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The A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER

2015 Summer Edition



ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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A.C.W.S. CONTACTS

Directors & Army Commanders



Mr Michael Smart, Chairman



Mrs Helen Needham, Secretary



Mr Ian Morris, Treasurer



Mr Peter Holt, Events



Miss Claire Morris, Membership



Mr Martin Cross, Health & Safety



Mrs Val Holt, Communications



Mr Mike Bussey, Webmaster



Mr Tim Davies, Federal Commander



Mr Glenn Gibson Confederate Commander

The American Civil War Society Ltd

THE BEGINNING

I used to run a shop in Bolton in the 1970's that specialised in military subjects. One day a young lad walked in and started to tell us about a society called The Sealed Knot. Within a couple of weeks about 20 of us, customers and friends, had not only been to see a re-enactment but we formed Sir Charles Gerard's Regiment of Foot and joined up. After a couple of years a number of us, whose real interest was the American Civil War not the English Civil War, heard of the club called SOSKAN who specialised in the American Civil War and to cut a long story short we thought we can do that up North. SOSKAN at that time only operated in the South.

I cannot remember everybody's name that came to the first meeting in 1975 but some of them were, to the best of my knowledge, Dave Davis, Dave Peters, Ian Roberts, Barry Ryan, Dave Whittle, Albert Hall, Fred Smith, Keith Lomax and me. We were all terribly jealous because Dave Peters actually had a musket. Over a period of about 6 or 7 months we recruited about 70 new members from all over the North and in 1976 we were ready to stage our first battle at Leverhulme Park in Bolton. Would you believe Granada television got wind of this event and asked if they could make a film for a television programme called on the road. They wanted to call it one day in the life of Pete Smith and we were well aware that they fully intended to portray us as a bunch of eccentrics. Luckily when the producers met us they realised we were serious and put an entirely new slant on the programme, more or less portraying us as amateur historians. The programme was aired mid week in the summer of 1976 and membership went through the roof, going well up into the hundreds in a very short time.

In 1982 I went to America with my father to visit the battlefields and was lucky enough to be present at Newmarket for the re-enactment. When we arrived all I could see was a sea of white tents and living history at its very best. Upon my return I bought four white tents for Knapp's Battery and the idea caught on throughout the society. Over the years regiments were formed all over the country and we went from strength to strength, including very close ties with SOSKAN who for me were the inspiration behind Civil War re-enacting in this country.

Founding Member
Peter F Smith

‘Rev Ron’ Remembers

My first battle was at Mow Cop on the Cheshire-Staffordshire border. At that time we had a character in the Tennessee called 'Penfold'. During the battle he fell in the moat which was covered in green slime and thereafter he was called "The Green Monster".

My first tunic and kepi were made by Grace Smith (mother of Pete Smith) at a cost of £12 including postage & packing. Our only sutler at that time was Edwin Field.

The funniest time I remember was when the Swellings family (six of them) arrived on Family Camp with a small caravan. They unhitched it from the car and they all piled in eager to get something to eat. In their haste they had forgotten to lower the jacks. With a resounding crash the back end slammed into the ground and the front end was tipped up high into the air. At the lower end, amid shrieks and screams, there was a melee of bodies, food, cans of beer and bottles of milk. There was no rapid response to their dilemma as all the bystanders were rendered helpless with laughter.



One of the happiest times that I've ever shared with ACWS members was when a young couple made their wedding vows in front of friends and family in a marquee in Sheffield. Another happy moment on camp was christening a baby called Byron. Sadder memories include losing an old friend John Smyth who was in the Yankee Artillery.

I would like to thank Alan Carter for encouraging me to become a member many years ago.

Ed: Ron Moseley is one of our oldest (I am sure he won't mind me saying that) and most respected members. His portrayal of a Confederate Padre is legendary and is known affectionately throughout ACWS as 'Rev Ron'.



THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF A.C.W.S.

Early days in the ACWS

I am one of the original members from beginning in 1975 I answered an advert in the Exchange & Mart regarding members required to form a club with American Civil War interest, it was placed by Peter Smith, so I answered the advert and went down to his shop (The model centre) in Bolton, to find out some more about this group he was forming, I was impressed by Peter and his ideas at the time there was not the contacts then regarding uniform & equipment so Peter's mother made a lot of the uniforms and in those naive days. I can still remember our first battle in Leverhulme park I did not even have a musket then just a few of the members had shotguns firing blanks it was the first taste of battle re-enactment I had. I started off in the 2nd Wisconsin with a chap called Chris Gregory running the company, after a year I changed over to the 24th Michigan run by Neil Harrison I would end up running the Regiment after a time over the years I saw a vast improvement in the society on looking back my most memorable would be the tactical events at Lyme Park and the International events at Weston Park Bull run, with the Europeans, American, SOSKAN and ACWS of course. As acting Regimental C.O. I did 30 years with the ACWS and look back fondly at those years I know we have lost a few good members & friends over this time and I still consider to have some friends who are still members. 40 years - well done the ACWS.

