P.O. Box 52, Brighouse, West Yorkshire,

HD6 1JQ, England

The A.C.W.S. NEWSLETTER

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North Carolina Monument Gettysburg

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A.C.W.S. CONTACTS
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Where now for Re-enacting? Recent Developments and challenges – what happens next?!

An address to NAReS AGM 20th November 2011 National Motor Cycle Museum Birmingham by **HOWARD GILES** of EventPlan, formerly of English Heritage.

To infinity and beyond!!!!

1. Introduction

I have been asked to talk about trends in re-enacting and challenges to re-enacting that I see developing. I don't intend to dwell on recent challenges as groups and their coordinators will know of them but there certainly have been some! e.g.

- Government legislation on violent crime, firearms, deactivated weapons, etc.
- Accidents, including the one involving the much missed Paul Allen.
- The state of the economy and its implications.
- Changing public tastes.
- Changes within the hobby itself.

Despite all this, re-enactment has prospered, probably due to clients like English Heritage, public popularity, the work of NAReS and the enthusiasm of re-enacting groups.

Some years ago I spoke to NAReS members about the future, and much of what I then said seems to have come to pass. I do not have a crystal ball, but maybe I have some insight, so let's all look forward rather than backwards. But obviously I can offer no guarantees of accuracy!

The only certain thing about the future is that there will always not only be challenges for re-enactment, but opportunities as well. Some of these themes will pop-up more than once in my talk.

2. Good News and bad news

GOOD

- We re-enactors are mainly still alive and kicking! And fortunately there are quite a few younger ones too!
- History has never been more popular with the public, probably as a result of films and TV etc.
- Historic properties appear to need events, including historical ones, to enhance their attractiveness.

BAD

- We are getting older. Whilst impressions are more accurate kit-wise, there is a disproportionate amount of re-enactors who are quite old and do not always look the part as a result. Some impressions e.g. Confederates or Home Guard are pretty much "age-proof" but others e.g. elite WWII fighting units, are not.
- The state of the economy.
- Public tastes are changing, not always for the better.
- Fewer filming opportunities.
- To the world at large, re-enactment 'doesn't matter'.

3. Threats and opportunities

a) THREATS

- Old age and retirement – more re-enactors are leaving than are joining.
- The economy. This effects what the public can afford to go and see. Today people are making careful choices of their leisure activities, and counting their pennies. Also re-enactment has to bear in mind what its clients can afford. English Heritage, National Trust, Local Authorities, independent stately homes – all have had their budgets cut. Frankly, some groups charge too much in these changing circumstances, but this only works against them when clients have no choice but to choose others instead. Also what re-enactors personally can afford to do becomes more limited, e.g. cost of fuel to travel.

- Changing public tastes.

  Because of video games and CGI the appearance of 1000 men in the field no longer seems 'unusual'. Also a lot of younger members of the public today have very reduced attention spans. There are other activities out there competing with re-enacting such as role play, paint balling and air soft and other 'less disciplined' activities which are easier/cheaper to do. Today people want entertaining and 'self indulgent' events are uninteresting, whilst the teaching of history in schools is not that thorough these days – and thus enthusiasm for it. Some eras are increasing in popularity e.g. the 1940's whilst others are declining in interest e.g. English Civil War.
- The Olympics (although not apparently as much as a threat as first thought).
- 'Entrenched' thinking by re-enactors e.g. on event content and/or fees and/or flexibility.

b) OPPORTUNITIES

- Historical events are in demand if entertaining and good value for money.
- Re-enactors continue to be enthusiastic.
- The public are still interested – re-enacting is 'known' by many, but not all, and use of re-enactors in recent TV programmes e.g. Lewis and Downton Abbey have been a help.

4. Trends

a) GOING UP

- WWII.
- WWI.
- Niche eras and groups, except perhaps some of those that are not particularly UK orientated.
- Cheap and 'easy' groups. Those who are relatively inexpensive to hire, quite small, and 'come complete'.
- Things that children like e.g. shiny knights and 'action'.
- Things that families like e.g. 'something for everyone'.

b) GOING DOWN

- Larger groups – limited resources, hiring fees, facilities needed and limited space are factors.
- Groups that are perceived to be 'difficult' i.e. not user friendly.
- Large battles – they are too expensive.
- Self- indulgent groups who don't bother much with entertaining the public.
- 'Plodding' groups – no imagination, just plod along with the same boring old thing time and time again.
- Groups that price themselves out of the market through "chasing the £".
- Poor quality groups.

5. Possible Changes

As I see it, as the years roll forward

- Multi-periods and big battles become rarer because they can be too expensive to put on.
- Most larger groups become smaller, probably except WWII.

- Groups become more regional e.g. because of fuel costs, those in a national society will increasingly come together to put on smaller regional events.
- More caravanners as we age = a problem for venues, because of the extra space for the 'family camp' or 'modern camp' needed, and appropriate "caravan-friendly" access.
- There is likely to be more 'pay to play' or performing just for group expenses, rather than for a fee.
- Clients will become more choosey.
- Smaller, successful groups will also become more choosey about which event invitations to accept.
- Government initiatives may well complicate things and inevitably increase re-enactor costs e.g. by combining firearm & shotgun certificates and (inevitably) at a higher fee. It is not terribly likely that such costs could be passed onto to financially embattled clients.

BUT there will still be plenty of opportunities for groups of all sizes and themes that 'get the balance right' both in what they do/present and how much they charge.

