

Chapter 16

A new beginning at Spytty Park 1991 - 1999



**Work starts on the new Spytty Playing
Fields development (May 1990)**



Newport Cricket Club 'UK Club of the Year' (1991)



Newport CC receive the UK Award at Lords (1991)



Newport CC receive the Regional Award

Having won the Regional Award, the project was judged, against the Irish, Scottish and English Regional winners and was awarded the title 'UK Club of the Year'.

Royal Mail 'UK Club of the Year' (1991)

As the Cricket Club fought for its very existence during the early 1990's, the phoenix from the ashes was beginning to rise. Teachers and twin brothers Dave and Mike Knight, were working hard to develop the Junior section of the Club, putting plans together to build a successful club of the future. The Junior Coaching Initiative that evolved was the prototype of its kind and highly thought of, by powers in important places. The Project won £1,000 and was awarded the title of Royal Mail, Welsh 'Club of the Year'. Having won the Regional Award, the project was judged, against the Irish, Scottish and English Regional winners and was awarded the title 'UK Club of the Year'. A visit to Lords to be presented with a cheque for £3,000 from Royal Mail, by West Ham & England footballer Trevor Brooking and England Cricketer Ted Dexter, was a high spot in the Club's illustrious history.



A 'New Beginning' At Spytty Park



The Nineties 'A New Beginning at Spytty Park'

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A 'New Beginning' at Spytty Park (1992)

As the 'last rites' were being proclaimed at Rodney Parade, a new vision was developing at Spytty Park. However, for two seasons (1991 & 1992), as the new ground at Spytty Park was being laid, the Club was 'homeless' playing all of its 1st team matches under the captaincy of Phil North away from home. Mike Grace captained the 2nd X1, with matches being played at Whiteheads Sports Club and the 3rd X1 led by John Blake and Allen Wood together with the Club's Junior teams which were overseen by Mike and Dave Knight, playing their matches at Orb Works. The demise of the Whiteheads and Orb Works clubs - who both eventually disbanded, allowed Newport the use of their grounds, which proved to be a major factor in keeping the Club together at such a critical time.

The 3rd X1 were the first Newport team to play at the new ground, when ex-Glamorgan player and former Newport 1st X1 captain Graham Kingston, led the team, consisting of many of the club's talented youngsters at Spytty Park for the 1992 season. Kingston was one of very few players to have captained the Club's 1st, 2nd and 3rd X1 teams.

Foreword in the Club's 1991 Fixture Brochure read :-

Without our traditional headquarters, the playing activities of the Club will be fragmented. No playing problems are anticipated either at Bassaleg (Whiteheads) or at the Orb ground, which will provide a delightful sylvan setting for the 3rd X1 and for Junior cricket. The 1st X1 will enjoy each week the hospitality and superb playing conditions of our Western League opponents. Organisation and communication will be more difficult and it is essential that all players co-operate with and assist the Captains, particularly with regard to availability. With the full commitments of the member, the Club will experience another successful season to preface the move to an exciting new ground where it is planned to provide unmatched facilities for players at all levels. Best wishes for a happy and successful season..

A footnote to the above Foreword confirmed the cost of Match Fees for the 1991 season - Senior £2.50, Senior 2nd X1 £3.50, Junior £2.00. It clarified that the reason for the 2nd X1 match fee being set at £3.50 was to pay for the 1st X1 travelling on the 9 away matches that they were completing for the 2nd X1!

Eddie Mogford (Chairman) and Mike Grace (Groundsman) lead the Way Forward

In what was a very traumatic time for the Club - with its very existence in jeopardy, the Club's Officers led by Chairman Eddie Mogford and Groundsman Mike Grace, a loyal band of volunteers worked hard to keep the Club alive. An indication of the unity of the Club at this perilous time, can be gauged by the fact, that the Club only lost one senior player throughout the upheaval and maintained their high playing standards, performing well in the Western League.

Playing wise the Club was at its strongest for a very long time. A strong youth section run by Mike and Dave Knight and a strong 1st team meant the future was worth fighting for. From the depths of despair, a group of dedicated workers began to assess their options (which weren't many!!) With great help from Newport Borough Council, The Foundation for Sport and Arts, along with SPORTLOT, the ground at Spytty Park was born.

