



ACWS Ltd, 17 Swan St, Sileby,
LOUGHBOROUGH, LE12 7NN

THE A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER

2015 Autumn Edition



TATTON OLD HALL 2015

ACWS is a Member of NAReS

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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

PLEASE NOTE NEW SOCIETY POSTAL ADDRESS

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Summary Report of ACWS board meeting on Saturday 8th August 2015

Present: Mike Smart Chairman, Helen Needham Secretary, Ian Morris Treasurer, Martin Cross H&S, Mike Bussey Webmaster, Glenn Gibson Confederate Army Representative, Claire Morris Membership Secretary, Tim Davies Federal Army Commander, Peter Holt Events, Val Holt Communications

In attendance: Debbie Davies Minutes Secretary, Viv Corbishley Events Assistant, P Francis-Wemyss Marketing Assistant, A Parrott

There were no apologies.

Minutes of previous meeting the minutes of the previous Board meeting on 28th March 2015 were approved.

Matters arising from the last meeting included Ian Morris reporting that there were no more tents to sell for the Boys Brigade however there is still money to pay to the Boys Brigade. It was agreed that this needs to be settled once and for all by the end of this year.

Claire Morris stated that she needs more information about costings and new artwork for website.

Regarding the defibrillator it was unanimously agreed that Claire is to do another raffle to raise money to buy either replacement battery / charger (which has to be imported from America) or new one for next season. The decision to buy one was agreed, but the decision about which type is to be made at the Board meeting in January 2016.

Directors Reports came next, with Events going first. Peter Holt stated that he has had a busy few weeks with the 2 extra events. All agreed that the 40th anniversary party at Avoncroft went well. All feedback received from members so far has been good and that they like the 2 short skirmishes rather than one long battle.

We have a possible 1 day event at Market Bosworth, Leics. Decision still to be made about arrangements and fee.

There is a possibility for an event at Rempstone. The organisers are to get back to us soon with details. It is the site's 60th anniversary so more things likely to be there next year compared to this year, so we need to await details of arrangements.

Possible training weekend at Bruntingthorpe again, we are awaiting details

At Rempstone we were approached by 3 different steam fairs, although no events yet confirmed.

As a result of the small event this year, Stockport may be a possible event in future depending on funding. All who attended this year are keen to do it.

Michael Smart suggested that Peter Holt should try to contact Shackerstone again for next year.

Regarding Membership Claire Morris stated that membership is up on last year by 15 and we now have 32 new members. Confederate numbers have really picked up which is good news. Both armies are now more even. It was noted that 1st Ten is now the largest regiment, with highest attendance. She also reported that her work on social media is going well. She stated that Facebook is proving to be the best for everything regarding feedback/public engagement etc. Helen Needham offered to help Claire Morris with the layout of a template for any new materials. Claire will also enquire about obtaining a new coloured template cheaply.

Fundraising activities this year have gone well (almost £500 so far across the year) which has offset the cost of the battles at Avoncroft Glenn Gibson stated that he is impressed with the "Welcome" banners used by the Union army and is keen to have more. To pursue in closed season ready for next year.

Confederate Army Glenn Gibson reported on the restored enthusiasm amongst Confederate ranks. Members are really doing well this year being more active and involved.

He stated that he is expecting to pick up some new members from the Napoleonics at Spetchley.

Webmaster Mike Bussey also reported that the Newsletter has been printed at no cost this time. Mike has enquired at another printer and so far Tom in Macclesfield cannot be beaten on price so it was agreed to continue with the current arrangement.

Communications Val Holt reported that she is now "friends" with every regiment with a Facebook page so warning orders are going out that way now, which appears to be very efficient.

Marketing Peter Francis-Wemyss stated that he has compiled a list of potential venues which he is working his way through. He has not had much success with Country Shows so far; and very little response from National Trust enquiries. On his list are about 40 private estates and castles, of which about 5 are looking promising. Kellum Hall have expressed interest in hosting an event possibly twice a year, Ripley Castle is also a possible and Muncaster Castle in the Lake District is looking very promising. They require a week of living history leading up to the August Bank Holiday. There is therefore the possibility of going there straight from Spetchley next year and stay for the week.

The Treasurer Mr Morris reported that he is pleased with the extra unexpected income from the last 2 small events. As a result the event budget is now looking much healthier.

He reported that the PO Box renewal excessive and it was agreed that this seems a drain on finances. Alternatively the PO Box could be cancelled completely and we could try to get a forwarding deal with the Post Office which is likely to be cheaper than that.

After some discussion it was agreed that it made sense to keep the PO Box active for the next 12 months while making any changes. Ian Morris /Mike Bussey to look into the cost of a Post Office forwarding service.

