

# Wargaming with Wesencraft

## Meeting the legendary practical wargamer

**Paul Stevenson and Robbie Rodiss** spend time with one of the great doyens of the hobby who has modestly ploughed his own furrow for more than four decades whilst inspiring the gaming of thousands.

Robbie's lovely wife, Carol, showed me in and I loped up the three flights of stairs to where it was all going to happen. There he was, perched on a high stool, the first face to greet my arrival in Robbie's splendid wargames room. Being an ex-runner, the seventy-five year old had obviously taken the upward journey in his stride!

The first time I encountered Mr Charles Wesencraft was at a talk he gave on the Battle of Otterburn at Sunderland Museum and Library back in the 'eighties. A group of us from the Sunderland club went to see him – we used to play his *With Pike and Shot* rules and so to see him demonstrate a battle using his wargames figures was a bit of a treat, and no less a novelty too. I recall him commenting not to look too carefully at some of the flags and banners, which were not necessarily correct for the armies involved – then he removed his jacket, rolled up his sleeves and delivered a lecture par excellence.

I think the next time I met Charlie was at one of the shows I used to run up in Newcastle. Like me, he is a big American Civil War fan and also played *Johnny Reb 2*. I believe his favourite rules are now *Fire & Fury*, both brigade and regimental versions. Last time I played a game with Charlie was about twenty years ago. I picked him up *en route* to play at Mick Nichols' place in Ashington a couple of times. (We used our collections of Seven Years War 15mm Frei Korps. Comprehensive ranges and nice figures but, at that time, oh so brittle!) Mick was beginning to adapt the Wargames Research Group's *1685-1845* rules for hexagon grid system at the time and Charlie liked this idea.

It was around this time that Robbie, along with John Reidy and Ian Kay (of Irregular Miniatures), was doing a reconstruction of the Battle of Blenheim in 10mm and I

was asked me to invite Charlie. Robbie and John always supported my wargames shows up in Newcastle with their fine demonstration games. I used to write a lot for *Practical Wargamer* at the time and the editor, Stuart Asquith, a big Marlburian fan and a pal of Charlie's, was keen to have some coverage of the game in his magazine for those two good reasons. So here we were again, a little later in time, in both the real and wargame period sense, still with miniature fellows in three-cornered hats, but this time they were time three times the size, featuring some really 'old school' figures such as the likes of Hinchliffe, Garrison and Suren and other classics of their kind.

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### THE GAME

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What follows first is just a brief description of an everyday sort of wargame, but it does involve Charlie Wesencraft – and this is precisely the point. Now, for those of you who are not familiar with the name... Well, I can understand this if you are not of a 'certain age', but Charlie is one of those names that can be ranked alongside some of the great pioneers of our hobby, and with the recent passing of the great Donald Featherstone, both Robbie and I felt that it was about time he got some recognition for his contributions to our wonderful hobby and for the inspiration he gave us then.

Some of you may wonder why it is that we did not use Charlie's rules, but as the man says, things have moved on since the 'seventies and even Charlie does not play with his own rules! He games once a week with a group of friends in Newcastle, but admits that if the fellow who wrote the home-written set they use is absent, they have the devil of a job to work out what is going on. Robbie's game then was a vehicle for getting to know something about the man in an informal setting before he went on to interview him.

Two brigades of infantry and of cavalry per side were initially deployed with the promise of a reserve arriving courtesy of Lady Luck. John, a savant of wargames rules, set the scene for the game and allowed maximum participation for the players. This is important, as chaps do not want to waste their precious time twiddling thumbs when they could be rolling dice in a meaningful manner. To this end, we use *Black Powder* for our

Charlie Wesencraft, the wily general, surveys the wonderful gaming table at Robbie's home.  
Photo by Robbie Rodiss.



games as these permit easy play when several people are involved in the set-to. Charlie was most enamoured with the author's writing style when he read a borrowed copy – he claims that he cannot afford to buy these new-style hardback rulebooks! – and the very large units of thirty figures we used intrigued him. Mick and I once introduced Charlie to *WRG 1685-1845* for which units are of fourteen to sixteen figures, which he seemed to accept at the time, whilst I thought that because he was around during the formative days of the hobby, he would have been at home with the larger 'old school' units fielded in rules by the likes of Charles Grant.