Brian Walton.

ACWS at Sewerby Hall, Bridlington, North Yorkshire

The American Civil War Society travelled to the picturesque resort of Bridlington and to one of their favourite locations at Sewerby Hall situated right on the coast for the May Bank Holiday. Due to the fine weather for most of the weekend, this resulted in one of the best re-enactments to date at this particular venue. The scenario, in tune with the 150th Anniversary and the later stages of the Civil War, was the re-enactment of the siege of Petersburg, Virginia and particularly the Battle of the Crater which occurred on July 30th 1864. The re-enactment scenario planned and organised by both Confederate Major Glen Gibson and Union Major Tim Davies involved the Confederates hiding behind breastworks directly in front of the hall and being pushed by the excellent Union 1st Michigan cavalry and the USS Sharpshooters in the forefront of the Union Army. However, the Confederate breastworks was suddenly confronted by a huge pyrotechnic explosion which blew (some literally but safely!) all the chosen deactivated non firing Confederates directly in front, along with the rest of the Army, into total disarray and confusion. As the Confederate Army lay stunned, the Union advanced through the Confederate breastworks and over the numerous prone Confederate dead.

However, as the Confederates regrouped, the 4 different Confederate Regiments took their respective positions with the 43rd North Carolina and 32nd South Virginia running around to man the palisade directly to the front and the 2nd South Carolina and 1st Tennessee to either flank and pouring volleys into the advancing Union Army from 3 sides with increasing devastating effect particularly in the ranks of the 69th New York and 19th Indiana. Despite standing firm, Union casualties mounted and as the Confederates slowly advanced from all sides, the Federals retreated and the Confederate victory was sealed. The scenario was repeated on both days. Overall, this was a fresh and exciting new scenario for the re-enactors and thoroughly enjoyed by all who participated. Both sides took their hits well adding to the realism. Christian Sprakes, the ACWS commentator, was in fine form and added his own colourful wit and extensive Civil war knowledge in entertaining and educating the public. This ACWS event, as usual, attracted a very large and knowledgeable bank holiday crowd who all stated how much they enjoyed the event and particularly the excellent pyrotechnic display by John Filer and his team. A successful re-enactment is also about living history and interacting with the public. This year, the Confederates used the Orangery and put on a General Robert E Lee and his Confederate

Generals display. This was enhanced by a continuous guard rota on the house and Orangery. The Federals camped on the hall grounds and mounted living history displays throughout the weekend with regular drill sessions by all the different regiments at various intervals keeping the public interested throughout. In addition, it was so pleasing to see The Cavalry out in force with their display and horsemanship, including some new riders and horses, was excellent. Both their drill displays and action in the battle itself was testimony to this. The Ask a Soldier Questionnaire for all the children present broke all records by well over a 150 being distributed and thanks must go to all the Civil War soldiers in both camps who helped and assisted. Although a percussion cap pouch is not "an extra small ammo box!" as 1 helpful new reb recruit identified to a young participant!

Along with the excellent re-enactment, the main highlight of the weekend witnessed the marriage of Paul and Kerry Edensor, US Sharpshooters and ACWS stalwarts, in the Orangery in Sewerby Hall itself. This was a lovely and memorable occasion, in beautiful weather, with the bride and groom and all the guests (both Union and Confederate) dressed in period uniforms and dresses. There were fine speeches, readings and poems read by Union Officers Major Tim Davies and Gary Holman and the ceremony was followed by a succulent hog roast held in the Union lines for all the invited guests. Over the weekend, the Confederate Army also celebrated the 21st birthday of Paige Brown (43rd North Carolina) which was a lovely occasion with a fine buffet and speeches.

On a very much sadder note, the weekend also witnessed a small ACWS Confederate memorial service for Chris Makinson (ACWS 2nd South Carolina) who sadly and suddenly passed away on Christmas Eve 2014.

The small service was requested by his family as they all lived locally and held in the Sewerby Hall gardens. Chris himself always enjoyed the Sewerby events and was due to attend. The service was attended by both his family members and the whole of the Confederate Army. There were fine readings and poems read by Sergeant Peter Francis-Wemyss (C/O 2nd South Carolina) and Dennis "General Lee" Jarwick ending with a perfect volley from the whole Confederate Army as the family requested.

