



Newport Cricket Club



'Through the Decades'



*The History of
Newport Cricket Club*

1834 -1990





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'Through the Decades'

Foreword

Mike Knight's dedication and passion for Newport Cricket Club led to the opening of the Newport Cricket Club Museum in July 2016, when First Class Cricket returned to Newport with Glamorgan CCC playing Pakistan at Spytty Park.

It was the first time that First Class Cricket had been played in Newport since the sale of the Rodney Parade Ground in 1990.

This book, compiled by Mike in 2018, charts the History of Newport Cricket Club from its inception in 1834 through to the sale of the Rodney Parade Cricket Ground in 1990.

Mike has used his own research, together with information extracted from the following books to highlight the major events and achievements of each decade :-

Newport Athletic Club 1875 - 1925 'The First Fifty Years'

Newport Athletic Club 1875 - 1975 'NAC Centenary'

A follow up book will explore the modern history of Newport Cricket Club, following the Club's move to Spytty Park in 1992 until the present day.



The History of Newport Cricket Club 1834 -1990

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Chapter 1

The Formation of Newport Cricket Club 1834 - 1874



PRE 1880



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1834-1870s

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1839

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1844

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1855

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1856

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1858

All England X1 v Monmouthshire XX11 and South Wales at the Marshes.

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Newport Athletic Club is created
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1870s

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1870-1872

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1874

- Formation of Newport Athletic Club Cricket section.
- Ground was at the 'Marshes' in Shaftesbury.
- W. Clifford Phillips, Fred and brother Edward Phillips, all played in the club's side.
- Joseph Gould was elected as the club's first captain.
- Formation of Newport Athletic Club Cricket section.
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1876



Lord Tredegar, donated land at Clarke's Garden (now Newport Athletic Club).

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1877

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1878



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1879

John 'Slingshot' Williams (13-12-1-8 wkts) v Llandoverly
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The Early Days Of Newport Cricket Club



'The Formation of Newport Cricket Club'

The Earliest Records

The earliest record of cricket in Newport dates from 1820, and in 1834 a formal club, catering chiefly for gentlemen came into being. Research by R. T Mole the well-known local historian, suggests that it is likely that Newport Cricket Club was formally established in 1834, with The Monmouthshire Merlin Reporting on 27th September of that year :-

'On Tuesday last, the newly erected mansion of Messrs. Allfrey was the scene of a most brilliant piece of festivity. The members of the Newport Club, which has recently established under the Presidency of R. J. Blewitt Esq. of Llantarnam Abbey and which bids fair to rival the most distinguished of the neighbouring clubs, met an early hour in the morning on the lawn in front of the house and after enjoying the whole day the delights of that noble and manly practice, sat down at Messrs. Allfrey's table to an elegant dinner, provided with all the luxuries that the most fastidious taste could have desired'.

This date of formation for Newport is reinforced in the same newspaper on 25th July 1835, when the occasion was Newport v Pontypool and won by Newport by 11 runs. The Merlin wrote :- *'When we consider that the Clubs have not been established more than twelve months, considerable praise indeed is merited by both from this trial of strength'*

G. B. Buckley, in his book 'Fresh Light on Pre-Victorian Cricket', mentions a match between Newport and Pontypool way back in 1820, taking as his source The Cambrian of 8th August that year. This seems, however, to have been a rather 'one off' match and there is quite a silence until 1834. Since when, there is evidence of the Club's continuing existence almost every season right up until the 1870's, when the Club became founder members of Newport Athletic Club.

A First Club Fifty

The first fifty for Newport is accredited to Lieutenant Way, who made 53n.o. v Monmouth, out of a score of 138 in 1839.

The Club's First Centurian

Early stars were the Brewers (E. & W. Brewer – the later being the then County Coroner). They were presumably a generation before Dr. R. E. W. Brewer who was club captain in 1882. E. Brewer it was who scored the first century for the Club, against the Officers and Men of the 73rd (stationed in the area at that time). The Merlin 9th August 1844 wrote:

'On July 26th, our Townsman, in the first innings, scored 233 while in both of theirs, the officers scored only 200. The eclat which Newport obtained on that occasion is mainly attributable to Mr E. Brewer's play, that gentleman having scored the extraordinary number of 118 runs off his own bat' This was probably the first century scored in the County.