Opening Match Sunday 12th July 1992

The opening match was played on Sunday 12th July 1992, nearly two years after relocating from Rodney Parade. The match, was organised in partnership with the South Wales Argus, who were celebrating their Centenary. A South Wales Argus/Newport C.C. team played a star studded Lord's Taverner's Team invited to 'Officially Open the Ground'.

The New Pavilion is Completed

Although still under construction and unable to be used for the 'Opening Match' in July 1992, the Pavilion was completed and ready for use in September 1992.

Newport International Sports Village (NISV)

A 'Sports Village' was the long term vision of the Council. With the Cricket Club being the first club to locate at the site. Newport County soon followed, moving to Newport Stadium (Athletics) while other facilities snowballed. An Astro Turf Pitch, an Indoor Tennis and Cricket Centre, a Swimming Pool, not to mention the Velodrome and FAW Headquarters that followed later, were all built on the prestigious site to see the vision of the 'Newport International Sports Village' dream come to reality.



NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Ground at Spytty Park



Spsitty Park-the day work started (May 1990)



During the 1991 and 1992 seasons, Newport Cricket Club's 1st XI played all matches away from home.



The drainage pipes are laid (October 1990)

NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Ground at Spsitty Park



The main square is excavated (October 1990)



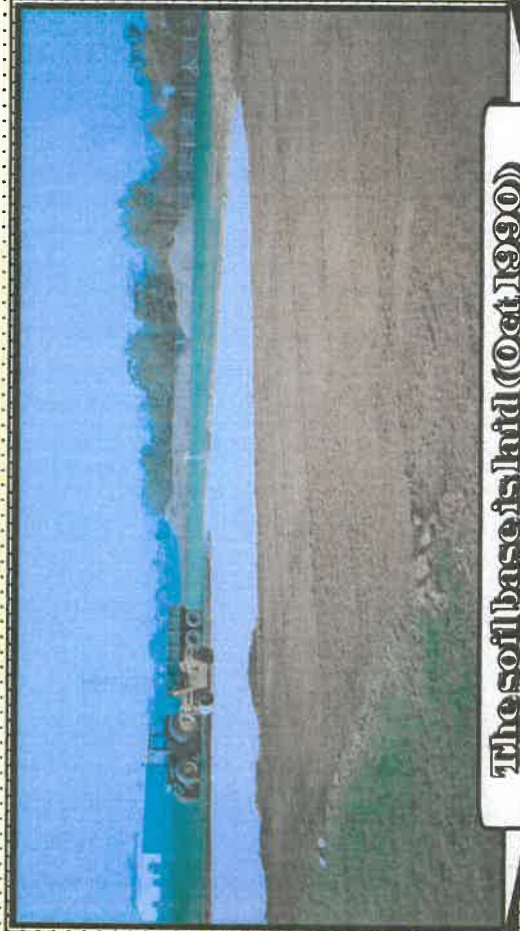
The Club's 2nd XI played home matches at Whiteheads C.C., with the 3rd XI and Juniors playing at Orb Works C.C.



Work on the main square continues (Oct 1990)

NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Ground at Spyty Park



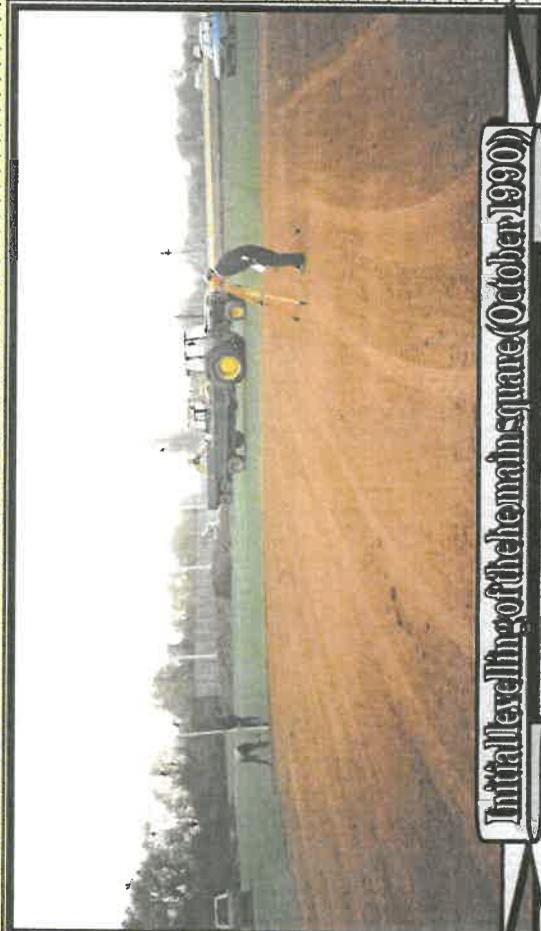
The soft base is laid (Oct 1990)



The new ground at Spyty Park was completed in September 1991, but it had to be left to settle for 2 years, before use.



