



The A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER

2024 3rd Edition

ACWS Ltd - PO Box 270 - Washington - Tyne & Wear - NE37 9BX
www.acws.co.uk



Photograph courtesy of Abigail
Hooper, 118th Pennsylvania
Marbury 2024

ACWS is a Member of
N·A·Re·S

Issue 213

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



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Federal
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**Confederate
Commander**
Glenn Gibson



**Federal
Representative**
Paul Kennelly

Director's Reports

I missed the Doncaster event!, and all I'm hearing is what a great event it was.

Apparently Confederates around the same camp fire as the union.... fantastic!
Let's do it again because I missed it.

Right, so next event Northampton. Please follow the warning orders and let's again show what a great team we are.

I heard that the new pyros helping team worked well, as well as the cannon crews doing over time as usual.

It's always sad to mention the passing of our members whether they are old or existing, but its my great honour to have known two great members, John Dale and Ozzy.

Both will have left behind good lasting memories with us all , some more than others. Please, please pass these memories around the next camp fire and let's drink to them both.

Also congratulations to our very own Catherine and Dave getting engaged. Well done guys.

After Northampton we have Detling, once again working with SoSkAn and all their great members, hopefully some great days and evenings around the camp fires with them will be made.

See you at the camp fire,

Daz Paul - Chairman & Federal Commander

Hi Everyone,

Here we are, about half way through the season. Thank you so much to everyone for helping to make our events so successful – from the camp organisation, Living History activities, engaging in public interaction, our arena displays, through to leaving our camping area tidy when we depart. Every organiser has been delighted and appreciated our efforts.

The sheer numbers of public for our displays at Doncaster was amazing, (three rows of children for kiddies drill was a sight to behold) and will happen again at Northampton – lots of potential for recruiting!

So I am gently beginning to think about next year, so as always please have a think of potential venues near you that I can contact to explore for future events. Feel free to talk to me at an event or send me a message/ email.

Best Wishes

Catherine Conyard - Events Director



The View from my Awning

I am nearly through my second season with ACWS.

I am pleased and humbled to have been allowed to hold my long-standing rank of Captain, an appointment made by our late departed and much-loved Colonel Timothy Davies.

Tim tasked me with the job of (with my wife Hilary), setting up a static display at events and communicating with the public with a view to raising awareness of our society, its aims and good works, along with possible recruitment.

Well. Things have evolved a little and I have been co-opted onto the board as Federal representative, I find myself recording events with photographs, opening arena gates and even holding an artilleryman's burger while he receives instruction.

Of late, because I have the luxury of being able to arrive early, I am camp marshalling so that when members arrive, they can be directed where to camp, where the toilets are and the water/firewood point.

I am pleased that I can do these things and by doing so, feel as though I am pulling my weight.

I am seventy-three and have health issues. These restrict me from running around the field, Reb bashing but occasionally I find the energy to join in (in a very small way).

I have also been appointed Adjutant to Major Darren Paul. Thus, my desk gets busier!

I now find myself carrying out camp inspections, reminding the Major to

remind me of things that I have forgotten, receiving company reports, being his wing man on the field, health allowing, being a sounding board, chalking the chalk board and writing to the parents of those who have fallen in battle (none thus far) and keeping my hand on the pulse of the camp.

It has been an eventful time; a learning curve and I do my best to do the best for the society. That's really all I can and wish to do.

Hilary and I are warmed by the reception we have been given, the help and advice from all corners and the comradeship so freely shared.

In my next report, I will tell you about my history in re-enactment and how I got to where I am now.

Meanwhile, I look forward to seeing you all, as our joint journey through history continues.

Captain Paul....that's what they call me.

Capt. Paul Kennelly - Federal Representative



ACWS at Marbury Merry Days

The ACWS travelled to the 43rd Marbury Merry Days on the weekend of 11th and 12th May 2024 and due to the splendid and very hot weather enjoyed an excellent weekend. Without doubt, this picturesque village site must be one of the best the ACWS has been in recent years.

The awesome views from the magnificent St Michaels Church which overlook the Big Mere are stunning. This is a particularly historic site and the gate to the Church is a poignant First World War Memorial with its inscriptions and there is a First World War Memorial Grave in the graveyard.

The Big Mere also reputedly contains an unexploded World War 2 German bomb and as such care has to be taken with regards any activities that take place on or under the waters of the Mere. This is always an excellent site for a Civil War skirmish re-enactment due to being able to utilise the Church wall and the hill that climbs up to it and this weekend was no exception. To the credit of both Chairman/Union Major Daz Paul and Confederate Major Glenn Gibson, a planned and historic scenario allowed both the Union and Confederate armies to use the hill and stonewall to their maximum advantage making for a superb fast moving scenario on the Saturday.

