

# JOHN HAMPDEN AND NICHOLAS STONE, SCULPTOR

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Nicholas Stone (1587–1647) was the leading mason-sculptor in England in the years immediately before the Civil War. He set up his yard in London in 1613 and for the next thirty years produced monuments of many different types which were erected in churches in all parts of the country. Details of some eighty of these are known through the survival of his Note-book and his Account Book which were edited by W. L. Spiers, and published by the Walpole Society, Volume VII, in 1919.

In the Account Book there occurs the following entry:—

This March 1639 the monement fur Mr. John Hamdon was sett up  
and the carges as followeth for glasen of the stone being 8 foot  
long 4 foot brode 32 foot at 18d the foot 2£ 8s 0 the under ston  
of portland stone 4 foot 1£ 0 0 the cornesh 2£ 0 0 the Armes  
2£ 0 0 the gilding and colleren at 1£ and the setting up 2£

	£	s	d
som	9	8	0 <sup>1</sup>

To this the Editor added that he had been unable to trace the monument to which the entry referred.

However, it seems plain that the monument described is that erected in Great Hampden parish church by John Hampden in memory of his first wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Edmund Symeon of Pyrton in Oxfordshire, who died on 20 August 1634. It is a wall monument with a rectangular dark-grey Purbeck marble tablet measuring eight feet in height and four feet in width — precisely the measurements given by Nicholas Stone. The tablet is topped by a moulded white stone open triangular pediment ('the cornesh') with the coloured arms of Hampden impaling Symeon in a large central cartouche. There is no flanking moulding, but the outline of pillars with a connecting arch is incised on the tablet. Underneath is a moulded pedestal of free-stone ('the under ston').

The tablet is unusually tall, but is completely filled by a very long inscription presumably composed by John Hampden himself. There is a gap after the first three lines of the inscription and the rest is divided into four sections. The first and last sections are carved in Roman capitals, the second in Roman small letters and the third in Italic small letters. At some time the second section has been replaced, presumably because it was in bad condition, since there is a strip of damaged stone starting abruptly below the centre of the newer part and running down the lower sections of the tablet.<sup>2</sup> In 1746 Edward Haines, a 'carver', was working at Hampden House, and amongst the records of payments made to him by the Steward of the Great Hampden estate is the item:



Plate I  
The Monument to Elizabeth Hampden in Great Hampden Church.

Photograph by Mary Farnell.

Putting a piece of marble to the monument in the church and  
 cleaning it . . . . . 2s 6d<sup>3</sup>

The only other marble monument in the church at that time was that to Richard Hampden of London (died 1662) and his wife Ann (died 1675) and this shows no sign of having ever been repaired.<sup>4</sup> It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that it was the monument to Elizabeth Hampden which Edward Haines repaired.

Amongst all the monuments recorded by Nicholas Stone there is only one which he specifically states was erected in Buckinghamshire. This is the memorial to Lady Jane Boys in Great Missenden parish church, and here also John Hampden was involved.

This 16 August 1638 Agreed with Mr John Hampden and with  
 Mr Richard Camden for one monement to consist of blak  
 and whitt marble to be set up in greet mesenden in memorell of the  
 lady Boys decesed and I receved this present day in part 10£ the  
 some Agreed for is 30£ so ther is to be receved whin it is set up  
 and fashed

£ s d  
 20 0 0

This is also a rectangular wall monument. The black marble tablet has a frame of moulded white marble which is surrounded by a plain black border. The white marble open segmental pediment encloses arms in a cartouche. Although this monument is smaller than the one to Elizabeth Hampden, the use of statuary marble and the additional carving may explain why it cost nearly three times as much.

Lady Jane Boys died on 17 January 1635/6, having appointed John Hampden and Richard Camden, of Ash in Kent, as executors of her will. She was the second wife of Sir John Boys, a member of a large Kentish family of gentry, who had been Steward to five successive Archbishops of Canterbury. Sir John died in 1612 and a large monument was erected to him in Canterbury cathedral on which both his wives appear as small kneeling figures at the base. Lady Jane Boys thus has the distinction of being commemorated on two memorials. Sir John's will was unsuccessfully contested by other members of the Boys family — perhaps this was why Lady Boys left Kent.<sup>5</sup> But we do not know why she chose to settle in Great Missenden.

By a codicil to her will, dated 22 December 1635, Lady Boys left £100 to be employed for the benefit of the poor of Great Missenden. To this sum John Hampden and Richard Camden added £35 and bought Cat's Croft in Prestwood (now known as Lady Boys, in Kiln Road), and conveyed it to Trustees. The annual income from this property was £6, and of this £5 was devoted to apprenticing poor children of the parish, 15s was used for incidental expenses, and 5s was for 'repairing and decently maintaining' Lady Boys's monument in Great Missenden church.<sup>6</sup> Receipts for the cleaning of this monument from 1651 to 1775 still exist; the first receipt, for £3, covers the preceeding twelve years.<sup>7</sup>

It was often the custom for a family to use the same sculptor for their monuments, so it is worth noting that the fine monument to Lord and Lady Knyvett in Stanwell parish church, Middlesex, is by Nicholas Stone. The Knyvetts both died in 1622 and Stone records that he erected the monument in the following year. Lady Knyvett's

first husband, Richard Warren, was John Hampden's great-uncle, and the personal relationship between the two families must have been quite close since William, John's father, left Richard Warren his 'best ambling gelding',<sup>8</sup> and Elizabeth, John's mother, was Lady Knyvett's executrix.<sup>9</sup> The Note-book does not tell us who ordered the Knyvett monument, but Elizabeth surely must have known about it.

At the back of his Note-book Nicholas Stone kept a diary from November 1640 to October 1642 in which he recorded events immediately preceeding the outbreak of the Civil War. The entries include a vivid description of disturbances in Whitehall Palace where he was evidently working at the time, and 'out of the window saw it all'. He gives a day by day account of the incident of the five members of Parliament, who, accused of treason by King Charles I, escaped to the City of London to avoid arrest at Westminster. He brings the story to a dramatic conclusion:

... and the same day [11 January 1641/2] com out of the Conty of Bukingham 3000 of the best and ablest men to give or show thar true harttes to Mr Hamden whow was knight of thar shear vowing thar lives and estates to mentayn and vendcatt his truth and liolty to his king and Contry; the mad a petecion to both Howes and had a very curtes refrencs whar with the war well satisfied for that tim: and the nex day thar cam 2 compeneys out of London and betwen thim the 5 genttlemen rood in 2 coches to weet Mr Holles Mr Pim Mr Strood Mr Hamden Sr Afer Hasellrige unto the parloment and the next day agene.

1. This total should, of course, be £10 8s 0d, but there is no record of the actual amount paid.
2. *The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments' Inventory for Buckinghamshire*, Vol. II, South (1912), 161, notes that the marble of the tablet was in bad condition from the damp.
3. Bucks. Record Office. D/MW/33/6.
4. The monument erected by Richard [Trevor] Hampden to his forebears was put up in 1756 (not 1743 as stated by N. Pevsner in *Buckinghamshire*) when a Great Hampden estate labourer was paid 1s a day for seven days to 'help the London workman put up the monument in the chancell' – the name of the London man was unfortunately not given. (B.R.O. D/MW/33/16).
5. Edward Hasted, *History of Kent* (1799), III, 565.
6. *Report of the Commissioners on Charities and Education*. V, Bucks (1842), 203.
7. B.R.O. PR/148/25/4.
8. George Lipscomb, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckinghamshire* (1847), II, 235.
9. *Victoria County History: Middlesex* (1962), III, 49.