Initial levelling of the main square (October 1990)



NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Ground at Spyty Park



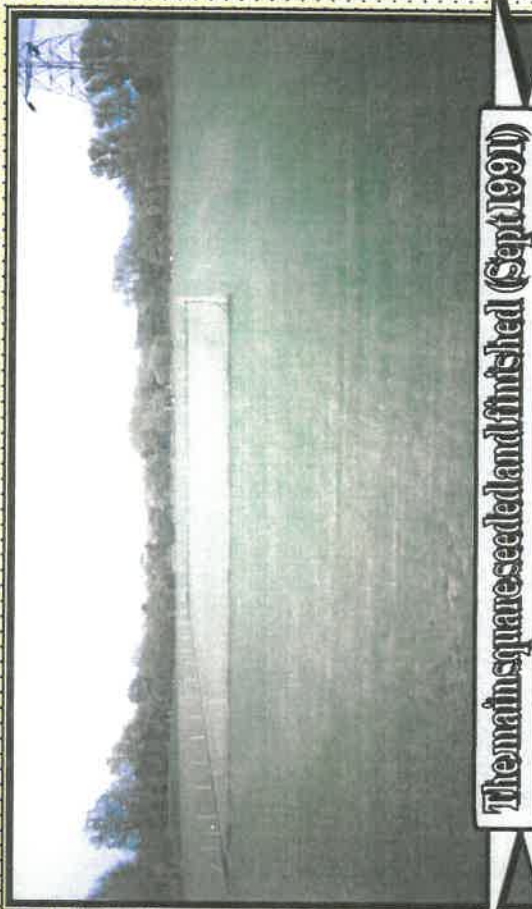
The final top dressing is levelled (June 1991)



Although, 1993 was the first full season of cricket at Spyty Park, the 'Opening Match' was played on 12th July 1992.



The main square seeded and finished (Sept 1991)



NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Ground at Spytt Park



Work starts on the outfield (July 1991)



The photo below taken in July 1991, gives a good view of the Spytt Park site at that time - no Athletics Stadium



Work starts on the outfield and the new ground (June 1991)

NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Ground at Spytt Park



Work continues on the artificial wicket (July 1991)



In 1992, the 1st & 2nds continued to play away from home, but the 3rd XI and Juniors played on the new artificial wicket at Spytt Park



The artificial wicket is installed (July 1991)



Spytty Park - 'The Opening Match' July 12th, 1992



'Opening Match' - South Wales Argus Centenary Cover Letter



'Opening Match' Invitation

Thief fails to steal the Argus limelight

By Paul Tully

THE 36th and 37th years came out for the South Wales Argus' special centenary cricket match yesterday, but a thief did his best to ruin the festive occasion.

The would-be sportsman took money and other items from the Argus' Centenary XI's changing room as they scored a 16-run victory over the Lord's Taverners at Spytty Park.

It began a reliable tradition for the Argus' youngster David Kemp to participate.

He volunteered as a last-minute replacement for a player who was injured and was a last-minute replacement for a player who was injured.

But, despite the unfortunate incident, the day had been happy and successful.