Secretary Helen Needham had nothing in particular to report, but commended everyone on the better-looking financial position, which was done to some luck (new events), and some hard work from everyone involved.

Peter Francis-Wemyss asked about a rumour he had heard that artillery were to become bipartisan artillery. It was clarified that the recommendation was that Federal and Confederate artillery should train together at the start of the year to ensure all members up to standard level, but each regiment would stay as they are currently.

AGM at 6th Gainsborough Sea Scout HQ, Love Lane, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, DN21 2SG on Saturday 5th December 2015

ACWS AT REMPSTONE STEAM AND COUNTRY FAIR

The ACWS travelled to the Rempstone Steam and Country Fair in Leicestershire on the weekend of 11th and 12th July 2015 and enjoyed a wonderful weekend with brilliant sunshine throughout the 2 days although it rained overnight on the Saturday which was a welcome relief to many. This event was very much larger and popular than many re-enactors expected and covered a large area with lots of activities taking place and numerous interesting stalls throughout. The ACWS was allocated a superb camping area on a rise overlooking the whole site with our own portaloos, water supply and car parking facilities which was very much appreciated. Both Union and Confederates had a good turnout and the respective camps looked awesome with all their regimental and battle flags flying. However, despite these positives, the site was slightly out of the way of the public but those who did venture into the lines really enjoyed the lay out and talking to the re-enactors.

The ACWS was contracted to perform 4 skirmishes in the main arena site which was much larger than expected thereby allowing both Federal and the Confederate Armies to move around and their respective artillery batteries to be fully deployed. The highlights of these was a superb Federal Artillery volley of grapeshot and canister that wiped out at close range the advancing Rebel lines which looked awesome to the public as all the gray casualties lay sprawled over the field and a corresponding full Confederate bayonet charge with all the stars and bars Confederate battle flags flying which drove the skedaddling Union forces full pelt off the field. With the ACWS now committed to providing 4 shorter skirmishes at most events rather than 2 larger ones, both Union Commander Major Tim Davies and Confederate Commander Major Glenn Gibson now have the opportunity to be more creative in their 1865 (150th Anniversary) scenario portrayals and it was really pleasing to see the Confederates now using bayonets (both safely and in a non contact manner) which added to the overall Civil War impression. It is envisaged that as the Civil War comes to an end in 1865, the 150th anniversary scenarios will include large scale Confederate losses, retreats and surrendering as further resistance proves untenable thereby giving the excellent Christian Sprakes, ACWS

commentator an ability to elucidate on these very difficult, emotional and final days after so much loss and sacrifice.

There is always a highlight, which is least expected, during ACWS weekends and this event proved no exception. This highlight occurred in the Real Ale Beer tent on the Saturday night when the superb ACWS Drum Corps gave an impromptu duet with the excellent Seaforth Highlanders Pipe and Drum Band (Leicester Branch). Despite the 2 contrasting drumming and playing styles, the majority of the ACWS were in attendance and both bands played out of their skins (literally!) to give all the ACWS and public who attended en masse a night of cracking music. Special mention must go to Drum Major, James Reed and Joe Reed who finished the spot with their special drum “stick” display. The skill displayed by all the musicians involved made it extremely proud to be a member of the ACWS.

Overall, this was a very successful weekend with both the organiser and the public enjoying the battle displays as well as the living history and authentic camps. A clear indication of the professionalism and reputation of the ACWS was the fact that despite the overall programme running late on the Sunday and the ACWS being last on, both Armies and all the re-enactors remained right until the end (well after 5.00pm) to complete their battle and ensure a totally successful conclusion to the whole event. Hopefully, we can go back to this prestigious event next year and continue to build on our excellent reputation.

Stewart “Goober” Douglas, 43rd NC

Did you Know ?

One of the most enduring culinary legacies of the Civil War is condensed milk. Invented in the United States by Gail Borden in the 1850s, it grew enormously popular among troops for both its taste and durability. But only Union troops benefited from the new technology: The Borden processing plant was located in New York, making it an impossibility for Confederate soldiers.

The Battle of Appomattox Courthouse

The Battle of Appomattox Courthouse was the Army of Northern Virginia's final battle and was the beginning of the end of the American Civil War. Though the actual battle took place on April 9, 1865, it followed the 10-month Battle of Petersburg and concluded General Robert E. Lee's thwarted retreat during the Appomattox Campaign.

After a long night and day of marching, Lee and the exhausted Army of Northern Virginia made camp just east of Appomattox Courthouse on April 8. Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant had sent him a letter on the night of April 7, following confrontations between their troops at Cumberland Church and Farmville, suggesting Lee surrender. The Southern general refused. Grant replied, again suggesting surrender to end the bloodshed. Lee responded, saying in part, "I do not think the emergency has arisen to call for the surrender of this army," though he offered to meet Grant at 10 the next morning between picket lines to discuss a peaceful

outcome.