This bi-annual Sewerby Hall Event is always a very popular event for both the ACWS re-enactors and the public who regularly attend in large numbers. The success of this years event only underlines this and it is hoped by everyone that we will be invited back again in 2 years time.

Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina



Growing Up In ACWS

My Family and I joined in 1981. I can't remember our first event it was so long ago.

I remember looking forward to the spring/summer months knowing that I would have to dress up as young girl of 1860's, it was fun and i enjoyed it. I made so many great friends young and old.

As a child of 8 years old I didn't really understand except it was against the blue and the grey soldiers. As I grew older and started to watch films and read books, I started to understand roughly what it was about.

Helping my dad to build a campfire and have our breakfast it was great. Cath and I would watch the battles. We would have a look around at the grounds if it was a stately home or look at the stalls. In the evenings we would sit around friends camp fires and listen to those singing or playing instruments of the period or go to the beer tent and there would always be someone singing on the make-shift stage.

During the day I would play with my friends in the sunshine. We only returned to the tent lines when we were hungry or thirsty. At night when I was put to bed I slept soundly, worn out by play and fresh air.

I have been to places that I wouldn't normally have got to go to on days out such as Chirk Castle, Hagley Hall, Bolton Show. I got to see wild rabbits, owls and squirrels, these were animals I wouldn't see normally, living in a town. I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity to be able to do an active interest as American Civil War and learn in the process.

Dawn Stringer
14th Brooklyn Civilian.

Grumpy Bear's Memories

Val Holt has asked me to write a Newsletter item about the past of this great Society, now that we are to celebrate our 40th year in operation. Whilst Mike Bussey has been in longer and has a better memory, I can recall one or two significant things.

In the early Summer of 1981 I left the TA, and later that Summer I went on a long holiday to the USA with Jennifer, to visit my cousin Peter and family in Georgia. We had a look at several museums and one of the things I can remember is going up Kennesaw Mountain, and noting there the Confederate Infantry re-enactor's Living History camp. I didn't quite 'get it' at the time, but the idea took root.

That Autumn (we then lived in Loughborough in the East Midlands) there was a Family Fun Day in our local park. Jennifer was unwise enough to turn her back for 5 minutes to talk to some friends. I watched in the main arena a small camp set up by some chaps in grey (including a cooking fire and some A frame tents) then led by one Cpl Roger Z (of blessed memory – never could spell his surname!) being attacked by some soldiers in dark blue led by one Ken McCullough. They fired a volley over a low mound and some bushes and then charged in. What I did not know at the time was that they had put rose hip seeds down the barrels of their muskets, so that the Rebs heard something 'whizzing' by their ears! Boy, did those Rebs run! So I got in touch there and then with the leader of this pack, one Staniforth, and joined us up. The next thing Jen knew was she was a Union soldier! Both my father and my in-laws were surprised to be asked at Christmas for certain items of kit, which you could only get by mail from the States in those days, using your credit card. Christmas presents were therefore proper belts, ammunition pouches and authentic water bottles. The rest of the uniforms came later in 1982 when the season started. In those days, genuine Sutlers were unheard of in the UK so – as our unit was part of the Iron Brigade – pale blue trousers were ex National Bus Company trousers from Ken where he worked, and dark blue jackets were tailored ex Policeman's or Fireman's jackets. At least the buttons were authentic ones from the States. Mr & Mrs Staniforth had set up the 'Badger Boys' in the East Midlands and the members largely came from Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. At any one time there were about 15 of us maximum. The Staniforth's had been members of the Iron Brigade 24th Michigan based in Coventry, but had been such a 'pain-in-the-arse'

that they had left and formed their own independent unit. Cheap skates as I now know them to be, they took off the '4' and changed into 2nd Wisconsin from 24th Michigan! Otherwise the uniforms were the same. Thus started our re-enacting career.

To cut a long story short, sometime in 1983 the Badger Boys were guests of ACWS at an event they had in South Derbyshire. Up until then we had been quite happy that Mrs Clark and Mrs Staniforth and others had been dressed as 'chaps' and looking like 'chaps' in the ranks, serving as soldiers. Our big joke was that one Cpl Colin was willowy, and had long blond hair, and so was picked out as 'the woman in the unit' in any photographs, much to his annoyance. Jennifer disguised her charms very effectively, whilst Mrs Staniforth had little or no difficulty in soldiering as a 'chap'!

