancing troupe, briefly appearing at the London Palladium. She was elected as Labour MP for West Bromwich West in 1973 and served that constituency until her retirement in 2000. She was subsequently created a life peer as Baroness Boothroyd of Sandwell in the County of West Midlands.



As Baroness Boothroyd had no surviving relatives the Society's Chair, Dr Beth Rogers, sent a letter of condolence to the current Speaker, our Vice-President Sir Lindsay Hoyle, and received a charming acknowledgement.

## JOHN HAMPDEN'S BED?



The Society's American committee member, Rich Howell, recently paid a visit to the Jamestown Settlement Museum - <https://www.jfymuseums.org/visit/jamestown-settlement> - at Williamsburg, Virginia, to view the bed said to have been slept on by John Hampden when he was a pupil at Lord Williams's Grammar School, Thame.

It is described as 'a late-16th or early-17th century wheeled trundle bed' made of oak, and Assistant Curator Nicole Gregory kindly sent Rich two photographs which he has forwarded.

Another photo of this bed in its original state, taken from John Drinkwater's 1933 book *John Hampden's England*, was featured in an article in *The Patriot* no. 48 in 2006.

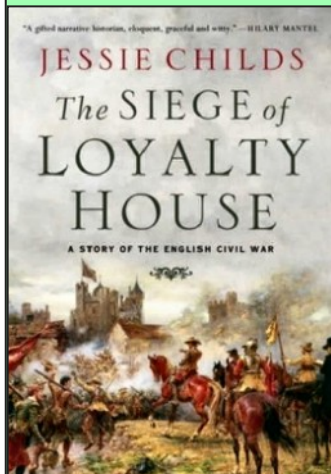
## BOOK REVIEW

### The Siege of Loyalty House

by Jessie Childs

Published in hardback January 2023 by Pegasus Books

ISBN 9781639363100 352 pages.



The story of the three successive sieges of Basing House has been told many times before but Jessie Childs, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, has produced something quite remarkable. One reviewer has called it 'an immersive and electrifying account of a defining episode in the English Civil War that illuminates the human experience and human cost of this devastating war'. Her scholarship is profound but never boring and it is hard to fault.

The book brings to life the motives and foibles of a huge range of characters who found themselves besieging and besieged at Basing. On re-reading the book it is remarkable to see that Childs manages, without ever being bland, to favour neither

one side nor the other. The only individual that she cannot warm to is the radical cleric, Hugh Peters, and who can blame her?

The first sixty pages of the book provide a detailed account of the events leading up to the first civil war and the siege itself. There is a fascinating account of the rivalries and the religious and ideological splits within the City of London and its militia, the Trained Bands. This makes it clear why the Earl of Essex's decision not to use the London Trained Bands as an aggressive attacking force at the Battle of Turnham Green in 1642 was extremely sensible.

Whilst this is not a book about Hampden there is much for members of the Society to enjoy and reflect upon. Robert Hammond, Charles I's future jailer and Hampden's son-in-law, was captured in the fog by members of the besieged garrison. He was held hostage as security for the life of the owner of Basing House, the Marquess of Winchester. The Marquess's wife, Honora, emerges as an incredibly resourceful and courageous woman, riding through enemy lines to Oxford and successfully pleading with the King to send a force to relieve the siege. In one of those strange twists of fate Honora's beloved half-brother was the Earl of Essex, Parliament's commander-in-chief.

The siege of Basing House reminds us, as the war in Ukraine had demonstrated, that a highly motivated, well provisioned garrison can hold out against a far larger besieging force for many months. However, then as now, there can be no real protection from sustained artillery assault and the besiegers worst enemy can be the spy and traitor or turncoat within your own camp.

**Sam Hearn**



## DIARY DATES

### 2023

**Sunday 28th May.** 11.15am. Morning Service at St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden, followed by a meeting to discuss the plaque. All welcome. (see: **REVIVAL**)

**Saturday 10th June.** A talk via Zoom by Dr Andrew Lacey entitled *The Only Anglican Martyr - King Charles I and the Beauty of Holiness*, commencing at 4pm (1600 hrs) BST.

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

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

## REVIVAL

In March 2020 committee members met the Rev Deiniol Heywood and his churchwardens to discuss the idea of erecting a plaque to mark the final resting place of John Hampden in St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden. Our picture shows the suggested wording This would have tied in with the proposed refurbishment of the 800-year-old church, and the details of our scheme appeared in *The Patriot* no. 93.

Near here lies the body of

**John Hampden**

1595 - 1643

Statesman - Soldier - Patriot.

*Vestigia Nulla Retrorsum*

The Covid pandemic put paid to both proposals, but now the church refurbishment is to take place this year, and the Society is planning to also revive its proposal for the plaque. However, permission has to be obtained from the Diocese of Oxford. A second meeting is planned for Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May at the church after morning service and all are welcome. (See: *Diary Dates*.)