In planning for the next day, Lee informed his men that he would ignore the surrender request and attempt to fend off Sheridan's cavalry while at least part of the Army of Northern Virginia moved on toward Lynchburg—assuming the main Union force was just cavalry. However, he asked to be informed if his men encountered any infantry, since that would mean he was outnumbered and would be forced to surrender.

Grant had spent the last week pursuing and closing in on Lee during the Appomattox Campaign. On the north side of the Appomattox River, Major General George G. Meade's VI and II Corps were in close pursuit of Lee's beleaguered army, while Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's cavalry had taken a southern route to outrun Lee and surround him on the west and south.

Early in the morning on April 9, Confederate Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon's corps attacked the Union cavalry blocking the road toward the railroad. Initially, Gordon had success in clearing cavalry from the road, but Union infantry moved in and he was unable to make further progress. Gordon sent word to Lee around

8:30 a.m. that he needed Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's support to make additional headway.

Upon receiving this request—and having watched the battle through field glasses—Lee then said, "Then there is nothing left for me to do but go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths."

Having dressed that morning in his finest dress uniform, Lee rode to the spot where he thought he and Grant would be meeting between the picket lines. There, he received Grant's message, written the night before, in which Grant refused to meet to meet for peace talks. Lee quickly wrote a reply, indicating that he was now ready to surrender, and rode on. Still hearing the sounds of fighting, Lee sent a letter to Meade requesting an immediate truce along the lines. Meade replied that he was not in communication with Grant but would send the message on and also suggested Lee send another letter to Grant via Sheridan. In addition, Lee also had Gordon place flags of truce along the line. As the messages moved through the lines and word of the surrender spread, the fighting stopped. Casualties

for the Battle of Appomattox Courthouse were light, 260 for the Union, 440 for the Confederacy. Grant received Lee's letter of surrender just before noon. He replied, detailing his current position along the road toward Appomattox Courthouse, and asked Lee to select a meeting place.

Lee and his men, in searching for a suitable place to have the surrender meeting, encountered Wilmer McLean, who showed them an empty building without any furniture. When that was deemed unsuitable, he offered his own home for the meeting. It is interesting to note that McLean had moved to Appomattox after having survived the First Battle of Bull Run, much of which took place on his property in Manassas, Virginia. It is often said that the war started in his front yard and ended in his parlor, though that is not accurate.

Grant arrived in Appomattox at about 1:30 in the afternoon and proceeded to the McLean house. His appearance in his field uniform, muddy after his long ride, contrasted sharply with Lee's clean dress uniform. They chatted for a while before discussing and writing up the

terms of the surrender.

The soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia would lay down their weapons and not take them up against the U.S. government again. Soldiers would be paroled and allowed to return home instead of being imprisoned. All Confederate equipment would be relinquished and inventoried. They agreed that any Confederate who claimed to own a horse or mule and would need it for spring planting would be allowed to keep it. Lee also requested rations for his men, as it had been several days since they had eaten, and Grant then agreed to provide them. After formal copies of the surrender document were made and the document signed, they parted. After such a long, bloody war and a particularly grim retreat, the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia has been referred to as "The Gentlemen's Agreement," a testament to the character of these two great men. Upon hearing the sounds of Union soldiers celebrating the surrender by firing salutes, Grant instructed that his troops cease active celebration, saying, "The war is over; the Rebels are our countrymen again, and the best sign of rejoicing after the victory will be to abstain from all

demonstrations in the field." This set the tone of the next few days, including the formal surrender ceremony that occurred April 12. Brigadier General (brevetted major general) Joshua L. Chamberlain, who had won renown at Little Round Top during the Battle of Gettysburg, was charged with officiating at the surrender ceremony at Appomattox Courthouse. He ordered his subordinate officers to come to the position of "carry arms," and on the approach of each body of troops from the Army of Northern Virginia, a bugle sounded and his men saluted. The Confederates saluted back in response and laid down their arms and colors. The formal ceremony, which saw the surrender of over 27,800 men, took nearly the entire day. Although Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia, the war was not over. There were still Confederate armies in the field and the final battle of the war would not happen until in May 12–13 in south Texas, at the battle of Palmito (Palmetto) Ranch near Brownsville. However, Confederate commanders did begin to surrender as news of the Army of Northern Virginia's surrender spread surrendering the last

significant Confederate force. Not until June 23 did Brig. Gen. Stand Watie surrender his small force of Confederate Cherokees in Oklahoma. The final act would come November 6, when the ocean raider CSS *Shenandoah* struck her Confederate colours in Liverpool, England.