6. What can groups do to survive in this changing and challenging environment?

- Do nothing and fade away.
- 'Get real' = meet the client and public requirements, offer better value shows and be more entertaining in their shows.
- Make life easier for the hiring venues and organisers by:

a) Minimising group costs.
b) Maximise entertainment without losing accurate Living History. Think 'show biz!'
c) Reduce the length of larger battles and make them more entertaining.
d) Work to set scenarios for tight, fast moving action – no more 'muddling through' or poor co-ordination. Be professional!
e) Maximise the living history camping to minimise modern family camping space *and* offer more living history to clients.
f) Offer clients a PA system "within the package" and a good narrator who explains clearly what's going on and *why.*
g) Co-operate with other groups even if they are 'rivals' if clients ask them to e.g. at multi-periods or large scale single era multi-group displays/battles.

- **Minimise the costs to clients**

I still so often find little correlation between group fees and the artistic/entertainment value of their displays to the client. Some groups still try to extract as big a fee as they think they can get away with, whilst others are incredibly good value and generous – it doesn't take much to work out who clients would prefer. Perhaps it would help if re-enactors (as opposed to just their coordinators) more clearly understood the cost to an event provider of staging a whole event e.g. costs of infrastructure (toilets, wood, water, parking, marketing, and staff, fee for hire of the site, security etc.). Quite often group fees only represent 25% or less of the whole. For example, marketing is absolutely vital but can be very expensive.

- **Engage the public**

It's not enough to just perform. Tomorrow's adults are used to interacting with video games. They just don't want to watch passively any more. It is important in the future to engage with children by allowing 'hands on' stuff so that they can have fun. Also it's often important to have music, song and dance: and for certain displays people expect background theme music appropriate to the event. For example, like *Regia Anglorum*, EventPlan plays carefully planned film music during some battles and displays, "lifting" the whole experience for visitors used to this at the cinema and on their TVs. The public in future will expect lots of variety, and because they will have shortening attention spans, what groups DO needs to be short and fast. Obviously there are issues with 'have-a-go' activities e.g. safety supervision and insurance cover, but it really is worth putting in the extra effort to do it. Also do stuff for charities e.g. Children in Need – be very visible: it raises the profile.

- Groups should provide 'must see' shows, with an emphasis on SHOWS if they want to charge a fee. It's no longer about the public paying to watch re-enactors 'playing'.
- Recruit! Recruit! Recruit! Re-enacting needs new, young re-enactors. Thus groups need to market re-enacting to teenagers and those in their 20's on its chief strength – it's real! (Not just on a TV screen!) i.e. Don't just game it (i.e. video games) – Touch it! Feel it! Smell it! – Get a LIFE! <u>Really</u> DO it!
- Offer a chance to have-a-go on the day with no waiting – so provide enough spare kit and training sessions, advertise this facility and make it easy to buy the kit e.g. 1940's is easy. Get people to come along by contacting those who would want to join in the activity e.g. singles groups or clubs

IN SHORT

- Be 'professional'.

- Be affordable.
- Be entertaining.
- Be easy to deal with.
- Be flexible.
- Market the hobby!

SO, what era is most likely to meet public and client expectations at present?

7. The 1940's: A success story – simply exploding with popularity

- So much variety and 'stuff' on offer.
- Much more for women to do.
- Easy to join in and easy access to kit.
- Easier for those no longer into 'battling'.
- Public understanding and empathy.
- Veterans and remembrance.
- And the one big thing that nobody else has –Spitfires!

EventPlan is arranging x 6 1940's shows in 2012 alone!

8. What does the 1940's offer and what can other eras learn from this? Is the 1940's scene a threat or an opportunity for other eras?

a) "Stuff" confined to WWII and other 20th Century groups include; Vehicles (tanks, trucks, jeeps, cars), motorcycles, cycles, aircraft, machine guns and other serious firepower, and 'strollers' i.e. visitors in realistic kit, often "civilians", who just turn up. There is a lot of interest in 2nd World War because school children are taught it as history today.

b) Other eras can include the following, too (if appropriate);

- Short, exciting displays with a continuous programme throughout the day.
- Music, song and dance.
- Ships.
- Food and cooking *demonstrations* (as opposed to 'just' Living History).
- Puppet shows.
- 'Know your enemy' talks (e.g. as offered by *Le Voix de Nord* group. Their presenter is a British SOE Officer with all the German kit laid out and the crowd/the public watching are treated as SOE trainees about to be parachuted into enemy territory. The officer explains what the enemy kit looks like,

what it does and what they can do with it if they capture any – why not translate this into other eras?

- Have a go activities.
- Comedy – living history can be perceived as too serious sometimes. A bit of comedy can hugely enhance an event.
- 'Walking through' a battle – "muster" blocks of the public with a re-enactor at each corner and an officer out the front shouting what's to be done, "versus" another similar group coming at the group from the other side. Issue each participating member of the public with a "fate card" in a sealed envelope. Walk through a battlefield scenario, littering the battlefield with "casualties" as you go - it shows them that war is hell. Then the participating public open their 'fate' card envelopes, and this brings home to them the "lottery of war" and how many die of disease or wounds, or even if somebody gets promoted to General! Naturally the cards have to accurately reflect what happened in the chosen era.
- Give fantastic value for clients' money (excluding costs of big battles) – indeed quite a few groups, period vehicle owners and 'strollers' do not charge at all.
- Don't forget 'Remembrance'. A minute's silence from everybody at the end of an event, in memory of everybody who has died in war, brings poignancy to the occasion for the public. We are currently remembering the 70th anniversaries of WWII – but WWI is about to follow – 100 years in 2014.

9. I finish with a question for all of you re-enactors – What will <u>your</u> society do to prosper and survive?

Howard Giles

©Howard Giles 2011.

Geraldine's Thanks

I would like to thank ACWS for the lovely flowers sent to Mark's funeral last year, and all my and Mark's friends who sent cards and good wishes.