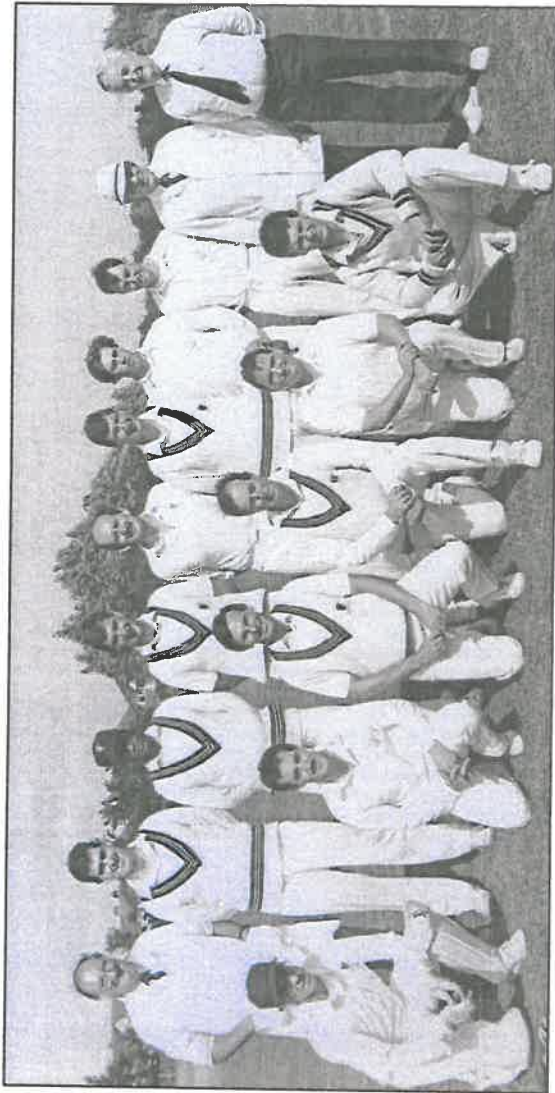
The match was supposed to be the main attraction for the day, but the thief's actions had ruined the day.



'Here's that'... Newport Mayor Councillor Alan Perry places the bats on for the Argus centenary cricket match. Looking on are, left to right, Deputy Mayor Councillor Fred Simmonds, Newport Cricket Club Chairman Edith Maynard, Lord's Taverners' Captain John Williams, MCC President Gail Jones and MCC secretary Alan Brown. Argus picture.

Not everything went to plan as a thief threatened to ruin the day!

Spytty Park - 'The Opening Match' July 12th, 1992



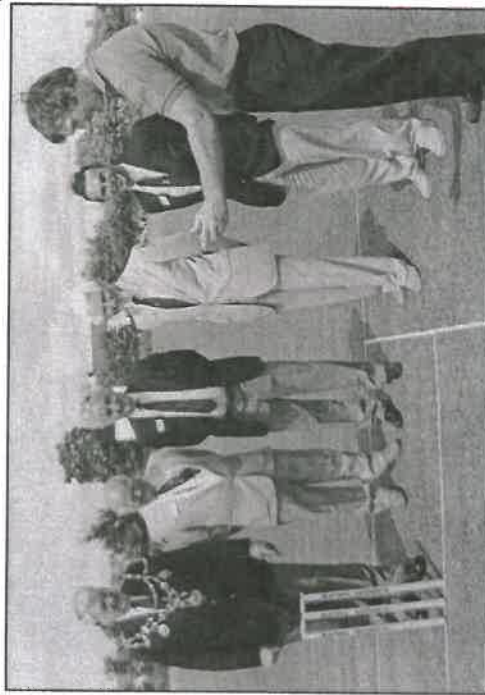
The Newport CC/South Wales Argus Team

Corporate Hospitality Opportunity
at
GRAND CHARITY CRICKET MATCH
S.W.A. CENTENARY XI
V
ALL STARS
LORD'S TAVERNERS
Sunday July 12th
Newport Cricket Ground,
Spytty Park, Newport.
A limited number of tables available in
our hospitality marquee. Enquiries -
Centenary Organiser
0633 810000 Ext. 285

Newspaper Advert



Spytty Park - The Morning of 'The Opening Match'



**Captains JPR Williams & Eddie Mogford
with Officials at the Toss**

Spytty Park - 'The Opening Match' July 12th, 1992



The Lords Taverners Team



Spytty Park - 'The Opening Match'

OPENING GAME AT SPYTTY PARK.

SUNDAY, JULY 12th, 1992.