Before the game got underway, we decided sides in the time-honoured wargame tradition of dicing. We then diced for the characteristics of our individual commanders as suggested on page 94 of the *Black Powder* rules. John and I went off to discuss our approach to the battle, whilst Robbie and Charlie colluded.

Keeping the orbat simple, the Allies consisted of three parts: the Hessians commanded by Paul, with four battalions of line infantry, a combined grenadier battalion, a unit of Jäger, two regiments of dragoons, a regiment of cuirassiers and a regiment of hussars; the Hanoverians commanded by John, with four more battalions of line infantry, a combined grenadier battalion and a light infantry unit; and a reserve, consisting of four more line infantry battalions and the cream of the cavalry (four heavy regiments, two of them cuirassiers, and a regiment of hussars).

Facing them, the French were commanded by Robbie and

Charlie. At his disposal, Robbie had four line regiments, the redoubtable Grenadiers de France and the famous Arquebusiers de Grassin, together with two regiments of Austrian cuirassiers plus Saarbruck cuirassiers and Mestre du Camp, accompanied by a unit of hussars. Charlie, for his part, had another four battalions of line infantry, the elite Royal Scots and a regiment of Grenzers. Trotting beside them were none other than the Gendarmerie and Cuirassiers du Roi, an imposing sight, with another regiment of heavy cavalry and a regiment of hussars rounding out his force. As reserves, the French had four more regiments of line infantry.

#### GAME EVENTS

The Allies took the first turn and we attempted to establish a good forward position in the centre of the table with my infantry doing particularly well, marching with alacrity. The French engaged us with artillery. Charlie amused us with a story about when he was an artillery officer after the war and how woefully inaccurate the fire of his battery had been, when one gun went off accidentally and actually managed to hit the target. He was happy enough with the simplicity of the wargame artillery, but stressed how he did not enjoy playing World War II wargames as they were far too complicated, with lots of charts. I thought this an interesting juxtaposition, given his involvement with one of the more technical military arms.

You could tell Charlie was an experienced wargamer. Despite

not having played the rules before, he kept his mounted forces well in hand and did not rashly commit them. He was up against the wily Reidy, who did well in outlining the pros and cons of the rules and options available before Charlie decided upon an action – and this was always the right one, as it turned out. Robbie's superior cavalry bore down on mine, supporting the right flank of my advanced infantry, and it was not long in demolishing it. On our left, John was making moderate progress against Charlie's troops when we broke for lunch.

During a splendid meal prepared by Carol, we tapped Charlie for some information about how he got into wargaming and how he came to write his books. When he began to write *Practical Wargaming* (published in 1974), he was in hospital recovering from an operation. He said that he caught a cheeky young nurse reading his manuscript, but that she gave it the critical acclaim that inspired him to complete the book.

After lunch, hostilities recommenced. John kindly allowed me to have the reserve in order to support the by now sagging Allied right. It was not long before the spent French cavalry was seen off by the Allied cavalry reserve and the reserve infantry pulled a flanker on Robbie's embattled infantry line. Meanwhile, Charlie was more than holding his own against John and launched his own counter-attack. We decided to allow the French to have the final turn since the Allies took the first turn, and here Charlie's cavalry did the old boy proud, smashing into John's troops and clinching a draw from the jaws of defeat.

As always, it had been a lovely day's entertainment in good company and the honours were even.

A few weeks later, Robbie caught up with Charlie for an interview. I have edited it for inclusion here – a veritable history of the hobby in our times.

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLIE WESENCRAFT

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**RR:** Charlie, you were born in 1928 in South Shields which was then in County Durham. You went to Hexham Grammar School and from there to Newcastle University?

**CW:** I never actually finished my university education, though. I was taking a degree in architecture, but I realised that I just wasn't good enough. I did, however, learn to make scale models, which obviously has helped me later in life.

**RR:** So what did you do after university?

**CW:** In 1947 I was conscripted into the army to do my National Service.

I was originally with the Fighting Fifth infantry regiment [5th Northumberland Fusiliers] in Newcastle, eventually ending up at the Mons Barracks and then onto Deepcut Barracks, where I received my commission.

I was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery and trained on the reliable 25-pounder. Typically, after fourteen months I was sent to 99 Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment to defend Wales. For whatever reason, I became the administrator for the regiment, organising social events, sports events and such.

