

Chapter 2

**Newport Athletic Club
is Created (1874)**

&

**The Move to
Rodney Parade (1877)**



Founded 1854

THE BIRTH OF NEWPORT ATHLETIC CLUB



'Special Rules' for Cricket in 1876 :-

- i. That Monday and Thursday be 'Field' nights - sides to be chosen when a sufficient number of members is present and the majority in favour of sides.
- ii. That on ordinary practice nights the time allowed each member to bat be 10 minutes, and that any member coming on the ground before seven o'clock, when three or more members are present, must do half an hour fielding before he be entitled to bat.
- iii. That on the eve of a Match, members selected to play meet (if possible) on the ground for a few hours practice.
- iv. The Laws of Cricket, as revised by the Marylebone Club, be observed by this Club.

Newport Athletic Club is Formed 1874

Although there is no record of the date of the formation of the Cricket Section of Newport Athletic Club, it is believed to have been in 1874.

The playing area was then a portion of what was known as the Marshes, i.e Shaftesbury Park, which was dedicated to the public as a playing area for all time.

Joseph Gould was captain during the first season of the club (1874) and W. Clifford and Fred Phillips, together with his brother Edward Phillips (of the famous Brewing family), were included in the club's side on a few occasions.

By 1876 the Club was firmly established, and a new ground was sought. Through the untiring energy of Messrs. Edward Bellerby, Richard Mullock, and Joseph Gould, and probably with the co-operation of the late Colonel F. J. Justice (Lord Tredegar's agent), Viscount Tredegar was approached, and a piece of land then known as Clarke's Garden was obtained and was levelled and made suitable.

Silverlock is engaged as 'Club Pro'

In 1882, one of the most significant events in the history of Newport Cricket Club took

place - the engagement of Arthur John Silverlock as the club Professional. He came when quite young in place of Mee, upon the recommendation (we believe) of the old Professional Devey and

immediately proved his worth, scoring 126 v Gloucester. Silverlock at this time bowled medium to fast, but he soon developed into a first class slow bowler.



A new Ground for Rugby

In 1883, thanks to the help of Colonel Justice, and the readiness of Mr. J. L Lloyd to relinquish his tenancy, additional ground was acquired for a new Rugby ground. The principle objectives were to procure a drier ground for football, a better protection of the cricket pitch, and to provide a larger field for practice for the juvenile members who joined for cricket. The extension, which included the removal and enlargement of the pavilion, entailed an outlay of over £300, heavy expenditure for those days. Up until 1891 football and cricket continued to be played on the same ground, but on November 21st, 1891 the present football ground was opened, and from that time football was not played on the old cricket ground.

W. G. Grace scores a Century against Newport

In 1881, the club only lost 1 match - an away match with Clifton C. C., which was captained by the

famous Dr. W. G. Grace and included seven

Gloucestershire

County players in the team. The game was of one innings a side and

Clifton batted first; Grace scoring 109 runs out of a total of 251.

Newport's innings was a disaster, as W. G.

Grace clean bowled the first six Newport batsmen for 27 runs, the team being all out for 30 runs. The Merlin reporting on the match said - "Newport had to fight against overwhelming odds and it is no wonder that they made only a small score."



May 24th 1877, a 'recreation day' - the Club's first enclosed ground was opened



The Early Days Of Newport Cricket Club



'Newport Athletic Club - Cricket Section (1874)'

During the first season of the club (1874) the fixtures included Usk, Monmouth, Bassalleg (who had a very strong side at the time), Panteg, Crumlin, The Newport Garrison (where the 103rd Regiment Royal Dublin Fusiliers and a Battery of Artillery were quartered), Bute Household (for whom Crosby, the old Notts County player was then Professional), Gloucester and Vale of Usk Wanderers.

The Phillips Family Feature Prominently

It is worth recording that even in the first year of the club's history in 1874, W. Clifford Phillips and Fred Phillips, together with his brother Edward Phillips, were included in the club's side on a few occasions, and one might add that they have been interested ever since. Records of the club during 1874, 1875 and 1876 are difficult to obtain, but in 1874 the club employed it's first Professional bowler, a man named Kelly. He was superseded in 1876 by one Murphy, who was also employed in 1877.

'Newport Athletic Club - The Move to Rodney Parade (1877)'

By 1876 the Club was firmly established, and a new ground was sought. Through the untiring energy of Messrs. Edward Bellerby, Richard Mullock, and Joseph Gould, and probably with co-operation of Colonel F. J. Justice (Lord Tredegar's agent), Viscount Tredegar donated a piece of land known as Clarke's Garden and was levelled and made suitable. This is the NAC Grounds by the Gymnasium and was used for football, as well as cricket and athletic meetings. It was bounded on the Corporation Road side by a long Ropery.

