



THE PATRIOT

Official newsletter of the John Hampden Society

Issue 113 – December 2024

WELCOME TO THE PATRIOT 113!

Dear members, welcome to the latest newsletter, showcasing reports from events, society activities and reviews from members. Please feel free to respond to any item or submit your own reviews or research.

Dr Beth Rogers, Chair (and reluctant editor 😊)

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DIG AT AYLESBURY?

Author Charles Cordell brought to our attention the possibility of a dig at the old football ground at Buckingham Road in Aylesbury. The archaeological officers at Bucks CC have recommended pre-development archaeology on the site. They did not recommend a metal-detecting survey, but JHS member Simon Marsh in his role as Chair of the Battlefields Trust has emailed them to suggest one.

The development site is close to the Weedon Hill site that was investigated by Wessex Archaeology in 2008, which found possible evidence of Civil War battle archaeology. Simon pointed out the advantages of testing whether this military activity extended to the east of the Buckingham Road and south of the stream crossing. We have debated in the Patriot if there was or was not a Battle of Aylesbury at Holman's Bridge. We may be a bit closer to finding out....

2025 VISIT

St Mary Magdalene Church at Great Hampden



OUTREACH AND DISSEMINATION

Since the last issue of the Patriot, the Society has been spreading the word about John Hampden in Hampden country. We were present at the Bucks Local History conference on October 5th, where the star speaker was TV historian Ruth Goodman. On 20th October there was a super turnout of members to support the JHS stall at the Thame Local History Fair (see photo).

We continue to get requests for talks. Chair Beth Rogers braved local flooding to deliver her regular talk "John Hampden – Rebel or Patriot?" to Haddenham Rotary Club on September 23rd. On November 14th, she spoke to 51 members of Chiltern U3A Local History group. The Events Organiser commented: "How wonderful to hear about a man of such integrity."



Members Roy Bailey, Annabel Bailey and Charles Harvey at the Thame History Fair on October 20th 2024.

There will be a Society Visit to Great Hampden Church, where The Patriot is buried, at **2pm on April 5th 2025**. The church has recently been renovated and now has audio-visual equipment. We have been asked to help with the cleaning of the Hampden graves in the churchyard, together with an external information board. Members will be able to see the site. *The church does not have Wi-Fi, so the AGM will be held separately, on Zoom, so that all members can participate. Date to be confirmed. Remember that you can nominate officers or committee members or self-nominate. If you wish to do so in advance of papers being circulated, please contact the Secretary.*

CROMWELL MUSEUM AUTUMN TALKS 2024

A review by Beth Rogers

The Cromwell Museum's talk programmes are a great opportunity for the enthusiast for the Civil War period to immerse themselves in the latest research from historians of the events of 1630-1660.

The Autumn programme began with a talk from Dr Charlotte Young on John Bradshawe and the aftermath of regicide. John Bradshawe was the president of the trial of Charles the First. He has often been dismissed as an obscure provincial judge, but in fact he was an accomplished lawyer. He came from Cheshire, and was a cousin of Sir William Brereton and John Milton. He had been appointed to deal with claims and counter-claims over the sequestration of land from Royalists and Catholics; he examined 2,543 cases from 1644-1648. Despite being vehemently anti-Catholic, he did not always agree with Parliament's view, and was regarded as fair. Bradshawe had objected to being Charles' judge, perhaps because he was well aware of the risk of assassination, but he was voted into the job in his absence. He was relatively well-rewarded. He continued to practice law in the 1650s. A viewer picked up on his role in witch trials, and the speaker argued that he was careful not to condemn women. He died in 1659, shortly after the death of his beloved wife, and suffered a posthumous execution after the Restoration. Far from being obscure, he was a fascinating character.

