



The A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER

2023 3rd Edition

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Restored Cannon
A Huge Thanks to Mick Smart
Photograph Courtesy of Linda Reed

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A.C.W.S. CONTACTS - Directors & Army Commanders



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Director's Reports

Hi all,
Thank you everyone for a fantastic year of re-enacting. Everyone has worked extremely hard, from entertaining the crowds, paying the bills, keeping us going with powder and caps, recruiting new members, leading our troops, getting good paying events, I could go on and on.

I think you are all fabulous and I am proud to be a part of our ACWS family.

On a sad note, I will be stepping down as chair person this year, it's time to let someone else have a turn.

I will see you all on zoom at the AGM on Dec 2nd at 1pm and next year when hopefully our calendar will be bountiful. It's been a blast!!!!

Mrs Helen Gibson
Chairperson ACWS

Hey y'all,
I hope this Newsletter finds you and your family well. Firstly I am sure you will join me in thanking Helen, our current chairperson, for her support over the last four years as she will be standing down this year at the AGM.

If anyone is interested in giving the position a try or would like more information, please contact myself or any other member of the board for a chat.

Thankyou to everyone who donated and took part in the secret raffle and memorial for "Ella Holman", we raised an amazing £213 and this has now been passed over to the family.

Our 48th year I feel has been a good one and we still have the new "M5" event left! It seems as we are back on track pre-covid. Myself and the girls have created some fantastic memories with you all this season that we can treasure forever. "2025" is fast approaching which will be our 50th year as a society, I am sure those who can remember the 40th year and party will be looking forward to it. If anybody has any suggestions or ideas as to how we could celebrate please come and speak with one of the board members.

I would like to send all our very best of "Get Well Wishes" to one of our junior members "Tom" from the 2nd South Carolina who has been poorly lately and we hope to see you soon Tom.

I would also like to send all our deepest condolences to Kel and Dawn Stringer on the recent passing of Cath, I for one have many fond memories from my childhood on camp with the Stringer family.

I hope to see you all at Upton "The New Spetchley" to create some more memories! If it is anything like Spetchley use to be, it will be an amazing event.

For those attending Chickamauga, I hope you have the most amazing time, safe journey and please send our regards to our fellow re-enactors across the water.

Enough from me for now!
Take care y'all
Linda Reed
(Company Secretary)



Hi Everyone,
As our season is drawing to a close, I wanted to say a huge thank you to you all for your support in attending our events over this year.
Without your commitment to events, we simply would not have a Society.

We have coped with a range of sites, weathers, and last minute changes this year – and we have all pulled together to put on some amazing displays and encampments with public interaction which have thoroughly impressed visitors and organisers alike.

To encourage new members into our Society, we need to be visible and 60,000 visitors at Northampton Balloon Fiesta could well be a record!

I am looking ahead now for events and dates for next year, so please let me know if you have any ideas for venues, or pass me contact details and I can explore options.

I have some events in the pipeline, and of course will let you all know further details as soon as I have dates and venues confirmed.



Best Wishes
Catherine Conyard
(Events Director – ACWS)

Hello to all fellow Southern Soldiers and Belles,

I am writing this after my return from Detling where I attended with other members of the ACWS, as guests to Soskan after the Whitby weekend was cancelled, and it did not disappoint regardless of the long distance involved.

Most of you are aware that the Bank holiday weekend re-enactment was my last one for the year as I will not be at Upton due to being on holiday which was booked before this weekend came about.

That being said, I think we have all been affected in some way this year with the weather, cancelled or re-arranged events. But what a year of events with all being good, funded sponsors that have helped the Societies finances.

As always, I must thank all those who have made the effort to attend the events they can

and continue to put on a fantastic camp atmosphere, both living history and round the campfire on the evening.

I know that some of the events we have had this year are not to everyone's liking but they are now the bread-and-butter events that will keep the society going, especially with rising costs of powder etc.

So, I ask you all to attend these events to boost numbers help the society in the future.

Looking back over the year we have had some cracking skirmishes and the evenings around the campfire have left memories that will stick with me for a long time, fantastic nights.

One thing that the Confederate camp has excelled at this year is the marvellous displays and interaction with the public during the day with everyone being busy and involved in one way or another.

Feedback from the public and sponsors on what we do at weekends have all been positive and they really love what the society does.

I will be standing again for election for Army Commander and have a few new ideas for next year to try things out so when they happen any feedback would be grateful.

Throughout the year I have spoken to the Regimental Sgts and discussed a way forward where they will be more involved in running the camp, drill and other duties.

So, as we come to the end of another year, let's stay enthusiastic, recruit, and prepare for hopefully a full 2024 calendar.

I hope you all enjoy/enjoyed Upton as I sun it up on my jollies and I will see those who I see this year and those who I do not see next year.

Push on and improve everyone.



Your obedient servant
Major Glenn Gibson
C.O - Confederate Forces ACWS



ACWS at Avoncroft International Living History Festival

A limited amount of ACWS re-enactors travelled to the superb location of Avoncroft Museum for Historic Buildings in Bromsgrove on 15th and 16th April 2023 for this living history weekend. This open air museum is a superb venue and contains over 30 rescued historic buildings spanning 700 years of history enclosed in a 19 acre rural site.

These include a 1940's pre fab house, a working windmill, a Victorian Toll House and Mission Church, a Tudor Merchants House, an Edwardian Tea Room and the National Telephone Kiosk Collection. For over 5 decades, this first open air museum has continued to rescue structures where this has not been available at the time. In all, there are over 25 historic buildings that have been saved covering over 700 years of Midlands history.