During the 1840's, there was a rivalry between Newport and the Clifton Club ('these crack Clubs') and a particularly tight game in 1845, was left unfinished when Clifton had to leave to catch the packet boat back home. Newport needed just 5 runs to win with 6 wickets in hand at the time! However, the match (as were most in those days) was played over two innings and Newport were awarded the game on the first innings. By 1846, Newport were called 'The Invincibles' by the Monmouthshire Merlin with wins over Easton and the quaint combination of 'Cardiff & Tredegar'.

E. Sopp - probably the Club's first Professional Bowler

Accounts from the 1850's show the Club made some income by selling grass mown from their Marshes ground. Among the items of expenditure in the 1850's accounts, was a sum of £15/12 shillings paid for a 'Professional Bowler' which was probably E. Sopp. He materialised in 1855, against Cardiff taking twelve wickets in the two innings match and scored 13 runs. If he was the Pro, it's a nice thought that even then it was worth going to some trouble to beat Cardiff.

A statement of accounts of 1850 shows that among the Club's members were Tom Powell, Edward Brewer, Thomas Latch, Henry Burton, George Gething, George Homfray, Samuel Homfray, W. S. Cartwright, Charles Prothero, with John Philpotts as Treasurer, and David Harry as Secretary. This club flourished for a number of years.

1856 Members List contains 8 Men who had been or were to become Mayor of Newport

Several of the Club's members were men of commerce; Edmund Cairns and the Harry's were warehouse holders in the docks and Joseph Latch was on the Hospital Board as well as being a Customs Official. The list of members for 1856 shows eight men who had been, or were to become Mayor of Newport : J. S. Allfrey, Edward Dowling, Samuel and Augustus Homfray, J. H. Davis, James Drown, Charles Lyne, David Harry. Apart from these men R. J. Blewitt had been a local MP. The status of the Club can to some extent be measured by the annual subscription at that time (half a guinea) - a sum which many clubs wouldn't have charged their members until a century later!





The Early Days Of Newport Cricket Club



All England X1 play at the Marshes

By now the touring circus of star players, 'The All England X1' was in full swing, travelling the country and playing often against local sides of 22 players. They made several visits to the area, with Newport hosting a match between All England X1 and a Monmouthshire XX11 and South Wales on 13-15th September 1858, when 6d each was charged for admission to the Marshes. George Parr was the man of the occasion, *'and told how justly he is considered the first batsman in England'*. He scored 48 after Jackson had brushed aside local batsmen, taking an incredible 26 wickets in the match.

John Lloyd one of the men 'credited with developing cricket in Wales'

Runs proved difficult to come by at this time and the few high scores stood out like beacons. One was when Newport scored 229 in against Chepstow in 1858, John Lloyd scoring 96 and J. Hussey scoring the first of two fifties he made that year. John Lloyd was one of the men *'credited with developing cricket in Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century. He and his two brothers were active members of the South Wales Club from its inception'* David Smith, 'First Class Cricketers From Christ College Brecon' wrote that Lloyd also had another immortal claim to fame : he partnered W. G. Grace when he made the first of his 221 centuries.

Players came and went suddenly in those days, particularly the military who would be called off to other postings. Basil Williams was a brief phenomenon for Newport adding a second century to Club records scoring 130 v Lydney in 1867 (for Gould's X1 - close to a Newport side). A fortnight later Basil Williams scored 73n.o from a total of 115 v Cardiff.

Victoria Cricket Club

As Newport grew, so did the number of cricket teams. By the 1870's there were around two dozen teams playing. The club had flourished for many years, but it was not in existence in the early 1870's, but another club, the Victoria Cricket Club, had been formed. 1872 officials were H. Ivins (Capt), John Williams (Vice Capt), T. S. Machray (Sec & Treasurer), with John Pritchard, C. Macbeth, T. Ray, R. Stonehouse, Joseph Jones, and H. Hulbert as Committee. They are mentioned in detail, as there is no doubt that this club afterwards formed the nucleus of the Cricket Section of Newport Athletic Club. Of the date of the actual formation of the cricket club there is no record, but it is believed to have been in 1874.