It was good to see those who came to the funeral, and I hope to see you all at events in 2012.

Chairman's Report

I hope that you have all had a good Christmas and wish you a Happy New Year. A new re-enacting season is about to begin and, by all accounts it looks to be an exciting one. We have a full calendar encompassing both full and Small society events to which our thanks go to the Projects Team who in my opinion have done an excellent job. Indeed I am informed that we already have had enquiries concerning possible events for 2013 which I am sure will be communicated to members at the appropriate time.

At the time of writing both Confederate and Union training weekends are coming up which hopefully will be well attended. As regards the coming season I realise that it may be difficult for members to attend all events due to perhaps work commitments, financial consideration and/or personal reasons. All that I and the society can ask is that you attend as many events as is feasible.

With regard to the forthcoming season for those members who are 'wavering' about rejoining I would hope that on perusing the events calendar they would, on reflection, continue to support the Society to which they have in the past been most loyal and steadfast.

Last season was I feel an enjoyable one for all concerned bearing in mind attendance numbers and events. It was also pleasing to be able to announce that the year ended with the Society in profit which is always good news as it means that we can pay our way and have no debtors. It is my earnest wish that this season can be both another profitable and enjoyable year for the members. It is important to remember that the ACWS is your Society and its success in both the portrayal of our hobby and the compliments that we receive from our sponsors at events is a tribute to your commitment, enthusiasm, and professionalism, which I am sure will be carried on in the forthcoming season.

In conclusion I can only thank members for their loyal support and commitment last season and earnestly hope that the forthcoming one will be both enjoyable and entertaining for both sponsors, the public and, just as importantly ourselves.

Denis Jarwick

Chairman

Beer and A Bun

The Board of Directors invite you to come and have a beer and a bun with them on Saturday Night at Sewerby Hall

This is your chance to get to know the directors and put forward ideas and suggestions (clean ones please) for the coming season(s). You may want to voice an opinion or put forward a possible venue for an event. Anyway just come along and have some fun at the Directors' expense.

FIRST AID KITS & DRINKING WATER

Would members please to remember to bring personal first aid kits with them to events, just as you would take on holiday. This should contain plasters, wipes, etc along with any medication you may need and any painkillers, medication for upset stomach if you've needed it in the past. The First Aiders are not allowed to give out any medication under any circumstances.

Also last season at a couple of events a few members had upset stomachs possibly from the water, so I would recommend that you boil water drawn from the taps onsite and take bottled water with you for putting in your canteens and for cold drinks.

So let's all be careful out there.

Ian Morris

THE PROJECTS REPORT

Here we are at the beginning of another season; let us hope for a good one.
The best laid plans can go awry and this year two of our events have been in doubt, one is to go ahead and two cancelled.
Sheffield was touch and go for a while, but happily it is on, Lanark has been cancelled for this year, hopefully we will be there next year and Morley is now in doubt. All will be explained as best as I can in the report and I will post updates on the forum and in the newsletter as I get the details.
I have one event for next year already, but more about that later in the year as the fine details are settled. Now details of this seasons events as they stand.

SEWERBY HALL 5-7 May 2012
One again we visit a favourite venue with ACWS. This year the house will be a Union friendly house in Harper's Ferry after the battle of Antietam Creek. In September 1862.
As usual the main re enactment will take place on Sunday and Monday, although this year we have a busy Saturday too. ACWS have been asked to provide a 'Guard of Honour' for a Bride and Groom who will be getting married in the Hall. The cavalry will provide an escort for the bride on her arrival and departure with her groom. The Guard of Honour will be from both sides. The wedding is scheduled for 3.30pm so the Honour Guard and escort will be ready from 3.00pm.
Later the Board of Directors will host a 'Beer and a Bun' reception for members so that they can get to know the Board and air their views and may be come up with ideas for venues and new scenarios for the future. Reg Fee £6

PEN FFYNNON WEST WALES 1-5 JUNE2012
Seeing as Morley has been cancelled the 69th NYSV are now holding a regimental event at Pen Ffynnon, Llangeller in West Wales from Fri 1st June to Tuesday 5th June 2012. This will be Living History only. There will be a charge of £3.00 per person to cover the insurance, raised fires are allowed but please provide your own fire wood .
There are five 'hook up' spaces for mobile homes/caravans, showers and flushing loos available 24/7 and a tea room on site during the day while the Museum of Childhood is open .

We have 12 acres to 'play' in or just sit and relax, or maybe you would prefer to go out and explore the beautiful countryside of Wales the choice is yours.
If you are coming along or wish to reserve a 'hook up' pitch, please contact Pete Holt by email peter.holt8@btinternet.com or through the ACWS website

MORLEY 16-17 JUNE 2012 (CANCELLED)
The event due to take place at Morley on 16-17 June 2012 has been cancelled. This event was postponed from last year, when it was found that the site was unsuitable. ACWS were led to believe that this had been resolved and the event would now take place at Morley Rugby Club, where we had successfully held a one day event four years ago. Last week the sponsor made contact with us to change the date of the event because it clashed with two events organised by Leeds Council that weekend. As negotiations progressed it transpired that our event was never intended to be held at the rugby club, but in the same place as was proposed last year with the campsite in a public park with no security and the only parking was to be on a public road, this was the very reason we rejected the event last year. The Board felt the lack of security was too great a risk to take and cancelled the event and regret any inconvenience caused to our members.
The Projects Team are still looking to find a replacement event and will keep the membership informed via the forum and newsletter.