However this group of then authentically equipped and dressed soldiers drew ire from certain parts of ACWS of the unreconstructed sort, because they were dead against this dire thing, 'women in the ranks'. Pete Smith, the then Chairman, was not happy, but we carried on as we were, and in due course the Staniforth's emigrated to work in the USA and most of the 2nd Wisconsin opted into ACWS as a new unit under Ken McC. I recall this was in the 1983 season and Ken and Paul McClullough were Members 99 and 100 whilst Philip and Jennifer Clark were 101 and 102 membership numbers. We already had a large enough 2nd Wisconsin, but the 19th Indiana (one of the founder units in ACWS) had withered down to one Sgt. Major namely Alan Mathews. Pete Smith advised Ken, as an 'authentic Iron Brigade Unit' to join the 19th, so we did, much to Alan's surprise and consternation. All of a sudden he had a full blown unit to look after, not that we were much trouble, because we sorted ourselves out and were very proactive.

The problem was 'women in the ranks'. Those groups that were fervently against women dressing as anything other than 'girlies' stirred the pot, and finally we had to take the matter to the AGM for resolution. So at the Bolton YMCA Club AGM in 1989 we put a proposition to amend the Bye-Laws and rules etc. accordingly. Rule 7 now says 'Women may participate fully in all events of the Company including being armed, equipped and dressed as men and in the ranks of units subject to ;

- a) Individual units being free to decide as they may wish on their own membership in this matter and;

