



# THE PATRIOT

Official Newsletter of the John Hampden Society

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AGM

RE M I N D E R



SUNDAY  
22 MARCH 2026  
4:00 P.M. UK TIME  
VIA ZOOM

## John Adair: A Personal Tribute

By Roy Bailey

I first met John Adair in the early 1970s, when I joined the Roundhead Association, an organisation set up as the Parliamentary equivalent of Brigadier Peter Young’s Sealed Knot. John was the Lord General of the Parliamentary Army, and he was known as ‘The Man in Black’ from the colour of his uniform.

It is far too long ago to remember anything of my association with John, but we must have kept in touch to some extent because, when I was trying to set up the John Hampden Society in 1992, I contacted him to solicit his help and support.

He was not over-enthusiastic, feeling that, because Hampden was so little known generally, such an organisation would attract little support, but he promised to do what he could to help. It was a measure of the man that, when the Society was well up and running, he later freely admitted that he was wrong.

At the inauguration in Hampden House on 27 October 1992 the four founders — John, Miles Buckinghamshire, Frank Hansford-Miller, and I — allocated ourselves certain posts to be confirmed (or otherwise!) at the first AGM. John became the Society’s President, a post he held with distinction and enthusiasm until his death.

On that first day in his role as President-designate, John gave a brief sketch of our subject’s life and career and, as befits the author of books on leadership, stated that he considered Hampden a good leader and a leader for good.

John was not to prove just a figurehead President, and he made a notable contribution to the early success of the Society.

On the evening of 26 June 1993, two days after the Commemorative Ceremony in Thame, he gave a talk about John Hampden’s life to an audience of some 150 people in the Great Hall of Hampden House. Those who attended (and many were turned away) will remember it as a tour de force. John spoke for

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John Adair (2), Loseley Park House  
Following Memorial Service

well over an hour completely extempore without any notes, and answered questions afterwards. Four years later, in June 1997, John gave another well-attended talk — this time illustrated with colour slides — at the John Hampden Primary School in Thame as a part of John Hampden Week. He was always ready to play his part, and contributed a number of articles to *The Patriot*.

As an author he wrote extensively on leadership but was also a noted military historian. *Roundhead General*, a biography of Sir William Waller and *By The Sword Divided*, an anthology of Civil War writings, are just two of his works that spring to mind, but we will remember him best for *A Life of John Hampden: The Patriot*. Published in hardback in 1976, this was the most authoritative and almost certainly the most accurate of biography of Hampden. I bought a second-hand copy many years ago and, with John's personal handwritten dedication on the flyleaf, it is one of my most treasured possessions.

In 2003 an agreement among the Society, John and Thorogood Publishing resulted in a paperback edition of the biography, with John generously waiving some of his royalties. The book was available for John Hampden Week in Wendover that year, and the Society now owns all the remaining copies.

John had a fine, dry sense of humour, and sometimes signed his letters to me 'El Presidente'! Once, when I was chivvying him to engage in some activity of benefit to the Society, he gently chided me in one of his elegantly-written communications, stating that I was working him too hard as he was 'one of the original veterans of the Civil Wars' and that he was 'now in winter quarters'!

Last autumn I found some of these old letters from John and decided to telephone him. He was welcoming and cheerful, and pleased that someone from the Society had contacted him, as he had rather lost touch.

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lost touch. He was interested in the news about the Society, but wondered if he should stand down as President to make way for someone younger. I assured him that we valued his past efforts and that his name as our President added authority and lustre to the Society. We arranged that I should visit him in the New Year but, alas, it was not to be. Sadly, he died on the 1st November at the age of 91.

That the Society and the country had lost a great man was evident at his memorial service in early January of this year. The church in his village of Compton, near Guildford, was packed, and the tributes were many and generous. I had not realised the extent of John's qualifications and achievements until his friend and fellow academic Georgina Sayer, who was mentored by John for 25 years and a fellow trustee of the Windsor Leadership Trust, presented her eulogy.

John Adair was truly a polymath, and we are the poorer for his passing.

### **Hampden Bomber on Display**

As there is a major RAF base (formerly Bomber Command) not far from Hampden House, I am often asked when I give talks in the area about the plane that was named (possibly) for John Hampden.

The twin-engine, all-metal monoplane called the Handley Page Hampden was first introduced in 1938. They were fast for their day at 263 mph top speed, and each could carry 4,000 pounds of bombs. In total, 1,432 of the aircraft were made.

For a long time, the only Hampden on display was a Canadian-built model, in the Canadian Museum of Flight. Hampdens served in the Pacific campaign.

The Hampden now on display in London in Hangar 3 of the RAF Museum is a veteran of the fleet that protected the Arctic convoys to the Soviet Union. It was caught in enemy fire and crashed into woodland in the Kola peninsula in Northern Russia. This Handley Page Hampden, P1344, was acquired by the RAF Museum in 1992.

Early in World War Two, Hampdens were deployed to bomb invasion barges, shipping and other military and industrial targets on mainland Europe.

Wing Commander Roderick Learoyd was awarded a Victoria Cross in 1940 for a dangerous mission to bomb an aqueduct in Germany. Despite damage from machine guns and shells, he held his course, dropped his payload and managed to make a "belly" landing back at base. It was the first VC for a pilot in WWII.

A gunner who saved his aircraft from fire whilst attacking a military target in Belgium in 1940 also received the VC. — *Beth Rogers*

### **Hampden Portrait Donation**

Mr David Deaton of Mortlake has donated a portrait and signature from a 1930s collection compiled by his father. The page "John Hampden" is probably a Victorian copy given the typeset of a poem kept with it. If anyone in the Society would like to be the new custodian of it, please contact the Chair.



## **Hampden-Sydney's President Stimpert Named Honorary Member**

*"I am delighted to accept Honorary Membership of the John Hampden Society. Hampden-Sydney College is proud to bear the name of John Hampden, whose commitment to liberty and civic responsibility inspired our enduring mission "to form good men and good citizens" in 1775 and continues to guide our work today. My colleagues and I value the Society's dedication to preserving John Hampden's legacy and we share its commitment to ensuring that his example and the principles for which he fought and died continue to inspire Hampden-Sydney students for generations to come." — President Larry Stimpert*

**L**arry Stimpert has served as the 25th president of Hampden-Sydney College since 2016. Reflecting his deep commitment to the liberal arts and the College's distinctive mission, "to form good men and good citizens," his presidency is focused on providing students with an extraordinary educational experience and outcomes.

Under his leadership, the College has implemented curricular and co-curricular enhancements, including new majors and minors, an experiential learning initiative, a four-year leadership program, and new programs in entrepreneurship and outdoor education.

The College has broadened the racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and geographic reach of its recruiting efforts and significantly improved retention. The College has set fundraising records in each of the last five years and it has pursued a vigorous building and renovation agenda that has culminated most recently in the construction of the Pauley Science Center and many other construction projects.

While serving as Hampden-Sydney's president, Dr. Stimpert has chaired the Council of Independent Colleges in Virginia (CICV) and the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC), and the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC). He is currently a member of the board of directors of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU).

Before arriving at Hampden-Sydney, Dr. Stimpert served as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Economics and Management at DePauw University. Earlier, he served for 17 years as a professor in Economics and Business at Colorado College. He is the author or co-author of many scholarly articles and the co-author of two management textbooks. Dr. Stimpert received his B.A. in economics from Illinois Wesleyan University, his M.B.A. from Columbia University, and his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He and his wife, Lesley, have two children.



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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.

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