

## Chapter 13

# The Seventies

## 1970 - 1979



**Dave Knight**



**Mike Knight**

**Twins Mike and Dave Knight start their  
life long association with the Club**



# 1970's



## The start of League Cricket Welsh The Start of League Cricket

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### 1975

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### 1977

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## WALES PICK NEWPORT ALL-ROUNDER

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## The 'Historic' Rodney Parade Ground



### The Seventies – 'The Start of League Cricket' (1971)

#### The Famous Grouse Western League

Until 1971, all Saturday cricket was played as friendly matches, with no organised League cricket. However, as travel conditions improved, with the building of the Severn Bridge, Newport, along with Cardiff and St. Fagans became founder members in setting up the Western League in 1971. Playing limited overs league cricket, against the best clubs in the South West of England was a mouth watering prospect and proved to be a resounding success. In the inaugural season (a trial season), the 1st XI captained by Oxford Blue, John Phillips finished third in the League, playing 10, winning 5, losing 5, with 7 matches cancelled due to poor weather. Graham Reynolds topped both the batting (Av. 35.66) and the Bowling Averages (5.9 - a club record). Other players at this time were - I. B. Frost, W. R. Jones, K. Hewinson, E. Mogford, R. Miller, G. Davies, F. Wangler, W. Whitehill.

#### Viv Richards, Allan Border and Shane Warne

Many top players linked with the professional County Clubs of Glamorgan, Gloucestershire and Somerset played in the league, not to mention three legends of the game, namely Viv Richards (Lansdown), Allan Border (Downend) and Shane Warne (Bristol Imperial). By 1989 all three had pitted their wits against Newport. As young players starting out in the game, who at the time would have realised that all three would go on, to not only star for their country, but to also Captain their countries with great distinction.

#### Mike and Dave Knight make their debuts for Newport

The onset of League cricket in 1971 coincided with the emergence of three young players who would feature prominently in the Club's history. Twins Mike and Dave Knight, together with Robert Brown had joined the Club as 10 year olds, under the guidance of coach Malcolm Price and made their debuts for Newport's 1st XI in the early seventies.

Thus began a lifetime's commitment to the Club as players, coaches, grounds-men and administrators. Both Mike and Dave had a major involvement in the Club's development and they along with others laid the foundations and built today's very successful club. Robert Brown, a young swing bowler continued to play for the Club until he completed 50 years of playing service, when he captained the Club's 3rd team in 2015, to become one of Newport's longest ever serving players. The trio played throughout the 28 years of Western League cricket and continued their playing days when the Club were forced to return to Wales to play in the East Wales League in 1999. Their careers coincided with the devastation of losing their cherished Rodney Parade ground in 1990, to the elation of seeing the creation of the new ground at Spyty Park and later its development into at top class Cricket ground. In 2019, under Mike's Chairmanship the Club achieved the 'Impossible Dream', when First Class County Championship Cricket returned to Newport for the first time since 1965.

#### Graham Reynolds - the Mentor

As the trio made their way in the game, they were fortunate to have as a mentor, one of the Club's legendary players at the helm - Graham Reynolds. Reynolds, a school teacher who played for Glamorgan and also played football for Newport County, was a left-handed batsman and right-arm seam bowler, In between his times at Glamorgan and football he was a major influence at Newport Cricket Club, captaining the club for many seasons (1968, 1970, 1972, 1973, 1978, 1987, 1988 & 1989). At the peak of his playing days, Reynolds topped both the Club's batting and bowling averages on numerous occasions - 1969 (batting 55.11, bowling 10.52), 1970 (batting 42.78, bowling 9.07), 1971 (batting 35.66, bowling 5.90 - a club record), 1972 (batting 45.20, bowling 12.92). Reynolds achieved the 'Double' again in 1976 topping both batting (Av. 27.8) and bowling averages (42 wickets, Av. 13.8). Reynolds was a hard task master and a fierce competitor, traits that would remain with Mike and Dave Knight throughout their playing days.