ACWS at Wrexham

The ACWS travelled to the Bersham Ironworks in Wrexham for the annual Living History Festival on 1st and 2nd August 2015. The location proved to be one of the best that the ACWS have attended for a 1 day arena event and there was so much to see, visit and do on the free day on Saturday. Both days provided excellent sunny weather thereby ensuring the popularity and success of the whole event. The location contained 2 very contrasting but excellent places to visit and explore. The first was the archaeological remains of the world famous Bersham Ironworks which was the first industrial site to produce machinery to accurately bore cannon barrels. It took 20 tons of iron to produce a 32lb barrel. The site was run by John Wilkinson (1728 – 1808) known as “Iron Mad Jack” who subsequently distributed the

cannon barrels throughout the world in order to make his fortune. The guns were initially shipped via Chester docks to Birmingham for proofing before being sent on. He mainly made his money through the 7 Years War but his cannons were also used during the American War of Independence and the American Civil War. He was also responsible for being involved in the construction of the famous Ironbridge as well as constructing ships made entirely of iron. He was also buried in an iron coffin. The free guided tour of the site for the public and re-enactors was both highly informative and interesting. The second was the Plas Power Woods. This beautiful ancient wood contained waterfalls, stepping stones, part of King Offas 1,200 year old dyke, numerous wood carvings, sculptures and is well protected and maintained by the Woodland Trust. It is a trail 9 kilometres in length. The Confederate Army en masse visited the woods in campaign mode for a short living history display on the Saturday and a few of the excellent photographs taken by ACWS photographer, Stephen Griffin can be seen on the ACWS Facebook site. If we return to the site, it is hoped we can do a full and much longer campaign living history display along the whole length during the free day. The

Woodland Trust stated there would be no issues and would like any photographs taken to publicise the beautiful woodland. During the Saturday evening, both the Union and Confederate Armies enjoyed an excellent game of baseball which was well contested and eventually won by the rebels 36 -14. Both Armies then enjoyed the evening with campfire singing.

Although advertised as only a 1 day display event on the Sunday, it was a packed arena programme from 11.00am to 4.00pm with opening salvos, marches, drill displays, artillery fire power (12lb howitzer), childrens drill display, musket fire power (Enfield, Springfield and Sharps) by the Union Army and a final skirmish involving both Union and Confederate Armies. There was a good public turnout and all the different living history campsite displays by both Armies inc. the Union colouring for children and the Confederate childrens drill and Ask a Soldier sheets proved popular. The interested public all mingled well with the re-enactors. Despite being an arena event, there was enough space to put on a full skirmish with cannon. It proved to be an excellent skirmish which was really enjoyed by both the public and re-enactors. The skirmish started when the Confederates appeared from

nowhere and overran the Union camp by driving out the Union guards and pickets. On advancing through the camp, the rebels advanced and approached the Union army which lay downhill. They were met by both sustained infantry and artillery fire well organised by Major Tim Davies, US Commander thereby stalling the rebel advance. Major Glen Gibson, CSA commander then ordered a rapid flanking attack by a small force which managed to take the federal cannon out after firing a point blank volley into the artillery crew. However, the cheering Confederates were quickly silenced and driven off by a large body of green uniformed USS sharpshooters who had been hidden behind the Union lines and they quickly recovered the cannon. The Confederates slowly retreated whilst regrouping and following a stand off between the 2 armies, the Confederates advanced en masse with battle flags flying. The advance was stopped in its tracks by point blank Union Infantry musketry volley fire and 12lb howitzer artillery canister resulting in massive rebel casualties which looked awesome to the public as the grey casualties littered the battlefield. The Union forces advanced over the Confederate dead and wounded and retook their camp resulting in an Union victory.

Rempstone



Avoncroft



Avoncroft



Stockport



The overall weekend was very successful and it was particularly pleasing that both Armies had excellent attendance despite being a 1 day event and initial fears that attendance would be low with other larger Civil War events in the pipeline. It is to the credit of all those ACWS Union and Confederate re-enactors who try and make every event that the arena was full and allowed the battle lines to engage with firepower and lots of movement and thereby impress the public. Again, there were some new recruits as well as a number of previous members returning from other re-enacting societies to rejoin both the Union and Confederate armies which bodes well for the future but more importantly increases our overall membership numbers which is a priority.

The ACWS next travel to the popular multi period event at Spetchley on 15th and 16th August 2015. Early indications are that both armies will be well supported at this excellent site and venue. I also understand that the Civil War Sutlers (Dorset) will also be in attendance.

Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd
North Carolina

ACWS at Tatton Old Hall

The ACWS travelled to one of their favourite and regular venues at the Old Manor Hall at Tatton Park on 5th and 6th September 2015. The Old Manor Hall itself is a "scheduled ancient monument" built at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries and set in 1,000 acres of beautiful deer park. In addition, Tatton Park played a vital role in the 2nd World War as it became the training centre for British Airborne Forces as well as SOE drops into occupied Europe. There are monuments in the grounds commemorating this important function.