As such, many thanks must go to ACWS Events organiser Catherine Conyard for getting the invite, despite being limited, due to the massive demand for space and places from other living history re-enactors and particularly traders and stall holders from all over the United Kingdom.

The International Living History Festival 2023 took place at this marvellous museum site in the Midlands. The museum itself is spread over 19 acres of beautiful Worcestershire countryside and also includes, apart from the numerous historic buildings mentioned, a wild flower meadow, period gardens and a traditional cider and perry orchard.

The event itself was designed as an opportunity for all historical re-enactors, groups and interpreters to get together to showcase and display their new displays and shows for the coming year. This was regarded as particularly important as the past 2 years, due to the Covid pandemic, has had a significant detrimental impact on many re-enactors themselves as well as re-enactment groups and events themselves. As we all recover, this was an invaluable opportunity for groups to recover, mingle with others and attract new members.

The ACWS was limited in space to 10 A frames each for both Confederate and Union A frame tent lines with an additional independent Officers street. Shelter halves were also invited as well as Civil War day trippers. Our sister American Civil War friends of Soskan and the independent 24th Virginia were also limited in exactly the same way and not surprisingly all the Civil War places were quickly taken up.

To the credit of everyone present, both the Blue and the Grey from Soskan, the 24th Virginia and the ACWS all worked together particularly well and put on fantastic firing and drill displays for both the public and other re-enactors who were present. This was enjoyed by everyone who was present.

In addition, the Union officers present Daz Paul (ACWS, US Staff) and Dave Durden (Soskan, Bucktails) did a commentary to the public led by ACWS commentator Christian Sprakes talking about the different soldiers, weapons, drills and movements that the Civil War soldiers were demonstrating which was also really well received.

As a result of this excellent and continued co-operation with everyone working so well together everyone present agreed that this must continue in the future at every available opportunity. Despite the muddy conditions, the weekend stayed pleasant and the whole weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. In addition, despite the limited availability of space, the main purpose of this multi period living history event was to showcase and publicise the ACWS to the much wider re-enactment community as well as a number of historical event

organisers present in order to try and secure more event possibilities for the future. Both Avoncroft staff and the organisers of the International Living History event namely Pike and Shot/Skirmish magazine were really thoroughly pleased with the overall success of the event and invaluable contacts for the future were made.



**Article by Sgt Stewart “Goober”
Douglas, 43rd North Carolina**



Photographs courtesy of various
Facebook sources.

AVONCROFT



MORLEY



ACWS at St Georges Day Parade at Morley, West Yorkshire

On Sunday 23rd April 2023, the ACWS attended, like the last few years, the St George's Day festivities on Queen Street in Morley Town Centre, West Yorkshire. This continues to be a prestigious event for the ACWS as this is not only the largest patriotic St George's festival in the North of England but also involved increased funding from previous years which is vital to our society due to the wholesale significant increase in costs.

Throughout the weekend, the town of Morley itself is crammed full of activities and performances including a large street market and entertainment throughout the day from local businesses and performers as well as a large fun fair.

Other highlights included the Yorkshire Volunteer Band, the Swearing of the Oaths from 12pm at the Morley Rugby Club itself, live stage shows, clowns, mini club, scooters, fire engines and plenty of food and drink stalls.

Apart from the ACWS, the Knights of the Realm Jousting Team, the Ladies of Equestry, Northern World War 2 Association, a Country and Western group called the Trail Blazers, the Medieval Society and the Vikings were also present in large attendance.

Historically, the St Georges Day weekend long parade began in 2005 and is thought to be the biggest St Georges Day celebration in the United Kingdom. It is organised by the Leeds Branch of the Society of St George.

The focal point is a large parade by St George on horseback from the Morley Town Hall to the Morley Sports ground. A dragon is then slain. It still attracts more than 20,000 visitors every year and includes additional activities such as historical re-enactments, living history encampments, medieval combat displays, music and the singing of the National Anthem.

Morley itself has resisted offers by Leeds for the city to hold the festival in future years with organisers saying that the host town is non negotiable and that it will not re-locate under any circumstances the largest patriotic St Georges Day Festival in the North of England.



The ACWS was, as always, contracted to take part in the massive parade from the Sports Ground to the Town Hall but also perform a skirmish on the large Sports Ground itself. To our massive credit and led by St George himself on horseback, the ACWS looked particularly impressive in the military contingent of the huge parade itself with our full kit of back packs, knapsacks and blanket rolls. We also had our superb drummers from the ACWS band to keep us in line and in step.

In addition, the ACWS then put on a small but highly enjoyable skirmish with the Confederates trying to take 3 Union artillery pieces stationed behind their small picket line.

The scenario was loud, fast and exciting with the 3 Union pieces firing constantly and the rebels trying to storm them. The finale of a double cannister shot taking out the whole Confederate line was spectacular and thoroughly enjoyed by the large amount of public and other re-enactors who watched.

Many thanks must go to Phil Clarke, ACWS commentator, who stepped in and kept the public interested and entertained throughout our skirmish.

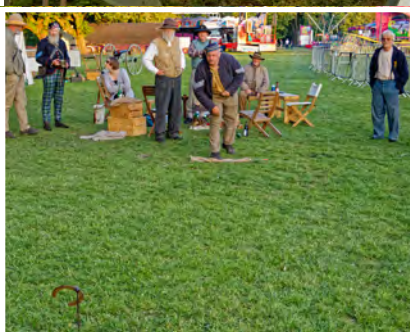
The public also enjoyed our day long living history Civil War impressions and small scenarios that took place making sure that the ACWS was busy throughout the day.