#### Western League a Success

Graham Reynolds Captained the team in 1973, the Season Report recorded, following 2 'trial' seasons, *'1973 was the first full season of the Western Cricket League. The club is very proud, together with Cardiff Athletic Club, at having put the League into full operation, as it is generally agreed by all the Clubs that the League has been an outstanding success. It has proved very popular and in addition has improved the standard of cricket.'*

#### Viv Richards plays at Rodney Parade in 1973

A young Viv Richards played at Rodney Parade for Lansdown, Fred Wangler dismissing him for 21, caught by Ian Frost. In 1973, Graham Reynolds topped the batting averages (Av.52.4) with Peter Brown topping the bowling (14 wickets, Av. 11.4).

#### The 'Battle of Cheltenham'

The Western League was one of the best in the U.K. and very competitive cricket was played. The annual battle between Newport and Cheltenham in the late 1970's early 80's was certainly an encounter not to be missed. With both sides packed with a host of ex-County professionals, current professionals and aspiring young professionals of both Glamorgan and Gloucestershire, tensions often ran high and were not for the faint hearted, as they met 'head to head'.

Cheltenham, who were at the time led by former Gloucestershire captain, Ron Nichols were enjoying a spell where they dominated the National Knockout Competition, while Newport were led by ex-Glamorgan player Graham Reynolds and were always more than competitive. Off the field there was great respect shown by all involved, but during play not an inch was given by either side. The games were always highly charged with many a tale to tell!!







# The 'Historic' Rodney Parade Ground



## Newport Athletic Club Centenary 1874 - 1975

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Newport Athletic Club was founded in 1874 and to celebrate the NAC Centenary in 1975 a Cricket Festival Week was organised. Under Graham Kingston's Captaincy, matches were played against :-

M.C.C. (145-9 dec, Newport 149-5, G. Kingston 60),

Western League 2nd X1 (Newport 184-5, Phil Morris 60, Western League 2nd X1 142-9).

Western League 1st X1 (Match abandoned during play - dangerous wicket),

A young Newport 1st X1 played 14 League matches, won 4 and lost 10 to finish joint bottom (18th place) in the Western League. However, a new young team was being developed, that would form the nucleus of the successful late 1970's and the 1980's teams. Graham Kingston led by example, topping the batting averages (429 runs Av. 26.8) with Gilbert Davies (30 wickets, Av. 8.2, econ 2.09) topping the bowling.

### Newport 2nd X1 win Western League Double (1975 & 1976)

With many of the club's established senior players making way for a new generation of younger players in the 1st X1, the 2nd X1 fielded a very strong team. Captained by John Blake, the team won back to back Western League 2nd X1 Championships in 1975 and 1976. Players in the two teams included - John Blake, Ben Williams, Fred Wangler, John Phillips, Dr Peter Brown, John Foster, Eddie Mogford, Mike Brickley, Ally Ashworth, Mike Rutledge, Tony Haines, Garrod Roberts, Steve Matthews, Steve Lyon and Dave Kershaw (all with 1st team experience), together with Adrian Gillard, Andrew Jones, M. Davies, Dave Elliott (Newport County Manager) and youngsters Robert Brown, Richard Williams and Neil Pearson, Peter Brown claimed 37 league wickets during the campaign, including 9-23 v Malmesbury and John Phillips another former 1st X1 captain took 36 league wickets including 8-32 v Brislington.