As usual, the ACWS were the main headline act of the Marbury Merry Days village fete and were contracted to do infantry and artillery drill sessions throughout the 2 days as well as 1 battle on the Saturday

but sadly no battle on the Sunday due to the dog shows. Other attractions and events included Pinxton Puppets, Grand Draw, Plant Stall, Sweet Stall & Cake Stall, Tombola, Bric-a-Brac & Book Stalls, Craft and Gift Fair, Side Shows & Refreshments; along with Glo*s Dance Troupe (Saturday), Maypole Dancing (Saturday), Wirral Pipe Band, Fun Dog Show (Sunday, entries on the day), Gun Dog Scurry, Cheshire Farm Ice Cream, Children's Activity Area, Bouncy Castles, Model Flying Display, Floral Display in the Church, Trade Stands, Classic Cars & Vintage Tractors, Cygnet Bar, and Climbing Wall.

The show was formally opened by the Cheshire Dairy Queen and her 2 Dairy maids on the Saturday which was well received as they made their short speeches. Both ACWS armies performed excellent infantry and artillery displays on the Saturday morning before the main battle which was the Battle of Fredericksburg which was fought in December 1862 and was a complete Confederate victory.

The historic battle itself included futile frontal attacks by the Union army on December 13 against entrenched Confederate defenders along the Sunken Wall on Marye's Heights behind the city. It is remembered as one of the most one-sided battles of the war with Union casualties more than twice as heavy as those suffered by the Confederates.

A visitor to the battlefield described the battle as a "butchery" to U.S. President Abraham Lincoln. Massed artillery provided almost uninterrupted coverage of the plain below.

Confederate General Longstreet had been assured by his artillery commander, Lt. Col. Edward Porter Alexander, "General, we cover that ground now so well that we will comb it as with a fine-tooth comb. A chicken could not live on that field when we open on it." Richard Rowland Kirkland, a Confederate Army sergeant with Company G, 2nd South Carolina Volunteer Infantry was stationed at the stone wall by the sunken road below Marye's Heights.

He had a close up view to the suffering and like so many others was appalled at the cries for help of the Union wounded throughout that cold winter night of December 13, 1862. After obtaining permission from his commander, Confederate Brig.

Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw, Kirkland gathered canteens and in broad daylight, without the benefit of a cease fire or a flag of truce (refused by Kershaw), provided water to numerous Union wounded lying on the field of battle. Union soldiers held their fire as it was obvious what Kirkland's intent was. Kirkland was nicknamed the "Angel of Marye's Heights" for these actions, and is memorialized with a statue by Felix de Weldon on the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park where he carried out his actions. 7 Union divisions had been sent in, generally one brigade at a time, for a total of 14 individual charges, all of which failed, costing them from 6,000 to 8,000 casualties at Maryes

Heights. Overall, the Union army suffered 12,653 casualties (1,284 killed, 9,600 wounded, 1,769 captured/missing). 2 Union generals were mortally wounded namely Brig. Gens. George D. Bayard and Conrad F. Jackson.

The Confederate army lost 5,377 (608 killed, 4,116 wounded, 653 captured/missing). As part of this iconic Civil War battle, the ACWS specifically re-enacted the 118th Pennsylvania Regiment at Marye's Heights, Fredericksburg, December 1862. Despite the blazing weekend heat, the Union soldiers wore greatcoats as at the time in the cold winter of 1862 and all had in possession personal details of the actual Union troops who fought and their outcome who they represented.

The re-enactment of the assault of the stone wall started on the Confederate right wing where the Confederates were attacked by a squad of fast moving green jacketed USS Sharpshooters sneaking up through the long grass. This was alongside a furious barrage by the Union artillery along the whole of the stone wall with the pyros of the exploding shells forcing the rebels to lie low.

It was then that the Union 118th Pennsylvania formed up and began their fatal assault on the well protected stone wall making it virtually impregnable and impossible to take it in a full frontal assault. As such, the skirmish then involved a sheer slug and full double canister fest with both sides pouring both infantry and artillery fire into each other as the Union tried to advance and take the stone wall.

Eventually, the Confederates with their massed infantry and fast firing artillery piece managed to slowly decimate the Union forces and leave many blue clad casualties on the battlefield. At this stage, Confederate Sergeant Rob Jamieson representing Richard Kirkland collected canteens from other rebs and leapt over the wall to give succour, respite and water to the many Union wounded and dying lying in front. This was a really cracking and memorable planned battle and scenario with commendable casualties and thoroughly enjoyed by all the Civil War re-enactors but it was the massive amount of public and more importantly the organisers who stated what a superb performance we put on.