KIPLIN HALL N. YORKS 24 JUNE 2012
This is a one day event, with a view to a bigger event next year. Unfortunately, because of the proximity of the house the artillery cannot be fired, but this does not exclude members of the artillery or cavalry attending.
I am consulting with the curator about camping from Saturday and will let you know as soon as something is agreed. Reg Fee £3

TATTON PARK OLD HALL 7-8 JULY 2012
Once again the Old Hall welcomes us. Camping is available from after 3pm on Friday until 12 noon on Monday, with the main event on Saturday and Sunday.
Reg Fee £6

HULL VETERANS WEEKEND 28-29 JULY 2012
This is a full society event with cavalry and artillery as well as Infantry invited.
This proved to be a very busy multi period event last year with lots of interest from veterans and public alike. Those who attended last year had a very enjoyable time and we look forward to the same this year. Camping is from Friday to Monday.
Reg Fee £6

LANARK 18-19 AUGUST 2012
Unfortunately this event has been cancelled this year due to unforeseen circumstances, but it hoped to take place again next year.

SPETCHLEY 18-19 AUGUST 2012
This popular event will take place again this year. It is hoped that those who were planning to go to Lanark will now attend this event. Unfortunately dogs are not allowed to attend this event. The usual camping is available from Friday until Monday. Reg Fee £6

SHEFFIELD FAYRE 25-27 AUGUST 2012
After some doubt that this event would take place this year, the Council have invited Howard Giles to organise the Fayre again and once again Howard has invited ACWS to take part. Unfortunately, the

Continued on page 21

White Canvas Patrol Ridge Tents (Wall Tents) 13ft x 8ft

Complete with poles, height 6ft. These tents have been previously used by a youth group in a formal camping area they are clean, waterproof and in good condition. They Sleep 4 to 6 depending on arrangements and are tall enough to stand in

Please Note!

The photographs are <u>illustrative</u> and not photographs of the actual tents. The tents are in used condition and therefore have marks on the canvas and some are faded. <u>No pegs or bags</u> are included. Many ridge poles have been replaced by aluminium poles and are 13ft long.

Two grades are available

- Good Quality - £200
- Minor Repairs - £125
- Volume discounts can be negotiated

The repairs needed vary but typically are small tears to the doors, pole holes fraying, or mud wall damaged, generally the canvas is sound and waterproof.

Fly sheets available which would provide storm cover for these tents at £75 each which are in excellent condition again the photograph is illustrative.

Collection or courier by separate arrangements at cost ; items currently in Ipswich.

Contact Roger Willison-Gray , Marketing Director of ACWS Ltd At marketing@acws.co.uk or on 07808 630274

FEDERAL TRAINING CAMP AT TATTON OLD HALL

Photos by courtesy of Claire Morris (69th NYSV)

FEDERAL TRAINING CAMP AT TATTON OLD HALL

Photos by courtesy of Claire Morris & Debbie Davies (69th NYSV)

Pauline France

3/7/56—18/3/12

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Pauline who died in hospital on the 18th March 2012 aged 55 years.
We do not know the time, place, date of our passing, however this does not, in any way, mitigate the heartfelt sense of loss or grief felt by those loved ones and family members left behind.
The memories of loved ones and close family members are always more personal and intimate than those of friends, colleagues and in the case of ourselves fellow re –enactors.
Pauline was born in West Leigh. She was christened at 12 Apostle Church in Leigh where she was also married and sadly was the place of her funeral. Pauline and her husband Brian lived in the same street, grew up together and married in 1977-indeed last year they celebrated their 34th wedding anniversary on camp. Pauline and Brian joined the ACWS in 2003 coincidentally their first event was at Sewerby Hall 9 years ago. From the start both Pauline and Brian played a full and active part in camp life, especially since joining the 43rd North Carolina Regiment. Pauline had an infectious laugh and both a jovial presence and outlook on life and needless to say was a 'diehard confederate', although I am told she did have a few 'Yankee' friends. Both Pauline and Brian were very much family orientated. Their son Paul joined the 43rd N.C. and latterly the 18th Virginia and they brought their grand children along to many events.
I am informed that Pauline enjoyed Country Music and was partial to a little willy (all who knew her will, I am told, understand).Pauline was gregarious in nature and consequently made many friends, was very approachable with a lovely smile, much warmth and was always 'ready to party'.
Pauline will be remembered (although sadly missed-but never forgotten) in many different ways by all of us who had the pleasure and privilege of knowing her, not only in the 43rd N.C. but also the wider ACWS family. Pauline will be remembered in memories, anecdotes stories, reminiscences around the campfires in the evenings and days to come.
Our heartfelt condolences go out to Brian, Paul, Rachel, Sonya and grandchildren Owen, Luke and Kelsey as well as to all her immediate family and friends.
Denis Jarwick
Chairman ACWS

Civil War Death Toll Keeps Rising

It has long been recognised by many historians and scholars alike that the death toll of the American Civil War was in the region of 618,222. These figures were gained through casualty figures and official statistics gleaned at the time. However, brand new research recently compiled following the release into the public domain of Census data material of the time has concluded that these statistics may well be far below the actual casualty rates that occurred during the Civil War. This may reflect opinions of other Civil War historians of both the 19th and 20th century who have long argued that the figures are far too low. Indeed, immediately after the Civil War, Francis Walker, Superintendant of the 1870 Census, estimated that the number of male deaths was "not less than 850,000".

Post war accounts of the Federal Army drawn from regimental musters and battle reports compiled by Provost Marshal General James Fry estimated that 279,689 men died in the War but this was quickly raised to 360,222 as a result of widows and orphans representations of lost ones. The Union Surgeons Office documented 304,000 deaths who died during actual service. However, Francis Walker argued that "Tens of thousands were discharged to die: tens of thousands died within the first few months of discharge and tens of thousands more lingered through the first or second year". He concluded "500,000 will surely be a moderate estimate for the direct losses among the Union Armies".

