



THE PATRIOT

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CONTENTS:

Wreath-laying June 2026

Review of talk by Alice Hunt

John Hampden: Manor Born, Manner Raised

by Bruce Alexander

The Buckinghamshire Neighbours: John Hampden and a Connecticut Family's Revolutionary Memory

**by Robert Boris
and more...**



Members Roger Howgate, Maurice Kirtland, Malcolm McDonald and Sam Hearn (left) at the John Hampden plaque in Thame High Street. Many thanks to Maurice for organising the beautiful wreath

Talk by Professor Alice Hunt, Author of *Republic* at Milton's Cottage for Chalfont St Giles Literary Festival 11/05/2026

Review by Beth Rogers

Professor Alice Hunt shared her thoughts on the Republic with a small group at Milton's Cottage, where the blind poet dictated *Paradise Lost* to his daughter and others. Hunt argued that the idea for the 17th-century epic poem arose from the dying embers of the Republic and is an allegory for England's failure to achieve positive change.

Milton had gained a reputation for defending republicanism and in 1649 he was engaged by the Council of State. Nominally, he was a linguist dealing with foreign correspondence, but he also wrote propaganda, including putting forward the idea that 'the people' can depose a bad king.

The Republican government of 1649-1653 was very different from Charles' rule. The House of Commons was supreme, although the Council of State (similar to a Cabinet) really ran things. Even when Cromwell became Lord Protector, there was no suggestion that his role was either god-like or above the law.

Milton used his influence to support thinking in fresh ways, and the result was a blossoming of creativity in the Republic. Robert Boyle, Joseph Hartlib and others, for example, were exploring science. New writers, including women, appeared on the growing literary scene, and the first woman to play on an English stage performed in the first English opera, in 1656. Freedom of belief was extended, trade encouraged, and literacy expanded rapidly. England was better, but still a long way from paradise.

The end of the Republic was not inevitable when Cromwell died. Even when Richard Cromwell stood down, it was not clear that Monck was going to invite Charles II back. But as Parliament and the standing Army continued to block each other, the possibility of paradise was lost. What Milton despised as the 'tyranny of custom' took England back to monarchy.

John Hampden: Manor Born, Manner Raised

by Bruce Alexander

Hampden, in Old English is Hamm-denu. For the Saxons, 'denu' conjured up a particular type of valley, one with easy dip-slopes and steep sides. The prefix 'hamm' is a word from which 'hemmed' is derived. The valley is hemmed in by trees, a natural shelter where Hampden was unusually cultivatable in the rough Chilterns landscape. The open-field consisted of a sophisticated system of agriculture that involved planning and ongoing cooperation amongst and with what would now be called the work-force.

Lords of the manor like the Hampdens were tied to the land and the community that worked it, fostering an intense sense of 'we'. Good lords were paternalistic, fathers to their people, willing to listen as well as command. To the Hampdens and their villagers, manorial or 'community' law was predominant, more relevant to their lives than the law of the king or the Church. The 'landed' were of the land and the people and for the land and the people.

John Hampden spent many years living on his estates and actively managing them, the evidence of his popularity from the march of the Buckinghamshire Petitioners in 1642 strongly suggesting that his approach was what today would be called 'consultative' leadership.

John's father's premature death brought the two-year-old to the centre of old-fashioned feudalism. Queen Elizabeth had the ancient right to take over the estate of a minor until he 'came of age'. a right which generated income for the Crown. However, John's mother, Elizabeth, paid £800 to 'buy back' her son's estate so she could run it for him. Indeed, this was the cause of family dispute, for cousin William clearly felt he should have made the application.

John's education, his time at the Inns of Court and his early membership of Parliament, primed him for managing the estate. When eventually he became more involved in Parliamentary affairs, what better training could he have had? He was ready for membership on the House of Commons committees, where he aimed to achieve consensus while others relished assertion. He was, in other words, an ideal man to manage crisis and deal with dissension.

On the occasion when a quarrel broke out in the House over the printing of the Grand Remonstrance, for example, Hampden averted bloodshed by 'a short speech of great sagacity and calmness'. Ever the authoritative chairman of few words, it was John Hampden's ennobling manner that took him from father of his community to Patriae Pater - Father of the People.



The Great Hall at Hampden House



The Dobson portrait of John Hampden



The historic Academy building in Branford, Connecticut
(Photo: Wikipedia)

Busy Beth

On a steamy 9th of July evening in Flackwell Heath, thirty resilient members of the local W.I. gathered in the Community Centre to hear our Chair Beth Rogers give her regular talk *John Hampden - Rebel or Patriot*.

