

# Appendix 2

## Newport Cricket Club Letters relating to the Sale of Rodney Parade



**Newport Captain, Mike Knight with Cardiff Captain, K. D. Williams and the Mayor Harry Jones at the last match - 'The Ashes Match'**

### **Letters Relating to the Sale of Rodney Parade**

**During the 'Battle to Save Rodney Parade' many letters were written by Club Officers to the NAC Management Committee initially, to try to influence the NAC decision and later to request compensation for the Cricket Club.**

**Some letters are enclosed in Appendix 2**



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29/9/87

Dear Sir

I wish to register objection to the development of the Henpath Cricket ground and the plan to build a school on the site.

Having lived and worked in the Maender area for the whole of my 56 years and as an ex pupil of Maender school I would respectfully claim some knowledge of the area and its people.

The site of the proposed school is at the boundary of the Calchmet area (or outside?) and will cause great hardship

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to the mothers who will be responsible for the supervision of journey to the school.

This is not a 'yuppie' 2-car area but a working-class district where the man will have gone to work with the car before 8-30 am. leaving his wife to sort out the day's problems including transportation of children to school. With no convenient bus routes many children will be required to cross two main roads.

The outline plan shows simple two-way access for children and pedestrian from

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the very busy Corporation Rd,  
and limited parking and  
turning space within the site  
offering yet another traffic  
hazard for infants.

The first priority for the  
blended mother will be a  
safe route for unsupervised  
children and a central site  
for the School; not fancy  
architecture and expensive  
sports fields.

The cricket ground itself  
is a unique facility which the  
people of Newport have enjoyed  
since 1890 when Lady Tredegar  
announced her intention of

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making the land available for  
cricket. It is the only 1st class  
cricket ground in the south  
of Gwent, and is an invaluable  
amenity in an area which  
is grossly under-served with  
such facilities.

If however it is decided  
to override all objection and  
go ahead with a school on  
this site surely it could be  
a great opportunity to clear  
up some of the industrial  
debris along the river bank  
by placing the school on  
the Dee-Bee building site

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by 100 yds from the currently  
proposed site. The cricket  
ground could be retained for  
dual usage by the children  
and the Cricket Club, and  
way access could be provided  
through the site from Rodney Rd  
to Corporation Rd or separate  
the pedestrian from vehicles  
by having a walk way along  
from Corporation Rd - thus saving  
the cost of access.

The Authority has  
a legal duty to consult with  
interested parties. The Cricket  
Club is the custodian of the  
facility but no consultation

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has taken place. Why?

Yours Truly,

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5/9/88

Dear Bob.

Having enjoyed, with pride, the privilege of playing membership of the WAC for the past 42 years, I am impelled to write to the Executive in response to your suggestion that written representation would be taken into account when deciding the future of the cricket section.

I understand that the Executive is empowered to make suggestions; and no doubt will set aside prejudice, personalities and myths in order to act judiciously and reach a decision based upon facts. However the committee consists of men with a life-long dedication to Rugby Football, but to my knowledge, little interest in cricket. I would therefore respectfully wish to refresh the corporate memory with a few details of the record of the cricket section.

The Weylsh c.c. was formally established in 1834 and maintained an independent existence until 1874. The playing area was located on the Marshes - part of the present day Shafterbury Park - and was enclosed with a parkade. In May 1874 a meeting was



held in the town hall under the chairmanship of Wyndham Jones and it was decided to amalgamate the Criccheh and Gynnarlic clubs and to introduce Athletics.

The Newport Rugby Club dates its existence from April 1875 when a match was played against Elanogon Rugby Club. Newport were two men short and of the thirteen players, seven were well known Newport cricketers. The match was played on the Criccheh field at Cardiff Arms Park, and the Elanogon team contained many Cardiff cricketers. It is interesting to note that the Elanogon Club subsequently amalgamated with two other clubs to form the Cardiff Rugby Club.

Criccheh was an international game before Rugby was invented and many of the early football clubs both association and Rugby emerged from the criccheh clubs, using the established facilities which were dominant during the winter months.

So it was that the early Newport Rugby clubs became associated with the Newport Criccheh and Athletic Club.

In 1876 the firmly established Criccheh club decided to look for a new ground and with the cooperation of Colonel Justice, an enthusiastic cricketer who was Lord Tredegar's Agent, the Viscount Tredegar was approached and a piece of land was obtained and levelled. This

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is that portion known as the Tennis Courts. The ground was opened on May 24 1877 with a sports meeting; and the General Rules stated that the club be known as the Newport Cricket, Athletic and Football club.