Post war accounts of the Confederate Army proved impossible. The Provost Marshal Fry report indicated only 133,689 from incomplete returns and estimates. Francis Walker roughly estimated that taking into account those who fought, longer service and a relative lack of food, medicine and skilled physicians stated " It is difficult to see how anyone could, upon reflection, place the losses of the Confederate Armies at less than 350,000 men".

Researcher J. David Hacker of the Binghamton University of New York has just produced research that indicates the number of people killed in the War should be nearer 750,000 or even as high as 850,000. In other words, a further 20,000 casualties (over 20% higher than the number frequently quoted). David Hacker based his research on the breakdown of Census material recently released that identifies every individual on his or her age, race and birthplace rather than grouping them as an aggregate number of people in a specific age group. He then established the population trends for deaths in the decades before, during and after the Civil War. He then compared the census data for 1850-1860,1860-1870 and 1870-1880 and discovered that the number of civilian deaths amongst native born men in the 1860-1870 period, encompassing the Civil War years, was far lower than would be expected based on similar trends among native born women. As a result, he reasoned that the difference between the two, 750,000, represented the number of men killed in the War.

Many scholars have long suspected that the original casualty estimates were less than accurate. A major factor being that neither side had standardised personnel records. Both sides lacked systematic recording procedures. Battle, Hospital and Prison records were incomplete and inaccurate. Many soldiers of both sides were buried unidentified. There was no means of officially informing the family of a relatives' death. If a Union or Confederate Soldier did not come home after the War, his family would have presumed him dead but his respective Country may not have counted him at all. In addition, the Confederates had very poor records and without national pensions for widows and orphans, there were few documents for cross checking. James McPherson, the Civil War Historian said of the new figures that "My guess is that most of the difference between the estimate of 620,000 and Hackers higher figure is the result of underreported Confederate deaths".

So what? Well, the new estimate may involve looking at the American Civil War in a very different light. This new figure reveals that 1 in 10 men died and not 1 in 13 as previously thought. The total number of casualties would now exceed all other American Wars combined. Far more women were widowed and far more children orphaned. The American Civil War shaped the whole of American history in the decades to come. Maybe, it affected people and communities far more that we thought.

Submitted by Stewart "Goober" Douglas 18/2/12.

Sources J. David Hacker, Binghamton University of New York.

The Gettysburg of Georgia

Whilst marching South on his infamous " March to the Sea", General Sherman split his 60,000 strong Army into 2 Corps under General Slocum and General Oliver O. Howard. General Howard commanded the right wing of the Army known as the Army of the Tennessee. During their march South, neither Federal column had experienced any Confederate resistance with the only hindrance being General Joseph "Fighting Joe" Wheelers 3,500 rebel cavalry who were constantly harassing at their heels. All the able bodied men of conscription age from the South were already fighting with General Robert E Lee in Virginia or General John B Hood in Tennessee. As such, in an effort to try and confront this Union onslaught, the Confederate High command decided to target General Howards column as it headed via Midgeville on its long term south easterly direction towards Millen and ultimately Savannah. The Confederate High command which consisted of Generals Hardee and Taylor were summoned to Macon, Georgia by overall Confederate commander, General Beauregard with his 2 Military Advisors, Governor Howell Cobb and Major General G.W Smith to plan the response. It was only the latter that brought any troops with him to Macon namely 3,000 Georgia State Militia who had recently been summoned into military service due to the impending crisis. As a result of this meeting, the 4 hastily constructed Confederate brigades (in reality not much larger

than regiments) under the command of rebel militia Brigadier General Pleasant J Philips set out at once from Macon in the direction of Augusta to confront the Federal column. Confederate Major General G W Smith stayed behind in Macon to organise supplies.

On earlier passing around Macon, General Howard and his Army of the Tennessee decided to leave a rear guard beyond Griswoldville at a crossing on the Central Georgia railway where he had passed. This rear guard consisted of a single brigade namely the 2nd Brigade, 1st Division XV Corps under Brigadier General Charles. C Walcutt. The brigade consisted of 6 Infantry regiments supported by an artillery regiment (Battery B, 1ST Michigan). They took strong defensive positions along a crest of the hill at the Duncan farm overlooking the crossing. Both its flanks were protected by swampy ground and there was an open field in front of their breastworks made of rails and logs. During their drive South, the Union columns had fought no infantry engagements whatsoever so it was with total astonishment that the 1,500 Union soldiers suddenly saw a heavy rebel infantry column marching towards them through the town of Griswoldville. The town of Griswoldville had only the day before been completely torched by marauding Union General Kilpatrick`s cavalry due to its Arms (Pistol) and Munitions factories. However, the Federals became even more astonished as the rebel troops immediately formed for attack in 3 compact lines and started walking straight towards them across the stubble of the open field in front of their position. A Union Officer who saw the movement described the action as appearing to be one of " more courage than discretion" . As such, with their accustomed ease and expertise, the battle hardened western XV Corps veterans slowly levelled their muskets as well as many who had newly acquired Spencer repeating rifles and fired at the approaching rebels. The devastating fire including supporting artillery canister smashed into the rebels and stopped them in their tracks.

Site of Griswoldville and the battle. Nothing is left but the reason Samuel Griswold came to the area -- the railroad.

approaching rebels. The devastating fire including supporting artillery canister smashed into the rebels and stopped them in their tracks about 45 yards from their positions in a ravine close to their breastworks. Major Asias Willison, commanding the 103rd Illinois Infantry Regiment at the time, later wrote " As soon as they (Georgia State Infantry) came within range of our muskets, a most terrific fire was poured into their ranks, doing fearful execution..... still they moved forward, and came within 45 yards of our works. Here they attempted to reform their line, but so destructive was the fire that they were compelled

Nevertheless, the rebels did reform again in close formation and marched towards the Union works. Once again, they were blown away by the heavy volleys and canister from behind the Federal breastworks. 7 times with repeated heavy losses this occurred before the rebels eventually withdrew in the dark and left the field strewn with their dead, dying and wounded.

