



THE PATRIOT

Official newsletter of the John Hampden Society

Issue 117– October 2025

WELCOME TO THE PATRIOT 117!

Many thanks to this edition's contributors. It was an honour to welcome Hampden-Sydney College students to the UK – a major event for the Society this year!

Dr Beth Rogers, Chair (and reluctant editor 😊)

IN THIS EDITION

Page 1/2 – Visit of Hampden-Sydney College Students

Page 2/3 – Father of the People – Bruce Alexander

Page 3/4 – Review of *The Blood in Winter* – Sam Hearn



**H-SC
students
at
Oxford
Real
Tennis
Club**

HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE STUDENTS STUDY TOUR of THE UK: PART OF THE H-SC 250th CELEBRATIONS in 2025

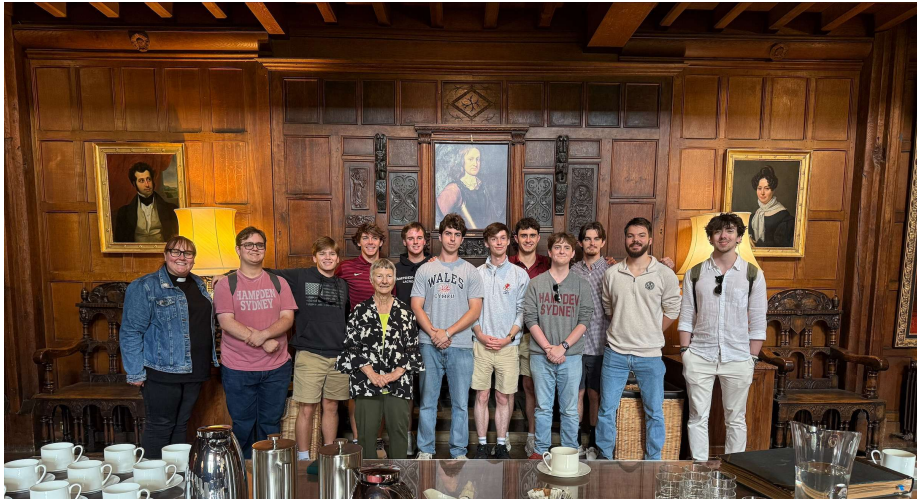
For six weeks this summer, a group of 14 young men from Hampden-Sydney College, named for John Hampden and Algernon Sydney, participated in the "Virginia Program at Oxford 2025". Sponsored by a consortium of Virginia colleges and universities, the program is designed to provide American college students with an Oxford University experience, complete with seminars at St. Anne's College focused on English history, literature, and art. This year's program would prove to be something special for these students. The college is currently in the midst of a three-year commemoration of their founding in 1775 with a mission "to form good men and good citizens in an atmosphere of sound learning". Its founders, among them James Madison and Patrick Henry, chose to name the college to symbolize devotion to the principles of representative government and full civil and religious freedom, which John Hampden and Algernon Sydney had so outspokenly supported, and for which they had given their lives. Indeed, they were widely invoked as hero-martyrs by American colonial patriots, and their names immediately associated H-SC with the cause of independence championed by its founders.

To help celebrate the college's anniversary, and give the H-SC students a deeper understanding and appreciation of one of their college's namesakes, two special events were planned. JHS member, and H-SC alumnus (Class of 1965) and former trustee, Gordon Schreck, worked closely with the Society's Patron Sir Miles Hobart-Hampden, Society Chair Dr. Beth Rogers, and H-SC student Henry Kvalevog, who served as group leader, to organize the events. The first of these was an exciting introduction to the English sport of "Real Tennis". The students got to see an exhibition played by two pros of the Oxford University Tennis Club, on the RT court at Merton College, which would have been familiar to the Oxford students of the early 17th century, including John Hampden himself. This event, on July 16, was the brainchild of Sir Miles, himself an avid RT player. After the exhibition match, the students had an opportunity to try their hand at the sport, each attired in his own ORTC tee-shirt, a gift of Sir Miles, who also graciously provided each student with a copy of "Tennis and Oxford", a history of the RT sport, described by its author, Jeremy Potter, as "the most intellectual as well as the most historic of all ball games", and often referred to as "the Game of Kings". Following the RT experience, the students enjoyed lunch with Sir Miles, his wife, Lady Alison, and Dr. Rogers, at the Bear Pub, dating to 1242, and said to be the oldest pub in England.