SOUTH WALES ARGUS CENTENARY XI V LORD'S TAVERNERS XI

TEAMS

SOUTH WALES ARGUS XI.
 EDDIE MOGFORD (Capt.)
 MIKE GRACE
 DAVID BEMP (Glam.)
 ADRIAN DALE (Glam.)
 EDDIE BUTLER (Welsh Rugby)
 MARTIN BOHERES
 MICHAEL KNIGHT
 DAVID KNIGHT
 PHILIP NORTH
 GRAHAM KINGSTON
 GARETH FOSTER (Glam.)
 GARETH DAVIES (Welsh Rugby)
 MIKE BUTLEDGE
 WALTER DAVIES (S.W. ARGUS)

LORD'S TAVERNERS XI
 ROLAND BUTCHER
 BILL WIGGINS
 LARRY DANN
 LESLIE THOMAS
 PETER SHEEVINGTON
 GWYN EVANS
 COLIN STEPHENS
 J.P.B. WILLIAMS (Capt.)
 JOHN CLARK
 JOHN PRICE
 FRED RUNNEY

Meet The Teams

The Match was Sponsored by the South Wales Argus who were celebrating their Centenary Year



Spytty Park - 'The Pavilion is Completed (Sept 1992)



Work Starts on the new Pavilion (January 1992)



The Pavilion nears completion (June 1992)

NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Pavilion



Laying the foundations (February 1992)



Work on Newport Cricket Club's new Pavilion began in February 1992.



Ground floor nears completion (April 1992)

NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Pavilion



Ground floor brickwork nears completion (May 1992)



The 'Opening Match' on the ground was played on 12th July 1992, but the pavilion wasn't ready for use until the 1993 season.



The new pavilion takes shape (June 1992)

NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Pavilion



Work begins on the roof and clock tower (July 1992)



After a winter of work inside, Newport Cricket Club's new Pavilion was fully open and ready for the start of the 1993 season.



NEWPORT CRICKET CLUB

The New Pavilion



The shell of the building is nearly complete (July 1992)



Since 1992, many improvements to the original Pavilion have been made - adding patio windows and player's balconies.



The back of pavilion (July 1992)



During the ICC Champions Trophy (June 2013)



A 'New Beginning' At Spytty Park



The Nineties 'Famous Grouse Western League Winners'

The Spytty Park Cricket Ground

Although two new squares had been laid and the outfield levelled, much work was required in the early days to establish Spytty Park as a true cricket ground. However, Mike Grace, together with a loyal band of helpers - Eddie Mogford, Mike and Dave Knight and others gradually began to transform the new grounds. Artificial practice nets, a score board and tiered steps for viewing from the pavilion all followed, as the ground improved. But, while developments were taking shape off the field, events on the field were progressing even better.

Phil North Captains Newport

Phil North, another outstanding player, who had progressed through the junior ranks of the Club and gone on to play County Cricket for Glamorgan captained the Newport team for three consecutive seasons, during the difficult period in 1991, 1992 and 1993. North led by example, topping the bowling averages in 1991 bowling 292.5 League overs and taking 65 wickets (Av. 15.26). He repeated the feat in both 1992 (48 wickets, Av. 15.75) and 1993 (43 League wickets, Av. 13.53). The team enjoyed a successful spell winning the Classic Bat (60 over) Sunday Cup and Welsh League 'Double' in both 1991 and 1992, in spite of playing all matches away from home. Martin Roberts topped the batting averages in 1991 (634 runs, Av. 39.62) and Dave Knight in 1992 (430 runs, Av. 30.71). North captained the club again in 1993, the first season of League cricket at Spytty Park. Gary Wood, son of Newport County Footballer Allen Wood topped the batting averages with 340 runs (Av. 34.00). It was the beginning of an outstanding period of achievement for the club.

Andy Knight took over the captaincy in 1994 and brother Mike Knight was named 'Player of the Year' scoring an impressive 566 Western League runs, once again topping the averages (Av 51.45). Ex-Gloucestershire player Kevin Jarvis topped the bowling averages with 42 wickets (Av. 13.90). The quality of the team was improving and the team was getting stronger finishing a very creditable 6th in the Famous Grouse Western League.

Famous Grouse Western League Winners (1995)

1995 was a season never to forget, as the team won the prestigious Famous Grouse Western League for its only time. Captain, Andy Knight led a very strong team, which included his twin brothers, Mike scoring 511, and Dave, topping the averages with 631 league runs (Ave 57.4) recording arguably their best ever seasons - Dave was named 'Player of the Year'. When available, County stars, Gareth Rees and Gareth Edwards of Glamorgan and Tim Hancock of Gloucestershire (Batting Av. 35.75 and topped the bowling averages with 11 wickets Average 15.18), added strength to the team which also included youngsters, Ian Thomas, Andrew Weeks, Gary Wood, James Brown and Dave Teague. Paul Morris, along with near ever presents, Roger and Peter Clitheroe, Kai Carlson and Damian Worrall made up a formidable team.