### Highest Individual Batting Scores

During the 1975 season, Adrian Gillard scored 151 v Panteg 3rds. At the time it was believed to have been the highest individual score by a Newport batsman. In time, this record was broken by several players - Mike Knight, Dave Knight, Martin Roberts, Gary Wood and Ian Thomas, whose 202 v Sudbrook, followed by 255 n.o in a League game at Panteg on 20/8/2005, remains the highest individual score by a Newport player. In 1975, Ian Frost 500 runs (Av. 29.4) topped the seasons batting averages and Graham Reynolds enjoyed a good season, topping the bowling averages (23 wickets, Av. 11.5),

### A Cardiff 'Treble'

It was interesting to record that on Saturday 3rd July, 1976 the section recorded three victories against Cardiff :-

1st X1 - Cardiff 223-7, Newport 226-7 (John Foster 107)

2nd X1 - Newport 206, Cardiff 141-8.

3rd X1 - Cardiff 69 all out, Newport 70-3.

In 1976, the 1st X1 finished 6th in the Western League and won the Fugitives Six-a-side Tournament. Graham Reynolds achieved the 'Double' again, topping both the batting (Av. 27.8) and bowling averages (42 wickets, Av. 13.8).

### A Drought causes matches to be cancelled in 1976

Dr Peter Brown Captained the team in 1976 which was a very dry summer and it was recorded that '*Probably for the first time in the history of the section matches had to be cancelled owing to the drought. The cricket square became so hard, and with watering being forbidden by law, that the pitches became too dangerous for play.*'

### Mike Proctor Hits a Century at Rodney Parade



During the summer of 1976 an interesting match was played at the ground, when Gloucestershire's 1st X1 played a Peter Lawlor X1 and during the afternoon the spectators were thrilled to watch a century made by Mike Proctor (Gloucs & South Africa) in 58 minutes, including one massive six hit onto the adjoining Rugby ground. Gloucestershire 222-8 (40 overs), Peter Lawlor X1 178-6.

### John Berthon Retires as Chairman

At the end of the 1976 season John Berthon, an Oxford Blue and Club captain in 1947, retired as Club Chairman to be replaced by Ian Frost. His contribution to the Club was immense - the Club's 1977 Report states; '

*John Berthon, having retired after some 20 years service as Chairman and before that as Secretary, continued to work for the section in the best possible way. He gave all his spare time to assist the ground staff in preparing the wickets and cricket ground. Their combined efforts brought an immediate improvement and many compliments were received from friend and foe alike. In fact the ground began to look County standard again.*'

### Umpires and Scorers

Umpires at this time were Club volunteers and the Club were grateful to enlist the services of Umpires - Alan Brown, Phil Morris (senior), John Holloway and later Bob Marsh. The scorers were 1st X1 Arthur Porter (former Newport and Glamorgan player) and 2nd X1 Keith Powell. The club were indebted to them for their excellent service.







## *The 'Historic' Rodney Parade Ground*



### **Newport Reach John Haig Cup National K.O. Quarter Finals**

The 1977 season was a good one for cricket and the club had an outstanding season under the captaincy of Dr. Peter Brown, who proved to be a tireless leader, leaving no detail to chance. He generated an exceptional team spirit and the team very nearly topped the Western League, finishing third after losing a disappointing last match of the season to St Fagans, where victory could have brought the Championship. The team won both the Cardiff and Fugitives Six-a-side Tournaments. Mike Knight topped the batting averages with 308 League runs, (Av.28.00) above Graham Kingston (22.27). Dr. Peter Brown headed the bowling (Av. 10.80), closely followed by Dave Knight (13.30) and Derek Porter (13.37).

The 3rd X1 entered the Gwent Reserve League for the first time and achieved some good results under the captaincy of Adrian Gillard. The side was made up mainly of Juniors, who gave a good account of themselves. In fact the progress of the Junior section was one of the most satisfying features of the season and gave great hope for the future.

### **Western League Runners Up**

In 1978, under the captaincy of Graham Reynolds Newport finished as League Runners Up to Stroud with a record of played 13, won 9, lost 4. Incidentally, Newport inflicted a heavy defeat on Stroud at Rodney Parade, but once again lost their final match of the season. Graham Kingston with 354 runs (Av. 35.40) and Dave Knight 26 wickets (Av. 15.88, econ 2.70) topped the batting and bowling averages.