In the second programme, Professor Alice Hunt, author of "Republic: Britain's revolutionary decade" spoke about the creativity and innovation of the decade, which is often just dismissed as a time of puritanical oppression. She drew attention to the political thinking of Thomas Hobbes, whose "Leviathan" explored consent to authority and challenged views of monarchy as "natural". Samuel Hartlib, who was described as the Great Intelligencer of Europe, was a scientist and philosopher who contributed many inventions, advice on agricultural practice, and together with John Evelyn and John Milton, circulated ideas about state schools and a state-run health service. He had a pension from Cromwell but was impoverished at the Restoration. Other writers, such as Margaret Cavendish, and scientists such as Hook and Boyle started their careers in the 1650s. Opera was introduced to England in the 1650s, and romantic novels were a popular genre. The speaker mentioned the re-admission of Jews to England as an indication of some appreciation of tolerance, but somewhat skipped over the oppression of Quakers. Overall, the argument for the Republic as a revolutionary period was compelling.

On November 20th, TV historian Professor Ronald Hutton provided an overview of his book about Cromwell as a Commander, 1646-53. He reminded viewers that Cromwell came third in the BBC Millennium Poll of the all-time greatest Britons, beaten only by Winston Churchill and William Shakespeare! Cromwell wrote many letters and much was written about him at the time, so Professor Hutton had plenty of source material. He took care to balance conflicting views and provided a lot of detail about the complex events of 1646-1653. The author expressed the view that Cromwell was primarily driven by his Puritan faith and an understanding of his reliance on the support of the soldiers of the New Model Army. He described Cromwell as "breathtakingly good" as a soldier and politician, but was also candid about his ruthlessness and duplicity. He won all his battles because he had better numbers or the enemy was incompetent, but also because of his careful assessment of risk, and ensuring that his men were well-equipped and well-fed. However, Cromwell could be savage and exult in killing enemies. He was a patient politician and willing to reconcile and negotiate, but he could be devious and he made scapegoats of those who opposed him. In concluding, Professor Hutton expressed his admiration for Cromwell and easily persuaded viewers that his achievements did indeed make him a "great Briton."

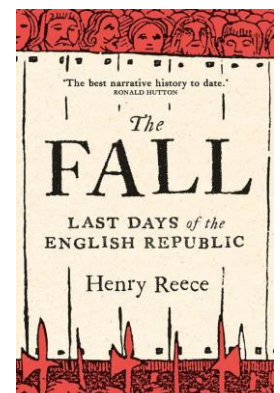
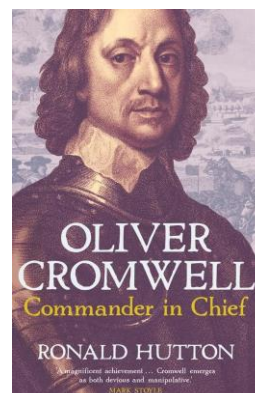
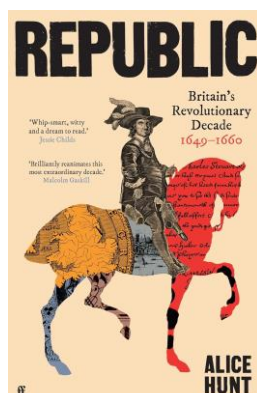
The final talk was given by Professor Henry Reece, based on his study of the last days of the English Republic. In 1659, a Royalist uprising in the north was crushed quite easily, but the next one was astonishingly successful. What went wrong? There were eight changes of government between 1658-1660, and Professor Reece attributed the fall of the republic not to an overwhelming desire to see the King back, but to establish stability in place of chaos. Non-monarchical rule had depended on a strong standing Army which was expensive to maintain, and it clashed frequently with Parliament. Parliamentarians had not forgiven the Army for the clear-out of 1653, so they could not work together in the aftermath of Oliver Cromwell's death. Although Richard Cromwell was not as hapless as he has been painted, (Professor Reece pointed out that he was a lot better than many Kings that England had endured) he did not have the stature of his father. In 1658, the Army wanted from Parliament a settlement of pay, indemnity for the actions of the war, a crackdown on royalists and more religious freedom for non-Conformists. Parliament responded by clearing out the officer corps. The Army forced Richard Cromwell to dissolve Parliament, and cycles of elections and dissolutions began. The population was confused and exhausted, but passive. They just wanted an end to disorder and high taxes. General Monck stepped into the vacuum. He was a former royalist who had turned Parliamentarian and been promoted by Oliver Cromwell. Professor Reece suggested that he was not a closet royalist, but his actions make that questionable. There was a lack of alternative leadership in the Army or Parliament to oppose his march south to restore the King. Even Charles II is supposed to have commented "I never imagined that I was so popular."