I loved the army, and if I hadn't met my wife to be, I would probably have stayed in the forces. It would have been very

unfair if I had stayed, as the life would have entailed travelling around the world, and my wife had trained as a teacher. So at the end of my service, I left. I joined the TA for three years. I am currently chairman of 101 Artillery Regiment here in Newcastle.

**RR:** What started you on your journey into wargaming?

**CW:** I think it all started when I was three. We were on holiday in Derbyshire, and my father was clearly sick of pushing me around in the pushchair. So he said, "Charlie, if you walk up this hill, you may find a castle at the top". Even then, I was fascinated by castles. Sure enough, my father was right. At the top of the hill was a wonderful castle.

So when Christmas came, my parents gave me a model castle and soldiers. My father devised a game with them, with me defending the castle and my father attacking the walls. We used pencils for ammunition. My love of toy soldiers and history grew from that.

I had a eclectic mix of Britains, though. I remember I had a Zulu set, and a fire-fighter set, really quite a bohemian collection. The mistake I made was giving them to my nephew. Unfortunately, he melted down all the collection in order to make catapult ammunition!

**RR:** What can you tell me about your early years of wargaming?

**CW:** I was lucky enough to meet a neighbour in the pub one night, where we somehow began talking about soldiers, and Airfix. The neighbour, Duncan Brack, inexplicably invited me around to his home the next night, where I played my first wargame.

Duncan and I fought an American Civil War battle using the rules written by Jack Scruby. We tried to understand the rules and finished playing at three in the morning. We had managed a total of six moves. Duncan and I were desperate to understand how to play a wargame, so we kept taking notes during the moves. I never slept that night; it was a wonderful experience.

**RR:** I know you were also a close friend of John Braithwaite, of Garrison fame. How did that friendship come about?

**CW:** I was attending the first convention that Donald Featherstone had organised for wargamers, so I drove down from Newcastle to Southampton in company with Duncan Brack. We had to pick a bloke up whose name I can't remember, who was living in Reading, a place I'd never been. I remember telling the chap that I would meet him outside the

Woolworths in Reading town centre at 11am. I thought that everywhere had to have a Woolworths, so it shouldn't be too hard to find him. Sure enough, the chap was there. Amazing, really.

Anyway, we attended the convention. There was a dinner organised for the night, and Donald Featherstone got up and made a speech. No one responded. Duncan said to me, "Charlie, someone has to get up and thank him for the speech and the convention". So I got up, and duly thanked Donald. After the dinner Donald came over and invited me back to his house that night, it must have been about 11pm. It was there I saw his wargames room with his wonderful table. I

**“Charlie, if you walk up that hill, you may find a castle at the top.”**

remember he had built what could best be described as a trough around the edge, in which he put his troops and casualties. It was really ingenious. But I am digressing.

At the convention, there was a chap from the North East, John Braithwaite. John had made some metal figures, and painted them. When I say some, it was quite a few actually. I was using Airfix figures, and these made by John were wonderful. John kindly sold me the figures. I remember paying three old pence each for them [*1.25p each!* Ed.], and they were painted. He was a generous person.

I also remember meeting Neville Dickenson at the convention, it really was quite a do.

**RR:** Tell me about Donald Featherstone.

**CW:** I met Donald many times. I thought his magazine, *Wargamers' Newsletter* was a tremendous magazine. Whenever I received my copy, I would be up all night reading it. Donald was a real personality, and invited me down to help him with a wargame presentation in Hastings to commemorate the battle. That was in 1966.

The idea was that Don would provide the commentary using a microphone somewhere up in the gods, whilst I and five other people would move the troops about for him. Anyway, it came to the penultimate moment, and Don said "... and arrows fell around Harold, striking him". So I naturally picked up Harold, showing the audience, before dramatically dropping the figure on the floor. A voice then boomed, "Harold then got up again!"

Don was having a bit of fun, so I was left scrambling around the floor looking for the damned figure. Donald Featherstone was a great friend and an excellent author.

It was through Don that I met David Chandler. I remember one year that David Chandler had organised a wargame of the Battle of Borodino. Don was commander of the French, with me as one of his marshals. David had organised the battle at a scale of 1:500.

For some reason, I remember writing an account for the *Newsletter* and putting in the phrase, "500 Russian generals fell with one shot", which Don found hilarious. He always would remind me of that *faux pas*.