This event was to be the last one of the 2015 season and it was to be the re-enactment of Appomattox Court House and the final days before the surrender of General Robert E Lees Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. This was always going to be both an emotional and difficult re-enactment to perform authentically as possible for not only the Confederates but also the Union. It is to the credit of both Major Tim Davis, Union Commander and Major Glen Gibson, Confederate Commander as well as the respective Officers and NCOS of both armies that the scenario was well rehearsed beforehand and became the moving event that it deserved. As predicted,

there was an excellent large Confederate turnout who have recruited and retained new members very well this particular season and a very good Union turnout.

The ACWS were contracted to perform 4 skirmishes (2 each day) over the weekend with the last skirmish culminating in the final surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. The first skirmish on the Saturday involved the Confederates launching a counter attack over the small bridge at Saylor's Creek and driving the advancing Union forces back as they steadily advanced over the hill. The Union forces were supported by a battery of 3 fast firing cannon which caused initial mayhem in the rebel ranks. Nevertheless, the Confederate counter attacks were successful and caused numerous Union casualties to be strewn across the field before they retreated. The second skirmish on the Saturday involved renewed Federal pressure with quick moving and flanking USS Sharpshooters causing the Confederates to begin retreating slowly. However, they continued to fight on and counter attack thereby inflicting more casualties on the Union forces. Although the Rebels managed to initially hold their ground, they were forced back over the small bridge at Saylor's Creek by the never ending oncoming Union forces leaving many of their rebel

wounded and dead behind. The re-enactment itself was enhanced by superb water charges placed under as well as ground charges on the bridge that covered the retreating rebels. The rebels were superbly covered by the rapid firing of the Confederate artillery piece placed on the hill overlooking the creek. The first skirmish on the Sunday involved a similar scenario to the Saturday with further rebel counterattacks to try and stop the never ending Union pressure. However, it was on the second skirmish on the Sunday that an aide from General Robert E Lee conveyed the news of the surrender resulting in a truce and formal discussion between the Confederate and Union commanders. They respectively then ordered that both armies stopped fighting and recovered their casualties. The still intact Confederate lines all reacted accordingly with great emotion, disbelief and shock by wanting to fight on whilst the Union forces could not contain their joy and burst into spontaneous cheering which was quickly silenced by their officers. Following the cease fire, the Confederates subsequently lined up and walked to the front of the Old Manor Hall (representing the McLean House), stacked their arms, their military accoutrements, flagpoles and some remaining flags (others had been shared out, retained or hidden inside uniforms).

An emotional and dejected General Robert E Lee suddenly appeared to the Confederate troops who all burst out into an emotional mixture of spontaneous cheers, tears and emotions before all marching off home. This scenario was well planned, acted and rehearsed by both the Union and Confederate commanders and officers and particularly General Robert E Lee but it was also the excellent professionalism and the superb re-enacting by all the Union and Confederate re-enactors that executed this particular difficult scenario with such proper and appropriate reverence. As usual, Christian Sprakes, the ACWS commentator, researched the historical aspect of Appomattox and kept the public enthralled with his excellent commentary throughout the weekend but particularly this final moving scenario. This included reading out General Order No. 9 which were General Robert E Lee's famous last words to his beloved troops of the Army of Northern Virginia. This will be a long remembered one off event with so many mixed emotions experienced. For the first time this season, the ACWS held an informal colours on the Sunday morning. This was a very informative and quite moving occasion. It was recognised by both the ACWS board and the society generally how well our displays, battles and interactions have been this year by gaining 2 first prize

awards at the Stockport and Culzean events. The ACWS Board was presented with a permanent plaque by Frank Mair (19th Indiana) who was instrumental in obtaining the Culzean event. Our performances this season have been considerably enhanced by the development of the superb ACWS Drum Corps. A letter was received by ACWS Drum Major James Reed and awards (drum sticks/medals) were deservedly presented to all the members (both Confederate and Union) of the ACWS Drum Corps for their hard work, practice and regular sessions which have proved so popular and entertaining. Very sadly, James, Linda, Joe and Cerys Reed, who have done so much for the society, were unable to attend this event to personally present the awards but everyone's thoughts are with them. The ACWS Board then formally thanked everyone for their hard work, attendance and dedication over the season and the re-enactors in turn thanked the Board for all their hard work on our behalf. It was finally revealed that already the Board are having ongoing discussions with regards 5 possible new events next year which is indicative of the work that continues through the close season. The ACWS continues to develop in lots of other aspects than battling. As such, the interaction and living history displays with the public have continued throughout the season. Tatton, as usual, had a very large

and interested crowd on both days so The Ask a Soldier questionnaire and Civil War colouring again proved popular. The childrens drill with the wooden muskets led by Confederate Major Glen Gibson also provides a lot of fun and humour for families.