This time Beth used 'What would you do?', a Q and A with the audience to open up discussion about the dilemmas facing John Hampden and other players in his story.

The response was fairly typical. The audience had heard of John Hampden School and some knew the statue, but as is often the case these days, even the Ship Money trial and the attempted arrest of the Five Members were not known.

Looking ahead, at noon on the 12th September, our Chair, with her 'fantasy author' hat on, will be giving a talk entitled *Martyrs, Regicides and Communists: South Bucks in the 1640s* for Aylesbury's Heritage Week. This will take place at *The King's Head* in the Market Place. Pre-booking required.

South Bucks was a hotbed of religious and political radicalism in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The speaker will introduce the people and events that made this region extraordinary in the early modern era, and you can discuss: if you had been there – what would you do?

The Buckinghamshire Neighbours: John Hampden and a Connecticut Family's Revolutionary Memory

by Robert Boris

In 1912, two of my Blackstone kinsmen in Branford, Connecticut - descendants, as I am, of the Rev. William Blackstone (1595–1675), first settler of Boston - swore affidavits recounting a scene from the American Revolution. During a British coastal raid, soldiers looted the Blackstone homestead while Capt. John Blackstone was away on Coast Guard duty. They drove off cattle and sheep, seized every provision, and stripped the place bare. Even bread his wife had just baked was carried off. It was this last act - taking bread from children - that broke her silence. She erupted into what the affidavit calls 'passionate reproach and scornful rebuke', awakened by 'the spirit of John Hampden, whose blood was in her veins'. One soldier, stirred by conscience, turned and tossed back a loaf before departing.

The claimed descent from Hampden remains unproven, but the documented genealogy makes it entirely plausible - and reveals connections arguably deeper than a single bloodline.

Hampden himself was a Connecticut landowner, granted territory in the Saybrook Colony under the Earl of Warwick's patent of 1632. The town of Hamden, adjoining Branford, bears his name to this day. But the link runs closer than geography. My ancestor John Blackstone married Rebecca Baldwin at Branford on 19 May 1757 (Branford vital records, Rev. Philemon Robbins officiating). Rebecca was the granddaughter of George Baldwin (1662-1728), whose father, John Baldwin, was born on 24th June 1619 at Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire - a Chiltern Hills village barely a morning's walk from Great Hampden. The Baldwins had held land at Aston Clinton since at least 1586, when Sylvester Baldwin was recorded as tenant of St Leonard's Chapel and other parish lands. Richard Hampden, the great parliamentarian's son, purchased the manors of Wendover Borough from a John Baldwin in 1660. These were not distant families: they were neighbours, fellow Puritans, and parties to the same property dealings.

John Baldwin's second wife in Connecticut was Mary Bruen, daughter of Obadiah Bruen of Bruen Stapleford, Cheshire - a documented Magna Carta Gateway Ancestor descended from Saher de Quincy (Douglas Richardson, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, I:343 -345). Through this marriage, my Blackstone, Baldwin, and Bruen ancestry converges in a single documented line. Whether or not a Hampden marriage awaits discovery in the Aston Clinton registers, the bond between these families was real, sustained, and rooted in the same Buckinghamshire soil that produced the greatest parliamentarian of his age.

John Hampden 1595 - 1643

Statesman - Soldier - Patriot

"One of the most extraordinary men in the records of mankind" — William Godeau

In this ancient beautiful church lie the remains of the venerated parliamentarian, John Hampden. He lived much of his life at Hampden House opposite the church, yet his influence extended far beyond this parish.

A Legacy of Liberty

John Hampden became a symbol of resistance to unjust taxation and arbitrary royal power. His name was immortalised in the *Hampden Club* in 1835, the early 19th-century political party, and John Hampden's as a predecessor in the 1780s. Several towns in the United States bear Hampden's name and he is honoured at Hampden-Sydney College. He also inspired later generations, including the English Romantic writers, the Chartist and the Women's Day Resistance League.

The Spark of Civil War

In the 1640s Parliament, John Hampden became a leading figure, nicknamed "The Great Puritan" and "Father of the People". At his suggestion, in the *King's Ship Money*, in January 1640, King Charles I ordered the House of Commons to order the raising of the Ship Money, including John Hampden, suggesting the start of the English Civil War. The MPs had refused, proposing the King to attack, "I am not bound to obey" his command but would defend the House of Commons.

His Final Resting Place

In 1643, John Hampden was wounded at the Battle of Chalgrove and died on 29th June. The Commonwealth brought his body back from there to this, his parish church, where he lies buried. The church is an unusual green, possibly to prevent decoration by enemy troops.