My abiding memory of that battle of Borodino was David getting an onion and sticking it on top of a model of a church to make it look more Russian. As far as we were concerned, it was definitely a Russian church.

**RR:** You speak fondly of David Chandler; what was he like?

**CW:** David Chandler was a very nice, gentle person, incredibly knowledgeable.

David was running a series of lectures at a place called Higham Hall in the Lake District. The idea was to deliver a series of five, one and a half hour historical lectures, followed on the Saturday afternoon by a wargame in which everyone naturally had to join in.

The rules were simple and easily understood, bearing in mind that none of the students had wargamed before. I

remember one particular female student, she was German, who was a very good general, lucky with the dice as well.

Poor David; after one series of lectures, I had set up Borodino for the students. Prior to the wargame, David had told the students of the French mistake of placing their artillery too far away from the Russian positions. Of course, when it came to wargame the battle, David did exactly the same thing. We did rib him about that.

It was David that arranged for me to create a model of the Battle of Blenheim for Blenheim Palace. He rang me up and said he was going to see the Duke of Malborough and wanted me to help him run a series of wargames at Blenheim palace to commemorate the battle. That was in 2004. I told David, "the Duke won't want that, he will want a model of the battle instead".

Anyway David rang back a few days later and said, "You were right, the Duke would like a model, but he doesn't have very much money to get it built". So David very kindly offered the Duke my services – he knew I had done models before and he must have thought I was cheap.

Anyway, I set to building the battlefield using my skills from my university days. The model was to be 10 feet by 4 feet. I made it in 2 foot sections of plywood, and filled it with 6mm Baccus figures.

The Duke sent a van up to collect the model, and I trekked down to set it up and fill in all the gaps between each section. David was very upset and apologetic that the Duke didn't open the exhibition of the battle. It was left to David to do the honours, but it was still a great day. Pete Berry came down for the opening; good chap, Pete, very enthusiastic.

**"I picked up Harold, showing the audience, before dramatically dropping the figure on the floor."**

**RR:** Anyway, back to the modelling. I know you have made other items.

**CW:** I created a model of the battle of Stirling Bridge which I think featured in a *Practical Wargamer*. I believe that they are reopening the visitor centre, so perhaps they still have the model. I was asked to create a model of Cullodan field, but I'm not certain if it is still on show. Anyone would think I was Scottish. I was also asked to build a model of Arbeia Roman fort, Prudhoe Castle, Fulwell Windmill and Aydon castle in Corbridge. I also did a number of smaller commissions.

**RR:** I know that you are also a local historian and active in several groups.

**CW:** I am president of my local history society. It sounds very grand, I still do the odd lecture. Anyway, how it all happened was that I was invited to present a history of the Battle of Flodden to some pupils at Barnard Castle Public School. I took Duncan Brack and John Braithwaite with me to present the battle using my figures.

The whole school turned out, all the masters in full regalia and all their pupils. It was a very impressive affair. I used a sword as a pointer whilst Duncan and John moved the figures.

After that baptism I realised that I could make a decent fist of it, so I used to travel around the region, presenting various

battles, like Nevilles Cross, Otterburn, Flodden and Newburn. It was a bit like a musical hall act, really. I think I got a reputation, hopefully good, for presenting the battles.

**RR:** Charlie, the early 1970s were an exciting time for wargamers, and some great books were written to help us novices. How did you decide to write your first book, *Practical Wargaming*?

**CW:** I was in hospital, would you believe? I was having a hernia operation and had to remain there for a week, before being sent to a convalescent home to recover.

As a result, I asked my wife to bring in a load of military history reference books, and I decided I would write a wargaming book. I wrote several of the chapters whilst in recovery, and one day when I returned to my bedroom, there was a young nurse reading my book, the cheeky beggar. She told me she found it fascinating, so after that critical review I thought I'd better finish it!

I sent it to a publisher who accepted it, and the rest is history as one says. I was amazed when I discovered that it had been released in the United States, where it sold 1,500 copies. Imagine that, with me receiving 8d [3.33p] royalties for each copy.

I remember receiving a letter from a gentleman in America who said he wanted to meet me and walk some battlefields over here. I invited him over and he stayed for a few days. Another chap wrote saying that I was a hero of the Benedict Arnold Society. I wasn't quite certain how to take that, as I thought Arnold was classed as a Traitor of the Republic!

