

THE PATRIOT

Official newsletter of the John Hampden Society

Issue 109 – February 2024

WELCOME TO THE PATRIOT 109!

Many thanks to the contributors to the first edition of the Society's newsletter for 2024. 2023 seemed like a busy year for our activities, but 2024 looks even busier with the display at Wycombe Museum kicking off mid-February and running until September, the AGM at Broughton Castle in March and continued demand for talks about John Hampden. We will be represented at the Bucks Local History Network conference and the Thame History Fair later in the year. At the moment, official roles in the society are being doubled up and managed by a few – please come and join us to make more things happen!

Dr Beth Rogers, Chair (and reluctant editor 😊)

IN THIS EDITION

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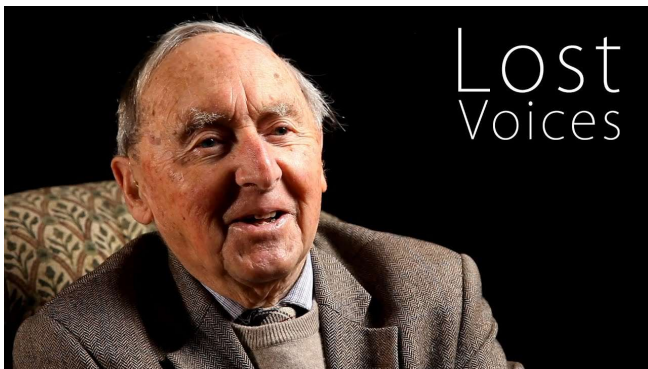
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THE SOCIETY LOSES A FOND FRIEND NATHANIEL FIENNES, THE 21ST LORD SAYE AND SELE



Still from an interview with Lord Saye about his wartime experiences:

[From D-Day to Bergen-Belsen: Lord Saye & Sele tells his unique wartime story. \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Nathan Portlock-Allan.



Broughton Castle (Photo by Banbury FM)

The John Hampden Society mourns the passing of Nathaniel Fiennes, the 21st Lord Saye and Sele, who died aged 103 on 24th January 2024. He was a Vice-President of the Society from its inception and hosted several meetings at Broughton Castle. The 8th Lord Saye was a Parliamentarian and a friend of John Hampden.

The 21st Lord Saye was best known for his restoration of Broughton Castle which he inherited in 1968, and for being one of the first soldiers to liberate Belsen concentration camp in 1945.

Apart from being a labour of love for his home, his restoration of Broughton Castle demonstrated true entrepreneurial spirit, involving the development of farming, tourism and developing the castle as a film location. It represents a significant contribution to the heritage of England. Broughton Castle has been described as a prime example of a late medieval mansion, romantic and “English to the core.”

He was an officer in the 8th Rifle Brigade that liberated Belsen concentration camp in April 1945. He said “It was a sight you wouldn’t have believed possible to see, and all I have to say is that if anyone ever denies the Holocaust, I’m very glad to stand up and tell them that I saw Belsen.”

The detailed obituary from the Daily Telegraph has been circulated in the Google Group, so for “*The Patriot*”, I thought it pertinent to concentrate of the thoughts of one our members, Gordon Schreck, who met Lord Saye in 1995:

“I was saddened to receive the news of the passing of Lord Saye and Sele, though buoyed by the fact that he had lived to 103, having lived, by all accounts, what was a remarkably full and rewarding life, one to be appropriately celebrated. I have a particularly fond memory of Lord Saye, having had the privilege and pleasure of meeting him on the grounds of Broughton Castle one sunny afternoon in the Spring of 1995, (when I was working at Buckingham University). My wife and I headed out to Banbury, and having read about Broughton Castle, decided to make a brief stop there, not knowing at the time if it was open to visitors for tours, but on the off chance we might at least be able to catch a view of the castle. We drove up to the grounds and saw a gentleman walking his dog, so we stopped to ask if he might know if the castle was open to visitors. As it turned out, that gentleman was none other than Lord Saye himself, and he couldn’t have been more gracious or welcoming. After introducing himself as the owner, he told us that, although the castle was not open that day for tours, he would happily, give us a quick look at the castle’s main rooms and the garden.”

Lord Saye was a truly warm-hearted person who will be much missed.

He is succeeded by his son Martin, who will continue the family’s connection with the John Hampden Society as a Vice-President.

Some members of the society attended the memorial service at St Mary’s Church, Broughton.

THE DASTARDLY CAPTAIN CARLO FANTOM

By SAM HEARN

Niccolo Machiavelli wrote of mercenaries: “they have no other attraction or reason for keeping the field than a trifle of stipend, which is not sufficient to make them willing to die for you.” The use of mercenaries was common in the Middle Ages and this carried through into the wars of religion in Europe. Many Parliamentarians had fought in Holland and Germany. Among the many characters preserved for posterity by antiquarian John Aubrey in his book *Brief Lives*, is Captain Carlo Fantom [Fantoni or Fanton], a Croatian mercenary. He had a reputation as a great cavalryman and for being impervious to bullets. He claimed to be a Roman Catholic who had fought for Christians against Turks and Turks against Christians. Aubrey believed that Fantom spoke thirteen languages and was apparently “very quarrelsome and a great ravisher”. Fantom was one of the Earl of Essex’s captains and Aubrey thought that Essex held him in high esteem. He was a lieutenant in Arthur Goodwin’s cavalry regiment and probably part of Richard Grenville’s troop at the battle of Edgehill in October 1642. (See Stephen Ede-Borrett’s letter published in edition No. 53 of “*The Patriot*.”)