Tyrant, Traitor, Rebel: The Life of John Bradshawe

By Charlotte Young

Available: August
2025

Amberley
Publishing



Cover prints from Amazon.co.uk

THE QUALITIES OF JOHN HAMPDEN, an opinion piece from Sam Hearn

I am suspicious of the "great man" version of history, that presents a narrative driven by the actions and qualities of individual leaders, usually men. Some would say that the broad swathe of history is not determined by the actions of individuals no matter how inspired or brave. It is now fashionable to talk of a worldwide seventeenth century political crisis driven by climate change and famine. In the twentieth century, Marxist historians were convinced that all history was determined by economic factors. However, as wiser heads than mine have said the only unforgivable sin when writing about history is to say that something was inevitable. But there remains the strong possibility that that in the long run monarchs and parliaments would have devised a way of working together, even without Hampden's interventions.

I take a middle course and believe that individuals can shape the pattern of history and the timing of events. Very occasionally there are, I believe, tipping points when an individual's actions can change the course of history. Perhaps the Great Kimble Petition, the Ship Money Trial, the failure to arrest the Five Members and the final charges made by Hampden's regiment at Brentford are such tipping points?

I believe that Hampden's most important contributions were as part of a team: In parliament he worked closely with others, notably Pym, Eliot and the Earl of Bedford, but also on many key committees. Although it was clearly him on trial in the Ship Money Case, he had a very powerful legal team behind him, and actively supporting them were many Puritan and parliamentary 'movers and shakers'. The Great Kimble petition shows him as the first on the list, but still only one of thirty petitioners. In the case of the Five Members, he was just one of an admittedly small group, even though the Buckinghamshire petitioners set him apart from the others. In raising his own regiment, he displayed his commitment and organising ability but we also see him as someone able to recognise his own limitations as a military leader, and quite prepared to hire military professionals to make his regiment an effective fighting force. In battle, he displayed great personal courage and leadership skills, but he was capable of taking orders and working within a broader strategic framework.

To me, Hampden's greatest strengths were to recognise his own limitations, and to work constructively as part of a team or group. It is said that History's great men are often brought down by hubris; character flaws and the inability to work as part of a team: Hampden was not brought down by any personal hubris but by the collective failure of the parliamentary officer core present at Chalgrove to get behind an effective response to Prince Rupert's brilliantly executed hit-and-run tactics.

So, I remain resistant to the idea of placing Hampden too high on a pedestal. Nevertheless, it is right to drag him out of the shadows of relative obscurity. When all is said and done, he was a great man. His contributions were significant at the time and should not be under-played or ignored. In many respects, it is his modesty and his lack of obvious ambition that make him so appealing, and in my opinion, so English a hero.