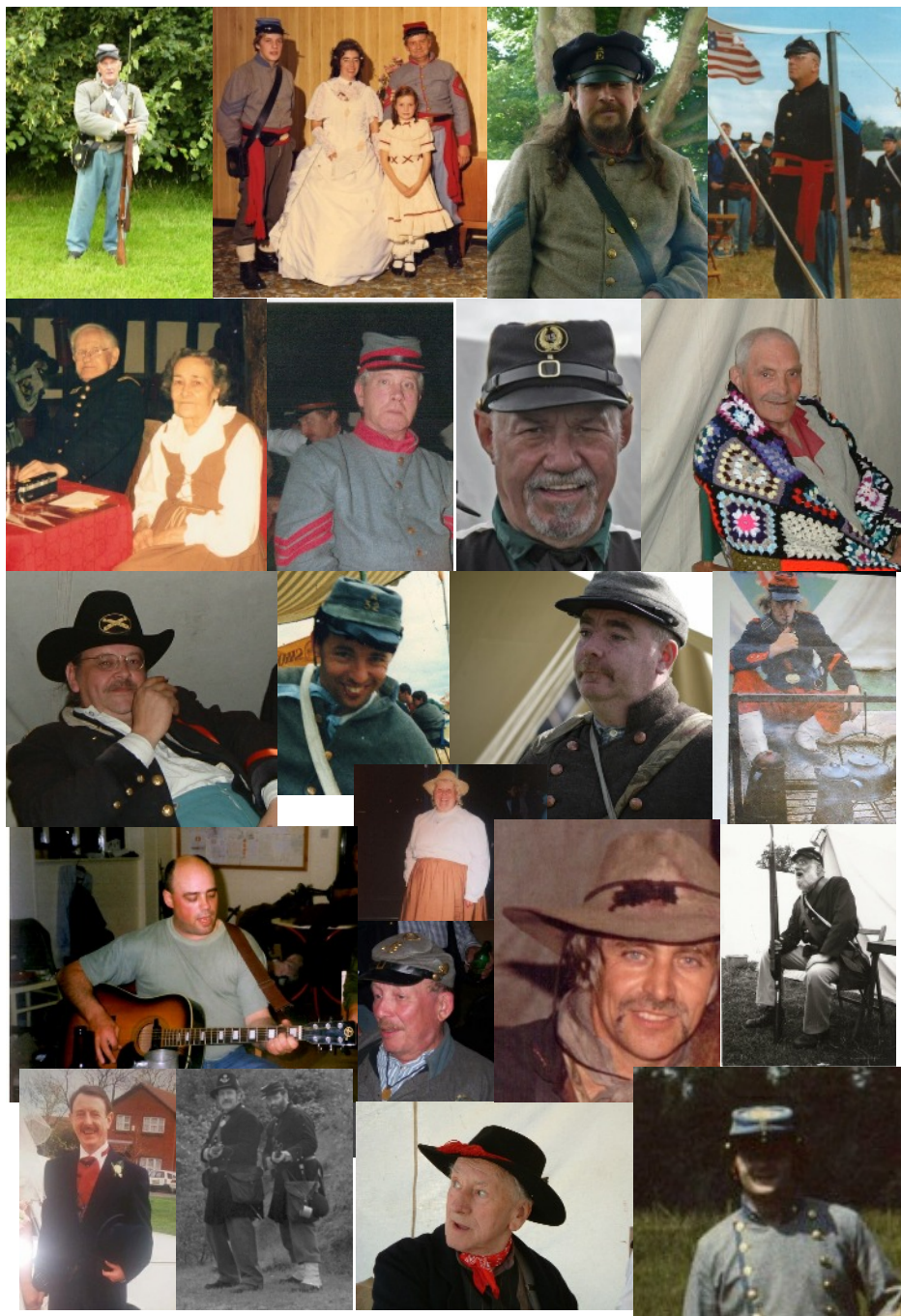
Blasts From The Past



ACWS Pets Who Are Gone But Not Forgotten



Memorial Wall



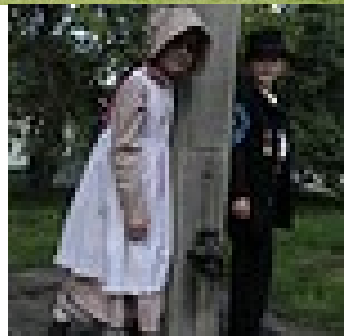
Members Past and Present



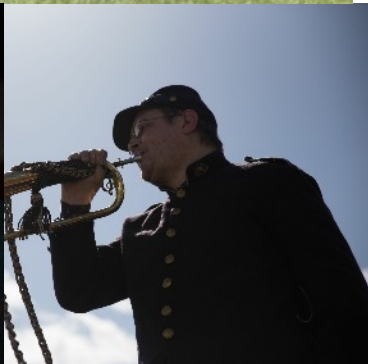
Members Past And Present



Blasts From The Past



Blasts From The Past



THANK YOU

The whole membership of the American Civil War Society

Would like to express their thanks to

LINDA REED

For her splendid efforts in making

Our 40th Anniversary Party such a roaring success.

Thanks also go to her band of helpers

It took hours of patience to produce

The decorations and bunting to deck the hall

So nicely also for organising the and setting out the food.

The music was magnificent, setting the tone just right.

Well Done Linda

For and on Behalf of

ACWS Board of Directors

- b) Women participating as soldiers must appear appropriately dressed and equipped to reasonable standards as the Board of Directors may determine, and be commensurate with the image and appearance of the unit that they are re-enacting'

My, was there a hell of a fuss when this legitimately went on the agenda. In those days the Autumn ACWS Annual Dance was usually on Saturday night in the Bolton area followed by the AGM (and the nursing of hang-overs) on the Sunday, upstairs in the YMCA meeting hall. The day duly came and Philip Clark had talked with the proposer before the event, one Beverley Schofield, a profoundly deaf woman of the Society. This meeting was in a burger bar in Bolton before the AGM meeting and, whilst being very successful in tuning our case, was the first and last time that I have ever been in a burger bar!

I was the Secunder to the motion because I could then speak last, address the opposition arguments, and be most effective.



Beverley put her case very well and the opposition behaved in a chauvinistic and 'flat-earth' way. They had not got their act together. Although I say it myself, I had, and had a beautifully rehearsed cogent argument of a speech ready. Pete Smith as Chairman and others, against the motion, so put up the backs of the woman members in the audience that you could see in the meeting room wife's

and girlfriends putting the arms of the chaps they were with up their backs as the chauvinists spoke. At the end of the day the cleverly worded clause 7, which gives units a decree of latitude and discretion, won a resounding victory. That is why Clause 7 is there and 'we are where we are'.

I always remember Pete Smith from the Chair berating 'those clever barristers speeches all written out beforehand in that blue book'. That happened to be the colour of my notebook, and I have forever been proud that we won the day, changed ACWS from being 'men only fight : women only wear dresses' and introduced voluntary egalitarianism, long before women were allowed to join St. Andrews Golf Club. Of all my amendments and additions to the Bye-Laws and Rules (and there have been many!) I think this is the one of which I was the most proud. Nowadays, women in the ranks follow the '10 feet test' i.e. if you can tell that soldier 'chap' is a 'girlie' at 10' away or more, the disguise is not

good enough, and 'steps will have to be taken'. Most units now have voted appropriately, within that Rule, to have women in the ranks. Not all choose so to do, but it does give freedom of choice to those who wish to, which I strongly support and think is alright-and-proper in today's Society, and in society today.