Fantom later defected to the King and joined the royalists at Oxford. It is not certain when this happened. Aubrey records that Fantom boasted to the Royalists: “I care not for your cause: I come to fight for your halfe-crowne, and your handsome women.”

Richard Greville’s notebook (published by the Bucks Record Society) notes monthly payments to Fanton from August 1642. The last payment was probably made in July 1643. Fantom received a payment of £27-6 as a Captain of a troop of horse in Essex’s army in early February 1644. This suggests that his defection must have been as late as 1644. Most reports of his life and career say that he was hung for rape, possibly in Oxford, possibly in Bedford. His date of death is given as 1643 or 1644.

Aubrey reports that whilst Fantom was with the Parliamentarians his own Colonel, Sir Robert Pye, shot at him for not returning a horse that he had taken. The bullets went through Fantom’s buff coat and “Captain Hamden (sic) saw his shirt on fire”. Fantom extracted the bullets and said to Sir Robert Pye “Here take your bullets again.” This incident apparently occurred in a field near Bedford as the Army marched to relieve Gainsborough. Aubrey does not elaborate on his mention of Captain Hamden (sic) and it seems a rather out of place reminiscence. John Hampden was dead before Gainsborough was relieved at the end of July 1643. Also, John Hampden’s rank was Colonel and not Captain. Nor could the Hamden (sic) mentioned have been one of Hampden’s sons. The eldest was already dead and the other was too young to be serving in the Army. The mention of Sir Robert Pye (junior) is however interesting. He was married to Anne, John Hampden’s eldest daughter. Pye would have been around 23 years old when the shooting incident occurred. However, he was a Colonel in General Thomas Fairfax’s regiment and it is therefore unlikely that he would have been in a field near Bedford at this time. Sir Robert Pye is famous for being the only man known to have besieged his own father in their family home, Faringdon House in Oxfordshire.

John Aubrey (1626–1697) was a remarkable antiquary, pioneer archaeologist and collector of scraps of insightful and often salacious information about scores of the great men and women of his time and earlier. *Brief Lives*, the work for which he is now best known, was not published until 1813, and then only in part. Aubrey believed that his eccentric collection of biographical sketches was “not fit to fly abroad until the authors and the persons mentioned are rotten.” This injunction meant that few of the first-hand witnesses to the events that he describes could contradict him or sue for libel. Sadly, we cannot rely on the accuracy of Aubrey’s tales. His erstwhile friend and editor, Anthony Wood, wrote that Aubrey was “a shiftless person, roving and maggoty-headed, and sometimes little better than crazed.”

THE HISTORY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS 1640-1660

On behalf of JHS, Sam Hearn attended a study day organised by The Cromwell Association and The History of Parliament Trust at Huntingdon Library, on Saturday 14th October. The main purpose of the event was to celebrate the publication of the Trust’s nine-volume set of “The History of the House of Commons 1640 – 1660”.

A small but dedicated team of professional historians has “laboured in the vineyard to bring forth the harvest”. The project took over thirty years to complete. The task became increasingly daunting as ever more contemporary archives, registers, memoirs and documents were digitalised and made available accessible online.

The result is far more accurate, comprehensive and detailed than anything that has preceded it. The Trust confidently predicts that most of the information in the nine volumes will be available via their website within the next two years. Meanwhile the Trust is currently engaged in a comprehensive reconstruction of its website. As new research is completed the website will be updated and revised. It is unlikely that updates to the nine volumes will in future be published in a physical format. The volumes contain the detailed biographies of 1,807 members of Parliament and studies of over 320 constituencies. This information will be of great assistance to both professional and amateur researchers and should generate fresh academic interest in the Civil War and Interregnum period. The speakers were all members of the team that had contributed to the nine volumes. They included Dr Larminie who delivered a Zoom talk to the Society in February 2023. The talks covered some interesting general themes as well as aspects specifically relating to Oliver Cromwell and his family.

The lives of some of the MPs remain largely obscure. However, some were eccentric to say the least and led unconventional and even scandalous lives. The bringing together of all this information has allowed many fresh connections between individuals to be made and for gaps in our knowledge of the period to be filled.

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THE HISTORY OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS 1640-1660 CONTINUED

It has for example been possible, for the first time, to calculate some interesting statistics such as the number of foreign-born MPs, and those connected with the North America colonies and those with wider international trading links.