1995 A Vintage Season 'The Treble' - one for the Archives!

The 1995 season was the most successful in the Club's history and was fitting testament to the blood, sweat and tears endured by Club members during the previous decade - not to mention the incredible hard work setting up the 'New Club'.

The omens were good right from the very first game, with Newport defeating a very strong Clifton, side who reached the National K.O Final at Lords later that season. In a tense and exciting season, two games stand out above all others :-

Malmesbury (A) (Top of the table decider) As Newport arrived on a very hot day they were rather surprised to see Philo Wallace, the West Indies Test Player, in the Malmesbury side. Newport batted first and scored 267 off 50 overs (Dave Knight scoring a superb 111 n.o). In reply, after 31 overs Malmesbury had scored 181-0. (19 overs to get 86 with 10 wickets in hand and Philo Wallace 101 n.o!) Gareth Edwards and off spin partner, Peter Clitheroe bowled in tandem and Newport claimed 3 quick wickets including Wallace for 101. Wickets begin to fall regularly as Edwards claimed 5-74. The game eventually going down to the last ball - Clitheroe to bowl, Number 11 batting, and 3 runs to win! A high full toss is bowled, the batsman swings and misses, with the ball going on to hit middle stump half way up. What a win!

Bath (A) (Current Champions, now 2nd in the league - Newport are top) With the end of the season approaching it's a League decider. Newport are put in on a green wicket, Mike Knight and Gareth Rees (53) batted really well to see off the new ball and Newport eventually score a very useful 235-7. Bath, with a strong batting line up, are blown away by young quick bowler, Damian Worrall who bowls a devastating spell to claim the first 5 Bath wickets as they slumped to just 24-5. Game over! Damian eventually finishing with 5-51.

Newport finished the season with a League playing record of Played 15, Won 13, Lost 2, Tied 0 and were crowned Western League Champions for the first and only time since the creation of the League in 1971.

A Unique 'Treble' 1995

Further success for Andy Knight's 1995 team saw them once again clinch the Welsh Sunday League, before completing an unprecedented treble by lifting the Classic Bat (60 over) Sunday Trophy against Lansdown, to crown a magnificent season.

Andy Knight captained the 1st X1 for a third term in 1996, but the team failed to meet the high standards of the previous season, finishing in 12th place in the League. Mike Knight topped the batting averages (39.7) and Glamorgan's Gareth Edwards the bowling with 20 wickets (Av. 16.05).

Roger Clitheroe a former Cambridge Blue and member of the Western League winning team in 1995, took over the captaincy in 1997. It was a season decimated by poor weather with only 12 League matches played, with the 1st X1 finishing in 6th position to secure a place in the newly formed Western League Division 1 for the top ten clubs. Mike Knight 517 runs (Av. 47.00) and Gareth Edwards with 15 wickets (Av. 14.07) again topped the Batting and Bowling averages. By scoring 56 against Weston-s-Mare, Mike Knight became Newport's only player to score a Fifty against all 20 Western League Clubs.

Newport Cricket Club - Famous Grouse Western League Winners (1995)

Newport Cricket Club - 'Triple Winners' (1995) Western League, Classic Bat (60 over) & Barclays Welsh League Winners



Newport Cricket Club 1st XI 1995

'Triple Winners' - Western League, Classic Bat 60 over & Welsh League Winners

Back L - R : Phil Stallard (Scorer), James Brown, Andrew Weeks,
 Ian Courtney, Peter Clitheroe, Graham Kingston, Ian Thomas,
 Malcolm Lewis (Scorer), Eddie Mogford (Chairman).

Front L - R : Gary Wood, Mike Knight, Andy Knight (Capt.), Phil North,
 Damien Worrad, Dave Knight.



Meet The Team





A 'New Beginning' At Spytt Park



The Nineties 'A New Challenge - An East Wales League'

Famous Grouse Western League is Disbanded

Roger Clitheroe was re-elected for the 1998 season, with Newport finishing in 5th place, in what was the final season of the Western League before it was disbanded following the formation of the ECB County Cricket Boards and much to their disappointment Newport had to return to Wales to play their Cricket. A young Ian Thomas topped the batting averages, scoring 375 runs (Av. 26.8) and Dave Teague the Bowling averages with 24 wickets (Av. 14.30).