The ACWS always has an active social side and this event proved no exception particularly as it was the last event of the season. One of the highlights was the Horseshoe Tournament with 4 Confederate Teams and 1 Union Team. This prestigious trophy was (yet again!) retained by the Tennesseans who won with a last minute leaner (scoring 5 points) and edging out the favourites and leaders from the very beginning, the North Carolina Tarheels. Other social and music soirees were held on both camps.

On the Confederate side, the 2nd South Carolinians kindly provided an informal drinks and snacks party including a head shave on Corporal Matthew Plumridge which made £35 for charity and the 43rd North Carolina celebrated Stuart and Sonya Cawley's wedding anniversary with a buffet.

This excellent event at Tatton very appropriately finished the 2015 season. Overall, it is recognised by everyone that this has been a fine season with both varied and new venues (combined with nice weather) but always a good attendance by both Union and Confederate re-enactors. The

formal feedback from all the organisers/sponsors of this years events have indicated how professional and interactive the ACWS has been. This bodes well for the 2016 season. The ACWS 2015 AGM will be held at Gainsborough, Lincolnshire on 5th December 2015.

Article by Stewart "Goober"
Douglas, 43rd North Carolina



EVENTS REPORT

Another season over and I am already well into chasing dates for next year, so far I have six possible/probable dates although all need to be confirmed, but first I want to say a big thank you to a few people for their help during this season.

First of all, I would like to thank Linda Reed and her helpers for making our 40th Anniversary Party at Avoncroft such a great night. It was a huge success and enjoyed by all who attended. The music was fantastic, the decorations were superb and must have been very time taking to make. The 'Jacob's Join' buffet was a great idea. The table groaned under the weight of good food. But it was the comradeship which caught my

attention. We were not Union or Confederate, we were a society of friends celebrating 40 years of sharing a hobby.

Late in the season I received two phone calls asking if ACWS could possibly take part in two small one day events. It was very short notice, with just a couple of weeks to organise, but ACWS came up trumps on both days, and I would like to personally thank those who turned up for one or both events at Stockport and Sheffield. Unfortunately, I could not attend either of these events, due to prior commitments, but I understand ACWS acquitted themselves admirably on both occasions, so much so that we won the trophy for the 'Best Marching' in the parade at Stockport. This brings me neatly on to those who attended Culzean Castle in Scotland in August, where ACWS showed just how to put on a Living History Display and walked away with the trophy for the 'Best Living History Display'. Two trophies in one season... wow that is something to live up to, and it is all down to the hard work that members put into the hobby; or perhaps I should say obsession.

My personal thanks also goes to Viv Crobishley, who has helped me with her vast knowledge and experience in organising events. This season our numbers have picked up with new members joining and the welcome return of some old faces. I would like to

thank each and every member who has turned up to events this year and made it such a successful season. Now we move on to news of next year's events. I must stress that these dates are, as yet, only possible or probable and until other organisations have sorted out their dates and budgets out for 2016.

Training Weekend. The dates and venue is still under discussion.

29th-30th May 2016 Tatton Park, Cheshire. We are pencilled in for the late May Bank Holiday weekend the Sunday and Monday 29th-30th May 2016. Camping from Friday to Tuesday, Saturday being a free day.

11th-12th June 2016 Sedgefield, Co Durham. This is a multi period event, camping Friday to Sunday. This is the first year for this event and they are hoping it will be on again in 2017, It would most likely be Living History and a small firing demonstration, there is no skirmish. Confirmed, but contract not yet signed

3rd July 2016 at Market Bosworth, Pencilled in for Sunday a 1 day event but with camping from Friday to Monday.

9th 10th July 2016 Rempstone on Saturday and Sunday. This is their 60th Anniversary, camping Thursday to Monday. I am awaiting confirmation again

13th-14th August 2016, Spetchley Park and Gardens camping from

Friday to Monday, event to be confirmed.

Our Chairman has spoken to two other interested venues which I am following up. As always Viv and I will continue to seek out new event for next year.

Peter Holt
Events Director

ACWS at Culzean Castle and Country Park

The ACWS travelled to Culzean Castle and Country Park in Ayrshire on the bank holiday of 29/30/31 August 2015 for the Forces in the Field 2015

multi period re-enactment. The excellent weather in such a superb and majestic coastal setting combined with a large, friendly and interested public made for a highly enjoyable weekend for everyone. What capped it all was the ACWS winning first prize for the best Living History and Interactive display at this prestigious event. The large trophy won was combined with a generous sum of money both very kindly donated by the Scotland National Trust organisers at Culzean Castle. It is to the credit of every single ACWS re-enactor who attended that the money was unanimously and immediately generously donated to the ACWS.