The church's plans can be viewed at <https://www.greathampden.org.uk/project>, and their fundraising page for the work is at <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/gh2023>

### ANOTHER HAMPDEN HOUSE



But where? Details in the next issue.

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## TRUSTEES TALKING

Two members of the Society's committee, Beth Rogers and Sam Hearn, have been busy giving talks to local organisations this year.

Sam kicked off on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January with a talk to the Amersham Society entitled 'William Hakewill and the re-enfranchisement of Amersham'. He writes:

*It is always good to return to Amersham, the town where I was born and brought up. The chance to open the Amersham Society's 2023 programme of talks was too good an opportunity to miss. The account of how Amersham, after a lapse of over three centuries, once again came to return two MPs to Parliament is inextricably bound up with the story of John Hampden.*



*As readers of **The Patriot** will know William Hakewill was the constitutional lawyer that Hampden collaborated with to achieve the re-enfranchisement of the three ancient Buckinghamshire boroughs of; Amersham, Marlow and Wendover. Hakewill and Hampden both lived in Buckinghamshire but sat for the adjoining Cornish constituencies of Tregony and Grampound in the Parliament of 1621. It is understandable why they should want to represent boroughs closer to their homes and London.*

*King James was not keen that three boroughs should have their ancient rights restored. Ultimately however the cases submitted to the Privileges Committee were sound and there was little that the King or his son Charles I could do about it. Hakewill and John Crewe were duly elected as Amersham's two new MPs in 1624, while Hampden was elected for Wendover. Hakewill was*

*re-elected for Amersham in 1628 but appears not to have stood for election when Parliament met again in 1640.*

*The well-attended meeting was held in Amersham's King's Chapel (see photo). Hakewill is today largely unknown, even in Amersham, and the audience were eager to find out more about his long and eventful life. More information about William Hakewill can be found in editions 57, 58 and 59 of **The Patriot**.*

Beth followed on with a talk on John Hampden to the Rotary Club of Princes Risborough at Whiteleaf Golf Club on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March. The Rotary Club raises many thousands of pounds for local charities, and recent projects include a sensory garden for the local primary school and outings for young carers. 35 members of the club attended, and were a very welcoming and interested audience. Like many people in 'Hampden Country', the audience were aware of his resistance to Ship Money, but less aware of his Parliamentary role and military contribution in the early Civil War. Questions included how much money was raised by the Ship Money tax, and what were the careers of the children of John Hampden.

Sam's second talk, entitled 'John Hampden - Rebel or Patriot?', was at St Nicholas Church, Ickford on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. This was a fundraising event to raise money for community projects and was attended by around fifty people. The vicar in 1642 was Gilbert Sheldon who was ejected in 1647 but subsequently became Charles II's Archbishop of Canterbury. He also employed Christopher Wren to design and build the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford.

## TALK REVIEW

### 'The most popular man in the House?' John Hampden in the Commons, 1640-1643

#### A Zoom talk by Dr Vivienne Larminie on February 25<sup>th</sup> 2023

Until her retirement last summer, Dr Vivienne Larminie was assistant editor of the Commons 1640-1660 project. It was very valuable for the Society to have this preview of the 1640-1660 research. It is not yet available on the History of Parliament web-site, but it is worth members checking out the blogs on the project.

It was John Hampden's contemporary, Edward Hyde, who characterised John Hampden as the most popular man in the house in the early days of the Long Parliament. Academics take a critical view of such accolades, and Dr Larminie pointed out that 'popular' might not have been as much of a compliment as we would assume today. Another contemporary (Sir Philip Warwick) commented that John Hampden was a mild and subtle speaker, but also suggested that he used 'sly' words, which implied that he was seen by some as manipulative.

John Hampden had been made famous by the Ship Money trial, and he was part of a group in Parliament known as 'fiery spirits' and 'the junta', which alarmed traditional MPs. They were outnumbered by supporters of the Crown, and not many MPs wanted Presbyterian rule like that in Scotland. The junta was not popular for seeking to make an alliance with the Scots while they were occupying the north of England.

Nevertheless, the records available to the project confirm that John Hampden was a hard worker and an effective tactician, working in partnership with Pym. Dr Larminie mentioned a number of other worthy Parliamentarians of the time who are not so well-known and yet worked hard in the Commons.

She described the attempted arrest in 1642 as the 'hero moment' for John Hampden, reinforced by the demonstrators from Buckinghamshire supporting him.

In conclusion, Dr Larminie seemed cautious about the extent of John Hampden's 'popularity', but his influence among the radicals in Parliament was important. One member attending commented that it was one of the best talks we have had. It was indeed thought-provoking and original, and exciting to members as it was based on very recent research.

**Beth Rogers**