I knew that I had written a best-seller when I discovered that the copy of *Practical Wargaming* that was in Newcastle Central library was actually stolen. What a compliment!

**RR:** So how did your second book, *With Pike and Musket* come about?

**CW:** *Practical Wargaming* had been well received. Donald Featherstone wrote a very nice review of my book in the *Newsletter*, and my peers all seemed to like my ideas, so I decided to write a second book about the pike and musket period.

However, when I took it to the publishers, they didn't really want it. I think they thought wargaming was a passing fad. Luckily, other wargaming books, especially Donald's, were selling well, so they changed their minds and accepted it and it was published.

**RR:** The book contained some quite obscure battles of that period; how

did you manage to research those particular battles when research material was so hard to find?

**CW:** Donald Featherstone always said, until you visit a battlefield, you will never understand the battle. I have been lucky enough to have walked the Napoleonic battlefields of Spain and Portugal. I also visited the battlefields of ancient Rome and Greece and followed in the footsteps of Alexander in Asia Minor. Whilst I was still fit, I also travelled to the wonderfully preserved battlefields in the United States to study the American Civil War.

I have always been a keen amateur historian and visited the various battlefields that I described in my book. However, I totally got the Battle of Yellow Ford wrong, but it was only later, after I had done more research, that I realised that. Luckily, wargamers didn't seem to notice, so I may have got away with that. Again, the book was well received and did well.

Years later, I was at an historical gathering in York, where I met this Irish chap who began blathering on about Benburg. I finally realised what he was talking about. He wanted to fly me to Ireland to walk the battlefields of Yellow Ford and Benburg. I ended up making models of both battles for the local museums near the battlefields. Some people are very generous.

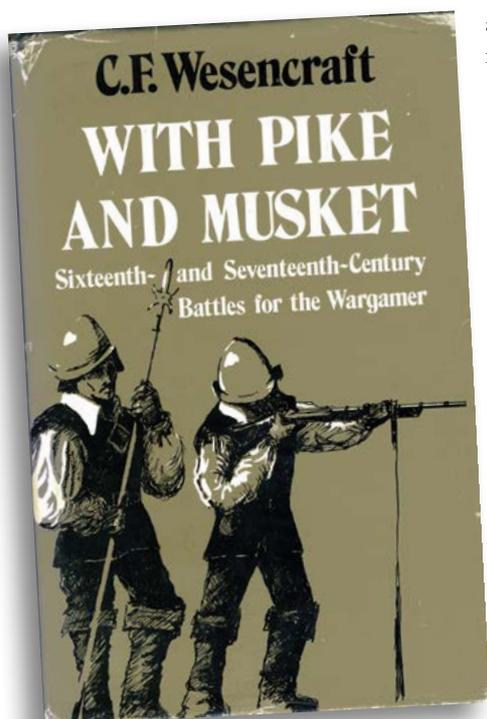
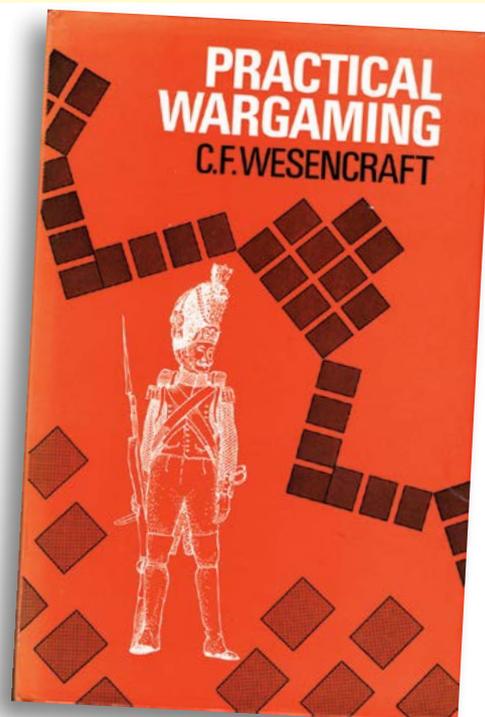
**RR:** *With Pike and Musket* is a particular favourite of mine, with a lot of ideas that still stand the test of time.