### **Reg Webb Dies**

In 1978, R. S. Webb (Reg) a former Newport Captain, who did so much for the young cricketers of the Club died.

### **John Haig / William Younger National Knockout**

During the late 1970's and early 80's the Club had several excellent runs in the John Haig / William Younger National Knockout Competition. Several exciting and tense contests were played between Newport and Gowerton, as well as 'annual wars' against Cheltenham, which took place in the competition over the course of several years.

The Club's best run in the competition came in 1979, when the team won the Wales and South West Zone, beating current National K.O holders Cheltenham in the Regional Final at Newport. The team led by Captain Derek Porter, then beat Cowley St John (Oxford), before losing away to Reading in the National Quarter Finals in 1979 - Reading were eventual Runners Up. Graham Reynolds (357runs, Av. 44.63) and Rupert Hill (34wickets, Av 14.65, econ 2.91) topped the averages

During the two John Haig National K.O. Cup runs, two young 'identical twins' came to prominence, with Mike Knight winning the Man of the Match Award for scoring 59 in the Regional Final win against Cheltenham in 1979, whilst not to be outdone, twin brother Dave took the Man of the Match Award in the 1983 Regional Final win against Hatherley & Reddings with 66 and 2-27.



### **Dave Knight selected to play for Wales in the ICC World Cup**

In 1979, all rounder Dave Knight was at the peak of his powers and was selected to play for Wales in the ICC World Cup (Associate Members Trophy). Following the opening ceremony at Buckingham Palace where the team met Prince Charles and Princess Anne, the team played matches against Sri Lanka (Abandoned), Holland (Won), Israel (Won) and USA (Lost). The team also played a friendly against Singapore (Won), prior to the Tournament. As expected, Sri Lanka, pushing hard for Test status at the time, won the competition.

### **Glamorgan C.C.C. 1st X1**

During this era, many of the Club's players played for Glamorgan 2nds and represented Gwent, with four players - Len Hill, Graham Kingston, Graham Reynolds and Rupert Hill all appearing for Glamorgan CCC. in First Class matches.

### **Achievements/Milestones of Newport Cricket Club (1971 – 1979)**

- 1971 Formation of the Western League – the start of League Cricket
- 1973 A. E. Hodges donated a Silver Bowl, which was used as a trophy for the annual Double Wicket Competition.
- 1975 NAC Centenary Season. Western League 2nd X1 Champions.
- 1976 Fugitives 6-a-Side Winners. Western League 2nd X1 Champions. Some matches cancelled due to the drought.
- 1977 A young Allan Border played for Downend in the Western League. Fugitives & Cardiff 6-a-Side Winners.
- 1979 Newport reached the Quarter Final of the National K.O, losing to Reading (A).

### **Newport Cricket Club Captains (1970 - 1979)**

1970 : G. E. A. Reynolds  
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1974 : G. C. Kingston  
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1975 : G. C. Kingston  
1977 : Dr P. Brown  
1979 : D. J. Porter





## *Mike & Dave Knight - Newport Cricket Club Legends*

Twins Mike and Dave Knight, began their association with Newport Cricket Club in the mid-nineteen sixties at the age of 10, when they attended their first coaching sessions under the guidance of coach, Malcolm Price. Thus began a lifetime's commitment to the Club as players, coaches, groundsmen and administrators.

At their peak as players, there were few to match them, both possessing a competitive instinct that meant that there was never a lost cause, indeed many games were won single handed from adverse situations. Mike and Dave started their senior cricket in the Newport 1<sup>st</sup> team at the onset of League cricket with the formation of the Western Cricket League in 1971. The Famous Grouse Western League consisted of the top Clubs of Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire and was one of the top leagues in the Country, featuring many future Test players - Shane Warne and Allan Border to name but two.