In contrast to the weather forecast, the weather turned out sunny and warm. Although there was a slightly disappointing turnout from both Union and Confederate infantry most probably due to being only a day event, the full Union artillery of 4 cannon with crews and the excellent attendance of the 24th Virginia allowed the ACWS to put on very creditable displays on both the parade and the skirmish.

Nevertheless, massive credit to all those ACWS members who attended and the organisers as well as the Mayor were all so pleased with our input, living history and performances that our future at this event is already secure.



HULL



ACWS at East Park, Hull

The ACWS travelled to East Park in Hull for the first full ACWS event of the season on the weekend of 3rd and 4th June 2023. Despite a funfair also being on the site, East Park has always been a popular venue for the ACWS and with ample parking and tent space for the 2 armies, excellent security and locked gates at night with no public allowed, a nearby café with fine food and clean amenities and a huge arena for battling, everything necessary was available for a cracking ACWS weekend.

Many thanks to Catherine Conyard, ACWS Events organiser for obtaining the event and all the hard work involved. This Event was fully enhanced by the lovely sunny weather over the whole weekend which made for both fine re-enacting as well as 2 big really appreciative crowds on both days. Both the Union and Confederate Camps were situated either side of the huge arena which made ample space for our A Frame Tent lines on both separate sites.

The ACWS was contracted to put on both Living History throughout the day as well as 2 full 30 minute skirmishes and drill in the arena on both days. This involved a full Infantry, Artillery and Pyrotechnics display.

The 2 skirmishes planned involved the full use of the 4 cannon present alongside a plethora of ground charges surrounding the

furthest away cannon which the rebs were going to try and get hold off. The scenario was called "The Battle of the 4 Guns" and involved the Union starting the battle by removing the 3 cannon at the top of the field. As the Union started to remove the cannons back to the safety of their lines, the Confederates appeared and were gradually released onto the battlefield in small skirmishing groups in an attempt to capture the lone remaining cannon.

However, the area was well sighted by the remaining fast firing 3 Union cannon and the superb co-ordinated pyrotechnics blasted the advancing Confederate Infantry as they neared the lone cannon. The battle soon erupted into a full scale affair with Union infantry and more Confederate infantry also pouring onto the battlefield. The 30 minute skirmish involved fast moving fighting between the massed Confederate Infantry and against 3 Union cannon as well as Union infantry.

Both sides kept on pushing forward but the Confederates could not get through and eventually pulled back taking a lot of casualties.

The skirmish involved lots of close quarter fighting right in front of the big audience who loved every minute.

On the Sunday, the battle plan was the same but with a surprise twist to everyone concerned with a newly formed Confederate Artillery crew suddenly racing onto the battlefield and using the lone artillery piece which the Confederates had been able to capture. This action swayed the fortunes of battle and the Confederates managed with their larger infantry numbers and the fast firing artillery piece to take the field and win the day.

Massive credit as usual to both sides for taking large casualties on both days and putting on a really creditable and interesting battle plan.

I personally think every battle plan should have a historical Civil War backdrop as well as involve lots of movement, close (but safe) volleys and flanking which allows both the commentator and public to better understand all the movements going on. These made for a memorable battle for both reenactors and the public.

The commentary to the public was made by new ACWS commentator, Matthew Jennings (2nd South Carolina) who for his first time was absolutely excellent particularly with both his deep Civil War knowledge as well as his own personal commentaries about individual participants which both enthralled and entertained the huge amount of public present.

He spoke really well about the different soldiers, weapons, drills and movements that the Civil War soldiers were demonstrating which was also really well received.

I always try and mention highlights at ACWS events which may go unnoticed by others. As such, a couple of the most outstanding highlights for me was the absolutely excellent contribution of the new recruits on both the Union and Confederate sides. For them to try and take part in Company drills, Battalion drills, all day living history and then actively participate in 2 full 30 minute fast paced skirmishes with 4 full cannon and pyrotechnics blasting off all the time was a massive credit to them all.

I will not mention names as they were all equally superb and I really hope they join our ACWS family on a more permanent and frequent basis as they were a massive credit to us all. We must always make every effort to retain any new recruits.

However, I will mention names when it comes to (not my words!) "Handsome" Steve Lord who somehow managed to get himself filmed live on Ukrainian TV representing a typical and normal member of the eccentric British public with their lifestyles and strange hobbies. They had previously just done a piece on cricket which they also hadn't a clue about!

Both sides provided excellent living history displays throughout the weekend. The Union had their always superb Medical, Artillery and authentic Civil War historical displays which went down really well with the interested public.

The Confederates tried something very new this weekend by combining together the 1) Ask a Soldier quiz sheet (over 70 given out!) followed by 2) a Photo shoot of trying a Confederate Uniform on and then onto 3) the 2nd South Carolina gambling game with a look and taste of authentic Civil War hard tack.

Each successful stage was rewarded with Confederate money which was of course all later recycled following the inevitable fleecing during the gambling by a highly unscrupulous and dodgy Palmetto banker.

Another highlight for many was the really well attended Kids Drill with all the children and parents being actively involved and who filled the arena on both days. Many thanks to those who helped out with all these extra displays. All this interaction was thoroughly enjoyed by all the public particularly the kids and massive credit to all ACWS Members who had to work so hard all day.