In his biography of the Patriot, John Adair has included this eye-witness account of John Hampden at the Battle of Brentford:

"I have seen him in the front of his regiment in green
When death about him did in ambush lie
And whizzing shot, like showers of arrows, fly
Waving his conquering steel, as if that he
From Mars had got the sole monopoly
Of never-failing courage."
Captain John Stiles



Sealed Knot re-enactors at Cropredy, 2024

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

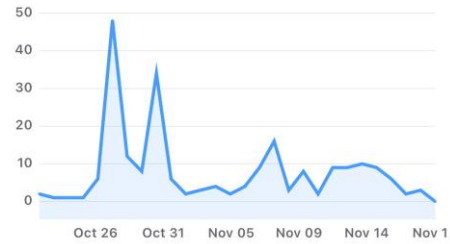
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Last 28 days

133 Reach

-322 from previous 28 days

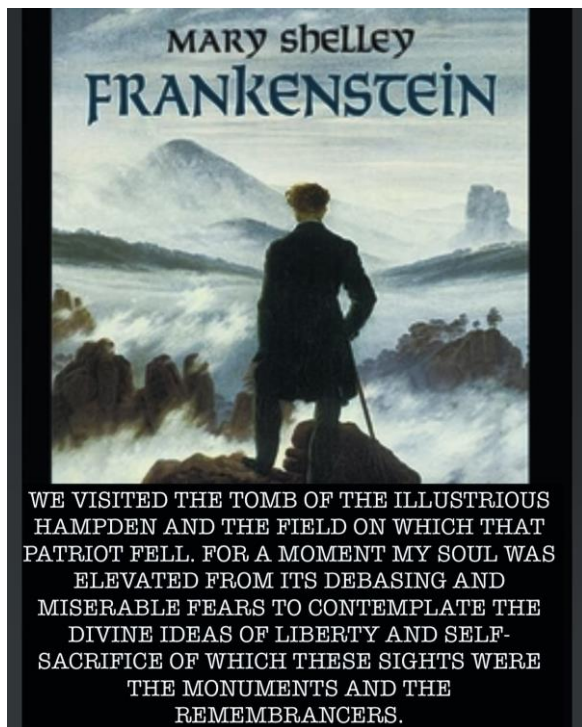


30 ↓ -80%
Engagement



3 ↓ -40%
Net followers

Are you following the John Hampden Society on Facebook and Instagram? Pat Moody is creating interesting and entertaining posts and providing reposts from like-minded organisations. You can see from the graph that interest in our Facebook posts is very spikey. At the end of October, the post about John Hampden's cameo appearance in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein was clearly very popular. The reach of 455 in September was a peak which we hope to repeat or exceed in 2025. We need to reflect on our demographic - our regular followers on social media are 75% male and 37% over 65.



WE VISITED THE TOMB OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS HAMPDEN AND THE FIELD ON WHICH THAT PATRIOT FELL. FOR A MOMENT MY SOUL WAS ELEVATED FROM ITS DEBASING AND MISERABLE FEARS TO CONTEMPLATE THE DIVINE IDEAS OF LIBERTY AND SELF-SACRIFICE OF WHICH THESE SIGHTS WERE THE MONUMENTS AND THE REMEMBRANCERS.

Painting: Wanderer Above a Sea of Fog by Caspar David Friedrich



The Ship Money monument with cut hedges! Many thanks to Peter Osborne for his diligent work maintaining the site.

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

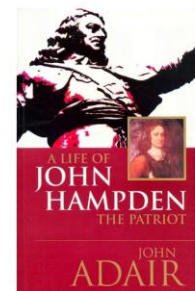
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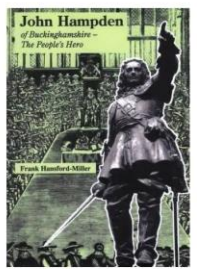
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A Life of John Hampden the Patriot
Certainly the best of the full-length biographies, containing much new material not previously available. The author is a noted military historian. 262pp.
MORE DETAILS



John Hampden of Buckinghamshire: The People's Hero
An illustrated life of John Hampden (1594 - 1643). 48pp.
MORE DETAILS

Many thanks to Osborne Samuel for hosting a new fulfilment site for the John Hampden Biographies. This ensures a professional service for people wishing to order the books, with a link through from the JHS website.

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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.