For me, the massed Confederate infantry presence behind the stone wall, the superb historical impression of the 118th Pennsylvania, the hard working artillery of both sides and the excellent pyrotechnics added to the overall impression. As usual, many thanks to our knowledgeable ACWS commentator, Christian Sprakes for his superb commentaries throughout all the displays and the battle. As usual, he really adds to the enjoyment of the public.

Apart from the Saturday battle, this was a very busy weekend for the ACWS with numerous additional activities taking place throughout the weekend. At the start of the weekend, the ACWS held a full formal meeting to remember and honour both Union Colonel Tim Davis and Confederate Major Trevor Stephens. Massive credit to Martin Cross for his lovely words and prayers and Union Major Daz Paul for his moving poem. Tim and Trevor will always be so fondly remembered by the ACWS.

Throughout the weekend, both armies took it in turns to do full drill and firing sessions in the arena. Towards the end of the weekend, both armies must be commended for both their active participation in the heat and particularly the high standard of drill achieved. This also included the excellent ACWS band.

Confederate Major Glenn Gibson led, in my personal opinion, 1 of the biggest ever Kids Drill with the wooden muskets which the public, parents and kids thoroughly enjoyed. Personally, I thought the full and active participation of both armies in this particular display really added to this occasion.

As usual, the Union Medical Display always stands out and a personal thankyou for hydrating all the troops which was so necessary due to the heat. During both fine, warm and clear evenings, the Union and Confederate armies enjoyed their usual friendly and enjoyable campfire sessions and it is really nice to see officers and soldiers from both armies now regularly visiting each others campfires.

On the Saturday, this was unbelievably enhanced by the appearance of the **aurora borealis** as the UK witnessed the Northern Lights for a 2nd consecutive day amidst breath taking levels of solar wind reaching Earth. I personally saw some excellent pictures so please send these into the editor of the ACWS Newsletter. Civil War historians will be fully aware that the Northern lights were visible during the actual battle and were regarded by the Confederates as a sign from above to commemorate their stunning victory.

Finally, there was also a superb low flying Battle of Britain Memorial Flypast by a Spitfire. Many of the ACWS re-enactors also utilised the excellent facilities of the newly refurbished Swan Hotel in the village.

Both the food and the various real ales were of top quality (although pricey!) but the staff and management were all so very welcoming and appreciative of the ACWS custom. In addition, a number of ACWS members also attended the Sunday church service.

Overall, both Union and Confederate armies had excellent attendances but much credit must go to the superb full 118th Pennsylvania impression with their greatcoats and scarves, the Union artillery performances and the excellent pyro-technics. From a Confederate perspective, having 5 separate infantry regiments fighting independently namely the 43rd North Carolina, 1st Tennessee, 32nd Virginia, 24th Virginia and 2nd South Carolina alongside each other behind the stone wall was an immense experience.

At the end of the event, all the various organisers formally thanked the ACWS for their excellent participation throughout the duration of the weekend and the feedback from the public was superb throughout. Due to this positive feedback and the typical exemplary conduct of the ACWS, I am sure we will be invited back again in the future as this picturesque venue and backdrop has already become an ACWS firm favourite.

Of course, well done to ACWS Event Director Catherine Conyard who obtained this special event and worked tirelessly throughout the

weekend. Finally and above all, well done to everyone who attended and made this such a friendly and memorable weekend as well as those who have now climbed the hill and attacked the stonewall!

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



MARBURY





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For all your uniform & equipment needs

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John Rushworth Memorial Trophy Photography Competition 2024

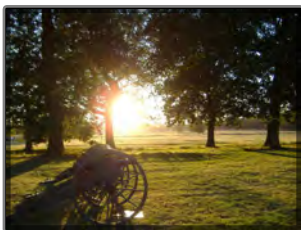
The rules are as follows

1. The photograph must be taken at an event this season, by a member of the Society.
2. Any member wishing to enter the competition can enter any number of separate entries.
3. “Amusing” photographs can also be entered for consideration.
4. Non members or members of the public cannot be included in the photograph.
5. If you think someone else has taken a great photograph, feel free to send it in on their behalf.

Entries for the competition must be sent to the Communications director
Editor@acws.co.uk

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.