**CW:** I wrote a historical book you know, on the Battle of Otterburn, which was a particular favourite battle of mine. I was invited to Otterburn in 1988 to conduct a presentation of the battle. Anyway, it was quite an affair; we all marched into Otterburn, which isn't actually where the battle took place, but that didn't seem to matter. I was asked to do a commentary of the whole battle.

There was a regiment of soldiers to act as the Scots and English, but for some reason; they were positioned well away from where people were supposed to be viewing the events. It ended up as a bit of a brawl, but fortunately no one was badly hurt. The funny thing was that the men playing Hotspur and Douglas didn't actually get to the battlefield in time as they got stuck in the traffic *en route* to the event.

**RR:** Did you ever consider writing a further wargaming book?

**CW:** I actually wrote it, but it was never published, which was a shame. The book was titled *Seven Steps to Freedom*. The idea was to describe and fight a series of battles in North America that shaped the Republic. I started with a description and re-fight





The Blenheim display under construction at Charlie's home...

of Braddock's Massacre, leading through to the start of the War of Independence. I thought there were seven key military events that shaped the Republic prior to the War of Independence. Sadly, it was never accepted by the publishers.

**RR:** I recently discovered that you had some input into the iconic *Battleground* series produced by the now defunct Tyne Tees Television. How did that come about?

**CW:** I had been asked by North Tyneside Council to do a series of six historical wargames for them.

On the first night, two ladies from the local television company turned up and asked me about wargaming in general. I heard nothing for a while, but then I received a telephone call out of the blue from Tyne Tees Television, asking if I could write a series of six scripts of battles fought by famous military personalities. Originally, I wanted to portray the Battle of Cannae, and Hannibal, but the producer said that very few people would know who he was! So they asked me to do Julius Caesar instead. I call them 'scripts', but actually they had to be written on one page of foolscap: it was an interesting problem.

**RR:** I remember watching the series, and wanting to refight the battles – it was amazing to a young wargamer.

**CW:** What actually happened was that I got John Braithwaite to help me prepare the battles. It was decided by the producer that we should record a pilot battle to see how things looked. I remember the producer: she was a vicar's daughter who swore like a trooper. I was appalled!

A younger wargamer called Peter Gilder was supposed to do the first battle, but nerves got the better of him. Peter had an anxiety attack and ended up fainting and being taken to hospital.

So, John and I did the pilot. I remember that the producer wanted us to throw a 6 to hit a gun – well, of course, neither John or I could manage to throw one, so we had to cheat a bit! They then insisted on smoke being blown all over the battlefield to add some drama, as if having beautiful wargames figures on a table wasn't enough. Anyway, the series was accepted, filmed and released for television.

**RR:** I have been lucky enough to have a DVD of four of the battles. I still think they are great, especially Gettysburg and Waterloo.

**CW:** That wasn't the end of my television career, you know?

**RR:** I didn't know that Charlie.

**CW:** I did a series for television called *Bob's Battles*. It was presented by Bob Johnson, the weatherman at 5.55pm on Tyne Tees Television. We did a total of ten battles. Bob and I would do a walk around one of the local battlefields and talk about the actual battle. Included in the series were Newburn, Pinkie, Flodden, Otterburn and the like. Poor Bob always got his lines wrong, but he was a very nice man. When we finished the series, he gave me a lovely card titled, 'a true professional'.

**RR:** So did you know Peter Gilder, a particular hero of mine?

**CW:** I didn't really know Peter Gilder very well, I only met him once or twice. I had this ridiculous idea to make an actual wargaming film. My idea, if you can call it that, was to stage a famous battle and constantly film the troops as I moved through what actually happened on the day. The idea was to place the troops, move them slightly, film it, and then run each shot together, a bit like a cartoon I suppose. Anyway, Frank Hinchliffe and Peter saw the film. They thought it was hilarious. Unfortunately, it looked like a silent film, all jerky and moving at the wrong speed – heaven knows how I thought it could work. I gave the film to John Braithwaite.

**RR:** I know you were a very close friend of Terry Wise and Stuart Asquith, and you used to meet once a year for an annual wargame and battlefield walk. How did that come about?