Whooping with delight and the total ease of their victory, the Union troops ran out onto the field to gather their spoils and booty. Soon, however, all their cries of delight froze in their throats as they saw what lay before them. To their horror, they saw who they had been fighting. Long lines of old men and young boys were all lying in attitudes of death, dying and wounded where they had been struck. Over 600 rebels lay there with the loss of barely 60 Union soldiers. Many of the Confederate wounded had crawled back into the relative shelter and protection of the ravine where they were later found in piles with the dead after the battle. In the pile, the Federals found a 14 year old boy with a broken arm and leg. A Union soldier wrote " Next to him, cold in death, lay his father, two brothers and an Uncle. It was a harvest of death". A severely wounded Confederate told his Union captor after being asked why he was fighting replied that he was fighting next to his neighbour and they were all fighting for each other. Among the dead and wounded were several black Confederate soldiers about whom little is historically known. Eyewitnesses describe the branch of the nearby Big Sandy Creek that ran through the ravine turning red with all the blood spilt.

After the battle, Union Colonel Charles Wills recorded in a letter home: "Old gray haired men and weakly looking men and little boys, not over 15 years old, lay dead or writhing in pain. I pity those boys. I was never more affected at the sight of dead and wounded before. I hope we will never have to shoot at such men again. They knew nothing at all about fighting and I think their Officers knew as little or else certainly knew nothing of our being there".

A fellow Federal Infantryman was more forthright in his opinion of the sight

"There is no God in war" he fumed " It is merciless, vindictive, un-Christian, savage, relentless. It is all that devils wish for".

The 3000 Georgia State Militia who fought at the battle of Griswoldville on November 22nd 1864 consisted of old men, young boys, 2 emergency battalions of factory workers from Augusta and Athens and others considered unfit for the regular Confederate Army. They were armed with squirrel rifles, shotguns and smooth bore muskets. Their commanding Officers had little experience of battle. They were known as "Joe Brown`s Pets" after Governor Brown who had formed the Georgia State Militia as a Home Guard.

History would probably have never remembered these Confederates if Union General Sherman had not put the torch to the town of Griswoldville, 10 miles east of Macon through which they had just marched and witnessed at first hand the waves and level of destruction being waged through the South. William C Scaife, the premier Civil War Historian of Georgia believes

" It was never intended to be a battle". Many other Civil War Historians believe it was one of the most tragic, one sided and foolish actions of the entire American Civil War.

However, there is also another interpretation why this long forgotten battle of Griswoldville must be remembered and preserved for generations to come. It should also serve as a memorial to one of the most courageous actions of the Civil War where tales of incredible bravery and heroism took place. The Confederates who fought were not seasoned regular soldiers of conscription age but old men in their 60`s and young boys in their early teens who turned out to defend their homes and neighbours against the destruction of General Sherman`s onslaught. At Griswoldville, they were all Confederate heroes at this Gettysburg of Georgia. Fortunately, the state of Georgia through its Civil War Commission has now dedicated 17 acres of the original battlefield to be maintained as a state historic site before another onslaught involving building, development and commercialism encroaches on this hallowed ground. This is particularly important as many Civil War sites become more vulnerable in times of economic recession.

Following the battle of Griswoldville, General Shermans "March to the Sea" continued unabated and some five weeks later, on December 22nd 1864, he presented the city of Savannah to President Lincoln as a birthday present.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas

43rd North Carolina

Continued from page 12

cavalry will not be in attendance this year, due to the unavailability of the horses, but members of the cavalry would be welcome to join either infantry or artillery for this event. Reg Fee £6

CRIEFF 8-9 SEPTEMBER 2012

This is special event to commemorate two brother from the town who fought on opposing sides.

There will be members of the 79th NY from Oregon USA attending along with an American Senator who will present colours and a plaque to the town of Crieff. Saturday will be Living History and Sunday there will be a parade and Drum Head Service. Camping will be from Friday to Monday. Reg Fee £3

INGLETON 15-16 SEPTEMBER 2012

Again we visit this popular venue to which all are welcome, even though the cannon cannot be fired because of the proximity of houses, members of the artillery are still welcome to attend.

It is hoped that the weather will be kinder to us than in previous visits, although the rain did not dampen our spirits and a good time was enjoyed by all. Reg Fee £6

A.G.M. BIRMINGHAM 8 DECEMBER 2012

This will be held at Rubery and Rednal Royal British Legion Club, beginning at 1pm.

I hope you will come to as many of the events as you can in these difficult days when funds for travel may not be as available as they once were, and the threat of fuel shortages and strikes. These difficulties apart let's hope for a happy and fulfilling season.

Peter Holt and Viv Corbishley

Projects team

Threats to Re-enacting

'The price of freedom is eternal vigilance'.
A recent court case has shown two things – that we be responsible when transporting any type of weaponry, and how useful NAReS' work representing the hobby to lawmakers has been.