ACWS at East Park, Hull

The ACWS travelled to East Park in Hull on the weekend of 25th and 26th May 2024. 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, 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 by both herself and others particularly with the constant gate security required. Despite the apocalyptic rain forecast, the event lasted all weekend with even sunny spells on the Sunday afternoon which made for dry tents! There were knowledgeable and 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 3 cannon present alongside some ground charges surrounding the furthest away cannon which the rebs were going to try and get hold off. The scenario was similar to last year but called "The Battle of the 3 Guns" and involved the Union starting the battle by having the 3 cannon in the middle of the field. As the Union started to move 2 cannon back, Confederate skirmishers of the 24th Virginia appeared and captured the lone remaining cannon. This was soon manned by a Confederate artillery crew who became involved in a firefight with the 2 Union cannon. The superb co-ordinated pyrotechnics blasted both the advancing Confederate Infantry and artillery crew as they advanced.

On the Saturday, the large Confederate infantry body managed to overpower both the Union infantry before then flanking and taking the 2 Union artillery pieces. However, on the Sunday, the advancing Union infantry and the 2 Union cannon managed to force back and eventually overpower the Confederate forces.

Both sides took commendable casualties on both days and I particularly liked the advancing Union artillery piece that was moved forward with the infantry and decimated the Confederate ranks with their last shot leaving numerous casualties. Both skirmishes involved lots of close quarter

fighting right in front of the big audience who loved every minute. Massive credit to everyone particularly Mike (CSA) and Neil (US) who stepped in and put together a really creditable and interesting battle plan. I always 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. The ACWS commentary by Christian Sprakes throughout all the displays and the 2 skirmishes was excellent.

Both sides provided excellent living history displays throughout the weekend. The Union had their always superb authentic Civil War historical displays which went down really well with the interested public. The Confederates undertook their very popular combination of 1) Ask a Soldier quiz sheet (over 80 given out!) followed by 2) a Photo shoot of trying a Confederate Uniform with a Steve Lord photo! and then onto 3) the 2nd South Carolina gambling game with a look and taste of authentic Civil War food. Each successful stage was rewarded with Confederate money which was of course all later recycled following the inevitable fleecing during the gambling by our highly unscrupulous and dodgy Palmetto banker. 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.

As usual, both sides had their well attended campfires both nights and these were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone despite the odd drizzle of rain. This sadly kept many musicians instruments undercover. As you all know, I always like to mention something special which always occurs at ACWS Events and this weekend was the successful undertaking of a Pyrotechnic Course. Really well done to the 6 participants who successfully undertook and completed the courses and special thanks to Linda for organising this. A great boost to the future of the ACWS.

I heard 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. Massive thanks to every single member who attended and those who all clearly put a lot of work and effort in to making it the success it was.

HULL



AVONCROFT



2nd South at the Battle of Doncaster (aka Gettysburg)

Dearest Mother,

Our regiment has fought in numerous clashes over recent months with the Billy Yanks but here at Gettysburg in July 1863 was the most climactic. Determined to pacify Pennsylvania and inflict a crushing blow on the Union, under Major Gibson, we advanced and engaged the enemy frontally as part of Kershaw's brigade at the Peach Orchard and the wheat field. Our initial advance successfully pushed the Union's forward units back towards the wheat field.

There, we captured a cannon and turned it upon the enemy but soon, we were met with withering artillery fire by a Union battery of which I since learned was under the command of Sgt C. Davies. In holding our ground, our flank was exposed and subsequently attacked by Yankee sharpshooters (especially 1st USSS) who caused us great loss. Our momentum was lost and it wasn't long before our outnumbered line received devastating musket volleys from the main enemy line causing us to yield ground and take extensive casualties.

Ultimately, we lost half our strength and forced to cede the field to the victorious Yankees and retreat with the rest of the Confederate army back to Virginia. It was a bitter blow. I narrowly survived the slaughter with just a leg injury and am now in Union custody along with many others from that calamitous battle. We must trust to the Almighty's providence in this struggle as with all things. And our shared love keeps our spirits up during this torrid time. I pray to see you and Pa again soon back in South Carolina and will write again with more news.

From your loving son,

Pvt. William Jennings (2nd SC)



CONGRATULATIONS



The ACWS and the Board of Directors would like to give a huge congratulations to Catherine Conyard and Dave McDade on their recent engagement.



The ACWS and the Board of Directors would like to congratulate Ingrid and Peter Gray on their recent Wedding.

(Took your time.)



We would also like to congratulate the members who took part in the ACWS Pyro course and passed with flying colours.

In Memoriam

Oswald "Ozzy" Skaurdyus
22/07/1949 - 01/07/2024



Ozzy was born in Edinburgh 22nd July 1949, his father was Norwegian and his mother Scottish. The family moved down to Doncaster 5 years later. After leaving school at 15 he was employed as an apprentice plumber with a local firm. When he finished his apprenticeship he was employed by the council as a plumber.