The Forces in the Field multi period event is not a large scale re-enactment but there were groups representing World War 1, World War 2, Medieval, Napoleonic and Vietnam. As such, it was not a full ACWS society event but was advertised as an ACWS regimental event organised by the well attended 43rd North Carolina. However, it is to the credit of all those other individuals from other Union (19th Indiana/69th New York) and Confederate (32nd Virginia) regiments who made the trip that allowed the society to put on such a varied, interesting and award winning display by working together that was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone present. The ACWS did have the biggest attendance.

Culzean Castle and Country Park in Ayrshire must be one of the most beautiful sites that the ACWS has ever attended. The imposing buildings with numerous turrets and battlements are surrounded by buffeting seas, lush forests and secret gardens. Culzean Castle was the final masterpiece of the most famous architect of the day namely Robert Adam. It is set in over 242 hectares of stunning countryside with manicured gardens, delightful follies and numerous long woodland trails. It also overlooks stunning sands, pebbly beaches and coastal trails with excellent views particularly of sunset over the Isle of Arran. Other benefits and attractions were the swan pond (a

13 acre lake!), deer park, a Victorian vinery, pagoda, a large Orangery, cannon and mortar batteries, smuggling caves, the home farm visitor centre with a restaurant, a cafe, a shop and a large toilet block. The castle itself boasts a spectacular oval staircase, an armoury containing the largest collection and display of flintlock pistols in the world (716 and all used) and a large round drawing room. The top apartment of the castle was frequently used by US President Dwight D Eisenhower for relaxing and golfing purposes. All of these buildings enjoy a panoramic view of the Firth of Clyde. Please see the ACWS facebook page which has excellent pictures of the event by the ACWS photographer. Due to the considerable kindness and generosity of the Scottish National Trust organisers, all the re-enactors were given free passes to visit the castle and all these attractions after the Event. They also provided a barbecue and 2 breakfasts all for only £5 as well as all the necessary firewood, logs, tables and camping/display space which was very much appreciated by all.

The ACWS had 2 twenty five minute slots each day in the small arena and all these proved informative and interesting for the public. Apart from the very popular and loud skirmishes in each of these slots, the ACWS also managed to fit in a Confederate flag display, a Confederate and Union civil war soldier uniform and kit talk, various drill and firing

manoeuvres, a Union soldier versus a Confederate soldier firing competition (a 1-1 draw!), a Confederate bayonet charge with rebel yell (by public request!), a Confederate General Robert E Lee and his Generals appearance and an excellent drum performance by 4 members (2 Union and 2 Confederate) of the ACWS Drum Corps. As a static living history display, the ACWS constructed a substantial log barricade surrounded by pup tents, shelter halves, flags, musket stacks and numerous authentic civil war accoutrements/items. In addition, the Ask a Soldier Questionnaire (over 100 given out!) again proved really popular with all the children and the ongoing drum displays by the ACWS Drum Corps added to the overall impression. One of the highlights of this multi period was an opportunity to socialise and meet other re-enactors as well as actively participate in other historical periods which a number of ACWS members did. Overall, the success of the weekend was due to the excellent site, the provision of everything required by the superb and friendly Scotland National Trust rangers, the camaraderie of all the different historical groups but above all the working together and co-operation of all the various different Union and Confederate regimental re-enactors to make for such an enjoyable and memorable weekend. The finale of the multi period event was an

awesome mass Pipe and Drum march and parade which superbly concluded the weekend. Hopefully, the ACWS will return next year in a regimental capacity. There are provisional plans in the future to make both the arena and re-enactment camping areas bigger to accommodate and develop the growing popularity of this event.

The ACWS travel to Tatton Park on the weekend of 5/6 September 2015 for the final full ACWS event of the season before the ACWS AGM at Gainsborough, Lincs on 5th December 2015. There promises to be a fine turnout at the Tatton event where the ACWS will be re-enacting some of the final days of the American Civil War with the surrendering of General Robert E Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas, 43rd North Carolina.

**New Research uncovers
extent of UK Arms
smuggling to the
Confederate States in
the America Civil War**

New investigations in Scotland have recently revealed the extent of the UK involvement in supplying the Confederate States with arms and ammunition throughout the American Civil War as well locating

the main secret British Headquarters of the American Civil War Confederate transatlantic gun running operation. The investigations conclude that such assistance to the Confederacy may have prolonged the war for a further 2 years.

Other research conducted over the last decade has also revealed the extraordinary extent to which a substantial part of Britain's business elite were working with impunity to help the Confederacy despite the fact that the UK was officially neutral throughout the Civil War. In total, some 200 vessels were purpose built or upgraded on Clydeside, Liverpool and London for the Confederate States and hundreds of thousand of guns (including heavy artillery) were manufactured in Birmingham, Newcastle and London for the Confederate armies. This entirely illegal but tacitly government approved pro Confederate gun running support is thought to have lengthened the Civil War by up to 2 years and therefore cost as many as 400,000 American lives.