Apart from the battle, there were also loads of other activities taking place on both camps. The Union enjoyed a game of baseball on the arena after the public had all gone home and the Confederates held a Horse Shoe Trophy Competition between the

current holders namely the Tennessee Tossers and the Old Timers led by the "Old Tarheel" Goober.

Unbelievably, this was a draw with both sides winning 1 round each by 2 points and the final 3rd round resulting in an exact draw. With no sudden death or final throws allowed, the Tennessee Tossers very luckily retained the Horse Shoe trophy but a quick rematch is obviously needed following the return of the more experienced Tarheel contingent! Both sides also had fine campfires under a full moon with music and chat with the Confederates being entertained by their favourite musician, the superb John Bamber as well as having a small Cheese and Cracker party kindly organised by Sergeant Major Mike Bussey.

I heard both the organisers and sponsors were massively impressed with all our Living History, various displays and Skirmishes which bodes well for a positive future, emphasises our professional reputation and therefore a possible return to East Park, Hull in the future. This was an important first full event for the ACWS for a number of reasons so massive thanks to every single member who attended and who all clearly put a lot of work and effort in to make it the success it was.

Personal Reflections of Sgt Stewart "Goober" Douglas

WORCESTER



ACWS at Worcester Hot Air Balloon Festival

The ACWS travelled to the Worcester Hot Air Balloon Festival on the 23rd and 24th June 2023 for a full living history and skirmish event. The Worcester Racecourse venue itself was excellent for the ACWS as we had our own camping space with own invaluable water supply, parking spaces and a private portaloo. In addition, there was excellent security throughout the whole weekend. Due to the extremely hot weather, we also took a lot of awnings which were vitally needed due to the sheer heat and sun. The Worcester Balloon Festival is an extremely popular event and there were huge numbers of members of the public on site all day and until 11.00pm. The Festival included over 50 Hot Air Balloons, food stalls, a large bar, a giant funfair, the Squibb freestyle motorcycle stunt team, an excellent evening fireworks displays on both nights, a Hot Air Balloon Night Glow show and Birds of Prey. Of course, the ACWS also had their usual campfires both nights with Confederate Major Glenn Gibson's Saturday cheese and cracker night.

The ACWS attended this re-organised society event of 2023 as both a living history display and a full skirmish. The previous one had to be postponed due to the racecourse being flooded. The

event took place on a Friday as a living history display and on the Saturday also as a full living history day but with more drill displays and a full skirmish. The skirmish itself involved our 4 superb and fully restored artillery pieces with 2 Union and 1 Confederate crew in fearsome action. In addition, there was a commendable turnout from both ACWS Union and the Confederate infantry particularly as many other ACWS re-enactors had pre-booked their holidays as well as a few were attending the Gettysburg Anniversary. This creditable turnout made for a fine skirmish battle with the 3 artillery pieces blasting away coupled with some really excellent pyrotechnics. This was probably in front of one of the largest crowds in recent years so the appreciation from such a huge crowd was brilliant and well done to the Confederates for winning the volley competition at the end which was voted for by the crowd! For all the ACWS re-enactors, the Saturday was extremely hectic and busy as well as being extremely hot and humid. The Living History display lasted all day from 12.00am to 7.00 pm until our 30 minute skirmish at 5.30.

There were excellent displays on both camps during the whole day including the Union Medical display by our invaluable camp medic, a Union music display, the Confederate campaign cooking display, Ask a Soldier, Major Glenn Gibson's kids authentic photo shoot as well as other various individual drill and living history sessions. The Union artillery crews also put on loading demonstrations for the public and kids. Both the Confederate and Union infantry also marched around the whole arena which proved really popular with the public and there were also 2 very popular arena displays with Kids Drill involving both the Union and the Confederates. Special thanks to ACWS commentator Christian Sprakes who made these

so hugely popular with both the kids and parents. We did 2 shows due to another arena act having to cancel at the last moment. So massive credit to all the ACWS members who interacted so well with the huge amount of interested public on both days and nights which was particularly taxing and exhausting due to the extremely hot weather. This was a really enjoyable weekend. The feedback from both the Event organiser and the public was also excellent. This is a cracking site and if we go back again, it is not an event to be missed.

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

ACWS at Huddersfield

The ACWS travelled to Greenhead Park in Huddersfield on the 22nd and 23rd July 2023 for a full living history and skirmish event. Greenhead Park is an urban park located 0.5 miles west of the town centre of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, England. It is one of the largest parks in Huddersfield and was originally opened in 1884. It is an English Heritage Grade II listed property and is also in a Conservation Area. The site itself was excellent for the ACWS as we had 24 hour security and the gates were locked at night.

However, finding out that we could not have fires due to being a listed Grade 2 area did put a slight damper on the event. Nevertheless, despite the appalling forecast for the weekend, massive credit to all the Union and Confederates who attended. There was also a funfair on the site at the same time. Of course, the ACWS also had their usual get togethers under awnings and without fires on both Friday and Saturday nights with Confederate Major Glenn Gibson's regular Saturday cheese and cracker night.