Then on August 5, and with arrangements made by Sir Miles and Dr. Rogers, the H-SC students had the unique opportunity to visit Hampden House, where they were personally welcomed by its current owner, Mr. Tim Oliver, and members of his family and staff, and given a personal tour of the house, which has been beautifully restored by them. From Hampden House, the students proceeded to nearby Great Hampden Church, to see the site where the Patriot himself was buried, after being mortally wounded at the Battle of Chalgrove Field.

The students are now back on campus at H-SC, working hard on their degrees. Since his return, Mr. Kvalevog, the student team leader, speaking on behalf of the student group, commented: "I thank all members of the JHS who helped create this incredible, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me and my fellow students. We got a rich history from Dr. Rogers and have learned more about our college's namesake than we ever thought we would, certainly more than most of our fellow students. Thank you for making our time here at Oxford exponentially more meaningful!"

Gordon Schreck



H-SC
Students at
Hampden
House, with
John
Hampden in
the
background

FATHER OF THE PEOPLE?

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, famously referred to John Hampden as being "*Pater Patriae*". What did he really mean?

"*Pater Patriae*" originated in pre-Republican Rome, and was applied to Romulus as Rome's founder. Marcus Furius Camillus, the general who drove out the Gauls after their early sacking of the city (386BCE), was also so named. These legendary figures received the title from subsequent grateful ancestors, as part of the foundation myth. The first to receive it during his lifetime was Cicero, by order of the Senate, for his decisive action as Consul in quashing the Catiline conspiracy. In 2 BCE the Senate decided to so honour Gaius Octavius. He became Augustus and heralded in the Imperial period. But by no means were all Emperors called "*Pater Patriae*". Twenty-three received the title (out of seventy-seven). Significantly, some even declined it. Politics must have played a part in their decisions, but there is more than a hint that the title was seen not as one in the gift of an administration, rather as an expression of a communal outpouring in significant circumstances.

Among the first in the modern era to be called "*Pater Patriae*" was Gustav I of Sweden (1496-1560), who fought for his country's independence from Denmark, then William the Silent, the leader of the Dutch revolt against the Hapsburgs (1533-84). In both these instances the appellation referred back to the principles of classical times. What should a new state be? The Roman precedent proved compelling. Indeed, the title had a strong sense of a leader who had saved the country from danger, even giving it its very identity. The proper translation is of course "father of the fatherland". Later George Washington was given the title. I haven't come across a single instance where someone who wasn't the ultimate leader of a country was so called - **apart from Hampden**. Do readers know of any?

The childhoods of both Hyde and Hampden were imbued with classical education. Both went to Grammar Schools. Hampden went to Thame's, Hyde to Gillingham's in Dorset. This period is now seen as the flowering of humanism. We associate Grammar Schools of that time with the study of Latin texts evincing Roman Republican values. Education there was conducted largely in Latin (some Grammar Schools even punished boys who spoke English at school).

Hyde and Hampden were MPs together in the Short and Long Parliaments of 1640s. Both men followed royalist constitutional principles, advocated reform and criticised the capricious rule of Charles I. Their views diverged after the Grand Remonstrance when Hyde became an adviser to Charles I. He went into exile with the Prince of Wales in 1646. By that time, of course, Hampden was dead.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3...

FATHER OF THE PEOPLE CONTINUED....

A proper reading of Hyde's use of the phrase about Hampden tells us that "the eyes of all men were turned on [Hampden] as *"Pater Patriae"* in 1640. He elaborates with the metaphor of a pilot - Hampden steering the country through tempests and rocks. Hyde writes as a historian, reporting the general view. His personal take came to be that Hampden's "death... seemed to be a great deliverance to the nation." Did he see a straight contrast between the praxis of the occupant of the throne and the principled exponent of traditional constitutional rule? Was he therefore saying that Hampden's death might have saved the Kingdom from all-out confrontation? After all, following Hampden's death in June 1643 the Parliamentary cause was seen to be at its nadir, and likely to be defeated.

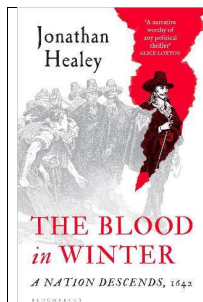
Hyde acknowledges Hampden as "a very wise man, and of great parts, and possessed with the most absolute spirit of popularity, that is the most absolute faculties to govern the people, of any man I ever knew". Many of us are familiar with other glowing compliments he paid. There is the sense of a one-time colleague looking back at the past fame of another with whom he had stopped associating. Certainly, the consensus of opinion is fully acknowledged (that "all men") and is in line with early classical convention whereby the phrase was accorded by general acclamation.