A New East Wales League

Following the disbanding of the Western League, due to the formation of the County Board system, an East Wales League was formed in 1999, in which Newport, Cardiff and St Fagans returned to play League Cricket in Wales, all reluctantly taking their place in the new League. The playing standard in the League was nowhere near the standard of the old Western League – playing their first 50 over match in the new East Wales League at Malpas on 1st May 1999. Newport bowled Malpas all out for 44 runs in just 15.2 overs, with quick bowler Joe Thompson recording figures of 8 overs, 1 maiden, 8 wickets for 21 runs. Newport quickly set about their task, scoring the winning runs in just 7.1 overs to record a crushing 10 wicket win, with the match being completed by 3.45pm! The League did get stronger, but Newport were always one of the premier teams in the League.

East Wales League Winners

Under the enthusiastic captaincy of James Brown, Newport were Runners Up in the first season of the East Wales League in 1999 and also won the West Sunday (60 over) Cup, Mike Knight won the 'Man of the Match' Award for his match winning innings of 80. Ian Thomas with 618 runs (Av. 51.5) and Joe Thompson taking 23 wickets (Av. 12.78), topped the Batting and Bowling averages

New Challenge For Club Stalwarts Mike & Dave Knight

Having enjoyed a tremendously successful playing period at Rodney Parade, Club stalwarts Mike & Dave Knight thought that their best playing days were behind them following the move to Spytt Park in 1993. However, both enjoyed great success at the new ground, driving the team to further glories with a string of personal achievements :-

- Both played in the 'Opening Match' at Spytt Park against the Lords Taverners in July 1992.
- Mike having scored 64 (retired hurt) v Gloucester in his last innings at Rodney Parade, scored the first run in the first competitive match at Spytt Park in 1993, going on to become the first player to score a Fifty on the ground.
- Both won the 'Player of the Year' accolade, winning it on 4 occasions during the decade - Mike in 1994 and 1997 and Dave in 1990 and 1995. This was at a time when arguably, their best playing days were behind them!
- By scoring 56 against Weston-s-Mare in the 1997 season, Mike Knight became Newport's only player to score a Fifty against every Western League Club.
- When the Western League was disbanded in 1999, Mike Knight had scored 9,070 Western League runs, an outstanding achievement. His overall playing record when he played his last game for the 1st team in 2008 was 20,473 1st team runs. Dave took 236 Western League wickets (Average 17.4), bowling 1,457 Western League overs, 317 of which were maidens (Economy rate 2.81 per over). He also scored 6,773 Western League Runs. When Dave finished playing for the 1st X1 in 2000, his overall playing record was 14,558 1st team runs and 448 1st team wickets, although injury had curtailed his fast bowling career in 1985.

Achievements/Milestones of Newport Cricket Club (1990 – 1999)

- 1990 Last First Class match at Rodney Parade Glamorgan CCC v Yorkshire. Welsh League & Macey KO Winners. Final Match at Rodney Parade Newport v Cardiff (Victorian Costume - 'Ashes Match')
- 1991 U.K. 'Club of the Year', Classic Bat (60 over) Cup Winners, Welsh League Winners
- 1992 Opening Match' at Spytt Park (SW Argus /Newport X1 v Lords Tav.), Classic Bat and Welsh League Winners.
- 1993 1st Season playing at Spytt Park. A 4th X1 was formed for the first time in Club history, Martin James was Capt.
- 1995 Western League Winners, Classic Bat Cup Winners, Welsh League Winners
- 1997 Finished in Top 10 (6th) of Western League. Top 10 teams formed Western League Premier Division. By scoring 56 against Weston-s-Mare, Mike Knight became Newport's only player to score a Fifty against all 20 Western League Clubs.
- 1998 5th in Western League – Final season of Western League Cricket
- 1999 Formation of the East Wales League (Runners Up). West Sunday Trophy Winners v Lansdown

Glamorgan C.C.C. (1st X1)

Only one of Newport's players played for Glamorgan CCC. During the decade in First Class matches - Martin Roberts.

Newport Cricket Club Captains (1990 - 1999)

1990 : M. J. Knight	1991 : P. D. North
1992 : P. D. North	1993 : P. D. North
1994 : A. R. Knight	1995 : A. R. Knight
1996 : A. R. Knight	1997 : R. Clitheroe
1998 : R. Clitheroe	1999 : J. Brown