Despite the rainy forecast for the weekend, there was a cracking turnout on the lovely sunny Friday night and both armies made use of the nice weather to have a cracking Friday evening with everyone glad to be together again. On the Saturday, we somehow missed the heavy rain forecast and had a cracking full day with living history, artillery and infantry displays as well as a large arena to have a full skirmish. In the morning, the ACWS put on excellent infantry and artillery displays in the arena which finished with the Union artillery decimating the Confederate infantry as they marched down the hill by demonstrating the effect of canister and shot. In the afternoon, the skirmish itself involved our 3 artillery pieces with 2 Union and 1 Confederate crews in fearsome action coupled with some really excellent pyrotechnics. The skirmish itself involved the Confederate infantry setting off from the top of the hill splitting into 2 companies and trying to flank and then take the 2 Union cannon after driving off the Union infantry. The Confederates did manage to drive off the smaller Union infantry unit but on trying to flank the Union guns were driven off and suffered large casualties as the Union turned their 2 cannon round and fired at close range at the oncoming rebels. This resulted in a Union win. Massive casualties all round which made for a real good spectacle as well as being enjoyable for all the re-enactors who took part. There was some good movement and falling back at

times by the 2 Confederate companies which always keeps everyone interested and the public interested into who will win. The crowd was appreciative and well done to all the ACWS re-enactors for a cracking crisp society volley at the end. The Living History displays on both camps lasted all afternoon including Major Glenn Gibson's authentic photo shoot, music displays on both camps and gambling on the Confederate lines. Sadly, there were not enough kids for the Kids Drill or the Ask a Soldier. As usual, special thanks to ACWS commentator Christion Sprakes who really held the public's interest throughout both our displays and skirmish on the Saturday. A few nice features of the weekend were some new ACWS recruits turning up and taking part as well as the appearance of a lot of old ACWS re-enactors who lived in the local area and came over to share their memories and stories with everyone. Sadly, we could not hold off the rain for the whole weekend and it really poured down on Saturday night and Sunday morning and totally saturated the site thereby forcing the organisers to cancel the event and the ACWS to pack off and head home. This was disappointing for everyone but particularly so for those Confederates who very kindly turned up on the Sunday to reinforce the army just as we were all packing away!

HUDDERSFIELD



NORTHAMPTON



ACWS at Northampton Balloon Festival

The ACWS travelled to the Northampton Hot Air Balloon Festival on the 18th, 19th and 20th August 2023 for a full living history and skirmish 3 day event. The old Northampton Racecourse venue itself, when we all eventually found it due to all the road closures, was huge with 2 arenas but the ACWS did have our own secure camping space with nearby water supply, parking spaces and 2 private portaloos. In addition, there was tight security throughout the whole weekend. As by the numbers who attended, the Northampton Balloon Festival is an extremely popular event and there were huge numbers of members of the public on site on all 3 days from 12.00pm until 11.00pm. The Festival should have included over 50 Hot Air Balloons in flight but the wind prevented them from flying over the weekend but they did inflate or “bob” up every night. There were many food (expensive) stalls, large bars, a giant funfair, international stunt shows, freestyle motorcycle display teams, extreme equine stunt displays, birds of prey flights, an excellent evening fireworks display on the final night and the famous Hot Air Balloon Night Glow show with night light display motor cycles. For the more discerning visitor, there was also Steve Lords favourite namely Cuddle a Ferret for £2!

The ACWS attended this full society event as living history and full skirmishes on 3 full days. The

skirmishes themselves involved our 4 superb and now being fully restored artillery pieces with the Union crews in fearsome action. In addition, there was a commendable turnout from both ACWS Union and the Confederate infantry particularly as many other ACWS re-enactors had pre-booked their holidays as well as a few were attending other big re-enactments during the same weekend. This creditable turnout made for 3 fine skirmish battles with the artillery pieces blasting away coupled with some really excellent pyrotechnics. This was probably in front of one of the largest crowds in recent years so the appreciation from such a huge crowd was brilliant. For all the ACWS re-enactors, the living history days were manic and hectic particularly on the Saturday. There were superb and interactive displays on both camps on all 3 days including the Union Medical display, the USS Sharp Shooters display, the Union artifact display, the excellent ACWS Union band music display, Union Artillery loading displays and on the Confederate camp there was a campaign cooking display, the Ask a Soldier (very many thanks to the young Union/Confederate kids who helped me out), Major Glenn Gibson’s kids authentic photo shoot, the 2nd South Carolina Chuck a Luck dice gambling game

and Steve Lords uniform/de-ac photo shoot. There were also many other various individual drill and living history sessions including small impromptu music and dancing impressions. I do apologise if I have missed anything or anyone out but there was so much going on in both our superb camps. Despite all these, personal memories for me were the excellent and moving family fund raising Raffle/Music night event and the professional and dignified way with which ACWS members responded to a difficult medical situation. We really do care for one another, long may it continue and really well done to those involved. Also thanks to Catherine for organising a Red Arrows and Spitfire Flyover for the ACWS camp alongside all the other hard work she had to do over this long weekend!

On all 3 days, both the Confederate and Union infantry did drill and firing sessions in the smaller arena. These proved really popular with the public particularly with our now iconic Kids drill sessions. These involved excellent and enthusiastic involvement from the public and kids and these were possibly some of the best we have ever done. Obviously, full participation every day. Massive credit to everyone who took part and helped out. Needless to say, our 2 superb ACWS commentators Matthew Jennings and Christian Sprakes really added to these hugely popular sessions.

The ACWS also had to perform 3 skirmishes over the 3 days. These occurred in the very much larger

arena. All of the 3 skirmishes were really enjoyable and involved lots of movement, firing, artillery and pyro explosions. Both sides took casualties and the public enjoyed them all as many came back after the first day. As is usual, any issues on the battlefield are ironed out and for me the skirmish on the 3rd and final day really was a cracker of a battle. Both armies being much closer and next to the crowd was awesome with many members of the public actually screaming along with the re-enactors as the fast volley firing and casualties on both sides mounted. Both lines of infantry blasted away at each other, taking casualties and now putting on blooded bandages before getting up to make it a little more realistic.