One other thing that I think the 19th Indiana implemented concerns recruitment. Back in those days a lot of units were based on a group of friends who met every Thursday (or whatever) in XYZ pub, or where members of such - and -such a club, so getting into them was not easy for outsiders. A lot of our ACWS events were scattered across the Midlands and the North and members of the public would often come up to us after a battle and say 'wow, that was tremendous, how do I join...'. If you couldn't come down to the Kings Arms in Urmston on a Thursday night, or whatever, you were a bit stuck. We would take down all the details of the person enquiring and send them a joining pack, and stay in touch on the telephone. It meant a lot of photocopying, postage and telephoning, but it worked. We got lots of members scattered all over the place who came and trained with us, wherever we were. We had a pool of kit, de-activated guns and tents to lend out to new recruits, which we did most successfully, and our membership increased by leaps and bounds, with new members springing up all over the place. They duly came to regimental training days and qualified as members, concentrating on getting their tickets and guns first, and both the Society and the Regiment thrived. This 'innovation' was followed by a lot of other units, and everybody has done well out of it. We concentrated on authenticity and getting the right kit and uniforms, firstly from the States and then from UK Sutlers. We always prided ourselves on having muzzle loading, percussion, Black powder firing guns. None of the 12 bore blank shotguns found in other units when we first joined! So, in due course, the Officer in charge changed from Ken McCullough to Steve Barnes and then to Chris Wood Crewe, then Tim Davies and on to 'Exotic' Phil Berry.....

On a couple of occasions I was made the Secretary of the Society and served out terms accordingly, working hard and hopefully 'doing my bit', but the best thing was working with an excellent group of pals, growing the 19th Indiana, and changing ACWS into the authentic but egalitarian, Equal Opportunity Society that it is today. Long may it so remain.

Philip Clark

How I came to be a re enactor

I am of an age to have friends whose parents like my own, met and married during WW2. One of my best friends at school was such a girl. Not only that, she had been born in the USA. Her mother had been a Land girl working on a farm in the South of England near to where there was an American base where soldiers were training for D-Day. Shortly after the war ended they were married and went to the USA. My friend's mother missed her family so much they can back to the UK in 1950. All this made them perfect candidates to interview years later when we were studying for our 'O' Level history exam. It was while we were talking I made the ultimate faux par when I referred to him as a 'Yank'. He kindly but firmly corrected me by explaining as he had been born and brought up below the Mason Dixon Line he was not a 'Yankee' but a Southerner, and suggested I read 'Gone With the Wind', which I did along with North and South and every other American Civil War based book I could find. Then the bug really did bite and I progressed to reading more about the war and its causes. As the years went by life got in the way as a career, marriage and a daughter came along and the trips to the local library became less frequent. Until said daughter announced one day that there was an activity afternoon at the local library and she would like to go. Mums were given a corner of the library to chat while the kids enjoyed the activities. My eyes began to wander across the book titles on the nearby shelves and one took my eye. In no time at all my interest in the chit chat was gone as I immersed myself in a long lost pleasure. I had to renew my library ticket so I could borrow the book to finish reading it. Peter was surprised to learn of my interest of this subject and encouraged it by BUYING me books on the subject. Again life rolled on and years later I heard an announcement on Radio Newcastle that the American Civil War Society were to have an event over the Spring Bank Holiday at Tynemouth Castle. We decided that this would make for a lovely family day out, although the teenager had some reserves because 'history is boring'. The day came and we walked through the Confederate camp, which was in some disarray as the strong winds round the headland the night before had ravaged through some tents. The Union camp was somewhat more sheltered and had not suffered as much damage and they seemed more inclined to talk, especially a couple from the 69th NY called Geoff and Linda. We chattered with them for ages then went for a pleasant lunch in a nearby

hostelry, returning in time to see the battle. It proved to be loud and exciting as the Rebels came up the incline from the headland and attacked the Union Camp right in front of us. Suddenly there was a tug on my sleeve. 'Look Mum that's a girl fighting.' The aforementioned teenager cried. 'Dad, do you fancy doing that? I do.' History did not look so boring now. After all the noise and smoke had drifted away we had another chat with Geoff and Linda who introduced us to their commanding officer, Noel Cooney, we took the offered forms to fill in at home. When we got home I put every obstacle in the way. Weather, travel, cost and of course camping, which I was not too sure about. But Peter and Magz enthusiasm did not diminish so the forms were filled in and sent off. Measurements were taken so that Pat Cooney's sister Irene could make two uniforms. I had to make my own dress. Again we were lucky as the next event was within daily travelling distance, Saltburn. While at that event we were persuaded to attend a small regimental event at Redditch. So we bought a modern tent because I was NEVER going to sleep in a white 'A' frame. That idea did not last long after a couple of long walks back to Family Camp after a few ciders round the campfire. Now I spend so many nights in my tent now I call it 'The White House' even if it is looking a bit greyer now. Also the idea of only doing those events close to home was thrown on the scrap heap after that August Bank Holiday. In fact Peter and I have only missed one ACWS event in 17 years and that was because I was in hospital with heart failure. In 2002 I had managed to attend events while receiving Chemo and radio therapy after a mastectomy, but that's another story.