**CW:** I received an invitation to the first meeting of the Conference of Wargamers [C.O.W.]

What happened was that invitations were given to people who had done something in wargaming. There were about 50 given out. The meeting was at Missendon Abbey and organised by Paddy Griffith. Anyway, I turned up and these two men came over to meet me. They said that I was the man they had been wanting to meet. It was Terry Wise and Stuart Asquith. A year later at the same convention, I met them again. We all decided that we didn't want to attend C.O.W. again and instead arranged to meet for an annual weekend of wargaming and genial company.

I'm afraid I didn't take to the ideas that Paddy Griffith was proposing. I remember we were all given hats at the convention; mine said I was a colonel of a cavalry regiment. I was supposed to go around talking to the other delegates about the coming battle. It wasn't for me, it wasn't my thing.

But meeting Terry and Stuart was worth wearing that silly hat. Terry Wise was a very knowledgeable person and a true friend. Both were great wargaming companions. Terry wrote



...and in its final position at Blenheim Palace.

Charlie plots the destruction of the Allied left flank.  
Photo by Paul Stevenson.

some very good reference books and was a very generous person. Stuart edited a first rate wargames magazine in *Practical Wargamer*. They were good wargaming companions. I still get a Christmas card off Stuart every year.

**RR:** In *Practical Wargaming*, you stated that there would never be a universal set of wargames rules. Has your view changed?

**CW:** Wells said that wargaming was like chess with a thousand pieces. It's not, and never will be. Wargamers are individuals, each has a view about how to wargame and each has a view about what they want from a game. That's one of the wonderful thing about wargames. That and the military history. It's amazing what you learn as you research a period.

**RR:** You also wrote, in *Practical Wargaming*, "a game played with easily understood rules that gives a result played within a broad outline of a particular period, is to be preferred to a game that is so accurate in detail that more often than not, the only result is a genuine hostility towards your opponent".

**CW:** In the 1970s there was a move towards excessive detail and charts. The game aspect took a secondary role, and things became too serious. I can't stand rules where you have to end up having to throw a dice to agree a point. By all means research the history, but don't spoil the point of wargaming.

**RR:** Are there any rules currently published which you feel achieved the purpose you wrote of?

**CW:** I can't afford to buy them! [Laughing]. I am a pensioner, you know. I do like *Fire & Fury*, and *Regimental Fire and Fury*. Those rules are well thought out. I mainly use rules written by my good friend Mike Fisher, but we also use rules based on hexagons as you have seen in my wargames room. Wargaming shouldn't be about the rules, it should be about historical tactics, knowing your period; the rules should be secondary.

**RR:** Charlie, before we finish the interview, just as a bit of fun, can I ask you some quickfire questions?

**CW:** Right you are.

**RR:** Favourite wargaming period?

**CW:** Malburian.

**RR:** Least favourite period?

**CW:** World War One and World War Two, especially Two. All the different weapons and excessive detail. I'm also afraid I never understood fantasy wargaming. I wargame up to the Zulu Wars and join in at my wargames club with members' games, because one should always join in.



**RR:** Favourite book?

**CW:** Well, I read a great deal, but at the moment I am particularly enjoying *The Waterloo Companion*. It is a very interesting book and well presented.

**RR:** Favourite personality from history?

**CW:** Malborough. John Churchill overcame so many obstacles and managed to never lose a battle. David Chandler also said that Churchill serviced his wife twice whilst still wearing his campaign boots! He was a fascinating man.

**RR:** Best wargame you ever fought in?

**CW:** That would have to be Gettysburg. I really enjoy multi-player games, it always makes for an interesting game. I have fought this battle many times. It holds problems for each side. I have toured the actual battlefield, and walked several of the other less well known ones as well. The Americans do a wonderful job of preserving their battlefields. They also present the history really well.

**RR:** Finally Charlie, you have probably met most of the personalities who helped wargaming to grow in this country. Who was the most influential person in your opinion?

**CW:** Donald, definitely Donald Featherstone. His little magazine was so exciting every time I received my copy, it was a wonderful inspiration. I never realised that it went to America. Originally, I thought there were only wargamers in England. Donald and his wife were lovely people, he was a very generous person and a great friend. You know wargaming is a wonderful hobby and I believe that it has kept me young.

**RR:** Charlie, I would like to thank you again for taking the time to tell me a little bit about your wargaming life and thanks for writing two excellent books for wargamers.  
[So say we all. Ed.]