Hyde's comments appear in his History of the Rebellion, written in his first exile. He wrote extensively of Hampden's "Character", concluding that Hampden became "fiercer" after he was accused of treason, at the time of the attempted arrest of the Five Members. Nowadays we might glibly say Hyde and Hampden were 'frenemies'. But there seems to be more to it than that. Words like 'steering' and 'govern' present Hampden as a veritable leader of his country. A father indeed.

Both men would have been aware that James I had called himself *"Parens Patriae"*. When he addressed Parliament in 1609, James stated: "Kings are also compared to fathers of families; for a king is truly *"Parens Patriae"*, the politic father of his people." He sent a copy of his speech to every school. James also warned MPs to limit (pretty severely) any expression of grievances they had - presumably as a child rightly should vis-à-vis a father. The sentiment was clearly behind Charles's view of his Divine Right as a King. The concept of parens-hood contracted to a legal one, justifying the monarch in taking care of those deemed to be in need of protection, e.g. minors or those deemed non compos mentis. We might wonder now how many of those calling Hampden *"Pater Patriae"* then had the contradistinction to such Stuart assertions in mind.

Perhaps in using the simple term 'Patriot', we might be downplaying the high and unique regard in which Hampden was held?

BRUCE ALEXANDER

**BOOK REVIEW BY SAM HEARN**

"The Blood in Winter: A nation descends, 1642" – by Johnathan Healey

ISBN: 9781526672292

Published by Bloomsbury Publishing

432 pages, £25 hardback

Why and how did the English Civil War break out? *The Blood in Winter* tells the story of England's great political awakening, and how the nation descended into unprecedented bloodshed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4...

REVIEW OF THE BLOOD IN WINTER CONTINUED.....

Jonathan Healey skilfully evokes the claustrophobic atmosphere of the day, a London blanketed in coal smoke, whilst rowdy protestors roamed the streets. He presents a remarkable cast of flawed characters faced with unpalatable choices. It ends in war, yet most of them earnestly sought compromise and a peaceful resolution.

This is a story that has been told many times before but seldom with such panache and erudition. Many of us grew up with C V Wedgwood's fast-paced narrative in *The King's Peace* (and *The King's War*). *The Blood in Winter* is a worthy and equally riveting successor. It also sits squarely and unapologetically alongside John Adamson's *Noble Revolt*. Not everyone has accepted Adamson's ideas but they are the foundation on which Jonathan Healey builds his story.

The brief character sketches that propel the plot forward provide essential background to the complex machinations of the factions in Parliament and within the Royal Household: Speaker Lenthall's weary desire to give up the Speaker's Chair, the rise of key men like Sir John Bankes and Sir Edward Nicholas and the double game played by Lucy Hay, Countess of Carlisle. Lucy's friend, Queen Henrietta Maria is treated sympathetically and emerges as a more astute politician than her husband. John Hampden is not central to the author's narrative but Healey still manages to make it clear why each of the five members was on the King's list of traitors to be arrested.

The author also provides believable explanations of why it took so long for the war to break out after the failed attempt to arrest the five members on 4th January 1642, and why so many with essentially similar backgrounds and beliefs ended up on opposite sides in the conflict.

Diane Purkiss in reviewing the book has pointed out the danger of ignoring the "lowly people who forced the conflict to a head". She is critical of those who have followed Adamson's lead and have, in her opinion, placed too much significance on the actions of the so-called Junto. This seems an unfair criticism of Jonathan Healey's book. Suffice to say that the work is full of surprises and is a great page turner. It did not seem like a long book and left me eager to read more. The lessons of how to deal with tyrants is unfortunately as relevant today as it was in 1642.

Sam Hearn



Aylesbury's new Mayor, Councillor Nidhi Mehta, was one of the audience members for a talk on John Hampden which was part of the programme for Aylesbury Heritage Week (September 12th-21st 2025). The talk was given by JHS Chair, Beth Rogers, in the King's Head, the oldest pub in Aylesbury. Allegedly, Oliver Cromwell stayed there in 1650.

Acknowledgements for photos, copy and ideas: Gordon Schreck, Bruce Alexander, Sam Hearn, Beth Rogers
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.