Newport Athletic Club - Cricket, Rugby and Athletics at the 'Marshes'

There's no formal record of the date of the formation of Newport Athletic Club, but it's believed to have been in 1874. The playing area was a portion of land known as the Marshes, and a portion of it i.e Shaftesbury Park, was dedicated to the public as a playing area for all time. The Marshes included the land between Wyndham Street and the Malpas Pill, together with Shaftesbury Park, a high black hoarding extending from Wyndham Street to the railway embankment running through the old Tunnel Yard of the Railway Company. Rifle butts were at the extreme end of the tongue of land and firing took place at all times of the day, it was also used for practice by the Artillery stationed at the Barracks. Sport was thoroughly enjoyed, the members rolling the ground themselves and making their own wickets. The pitch was protected from cattle on tack by ropes and chains fixed to iron standards let into the earth.

A First Pavilion

The first 'Pavilion' belonging to the club (it was really provided for by the members of the old Victoria Club) was a wonderful affair, and one cannot do better than give the description obtained from one of the old members of that day 'At a special meeting of the club it was decided to procure a Pavilion -- this was accomplished, the order was given, it cost between £6 and £8, and in due course the handsome structure was carted from the builders at Pill to the Marshes on a four wheeled wagon, amidst no little excitement. To describe the Pavilion to the present generation of cricketers were scarcely to be credited. It was a wooden structure much after the style of a cowshed, well tarred and pitched, and would hold some half a dozen people -- it is understood that the home team would undress before the arrival of the visiting team to allow them the full benefit of the Pavilion. It was the first solid structure ever erected on the Marshes, and in all probability tempted some of the old Newport players to amalgamate with us'

Joseph Gould, the First Club Captain (1874)

Prominent players of these early days were Mr. Joseph Gould, a very keen captain, and a useful batsman, but was rather slow in his methods; Henry Ivins, a left handed batsman/bowler, very keen and the most useful man on his side in those days, and of great help to his captain; John Pritchard who was one of the finest wicket keepers of his time and also a useful first wicket batsman; Joseph Jones, a fast underhand bowler; David Harry, C. H. Newman, Rev. Basil Williams, a very fine hitter and another useful wicket keeper; John Williams, known as 'Slingshot' in those days and perhaps one of the best bowlers in South Wales in his time. He bowled with a round arm action, keeping the ball very low, and was a dangerous bowler on all wickets; William Daniell (a Barrister); Dr. R. E. W. Brewer, and Edward Bellerby. Mr Richard Mullock, was joint secretary with Mr. Edward Bellerby, and also acted as umpire for the cricket X1.



Founded 1834

Pre-1874

Newport Cricket Club in 1850

There was a Cricket Club in Newport in the year 1850 (and before). A statement of accounts of 1850 shows that among the members were Tom Powell, Edward Brewer, Thomas Latch, Henry Burton, George Gething, George Homfray, Samuel Homfray, W. S. Cartwright, Charles Prothero, with John Philpotts as Treasurer, and David Harthy as Secretary. This club flourished for a number of years.

Newport Athletic Club - Cricket Section

Newport Cricket Club was not in existence in the early 1870's, but another club, the Victoria Cricket Club, had been formed. Playing at the 'Marshes', the officials in 1872 were H. Irvins (Captain), John Williams (Vice Captain), T. S. Machray (Secretary and Treasurer), with John Pritchard, C. Macbeth, T. Ray, R. Stonehouse, Joseph Jones, and H. Hulbert as Committee. They are mentioned in detail, as there is no doubt that this club afterwards formed the nucleus of the Cricket Section of Newport Athletic Club. Of the date of the actual formation of the cricket club there is no record, but it is believed to have been in 1874.

THE FORMATION OF NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

Newport Cricket Club Founded 1834

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8 Mayors of Newport

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Newport Host England XI

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