Also the super synchronised pyros following artillery blasts were spot on and well done to those rebs who went down in response. This combined visual effect is really special and something the ACWS does really well and must continue to do as well as develop. I loved the Union artillery piece being quickly manually handled in order to try and outflank the advancing rebel line as the public screamed at me to look out!

Great way to finish such a memorable weekend despite the Lionesses loss but they did so well to get there. Overall, the organisers were absolutely delighted with our numerous displays over the whole weekend with over 68,000 people recorded as attending.

Archaeologists in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia have made a startling new discovery regarding a battle fought there during the American Civil War.

Archaeologists excavating Williamsburg's historic Powder Magazine which was an octagonal tower built in 1715 that has been used for centuries as military supply storage were working to restore the building to its original design. However, during the process, they suddenly came across multiple human remains in a mass grave located within the actual walls of the powder magazine itself. And as they initially probed, it became clear that the find had nothing to do with life in the old colonial capital of Virginia. They believe that it was a concealed mass grave associated with the Civil War's Battle of Williamsburg in May 1862.

Jack Gary, the director of archaeology at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, said the human remains were initially found in March 2022. However, they were quickly covered back up until archaeologists received official permission to study the site from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Jack Gary said a Baptist church that once stood next to the Powder Magazine did serve as a field hospital during the Civil War fight. "There's descriptions and references to mass graves being dug somewhat regularly as the soldiers died, and them being buried just outside of the church," Gary said. It is currently unclear at this time how many dead are in this mass grave or which side, Confederate or Union. "That's one of the questions that we're trying to answer with the excavation to see if we can determine the affiliation of these individuals, they may also be

civilians," said Gary. "The citizens of Williamsburg were caught up in it, and like most battles, it was a traumatic experience for our city," said Gary.

Archaeological crews will now work over the next several months to remove and study the remains including using DNA analysis before the remains are then interred in individual graves. Jack Gary said they are currently studying the bones in the ground then will then safely transport them to the College of William & Mary for further forensic analysis. The goal of the whole project is to expose and close a chapter of history.

The DNA analysis will be done by Raquel Fleskes at the University of Connecticut. Jack Gary said "This was a mass grave, this was never meant to be the final resting place for these individuals so it's important for us to be able to respectfully move these individuals to a place where they can lie in respect."

Fragments of clothing that emerge could tell on which side individuals fought. And the bones could reveal a soldier's cause of death. "That's something that we'll be looking out for," Gary said. "Cause of death ... may be obvious, maybe in the form of bullets, shrapnel, or other injuries." They will also be able to further investigate the bodies for identifiers such as height, sex and even ethnicity of each individual. A similar grave found on the Manassas battlefield in 2015 contained the shattered leg of a Union soldier with a Confederate bullet still buried in the bone.

The Battle of Williamsburg, also known as the Battle of Fort Magruder, took place on May 5, 1862, in York County, James City County and Williamsburg, Virginia, as part of the Peninsula Campaign of the American Civil War. It occurred when Union Forces under General George McClellan caught up with the Confederate Army led by General Joseph Johnston, who had just retreated from Yorktown, Virginia, to Williamsburg after a month long siege.

It was the first pitched battle of the Peninsula Campaign, in which nearly 41,000 Federals and 32,000 Confederates were engaged, fighting an inconclusive battle that ended with the Confederates continuing their withdrawal.

The Northern press portrayed the battle as a victory for the Federal army. McClellan miscategorized it as a "brilliant victory" over superior forces.

However, the defence of Williamsburg was seen by the South as a means of delaying the Federals, which allowed the bulk of the Confederate army to continue its withdrawal toward Richmond. Confederate casualties, including the cavalry skirmishing on May 4, were 1,682. Union casualties were 2,283.

"No real action happened within the city, most of it happened just outside of the city limits through a series of ravines around these forts that the Confederates have built," Jack Gary said. Confederate troops pulled out of the town later that night after the battle that was meant to stall Union forces from marching on Richmond. Archaeologists firmly believe the remains are linked to this May 1862 Battle of Williamsburg in which there were nearly 4,000 casualties.

The Battle of Williamsburg itself was actually fought southeast of the town. Afterward, almost every building in

the Williamsburg community flew a yellow hospital flag, the historian Stephen W. Sears wrote. "Union soldiers, Confederate soldiers, even civilians were in these makeshift hospitals ... one of them being in the Baptist church right next to the Powder Magazine," Jack Gary said. "There's quite a bit of documentary evidence right after the battle about there being mass graves dug for the casualties that are happening in the Baptist church hospital.

According to official reports and testimonies, Private John Wilson, of the Union's 38th New York Infantry Regiment, wrote in his diary, according to the American Battlefield Trust: "The rebels left about 1000 sick and wounded in Wm.burg. [I] was all over the battlefield to day and it was an awful looking sight, at some places our men and the rebels laying side by side where [they] charged bayonets and killed each other."

Another Union soldier, Warren Lee Goss, wrote, according to an account in "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War": "After the engagement I went over the field ... [and] came upon one of our men who had evidently died from wounds. Near one of his hands was a Testament and on his breast lay an ambrotype picture of a group of children and another of a young woman."

Detailed forensic examination of the burials in this recently discovered mass Civil War grave hope to reveal much more about the individuals interred and then lay them to rest in a far more appropriate and dignified marked grave.