A 56 year old man was preparing for a history display by the Northern World War II Association. He was in his vintage car with some of his kit under a blanket on the back seat, and had parked illegally to go and collect some items, when a member of the public reported to the police seeing the butt of his replica machine gun and bayonet on the back seat of the car. An armed response unit was called, and he was arrested and charged with possession of an imitation firearm in a public place. After five court appearances, the re-enactor was released, after pleading guilty, and receiving a twelve-month conditional discharge. His deactivated MP34 machine gun and pistols were returned. The Judge told him 'I'm quite satisfied that you are not a criminal and this is part of your hobby'. South Yorkshire Police had requested the forfeiture and destruction of the rare 1934 weapon and two other replica pistols but the Judge said 'I do not want historical artefacts to be destroyed so I am not going to make the requested order'.
An imitation firearm is defined by the Firearms Act 1968 as 'anything which has the appearance of being a firearm, whether or not it is capable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile'. It is an offence to carry an imitation firearm in a public place without lawful authority or reasonable excuse'. His legal team argued in court that he was being prosecuted for pursuing his interest in historical re-enacting, which is regarded as a defence in law against weapon related charges (as negotiated by NAReS) and after listening to the evidence the Judge at Sheffield Crown Court said that common sense should be applied to the case. The Judge said that he hoped the re-enactor had learned a salutary lesson over the police response which reflected the times we live in. The police returned all his weaponry on condition that he keeps them in a locked cabinet at home and when they are in transit to and from events, they are kept out of sight, safely locked in his car boot.

We may have the privilege of legal protections with regard to our weaponry, but these do not excuse us from the consequences of bad practice in the transportation of weapons.
Therefore, whenever you are going to the ranges or to a re-enactment, **always** make sure that guns, swords and bayonets are out of sight, locked in your boot or otherwise secured, well covered up, so that anybody looking from outside into your vehicle sees no weaponry. If stopped by the police or challenged, have with you either the invitation to go to the event or the current newsletter with the events list on it, to show the policeman that you have reasonable cause to be travelling with these things. Also at all times have with you your licenses and membership card. If you don't, then things, as above, are likely to happen

May we also remind you of the 2010 case where a trader at Lincoln Christmas Market was convicted of affray and possession of offensive weapons in public. He had been drinking following the cancellation of the event, and drew his sword and knife, waving them at other customers of a pub. His weapons were forfeited and destroyed, and he received a suspended sentence and an unpaid work order.

Please, folks, be careful out there!

NAReS is currently following up reports of an ongoing case involving weapons at Northampton Crown Court and will further advise when the full facts become known.

Philip Clark. ACWS Secretary

Secrets of a Confederate Blockade Runner.

On the 6th September 1864, the iron built side wheel steamship, the Mary Celestia, slammed into the reef off the Gibbs lighthouse on Bermudas southern shore. It sank in just 8 minutes. The skeleton of the wreck still lies there today, 57 feet below, and is now one of the "top ten" diving attractions for all the holidaymakers that swarm around the crystal clear, warm coral waters off Bermudas coastline. However, it also remains a vitally significant historical and archaeological site due to its connection with one of the most hazardous aspects of American Civil War Naval history – blockade running. The site has been investigated on numerous occasions and the only remnants discovered were a handful of empty bottles which have been placed in the Bermuda National Trust Museum for the occasional visitor.

The Mary Celestia was a Confederate blockade runner. It was built, as many Confederate ships were, in Liverpool, England. It was designed by William C Miller and Sons and launched in February 1864. It registered 207 tons which is correspondent with the amount of cargo it was allowed to transport. It departed the Liverpool docks in April 1864 following installation of its boilers and engines and arrived in Bermuda in May 1864. On arrival, it immediately began its life as a Confederate blockade runner and commenced the first of 4 known trips to Wilmington, North Carolina. It is estimated that it may have made as many as 8 clandestine trips but no definitive records exist. The ship was commissioned by William and James Crenshaw of Richmond, Virginia to serve their business interests in the UK and Bermuda.

The Confederate blockade runner was the Southern response to the Unions blockade of all the Confederate ports on the Eastern Coast. The Union blockade strategy was known as the "Anaconda Plan" which involved some 500 Union ships patrolling the 12 major ports and approximately 3,500 miles of Confederate coastline. It was an attempt to economically starve and strangle the Confederacy by preventing exports such as cotton and tobacco to Europe as well as the import of vitally needed military and food supplies. Great Britain played a pivotal role in the development of the blockade running business as it

maintained huge investments in the South and were recipients of many exported goods, particularly cotton. To protect these lucrative interests, British investors had engineered steamships that were longer, narrower and much faster than the conventional steamers of the Union blockading fleet.

By May 1864, the war situation was becoming critical for the South and the Confederate Congress needed cargoes that would help to reverse the tide of the war. As such, they passed a law banning non essential items operated by government owned runners and demanded goods such as uniforms, boots, medicine, weapons and ammunition be imported rather than high value luxury products (eg perfumes, ladies clothes and wines) that made much larger profits.

It was during this time and within this background that the brief yet dramatic career of the Mary Celestia took place. On one occasion, she was chased by a Union Navy blockader but managed to avoid capture by throwing 100 bales of cotton (value $100,000) overboard and the engineer overriding the safety valves to obtain a speed of 17 knots which left the US Navy blockader in its wake. On another occasion, the ships crew was riddled with yellow fever with the North Carolina pilot being particularly ill. However, he managed to stay at his post and navigate the ship past the dangerous approaches to Wilmington, North Carolina and into the safety of Cape Fear river before immediately collapsing and dying.

The Mary Celestias final voyage occurred when it departed from Bermuda with a Confederate government mandated cargo of canned beef and general merchandise (which was actually ammunition and Enfield Rifles) for Wilmington. As it began its journey, it steamed along the southern shore of the island with the intention of dropping off the owner and pilot near Gibbs Point Lighthouse where they both lived. However, as they approached the shore, the pilot still in control shouted in response to a warning of rocks ahead by the chief mate that he knew the reefs and rocks as well as his own house and promptly struck the reef. All the crew abandoned ship and it sank in several minutes. The Mary Celestia had only been afloat for 4 months. Skin divers salvaged much of the cargo at the time and it remained relatively undisturbed for 150 years.

