

Weekend . . . Special



Cheers! The "cavaliers" socialise with a comely wench alias Caroline Massey from Swansea.

Battling on . . .

THERE ARE 4,100 of them in Great Britain, always on the look out for a fight.

Clerks, accountants, solicitors, regular Servicemen, mortuary attendants, steeplejacks, salesmen, psychologists — these normally mild mannered men are ever ready to swap pin-stripes for plumes and charge into battle in the name of God and the King.

King Charles I, that is.

They work in the 20th Century and play in the 17th; the members of the Sealed Knot Society, who spend their spare time re-enacting the battles of the Civil War.

It's nothing for Royalists and Parliamentarians — they don't like to be called cavaliers and roundheads which were originally terms of abuse — to travel as far as Liverpool, Nantwich or Nottingham for a camping and fighting weekend.

And frequently, Northern-based units find their way to South Wales as they did for the "Battle of Cowbridge" last August.

They've been regarded as everything from lunatics to "a bunch of bovver boys".

They've been asked what makes them travel miles around the countryside just to get hit on the head with a lump of wood.

But as both sides sat down to make merry over roast beef and Christmas pudding at an inn in Ogmores recently, they were convinced that it's the "not Knotters" who are missing out.

Many have started by

The men (and women) who just love playing at Civil War soldiers

place they say look at those fancies and poofs," volunteered Lieut Graham Loveday of the Thomas Fairfax Regiment — by day a systems analyst in computers with British Telecom.

"But after they've seen us fight they don't want to tangle with us. We get most of our recruits from spectators."

As for playing, Graham is sure that "anyone who's staggered around under a 12th pike wouldn't call it

game of let's pretend. For others, the line between fact and fantasy is more blurred.

Corporal Dave Warren of Sir Charles Gerard's Regiment of Foote — an articulated clerk with a firm of Cardiff solicitors, calls it "A weekend of fancy dress, aggro, a bit of fun and good for raising money for charity."

In fact, the dinner held by Dave's regiment, has