The Burnside Carbine

Guns have played a key role in military battles for centuries, and the technology around them has continually evolved. Here, Erick Redington looks at the importance of the Burnside carbine gun in the US Civil War. In the years leading to the US Civil War, the industrial revolution was making itself felt in the field of military technology. During the Mexican War of 1846-1848, the standard infantry weapon in the United States was the smoothbore musket, while the standard cavalry weapon was the smoothbore carbine, a shorter version of the musket.

There were multiple issues with these weapons. A smoothbore musket has no rifling and has limited range and accuracy. The firing mechanism, using loose black powder, was messy, and prone to fouling. The biggest problem was rate of fire. As a muzzle loader, a trained soldier could fire about three shots a minute.

These issues combined to drive the desire for a new weapon. Just as there were many problems with the standard smoothbore musket, there were issues with early breech loading rifles as well.

First among these was the creation of a seal in the breech to prevent the escape of gas. Another was the cartridge used. Precise machining and mechanical issues were present as well.

The first practical breech loading rifled musket was developed by Major Patrick Ferguson of the British Army during the American Revolution. This weapon solved several issues, such as gas

leakage from the breech and allowed for quicker loading, resulting in five or six shots a minute. Despite these positives, the weapon was also expensive to make and required precise craftsmanship.

The British Army of the time was willing to outfit small numbers of men with the Ferguson Rifle, but the Brown Bess remained the standard for decades.

Solving the issue

With the development of industrialized mass production and interchangeable parts, the technological ability to solve the issues inherent in breech loading weapons emerged.

Precision tooling gave manufacturers the ability to rifle on a mass scale. Samuel Colt began mass producing firearms. Veterans began trying their hands at new inventions. One of those was Ambrose Burnside.

Ambrose Burnside has a reputation amongst historians and Civil War buffs. He is generally seen as an amiable fool at best, and an incompetent at worst. These are grossly inaccurate generalizations.

Burnside had a very incisive mind with good attention to detail. During his service in the American Southwest after the war, he was exposed to the Hall Breechloader. This weapon had many of the improvements of a rifled breech loader but had severe issues with gas leakage at the joint of the breech and the barrel.

When he decided to turn his attention to the issue of weaponry, he had a very creative solution. Burnside designed his own cartridge that was conical shaped with the bulge in the middle. This conical casing created a seal at just the point where the issues with gas leakage occurred. As Burnside was serving in the cavalry at the time, he developed his firearm as a carbine. The final product was a .54 caliber rifled carbine.

In 1853, Burnside applied to the army ordinance bureau to have a prototype of his carbine design made and was granted permission. When the prototype was made, he resigned from the army and created an arms manufacturing company to market, produce, and sell his new weapon.

In 1857, the army was trying to replace the Hall Carbine, and was soliciting entrants for a competition to choose a new carbine. Burnside entered the competition, and his carbine was approved. This was the first breechloader adopted by the army that utilized a metallic cartridge. The army placed an order with Burnside.

US Civil War

During the Civil War, over 50,000 Burnside Carbines were ordered by the Union Army, however most of these would be delivered only in the last year of the war.

At the start of the war, the Union would arm its cavalry with any weapon it could get its hands on, mostly smoothbore muzzle loaders.

The Union cavalry would be repeatedly thrashed by

Confederate cavalry through the first years of the war.

A weapon that provided a clear advantage in firepower and rate of fire would have been a force multiplier for the North.

Two questions present themselves, first: If the United States approved a breech loading carbine prior to the war, why did they not adapt the design to a full-sized rifle for the infantry? Second: If Burnside's Carbine was approved before the war, why was it not mass produced and ready at the start of the war?

The answers to these questions were complicated. First, the army leadership at the start of the Civil War was old and set in its ways. This is especially true of the head of the Army Ordinance Bureau, General John Ripley. At the start of the war, General Ripley insisted on issuing smoothbore weapons instead of rifled due to costs.

The government had large stocks of smoothbores and it was more cost effective. He also opposed breech loading and repeating rifles. The higher rate of fire of these weapons would only encourage soldiers to use more ammunition and create carelessness in aiming.

The consequences of these decisions were a war that lasted years longer and cost tens or hundreds of thousands of more casualties.



John Rushworth Memorial Trophy Photography Competition 2023

Good news to all of the budding photographers in the Society, we are now hosting our photography competition again for the 2023 season.

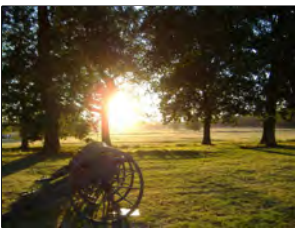
The rules are as follows

- 1) The photograph must be taken at an event this season, by a member of the Society.*
- 2) Each entry must not have any non authentic items or vehicles within the photograph.*
- 3) Any member wishing to enter the competition can enter any number of separate entries.*
- 4) "Amusing" photographs can also be entered for consideration.*
- 5) Non members or members of the public cannot be included in the photograph.*

Entries for the competition must be sent to the Communications Director and clearly labelled as an entry.

The Board of Directors will vote anonymously for the winner, second and third place before the last day of October.

