



## THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR SOCIETY

Formed in 1975 the ACWS has been going from strength to strength ever since. We have strong connections with American Civil War re-enactors from all over the world. The Society provides an absorbing hobby for its members, spectacular battles and historical displays for audiences.

The ACWS is essentially a historical society, with many members acknowledged as experts on the history of the period who give talks to schools, colleges and other organisations. ACWS caters for all interests in the subject from military modelling to music of the period and live shooting period black powder weapons. ACWS offers people the opportunity to experience 'living history' in the form of battles, displays of period medical techniques, authentic camps, civilian life, military drill and the portrayal of period events.



The ACWS is the largest American Civil War re-enactment society in the UK. Members are drawn from all walks of life and come from all parts of the country. The society is essentially a non-profit making organisation and attendance at events by members is on a purely voluntary basis.

Over the years we have helped to raise money for various charities acting as the focal point for shows. We have attended fetes, carnivals, stately homes and organised events all over the country.





Previous clients vary from the British Army of the Rhine, Zeneca and Staffordshire Tableware to many stately homes including Castle Howard, Knebworth and Eastnor Castle. We have worked with English Heritage, The National Trust, numerous City and District Councils and film companies, appearing in films, historical drama, educational and training videos. Members can regularly be seen on the History and Discovery Channels and have taken part as extras in films such as 'Gettysburg', 'Glory' and more recently 'Gods and Generals'.

In addition to the military uniforms we have many members dressed in a variety of clothing and portraying various civilian roles around the authentic tented camp. All this comes together and creates a wonderfully atmospheric backdrop to our events.





## BRITAIN & THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Why should we in Britain be interested in the American Civil War?

The armies of the American Civil War were formed mainly of English speaking men, mostly descended from colonists who had come from these islands. Great Britain contributed over 45,000 participants to the struggle, as well as vast quantities of arms and war material, much finding its way through the Federal blockade of the Confederate coastline.

Confederate warships were built at the Birkenhead shipyard of Lairds, the most famous being the commerce raider Alabama, later sunk by the Federal warship, the Kearsarge, off Cherbourg.

The cotton workers of Lancashire endured great hardship during the war years, but they steadfastly refused to

handle Southern cotton knowing it had been gathered by slave labour.

There are many, many personal connections between this country and the people and events of the American Civil War, including the great-grandfather of one of our members being involved in gun running in the Mersey estuary to ships bound for America.





## WHAT ACWS PROVIDE

The American Civil War (1861-1865) was the first 'modern' war. It had a profound effect not only on the USA, but also on the course of subsequent European and World History. Vast numbers of Europeans, especially people from Britain were involved. The war had many firsts, including the first practical use of machine guns, repeating rifles, ironclad ships, modern trench systems, torpedoes, telegraphy, balloons, railroads, and photography.

The American Civil War Society offers the opportunity to experience living history in the form of re-enactments of battles, camps and events of the period.

Members represent individual units from the two sides. If wearing grey or brown the unit will be Confederate (Southern Rebels), while the dark blue uniforms represent the Federal or Union (Northern Yankees). As a general rule, red rank



badges and piping on a uniform denote artillery, yellow is for cavalry, and pale blue is for the infantry, on both sides. Some units, however, had their own, different way of doing things, too!



Members equip themselves with blank-firing black powder muskets and other authentic firearms, uniforms and equipment of the period. We also have batteries of real cannon on each side, each cannon emits a deafening roar and clouds of smoke when fired,



whilst the opposing infantry and cavalry also blaze away at each other using the tactics and drills of the period.

At our events, the re-enactment arena is roped off and members of the public are warned to keep out of the arena and to keep children and pets under control and behind the ropes or barriers. Our battles are noisy and we use explosive ground charges to simulate artillery fire. It is unsafe for a member of the public to enter our battlefield arena until after we have cleared the field at the end of an event.

The public is very welcome to come and talk to any members and to walk around the authentic tented camps both before and after our battle.





## EVENT SAFETY



The black powder (gun powder) muskets and cannons produce a lot of noise and smoke, so our audiences must be prepared for this.

We pride ourselves on the society's exemplary safety record. Because our battle scenes involve real weapons

(firing blank ammunition), it must be stressed that the most stringent safety rules and codes of conduct are observed at all times. All weapons are proofed by a Government test house and fully licensed to the individual members who own them. All members are fully trained and experienced in the use and safe maintenance of their weapons.

We take no chances with our members or with our audiences, we have fully trained medics and first aiders within the society. We are fully covered with public liability insurance and have assisted the Health and Safety Executive, NAReS and the Police in producing a code of conduct for re-enactment societies





## WHAT CAN THE ACWS DO FOR YOU?

Engagements can be tailored to suit most budgets from small living history displays to full scale Spectaculars including Pyrotechnics, Infantry, Artillery, Mounted Cavalry and Civil War Musicians.

We seek to recreate the atmosphere of the 'war between the states' and life in the 1860's.

We have a dedicated Marketing and Projects Team who will work with you to make your event a success.

To discuss your requirements, please contact our Projects Director.

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- Corporate Hospitality
- Sales Promotion
- Living History Displays
- Historical Demonstrations
- Film and Television
- Carnivals and Fetes
- Festivals
- Country Shows
- Victorian events
- Museums
- Schools, Colleges and Universities
- Exhibitions