However, on 22 August 2009, Hurricane Bill passed 80 miles off Bermuda with its 75 miles per hour winds. The result was tons of sand being washed off the wreck of the Mary Celestia in particular revealing for the first time the very front section of the bow known as the forepeak including the well preserved remains of the boatswain`s locker. Following careful investigation, a number of artefacts and a crate were revealed. These included a number of intact sealed bottles of wine, a small glass sealed with a glass stopper containing a rare perfume from Piesse and Lubin, Bond Street, London, (now defunct) and another perfume bottle containing Florida Water (citrus cologne) from Murray and Lindman, New York. Although this firm has now re-located to New Jersey, the original 1808 formula for citrus cologne, enjoyed by Southerners in 1864, is still available today. A nice and refreshing aftershave! In addition, various pairs

of handmade leather shoes were also found. So what I hear you say? Well, what is certain is that this contraband was someone's personal hidden stash. It was subject to both immediate confiscation by both the Union and Confederate Authorities. Although not a substantial hoard, it was clearly hidden from the owners and captain and would have fetched a very handsome profit in Wilmington. Or, perhaps, a very nice present for family members. Sometimes, even now, personal stories are emerging that provide intimate insights that never see the light of day in comparison to the big names and events that took place during the American Civil War.

Article by Stewart "Goober" Douglas. Dated 15/1/12.

Footnote: The success of the Union Naval blockade played a major role in the eventual victory over the Confederacy. By the end of the War, the Union Navy had captured more than 1,100 Confederate blockade runners and had destroyed or run aground another 355 Vessels.

Mama's Mutterings

Another season begins. It seems as if the Winters get longer this days, or perhaps that's just old age creeping on. Never mind let's look forward to some long hot days of summer and a good season of re enacting.

We have had to say goodbye to a couple of our comrades in arms over the closed season. I am sure we all have our memories of them and they will live on every time one of us recalls them in a story as we sit round the campfire in the twilight.

The training weekends have helped to blow away those cobwebs and we kick off this year's round of events at an old favourite venue, Sewerby Hall.

It would appear that Sewerby is not only a favourite place to re enact, but also to 'tie the knot'. A young couple also thought Sewerby would be a good place to be this May Day Bank Holiday and have booked the Hall for their wedding on the Saturday.

ACWS have arranged a 'Guard of Honour' for the Bride on her arrival and her departure with her new husband. That should make for some spectacular and unusual photographs. So let's do 'em proud.

ACWS have been invited back to Hull Veterans Weekend again this year. For those who did not go last time, let me tell you that you missed a great weekend. The site is situated in a lovely park setting, which was well patrolled and CCTV's kept a close eye things too. We had many a good chat with Veterans from WWII and more commonly Korea. I did not know much about this war until talking with the guys at Hull. I came away with much more knowledge about this war, which always seems to be overshadowed by WWII. Not to take anything from any serviceman or woman who has laid their life on the line in the name of freedom. Especially this year when we commemorate 'our soldiers' who fought in such battles as Shiloh and Sharpsburg 150 years ago this year, as well as those who fought in the Falklands thirty years ago.

I read with interest the other day that we should refer to Korea, the Falklands, and even more recently the Gulf and Afghanistan as 'conflicts' and not a war. Perhaps someone would enlighten me as to when a conflict becomes a war.

On a lighter note, let me mention the event in Crieff. Yes it is a long way to Scotland for some of us, but this is probably a one off event. The story is an interesting one. It goes back 150 years when two brothers went to America for whatever reason and when the war came each chose which side to fight for and in true Civil War fashion, they found themselves on opposing sides. One fought with a South Carolina regiment the other with the 79th NY Highlanders.

A group of re enactors in Oregon who portray the Highlanders, along with a US Senator are coming to Scotland to present colours and a special plaque to the town of Crieff in September. They have invited ACWS to be in attendance. When there is any news it will be posted on the forum.

Please Note: This will be the last newsletter you will receive until you renew your membership.

New Recruit

The 19th Indiana welcome a new recruit into their midst,

Freya Kate was born To Paula Burke and Neil Manison on 27th January 2012.

Freya had her first outing with the regiment at Tatton Old Hall for the Federal Training weekend and proved to be a good little soldier in the making, as well as winning all our hearts with her lovely big smiles.

HONOUR GUARD FOR BEEFY

The Federal Brigade provided a Guard of Honour for Sir Ian Botham as he walked for charity through the grounds of Tatton Park on Sunday 15th April 2012 .

Sir Ian acknowledged the Brigade by raising his cap as he and his minders walked past.

You can see a photograph on page 15.

DRIVER WANTED

Driver wanted to transport Ordnance Trailer to and from events.

The Society will pay all fuel costs and if necessary, provide a tow bar.

The trailer will normally be required on site by the Thursday prior to the event.

For more information please contact:

Mike - 01832 734674

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Find us on Facebook

All newsletter correspondence should be sent to: - Val Holt Editor
E-mail address Editor@acws.co.uk or send to
PO Box 52, Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 1JQ
Web Site: - http://www.acws.co.uk

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EVENTS CALENDAR 2012

May 6-7th - SEWERBY HALL Full Society Event.

June 16-17th - MORLEY, CANCELLED

June 24th - KIPLIN HALL, North Yorks Small Event

July 7-8th - TATTON, Cheshire Full Society Event

July 28-29th - EAST PARK, HULL Full Society Event

August 18-19th SPETCHLEY Full Society Event

August 25-27th Sheffield Fayre Full Society Event

September 15-16th - INGLETON, North Yorks Full Society Event

December 8th - ACWS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dates correct at time of printing.

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