The Statue Against Ship Money

In an MP for this area in the 1620s, John Hampden was imprisoned for refusing to pay a forced loan imposed by the Crown. He helped shape the 1628 Petition of Right which declared that subjects should not be compelled to pay taxes without the consent of Parliament.

The Buckinghamshire Greenways

During the early years of the English Civil War, John Hampden helped Buckinghamshire Greenways, known as the Greenways. He fought to prevent battles in 1642 and 1643 including the Battle of Chalgrove in which they were outnumbered in taking the King's attempt to march to London.

One of the Greenways Captains, John Julius, wrote this poem, describing John Hampden in that battle.

*"I have seen him in the front of his regiment to gaze
At his death, about him did he stand
And abiding that like a shower of arrows, he
Was his company, and as if that he
From there had got the only message
Of some living courage"*

This board is provided by the John Hampden Society

For more information on the life of John Hampden and how you can support the society, please scan the QR code johnhampdensociety.org.uk

THE JOHN HAMPDEN SOCIETY
... HONOURING A GREAT ENGLISHMAN

1595: Born in Great Hampden, Bucks.
1627: Imprisoned for refusing to pay a forced loan which served as an MP.
1628: Petition of Right passed.
1629: Declaration of Parliament by King Charles I.
1637: John Hampden's Ship Money trial.
1640: King forced to recall Parliament.
1642: Fight at Chalgrove, starting the start of the English Civil War.
1643: John Hampden dies after taking the Greenways in the Battle of Chalgrove.

The Society's impressive display panel, soon to be erected at Great Hampden church



Avellina Balestri

How figures from the English Civil War were perceived by American Revolutionaries.

A talk by author Avellina Balestri

On 22nd July at 7pm via Zoom

Figures such as John Hampden were sources of inspiration to the American Revolutionaries in the 1770s. In some cases, they were reimagined by them. However, there was push-back by those who maintained support for King George III.

This talk also explores the religious ethos of the Reformed Churches of England and Scotland whose influence upon colonial America is undisputed, especially when it comes to the Puritan settlements in the northern colonies.

The talk will include some excerpts from the speaker's historical fiction, *All Ye That Pass By*, where characters discuss their perceptions of Hampden, Rutherford, Brooke, Cromwell, etc., showing how they have come to be treasured in the 18th century. A timely talk, given the 250th commemorations of the American Revolution.

THE FIVE MEMBERS - AN ALTERNATIVE SCENARIO

by Roy Bailey

I have recently been re-reading John Adamson's mammoth (741 pages) *The Noble Revolt*, which deals with the increasing opposition to Charles I's rule from early 1640 until he was forced to leave London for good in January 1642.

Adamson maintains that the campaign to wrest power from Charles and make him, in effect, another Doge of Venice (who reigned but did not rule) was originated and organised not by members of the House of Commons but by Puritan peers, led by the Earl of Northumberland and supported by the Earls of Warwick, Essex and Newport, among others.

These reformist peers, who eventually commanded a small majority in the Upper House, became known, together with their colleagues in the Commons, as 'The Junto'. Together with the majority in the House of Commons led by such activists as John Pym, John Hampden and Oliver St John, they chipped away at the King's power and authority until he could take no more.

Following the passing of the Grand Remonstrance two days before his return from Scotland on 25th November, Charles decided to go on the offensive. On 12th December he issued a proclamation summoning all the members of both Houses to return to Westminster on or

before 12th January 1642. Most of the missing peers and MPs, who constituted about a third of the Parliamentary membership, were supporters of the King and had wisely decided to keep well away from the Westminster hotbed. Their return would hand Charles the majority he needed to reassert his authority.

Allied with this was Charles's decision to accuse leading members of both Houses of treason. And here Adamson puts forward an interesting argument. He believes that the impeachment of the five MPs and one peer was intended more to completely disrupt parliamentary business for a long period (as it unquestionably would have) than, in his own words: 'actually removing their heads'.

And the King made no attempt to actually arrest the accused in their beds, contenting himself with having their papers seized on Monday 3rd January. Otherwise, in Adamson's words, Charles appeared to have been 'proceeding in a parliamentary way' and observing normal legal procedures.

His attitude seems to have been changed by the Junto's request on 3rd January that the Capuchin Friars, who formed a part of Queen Henrietta Maria's household, be banished. The Queen is said to have been so enraged by this threat that she is reported to have shouted at the King: 'Go, you coward, and pull these rogues out by the ears or never see my face more'.

If so, it would explain the famous incident in the House of Commons on the afternoon of Tuesday 4th January 1642.

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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.