Mike was a high class opening batsman and Dave a genuine all-rounder (opening fast bowler & top order batsman) who both played for Glamorgan 2nds. During their playing days from 1971 - 2008 the Club enjoyed a very successful period, winning many trophies. Mike Captained the 1<sup>st</sup> team on four occasions - 1981, 1982 and 1983 and again in the Club's last season at Rodney Parade in 1990. Dave captained Newport in 1986. The highlight of their playing days was winning the prestigious Famous Grouse Western League in 1995 - Newport's only Western League title. During the title winning season, both Mike and Dave enjoyed an outstanding season, Dave being named 'Player of the Year' with 631 League Runs (average of 57.4) and Mike scoring 511 League Runs (average of 34.1). With the introduction of the Arthur Porter Memorial 'Player of the Year' Awards in 1994, Mike and Dave won the coveted title three times in the first four years - Mike (1994 & 1997) & Dave (1995), this at a time when their best playing days were behind them.

As teachers, Mike and Dave had a great affinity to help young people, and helped to coach the Club's youngsters throughout their playing days. They were highly regarded as coaches, with Mike taking on the Club's Head Coach role, towards the end of his playing days. As coaches, they were inspirational and were responsible for many of the Club's greatest Junior achievements, winning many Gwent League and Welsh Cups, as the Club's juniors dominated junior cricket. The following successes ranked among the best :-



1991 UK Club of the Year  
2005 U13 UK National Champions  
2007 U15 UK National Runners Up  
2010 U13 National Champions



Mike and Dave were totally committed to developing cricket and as part of an ambitious plan to celebrate the Club's 175<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary in 2009, they worked tirelessly to create a Girls Cricket section - a first for any Club at that time. In 2013, Mike was instrumental in forming and coaching a first ever Newport Women's Cricket team. They often reflected, that setting up the Women and Girls section of the Club was one of their most rewarding and satisfying contributions to the Club, and the achievements of the Women and Girls teams in 2013 demonstrated that their hard work had paid off, with the teams enjoying an unforgettable season :-

**2013**

Newport Women's C.C. UK Premier Leagues Champions  
Newport Women's C.C. South West Premier League Winners  
Newport U13 Girls - Lady Taverers UK Champions (Trophy presented at Lords)  
Newport U15 Girls - Lady Taverers UK Runners Up

In 2014, both Newport U13 & U15 Girls teams became Lady Taverers UK Champions - 'UK Double Winners'

The enforced sale of the Club's Rodney Parade home by Newport Rugby Club in 1988, left the Club homeless and penniless. It was a savage blow that could have signalled the end of the Club's existence. Re-locating to Spyty Park (Newport International Sports Village) Mike and Dave, together with Eddie Mogford, Mike Grace and others were instrumental in developing a new Club and a new ground. Years of dedication, working on the ground turned a marshy sports field into a magnificent Cricket ground, used by Glamorgan 2nds, Wales Minor Counties & as an ICC Training Base, used by Sri Lanka (2013) and Pakistan (2017) for the ICC Champions Trophy. Mike and Dave were delighted when First Class Cricket (List A) returned to Newport in 2016, when Glamorgan played Pakistan 'A' at Spyty Park. Mike, as Club Chairman and Dave were integral to developing the Club's partnership with Glamorgan which saw the return of First Class County Championship Cricket to Newport when Glamorgan played Gloucestershire at Spyty Park in 2019. *The 'Impossible Dream made Possible'*

As administrators, Mike and Dave showed the same determination raising considerable sums of money from grants to develop the Club and Dave was instrumental in developing the Club's website. Mike was responsible for the creation of the Club's Museum in 2016 and he became Chairman in 2017. Mike & Dave Knight were true legends of Newport Cricket Club, devoting a lifetime to the playing success and development of the Club. Much of the Club's success, following its move to Spyty Park in 1990 can be attributed to their loyalty and dedication and their legacy will ensure that the development of future generations of cricketers for the Club will continue.

*Mike & Dave Knight - Newport Cricket Club Legends*