The clandestine identification of the Confederacy's main secret gun running headquarters has been located at a still existing mansion in Bridge of Allan which is some 32 miles by railway from Clydeside and situated north of Sterling. This quiet and secluded mansion housed up to 10 Confederate agents throughout the Civil War

until 1864. This remote, idyllic, secluded and rural base was deliberately chosen to avoid unwarranted and unnecessary attention particularly from Federal agents. The Confederate agents based there would regularly visit top shipbuilding magnates in the locality as well as test and assess the capabilities and particularly the speed of potential blockade runners. Overall they contracted the building and upgrading in Clydeside of more than half of the 200 hundred vessels supplied to the Confederate States by the UK shipyards. In essence, all the arms, ammunition and supplies would be shipped on commercial vessels from the UK to the British Crown colonies of the Bahamas or Bermuda and then transferred to over 300 high speed gun running vessels which would attempt to break the Union blockades of the Southern ports. Overall, over 2/3rds of these high speed blockade vessels were built throughout the UK. Very sadly, none of these vessels survive above water today but there are many that rest beneath the waves. Around the British Islands there are important examples. The most famous is the Iona 2 which due to its importance and state of preservation has just become a designated English Heritage Trail protected site for underwater tourist exploration. Other Confederate blockade runners around the British Islands

include the Iona 1, Lellia and Matilda. The Confederate agents in Bridge of Allan were eventually exposed in 1864 by a local women's anti slavery group who reported them to Federal agents who in turn alerted the UK Government. They stated that the Confederate agents were easily identifiable by their wearing of "large wide rimmed hats and smoking large cigars!". Sounds familiar guys!

Dr Eric Graham, Maritime Historian at Edinburgh University, who conducted this new research by using new primary sources states by his findings that "It demonstrates that British neutrality was, in reality, a complete sham". There is also further new research currently being undertaken at Manchester University that is examining both the extent and the roles of Liverpool and London in gun running to the Confederacy. This research is particularly focusing on 6 pro Confederate blockade running sorting companies with their close ties to both pro Confederate sympathisers as well as pro Confederate MP's in Parliament.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas

Main Source : Dr Eric Graham, University of Edinburgh: "Clyde Built :The Blockade Runners of the American Civil War".

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

It has been decided by the Board of Directors, on the advice of the Webmaster, that as most members now use Facebook and other social media sites that the 'Members Forum' on the society's website will be discontinued because of the lack of recent activity. The ACWS website will continue as before.

Due to rising prices imposed by Royal Mail Services the cost of retaining the PO Box address has also being discontinued this will make a saving of around £300 per annum.
In future our mailing address will be as follows:-

**American Civil War Society Ltd
17 Swan Street
Sileby
Loughborough
LE12 7NN**

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5th December 2015

ACWS AGM

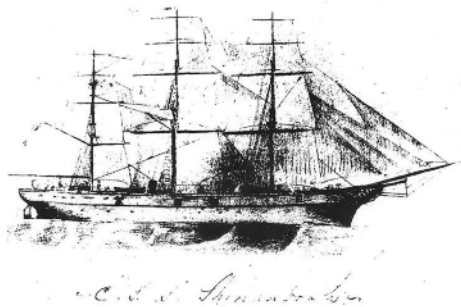
**6th Gainsborough Sea Scout HQ,
Love Lane, Gainsborough,
Lincolnshire, DN21 2SG**

Tea, coffee, soft drinks and light refreshments ie sandwiches, crisps etc. will be available to buy. Alternatively, Gainsborough has a number of places selling takeaways.

The Last Flag Down

As many of us know the last act of the American Civil War was played out on the River Mersey with the surrender of the CSS Shenandoah in November 1865.

This year, being the 150th anniversary of that event Liverpool staged a number of events to commemorate this momentous anniversary.



When they arrived on the Mersey November 5th 1865, Captain James Waddell surrendered to the British Naval ship HMS Donegal and the second National Flag of the Confederacy was lowered for the last time.

The captain and crew were all paroled by the British Government as they all claimed to be 'American' although 70% of the crew were British, including several Liverpoolians.

All newsletter correspondence should be sent to: - Val Holt Editor

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Copy date for the Next Issue will be 20th December 2015 for the next issue

All advertisement & editorial copy should be sent by the above date

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EVENTS CALENDAR 2015

5th December 2015

ACWS AGM

**6th Gainsborough Sea Scout HQ,
Love Lane, Gainsborough,
Lincolnshire, DN21 2SG**

Watch this space for future events