The Move To Rodney Parade (1877)

'May 24th 1877, was a red-letter day; on that day the Club's first enclosed ground was opened – Athletic Sports were held in honour of it's opening; it was recorded that the funds were augmented by the Sports section, who held meetings on the Marshes in 1874, 1875, and 1876, which were successful and enabled the Club to entail the expenses of taking over and preparing the new ground'.

Joseph Gould was still captain in 1877, and there was also a 2nd X1 captained by J. M. Wood. The 1st X1 played 14, won 9, lost 3, with 2 drawn. Murphy was the Professional bowler. The first pavilion was erected at an outlay of £108 11s. 6d, mainly by loans from individual members of the club. The historic building on the Marshes changed hands for £4.

In 1878, 1879 and 1880 Joseph Gould continued as captain of the 1sts and J. M. Wood captained the 2nds. The 1st X1 played 27, won 17, lost 5 and drew 5. Herbert Beresford (Sheffield), a useful all-rounder was Professional and the members did well under his tuition.

John Butcher Appointed Groundsman

In 1878, John Butcher first became groundsman to the club, a role in which he continued until he retired in 1905,

Fixture List Extended

In 1879 the 1st X1, played 20 matches, won 14, drew 2 and lost 4, with 'cold weather during the summer months interfering greatly with the comfort of cricketers upsetting many fixtures'. The fixture list was extended to include Cheltenham and Clifton. A South Wales Challenge Cup was introduced, on the same lines as the Football Challenge Cup was being competed for by the same clubs. It lasted 4-5 years, but although Newport were always near the head of the list of clubs, the club never succeeded in securing the cup.

John 'Slingshot' Williams Records Remarkable Bowling Figures

In an 1879 cup match v Llandovery John Williams 'Slingshot' brought off a wonderful bowling performance. bowling 13 five ball overs, 12 maidens, 8 wickets for 1 run. Several well known Footballers were also enthusiastic cricketers - W. Clifford Phillips, who used to hit very hard; Bob Gould, a good fast bowler and a keen and active fielder; F. T. Purdon, very useful in any position in the field; T. J. S. Clapp, a good bat and excellent fielder; Theo Harding, H. S. Lyne and others. J. H. Young (Tredegar Arms Hotel host) also played.

Achievements/Milestones of Newport Cricket Club (1870 – 1879)

1872 – Victoria Cricket Club in Newport later formed the nucleus of the Cricket Section of Newport Athletic Club

1874 – The Newport Athletic Club Cricket section was formed, playing at the Marshes in Shaftesbury

1876 - Lord Tredegar donated land for Football, Cricket and Athletics, at Clarke's Gardens, now Newport Athletic Club

1877 - The new ground opened and the first pavilion was erected at an outlay of £108 11s. 6d

1878 – John Butcher became Groundsman

Newport Cricket Club Captains (1874 - 1879)

1874 Joseph Gould

1875 Joseph Gould

1876 Joseph Gould

1877 Joseph Gould

1878 Joseph Gould

1879 Joseph Gould





The 'Historic' Rodney Parade Ground



The 'Original' Rodney Parade Ground

The first reference to a cricket ground in Newport was in the Shaftsbury area of Newport, then known as the Marshes'.

The 'Original' Rodney Parade Ground (1877 – 1893)

H. Berrow in Newport Athletic Club '1875 – 1925' entitled 'Cricket In The NAC', wrote :-
'By 1876 the Club had become firmly established, and it was decided to look around for a new ground. Through the untiring energy of Messrs. Edward Bellerby, Richard Mullock, and Joseph Gould, and probably with the co-operation of the late Colonel F. J. Justice, who was Lord Tredegar's agent, the late Viscount Tredegar was approached, and a piece of land then known as Clarke's Garden was obtained and was levelled and made suitable. This is the portion of the Sports Grounds nearest the Gymnasium, and at that time was bounded on the Corporation Road side by a long Ropery. The ground was used for football as well as cricket and athletic meetings'.

'May 24th 1877, was a red-letter day; on that day the Club's first enclosed ground was opened – Athletic Sports were held in honour of it's opening; in fact it should be recorded that the funds were augmented by the Sports section, who held meetings on the Marshes in 1874, 1875, and 1876, all of which were successful, and thus enabled the Club to entail the expenses of taking over and preparing the new ground'. In 1877, the first pavilion was erected at an outlay of £108. 11s. 6d (mainly by loans from individual members of the Club). The historic building on the Marshes changed hands for £4. The following year John Butcher first became groundsman to the Club. In 1880, a thing much appreciated by members took place during the season – a bath-room was installed for the first time at the pavilion! In September 1881, the ground hosted a game between a Newport and District XXII and W.G. Grace's All England XI.

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Newport Athletic Club, Rodney Parade? The long building to the right is thought to be Newport Ropeworks, scene of a disastrous fire in 1897. Sketch by William Henry Greene (Date around 1890)

