

# The Napoleon Series

## An Interview with Gareth Glover: Part III

By [Robert Burnham](#)

**Editor's Note:** This is the third and final interview of a multi-part interview with Gareth Glover, a frequent contributor to the Napoleon Series. The first part can be seen at [An Interview with Gareth Glover: Part I](#) and [An Interview with Gareth Glover: Part II](#)

**Question #31:** The final part of the book are the letters William Siborne wrote about making the diorama. Several talk about whether to include the Prussians in it. What do you think about William Siborne and the whole argument regarding the Prussians on Siborne's model?

**Gareth:** I have always felt that it is a calumny to blame Wellington for its complete failure as a commercial venture. William Siborne went about it with the best of intentions, with absolute integrity and genuinely sought to discover the truth. However, the model was a project started by the Army but quickly abandoned when funding for the forces was drastically cut – not unsurprisingly. Siborne chose to personally carry on the project which I applaud, but then to try to continue receiving official funds was hopeless and wrong. He then launched it and it was truly successful in all but commercially and this must be put down to his 'hands off' approach. A strange decision, when his future relied on its success. Basically he was a very good historian and excellent model maker but a commercial disaster!

**Question #32:** You are justifiably known for being an expert on British primary sources. What has been your favorite one that has been published? And of course, why?

**Gareth:** That is so difficult to answer as I get fully immersed with the lives of each as I do it. I am going to answer with two – [From Corunna to Waterloo](#) – The letters and Journals of Major Edwin Griffiths and his nephew Captain Frederick Philips 15<sup>th</sup> Hussars, one of my earliest journals and a fascinating story with unfortunately an unhappy ending for Edwin. And [A Scots Grey at Waterloo](#) the story of Sergeant William Clarke, simply for his story of adventures at home and an unforgettable description of the battlefield of Waterloo the day after – particularly his description of Mon St Jean.

**Question #33:** Many of your sources were light infantrymen. Any thoughts on why they were so prolific?

**Gareth:** Not sure if it is just light infantry (although they are popular – so easier to sell!), but the Guards and the hussar regiments were also prolific. I suspect that in some regiments it was simply the done thing and everyone wrote a journal, whereas in other regiments few if any did. But having said that, there are many yet to be discovered.

**Question #34:** Looking at all the primary sources that have been published over the years and not just by you, do you feel there are gaps?

**Gareth:** There are many gaps in regimental terms, but also in certain theatres. I would like to find more covering the east coast of Spain, the Mediterranean, Canada, South Africa and the Baltic, to further our knowledge of these campaigns.

**Question #35:** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Foot (the Buffs) only has Thomas Bunbury's memoirs and most of those are about the years he was not in the regiment. Also there are no known memoirs for the 11<sup>th</sup> Foot or the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoon Guards. Any thoughts why?

**Gareth:** As I have said previously, there seems to have been a different view in different regiments, with some maybe more into sports and adventures, whilst in others it would seem to have been obligatory! But there are huge numbers still to be discovered and published. The other factor is that only so many of them are large enough to fill a traditional book, many are only suitable for a short monograph and unfortunately few bother to publish them, except for me.

**Question #36:** Are there any journals you would love to publish but can't and why?

**Gareth:** I am in possession of copies of around half a dozen journals/letters which I would love to publish but am prevented from doing so by the owners. Their reasons for doing so are multitudinous – some aim to produce a family history themselves, some want impossible amounts of money, some aim to sell etc. But I have had many of these for many years and it is funny how not one of them has ever emerged. I find this incredibly frustrating!!

**Question #37:** I have heard rumors that there is a website that will have hundreds (thousands?) of pages of primary sources that you have edited but were not long enough for a book. Is this true? If so, what is its URL or when will it be online?

**Gareth:** I have arranged to produce about 400,000 + words of small journals, individual letters too small to publish alone and long letter books from Eastern Spain etc for the Waterloo 200 website – they have received the first batch of nearly 150,000 and another 150,000 are close to being sent to them. But I have no control on how and when they are actually put up on the website – but they are designed to be free to access. I will inform you and your readers as soon as it is up.

**Question #38:** You average writing four books a year. What's coming out soon and what's in the works?

**Gareth:** As I write this, *The Two Battles of Copenhagen 1801 & 1807* has just been released, and in depth history of the war between Britain and Denmark. As has *The Journal of Sergeant David Robertson 92<sup>nd</sup> Foot*. In November *A Light Infantryman with Wellington* the letters of Captain George Ulrich Barlow 52<sup>nd</sup> and 69<sup>th</sup> Foot: 1808-15 comes out. In the spring, a book I produced with Michael Crumplin, *After the Glory, Hospital Sketches and Reports on the Wounded after the Battle* (an incredible discovery). Another out at the end of the year is *A Sergeant of the Scots Guards in Time of War, The Journal*

*of Sergeant John Stevenson 1793-1814.* I also have to write two others by Spring 2019, but I am not allowed to tell you about those yet!!

**Question #39:** I heard that you and Robert Pocock has started a battlefield tours company. What kind of tours have you done?

**Gareth:** That is correct. Last year we did Portugal 1808-11 and Waterloo.

**Question #40:** What kind of tours are being planned?

**Gareth:** In planning for next year are Portugal 1808-11 again, Spain 1811-12, Waterloo, Copenhagen 1801 & 1807, and more yet to be announced..

**Question #41:** Are the tours just limited to just Napoleonic history?

**Gareth:** Initially it was but we are now expanding into Medieval and Second World War, including Dunkirk 1940; and more as other experts are signed up.

**Robert Burnham:** I guess it is time to wrap this up. I do appreciate you taking the time to answer all my question! Good luck with all your projects, they sound interesting!

Placed on the Napoleon Series: September 2018