Val Holt 69th NY



Tynemouth Castle 1998

ACWS – NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015

The American Civil War Society Ltd (a company limited by guarantee, number 2610962) hereby gives NOTICE that it's AGM will be held on Saturday 5th December 2015 starting at 1pm prompt at the 6th Gainsborough Sea Scout HQ, Love Lane, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, DN21 2SG

If you are a current member and have any nominations for posts of Directors or Army Commanders of the Society and/or you have any agenda items appropriate for the AGM, then put them in writing as soon as possible addressed to the Secretary ACWS, P O Box 52 Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 1JQ. These MUST be received at this location by NO LATER than Monday 5th October 2015.

Nominations for other than existing post holders have to be signed by the nominee and proposed by at least one other current member, who must also sign the nomination. The nominee may submit a short address for circulation to the membership to support their candidature.

As at the date of this Notice, the current directors are standing for re-election as far as is now known. The current two Army Commanders are also standing for re-election as at the date of this notice.

Once relevant inputs have been received, the AGM Agenda can be put together and the appropriate documentation sent to you before the AGM. Please note, only current members of ACWS are entitled to vote at the AGM or to submit proxy forms. Members who wish to attend the meeting are asked to bring their membership cards to the AGM to help validation, admission and/or voting if necessary.

For and on behalf of the Board

Helen Needham

Company Secretary and Director

6th July 2015

NB: Electronic delivery of Agenda and voting slips . We will seek to send all the AGM paperwork to all those of you who have e-mail addresses electronically by that means (to cut down on printing and postages) and post only to those who currently have no e-mail address or who have specifically opted-out of e-voting. PLEASE NOTE , your Webmaster has devised a secure way for you to deliver your Proxy Vote electronically . This will save everybody a lot of time & cost of postages. If you are coming to the AGM , you will NOT be voting electronically (or by post) . However , you all need to make sure either Mike Bussey or Claire Morris have your correct , up-to-date e-mail address for this to happen. If you fail to do this then you will not get the AGM papers or proxy vote form.

AVONCROFT EVENT REPORT

ACWS at Avoncroft for 40th Anniversary

The ACWS travelled to the superb location of Avoncroft Museum for Historic Buildings in Bromsgrove and despite the appalling wet weather on Friday night, it quickly cleared up over the weekend thereby allowing all the full activities, parties, speeches, music, society raffle and skirmishes planned over the Saturday and Sunday to take place. The success of this memorable Event would not have taken place without the all the individual hard work, organising and planning by Linda Reed and others particularly Sharon Francis-Wemyss who all spent many hours helping out along with the ACWS Board. The highlight of this event was always going to be the 40th Anniversary party held on the Saturday in one of the large old period barns preserved on the site. With all the decorations, buntings and regimental battle flags adorning the walls, the scene was set for a memorable evening.

The highlights were speeches by current chairman, Mick Smart, past ACWS chairmen including original founder Peter Smith, the Memorial picture board and the reading out of the Memorial list allowing everyone to remember all those past ACWS re-enactors who were no longer with us but will always be fondly remembered. It was so pleasing to see and talk to some of the original members who had set up the ACWS all those forty years ago as well as many older and retired members who came along to reminisce and share their stories and fading Polaroid photographs. The band personally organised and selected by Linda for the event were The Soggy Bottom Boys who were thoroughly enjoyed by all and allowed everyone to dance away well into the early hours with many members joining the band on stage with their eclectic array of musical instruments. The buffet was also well supported by all the Regiments who individually contributed to the ample fayre supplied.

This was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion to be long remembered for all the right reasons by all those who attended.

With the weather clearing up quite quickly on the Saturday afternoon, the Society was able to put on a late afternoon skirmish for the members of the public and they were treated to a small but lively exchange in the Windmill Field. The highlight of this was the surprise

use of Union artillery being wheeled from behind into the Union Infantry line and blasting the Confederate troops at close range with canister and grape shot thereby totally decimating the rebel ranks as many fell and subsequently sweeping the field. The two skirmishes on Sunday involved the Confederates fighting as one full Regimental unit and later taking one of the Union guns which was turned on their own troops by their own troops at rebel gunpoint thereby allowing the Confederates to flank and overrun the Union lines and camp. Due to the small constricted battlefield area and the use of 4 firing cannon, the skirmishes had to be free flowing with lots of movement back and forwards. To the credit of both Army commanders, Union Major Tim Davis and Confederate Major Glen Gibson and the regimental NCOS in both armies, this occurred and the public thoroughly enjoyed some of the spontaneous but unplanned battling at close quarters. It was particularly pleasing to see the return of the distinctive uniforms of the redlegs of the 14th Brooklyn which was an original Union regiment when the ACWS was formed. It is hoped by all that this unit can now thrive and develop.