He joined the army a few years later, (Royal Engineers), was stationed mainly in Germany, as well as 2 tours of Northern Ireland during the early seventies. He left the army in 1975 and went back to civilian life as a plumber for the council. We married in 1976, he went self employed as a plumber in 1988.

He joined the ACWS in the 90s, and enjoyed being part of the Confederacy. He had a kidney transplant in 2002 on Christmas Day, that kidney lasted him for 20 years which gave us the freedom to travel America, southern states and mid west America.

Unfortunately 2 years ago his transplanted kidney began to fail and so began dialysis at Doncaster Hospital 3 times a week. At the end of May this year, he began to feel unwell and was admitted to hospital, they did an emergency operation on him for a perforated bowel. He seemed to be recovering from the operation but gradually other complications set in and he sadly passed away on 1st July 2024.

Obituary written by Ozzy's wife, Daisy.

John S. Dale
01/10/1949 - 21/07/2024



Did You Know?

Regiments are able to host their own fundraisers to raise money for various items to aid in the Regiment's authenticity, impression or general well being.

These fundraisers can include but are not limited to, general donations, raffles, "golden tickets" and football cards.

All requests to host a fundraiser at any event **MUST** be passed through the Secretary.

If multiple bids are put forward for fundraisers from several regiments, the ACWS Board of Directors will arrange for regiments to host these at particular events to prevent any from overlapping each other and allow everyone to have their "fair share".

Any questions regarding Regimental Fundraisers can be directed to either Army Commander or the Secretary for clarification.

From the Medical Team

Members please remember to bring personal first aid kits with you to events, just as you would take on holiday. Along with any medication you may need for any existing condition you may have.

You must let the medical team know of any existing conditions or allergies that you think may affect you. However, the medics are not allowed to give out any medication under any circumstances this includes but is not limited to pain killers and anti-allergen medications.

Please also remember to stay hydrated at all times and notify any medic if you're suffering with any symptoms of dehydration.

Also anyone in the Society that has any medical qualifications, please feel free to contact our Chief Medical Officer (Mr Ian Morris) or Mr Stewart Hayllar and let either of them know, help is always appreciated.

If an ambulance is needed or has already been called for an injury or emergency please let one of the medical team know, as this will allow us to take observations and do a full handover with the NHS paramedics.

Don't forget, the medical tent is always occupied by a society medic and is easily identified by a yellow flag with a green "H" (Hospital). If you wish to know who your army medics are at any event, feel free to ask your army commanders.

So let's all be careful out there and look after each other.

NOTICE OF 2024 AGM

The American Civil War Society Ltd (a company limited by guarantee, (number 2610962) hereby gives NOTICE that its AGM will be held on Sunday 7th December 2024, 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 Thursday 3rd October 2024.

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:

- Chairperson: Darren Paul
- Treasurer: Ian Morris
- Membership: Claire Morris
- Webmaster: Mike Bussey
- Events: Catherine Conyard
- Communications: Joseph Reed
- Health & Safety: Frank Mair
- Federal Representative: Paul Kennelly

Mrs Linda Reed (Secretary) is not standing for re-election however is willing to stay on and be nominated as a non-executive director with no voting rights.

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

- Federal Commander: Darren Paul
- Confederate Commander: Glenn Gibson

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.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors,
Linda Reed
Company Secretary and Director
8th August 2024



EVENTS CALENDAR 2024

August 16-18 NORTHAMPTON BALLOON FESTIVAL

Full society event.

Infantry, Artillery, Pyrotechnics & Living History

Northampton Racecourse, Kettering Road, N'hampton, **NN1 4LG**.

August 24-26 DETLING, KENT

Full society event. (Guests of SoSkAn)

Infantry ONLY & Living History

Military Odyssey, Kent Showground, Detling, Kent, **ME14 3JF**.

September 7-8 MOIRA FURNACE, LEICS

Invitation by 24th Virginia to the ACWS

Moira Furnace Museum, Furnace Lane, Moira, Leics, **DE12 6AT**.

September 21-22 UPTON UPON SEVERN, WORCS

Full society event.

Living History & Infantry skirmish with guest Cavalry on

SATURDAY & SUNDAY

Fish Fields, Upton upon Severn, **WR8 0PB**.

Other possible events for 2024

We are in discussion other possible event sites and will update the website when appropriate.

December 7 ACWS AGM

The 2024 ACWS Annual General (Virtual Zoom)

Meeting starting at 1 pm prompt.