Here are a couple of examples of some previous winning photos



*Stanford Hall 2006
Lorraine Mitchell
(4th TX)*



*Sheffield 2008
Alison Brown
(43rd NC)*



*Tatton Park 2009
Alison Brown
(43rd NC)*

Good Luck and Have Fun
*We look forward to seeing
your fabulous pictures.*

Hardtack and Johnny Cakes

During the Civil War one of the most common meals for soldiers was a cracker-like food called hardtack. Hardtack is made from flour, water, and salt. It could last a long time- there is even hard tack from the Civil War in the museum at Manassas National Battlefield Park today! Soldiers really didn't like eating hardtack. It was known as "sheet iron crackers" or "tooth duller" because it was so hard. It also was known for getting wet, which allowed mold to grow in the boxes of it that were supplied to the Army. In addition, insects would sometimes lay their eggs in the hard tack giving it the nickname, "worm castles." Hardtack was important for the men to eat- it gave them energy they needed, and it was a big piece of their diet so they tried to find all kinds of ways to eat it.

Soldiers would soften their hardtack in coffee. This also was also a way to help kill the little maggots and worms that lived inside of it, allowing soldiers to skim them off of the top of the coffee. They would also break up the hardtack with the butt (the back part) of their rifles and throw it in soups such as a stew called "lobscouse," which also included soldiers' rations of salt pork (which was preserved with salt to make it last a long time too), and any other things they could find to add to it. They also would soak hardtack in water and fry it in bacon fat or lard (animal fat) to make something they called "skillygalee." If a soldier could afford to spend

some of their monthly pay, they might buy ingredients from a sutler, a merchant who sold goods to encamped soldiers. For example, soldiers would sometimes mix hardtack with a can of condensed milk they bought from a sutler. However, sutlers often charged a lot of money for their supplies, so many men could not afford to pay for these goods because their money was needed to support their families back at home. Men sometimes would also forage, or look around an area, for additional ingredients that could be eaten with hardtack.

The Confederates did not always have hardtack, because it was made from wheat flour, and wheat was not widely grown in most Confederate states, aside from Virginia and Georgia. The Confederates instead relied on two crops they grew to make their bread: corn and rice. In particular, they used corn to make something similar to hardtack that was known as "corn dodgers" or "Johnny cakes." This was a mixture of cornmeal, salt, and water cooked until it was just as dry and hard as the hardtack. Soldiers might try to make them taste a better too! They would use whatever grease or fat they could find and fry their Johnny cakes with it to make something they called "cush" or "slosh." People ate Johnny cakes before the Civil War and they still do today.

Johnny Cakes

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon of baking soda
- 2/3 cup of milk
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon of sugar (Optional)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix ingredients in a bowl until a stiff batter is formed.
3. Divide into biscuits and place on a greased cookie sheet. You will be able to make about 8 with this recipe.
4. Bake in oven for about 20 minutes. (or until golden brown)
5. Serve with butter, honey, or molasses.



Hardtack

Ingredients:

- 4 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 cup of water (Add more or less as needed, up to another ½ cup.)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix ingredients in a bowl until they form a stiff, elastic dough but not dry or sticky. You may need to adjust the amount of water- so be careful as you add it!
3. Spread the dough about ½ inch thick onto a greased cookie sheet.
4. Bake for 30 minutes. Pull out of oven and let cool for 5 minutes.
5. With a bread knife or pizza cutter, divide the dough into 3x3 squares and poke a grid of holes with a cleaned nail, toothpick, or skewer. Flip pieces over. Be careful with this step!
6. Bake in oven for more 30 minutes or until lightly brown. Turn off the oven, leaving the hardtack inside until it cools.



Sergeant Goober's Guide to Safe Weapons and Canteens

Bore will be clean and clear, a distinct ping is expected when the ramrod is dropped to the breech.

Lock, half cock is expected to engage and hold the weapon's weight on the hammer as well as not fire from normal trigger pressure.

Cone is to be clean outside as well as clear through. The bolster area around the cone is also to be free of major fouling.

Bands should be tight and not moveable with hand pressure, all screws are to be present and also be seated well enough to resist finger pressure.

Blued weapons are expected to be free of any major surface rust.

Bright weapons are expected to be bright and free of rust.

Stocks are to be free of any major cracks/missing pieces of wood.

Bayonets must be well fitting to the rifle and the locking ring should be present and functional.

Bayonet scabbards are required. A tip or finial must be present and covering the point of the bayonet.

Canteens will be carried and will be full of clean water. This is a safety concern not only for the individual but also in a medical emergency for others. It has also extinguished small accidental fires before it became an issue.



EVENTS CALENDAR 2023

September 16-17 UPTON, WEST MIDLANDS
Full Society Event. (ACWS Members Only)
Possible event currently awaiting confirmation.
Further details to follow.

CONFIRMED

December 2 ACWS AGM 2023

The 2023 ACWS Annual General Meeting

Saturday 2nd December 2023, starting at 1pm prompt via Zoom (virtually).

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 Ltd, PO Box 270, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE37 9BX. These MUST be received at this location by NO LATER than Friday 29th September 2023.

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.

The current directors standing for re-election as at the date of this notice are:

- Secretary: Linda Reed
- Treasurer: Ian Morris
- Membership: Claire Morris
- Webmaster: Mike Bussey
- Events: Catherine Conyard
- Health & Safety: Frank Mair
- Communications: Joseph Reed

The current two Army Commanders are standing for re-election as at the date of this notice are:

- Federal Commander: Tim Davies
- Confederate Commander: Glenn Gibson

Helen Gibson (Chairperson) is standing down.

Once relevant inputs have been received, the AGM Agenda can be put together, with guidelines regarding "Zoom", and the appropriate documentation can be 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 attending the virtual meeting are asked to have their membership cards to hand to help validation, online admission and voting if necessary.