Throughout the weekend, the ACWS continue to develop their interaction and engagement with the public and it was pleasing to note how enjoyable the regular Children's drill sessions went with Confederate Major Glen Gibson leading from the front with sword in hand and the 2nd South Carolina helping out with the rebel yells, bangs, battle flags and drumming. The 2 unplanned and spontaneous attacks on unsuspecting Union troops casually strolling through the museum park, who played their part by skedaddling, was hilarious. The "Ask a Soldier" questionnaire has also been very kindly revamped by Stephen Griffin, ACWS photographer and this continues to be really popular and informative for the children and their parents but still sadly confusing to a number of Confederate re-enactors who still cannot correctly identify their military accoutrements! The Southern Woman history display by Jayne Booth on the 32nd Virginia street also proved very popular with the public. More scenarios and activities such as these are still required by both armies to build on this solid foundation.

Stewart "Goober" Douglas

A FINAL REMINDER

I regret that it has become necessary to have to republish this reminder, **BUT** we have had instances at recent events where Members have again been indiscreet, and relieved themselves in public in daylight hours in the open. There have been complaints. Apart from possible criminal liabilities for exposing yourself, and the public health aspects of such behaviour, this damages the good name of our Society and makes us appear to be ill-disciplined.

So, **PLEASE, NO MORE** of such behaviour. If you can not contain yourself and get to the toilets provided in time, you should organise a suitable container or portable toilet inside your own tent that you can use out of sight, with tent flaps closed, and then dispose of the contents down the toilet on your next visit. I am saddened that it has become necessary to have to utter this warning, but this misconduct has to **STOP**. Any more instances will mean our disciplinary code will have to be applied.

Michael Smart

Mama's

Mutterings



Now for my bit. What a great time we had at Avoncroft! A big thumbs up to Linda Reed and her team of ladies, especially Sharon Francis-Wymes, who I know spent many hours snipping and tying red, white and blue fabric to wire rings to make those very effective wreaths. The other ladies who spent all day shopping and preparing the delicious buffet, which everyone contributed to. That was a stroke of genius.

The Soggy Bottom Boys, who played their hearts out all evening really set the tone and helped to bring the whole of the society together. It was nice to see some, dare I say 'old faces' again and catch up with the gossip. Perhaps some of them realise what they are missing and want to come back to the fold.

Thanks again Linda.

But onwards and upwards. Time and Tide etc. And by the time you have read this special 40th Anniversary edition, we will have been to Rempstone and maybe Wrexham with Spetchley and Tatton to look forward to.

Val Holt
Editor



EVENTS REPORT

We have had a good season so far with three more events to come, let us hope the recent good weather holds out for us.

Bersham Ironworks near Wrexham in North Wales, Sunday 2nd August 2015. “History Alive” organised by Wrexham Museum. It is with camping from the Friday 2pm leaving site Sunday after the event. They want living history and a skirmish infantry only and a couple of cannon to give a firing display only. Although this is only a one day event it would be good if as many people as possible could attend, even if you just day trip. If you do intend to Day Trip would you still bring along an ‘A’ frame tent to put up to make a good camp.

Spetchley Park is the 15th and 16th of August 2015, camping from Friday 4pm to Monday noon. Living history both days with a skirmish each day with Infantry and Artillery. This will be run much the same as in previous years and Warning Orders will be issued when I get them..

Tatton Old Hall, Cheshire is the 5th and 6th September 2015, camping from Friday 4pm to Monday am. As last year living history both days with 2 skirmishes each day with infantry and artillery.

I am in discussion with a couple of sponsors for next season, as soon as I know anything you will know too. Keep watching the website and facebook.

Peter Holt
Events Director



EVENTS CALENDAR 2015

**2nd August Bersham Iron Works
Near Wrexham N Wales LL14 4HT**

9th August Greenhill Park, Gresley Road, Sheffield S8 7HN
Noon until 5.pm Firing through the ages,
details will follow as they are available on Facebook and the
ACWS Website

**15th - 16th August Spetchley Park
Worcs WR 1RS**

**5th - 6th September Tatton Old Hall
Cheshire WA16 6QN**

**5th December 2015
ACWS AGM
6th Gainsborough Sea Scout HQ,
Love Lane, Gainsborough,
Lincolnshire, DN21 2SG**

Watch this space for future events