The venue for the event, the Huntingdon Library (in the town of Huntingdon), is the home of the Cromwell Collection and the library of the Cromwell Association. If you are in the area, the Cromwell Museum, close to the library, is well worth a visit. The Museum is housed in the 12th Century building that was once the Grammar School attended by Oliver Cromwell and subsequently the diarist Samuel Pepys.

Since 1995 The Trust has been largely funded by the two Houses of Parliament. It was founded before the Second World War by Josiah Wedgwood MP, a Labour parliamentarian and minister. After the War a number of eminent British historians of the day, including Sir Lewis Namier, Sir Frank Stenton and Sir John Neale, were involved in its re-establishment.

The Trust's website can be found at:

www.historyofparliamentonline.org

Report by SAM HEARN



THE CROMWELL MUSEUM
Photo by Robert Weedon

JOHN HAMPDEN – A WYCOMBE MAN WITH GLOBAL IMPACT

From February 13th 2024, running until September, there is a display about John Hampden in the café at Wycombe Museum. This includes display board, photos, and a display cabinet including some fine pieces of Civil War armour and armaments from the private collection of our member Howard Simmons and a miniature cabinet on loan from member John Abel Smith, which is said to have been made by John Hampden. The photos here will give you some idea about the visual impact of the display, but I urge you to visit the museum, which is free entry.

The Curator has reached out to the John Hampden School and other local connections, and the display will be publicised by the museum.



Can you guess what this is? As parts of the outreach to schools for the John Hampden exhibition, a competition will be running asking children to identify this object (which is not part of the exhibition, but it is part of Howard Simmons' collection). Here's a clue, although it may not sound like one – it's a secret.

Dr Catherine Grigg, Curator of the Wycombe Museum with John Hampden Society member Howard Simmons during the preparation of the John Hampden display in the museum café.



ALCHEMY ACOUSTIC AND THE BALLAD OF JOHN HAMPDEN (CHALGROVE FIELD)

We may moan sometimes that John Hampden is an unsung hero, but this is no longer the case. The research of our social media guru Pat Moody turned up a song called Chalgrove Field on Youtube, composed and sung by a folk duo from Kent.

Alchemy Acoustic are Alan Ribchester and Gary Martin. They met at school in the 1970s and played rock music and club music for many years. In 2017, when they had both retired from work, they started playing acoustic music. They performed folk covers to begin with, such as songs by Fairport Convention. One day Alan came up with an idea for a song about 1066 and William the Conqueror. A couple of weeks later, Gary had written the song "Saxon Shore". Gary and Alan then planned an album of original English Folk Songs. Gary is the main writer, but Alan made some contributions to 'Chalgrove Field', which was inspired by a visit to the monument at the site of the battle.

The song "Chalgrove Field" includes lyrics that the Society would heartily endorse: "John Hampden was a man of great renown - who challenged the dominion of the crown - the Father of the People and the champion of the law - the Patriot made rebel by the war".

Alchemy Acoustic's album, "Turn back the clock" was released in November 2020, and a second, "One day soon" in 2023. They are available to download from Spotify.

Some Society members have remembered a Ballad of John Hampden that was written by a local musician for Thame Festival Week in 1997. Does anyone have a recording of it?

The photo is of Alchemy Acoustic performing at Dennysfest, Tunbridge Wells.

The 'Chalgrove Field' video can be viewed on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZAs3t3w7fc>



TALKS ON JOHN HAMPDEN

Demand for talks on John Hampden seems to be high! Here is a photo of the Chair, Beth Rogers, with Brian Clark, the Talks Organiser of Hughenden Church Mens' Breakfast Club. She delivered the society's regular introductory talk "John Hampden – Rebel or Patriot" in the meeting room behind the church that used to be the Priest's House in early January. She has also spoken recently at the Beaconsfield 41 Club and is scheduled to speak at Wingrave in February, Great Missenden in April and Owlswick in May.



THE FOUNDING FATHERS PSEUDONYMS

American revolutionaries hadn't forgotten the names of Hampden, Pym and Clarendon over one hundred years after the English Civil War. Anti-crown policies and notions of extended liberty were argued between three "anonymous" authors, though we know it was future President John Adams writing under the pen-name "Clarendon". Who might have been Hampden? Several issues would begin with an opening speech (more often than not from Hampden), and answered a few pages later, or in the next issue, where the political and philosophical discourse would continue.

PAT MOODY



Acknowledgements for photos and copy: Alan Ribchester, Howard Simmons, Sam Hearn, Gordon Schreck, Beth Rogers, Robert Weedon, Banbury FM, Nathan Portlock-Allan, Pat Moody

Printed by: Sarsen Printers, Winchester.

info@sarsenpress.com 01962 854281

Published by: The John Hampden Society, High Wycombe.

www.johnhampden.org

Registered charity: 1098314

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.

Every effort is made to attribute facts and contributions correctly. If any mistakes have been made, they will be corrected in the next issue after notification has been received.

**REMINDER: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY, MARCH 23rd
BROUGHTON CASTLE TOUR BEFOREHAND
PLEASE CONTACT THE SECRETARY TO ADVISE
ON YOUR ATTENDANCE**