Relatively little football was played in the early days and the limited area could sustain both games with athletics and some Tennis, but subsequently the old Brick Pond was filled the football ground constructed and in the 1890s the ballast bank was levelled to form the present cricket ground.

This indeed was a halcyon era with the building of the gymnasium housing the indoor Tennis court and the construction of the magnificent cricket pavilion. These ventures were both totally financed by donation from the section members; the annual reports list the donation to pay for the cricket pavilion down to the last half-crown.

Concurrently came the drawing together of that galaxy of great players who made up Tommy Brahm's invincible

side of 1891 and which prepared what 'Dromio' described as the Golden Age of Newport Rugby - 170 games in six years and only 13 losses.

Little of international excellence has emerged from Newport in any field of endeavour, but it was this closely-knit multi-sports community, managed by players of games, with its influential benefactors which nurtured the early days of the Newport Rugby Club, and provided the environment for it to bloom into one of the great Rugby institutions of the world, with an unsurpassed record of excellence on the field, and a reputation for absolute integrity off the field.

Of the men who directed the club in the early days the most influential was Edward Belleby. To again quote the lovely Edwardian prose of 'Dromio'. "When tribute of gratitude is paid to the makers of the Club the name of Edward Belleby stands first in honour as in point of time. He was secretary to the old Newport Cricket Club."

Throughout the life of the club there have been outstanding influences,

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and exceptional efforts but in the recent <sup>times</sup> ~~past~~ much of the cohesion of the park has been lost, the sections have become polarised and less inter-linked, but nevertheless great efforts have been made.

The building of the Social Centre was the largest investment made in the long history of the club, financed by the Memorial Fund, Section Efforts and individual donations. Cricketers were killed in the wars, and cricketers played their full part in the Building Fund.

The first Football Pool scheme which was so important to the finances of the 60's was promoted by John Bertram and Arthur Webb - cricket members.

In 1974 part of the cricket ground was converted to a car park providing substantial income for ten years until sold for £10,000 - thereby eliminating the current account overdraft and providing the first opportunity for financial reorganisation of the club.

During my tenure as Treasurer of the Club the Park has been

maintained at no significant cost to the Club. The roof has been maintained, the seating rebuilt, the windows protected, the showers retiled, the urinal refitted and the kitchen modernised.

The past five years have seen much voluntary work on the playing area and nowadays club labour is rarely required. Equipment purchased and maintained.

These comments in no way diminish the immense contribution of the highly members which is self-evident and well documented, but it is disturbing that the contribution of others is rarely acknowledged and I respectfully remind you of the life-long dedicated loyalty of Norman Abraham, Bert Hodges, Joe Rust, Arthur + Kay Webb, Jim Farclough, Fred Cabb, John Berthan.

The sale of the Cuckoo ground now provides another window of opportunity to reorganise the club, and with the fortunate juxtaposition of reduced capital taxes and astronomical increase in the price of land ensures sufficient capital is available to meet the

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Requirements of the Rugby and also ensure the survival of the Cricketers Club. It is likely that a further sale of land will take place in the near future, more valuable per acre than the cricket ground, to further underwrite the financial security of the Rugby Club.

It is nowadays impossible for any sporting club, cricket, rugby or golf, to raise the capital to buy land. We are all dependant on land bequeathed largely in the Edwardian era by sports-loving benefactors. The cricket club is now losing its inheritance and is seeking not a luxury cruise, but more in the way of a life-boat.

Sincerely Yours

Fred. Wyle

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26/10/88

Dear Hayden

It was refreshing <sup>& stimulating</sup> to have a rational and useful conversation with a member of the Rugby Section. In recent years the cricket members have grown accustomed to being treated as though they have a highly contagious disease slightly worse than AIDS.

I enclose a copy of the Touche Ross Report prepared about 1 1/2 years ago which was circulated and discussed by management and ~~the content of which should be familiar to the officers~~ and must be familiar to the officers of the Club.

Much of the content is now irrelevant but I suspect that it is now a professional interrelation of

Its Capital Gains situation with special reference to roll-over provision as set out in Section 2 would be applicable to the current situation.

If no mitigation of tax is achieved by using the roll-over provision then ~~it would be~~ it seems likely the tax bill for the current year will be assessed on profits of approx £900,000 which will qualify for the top <sup>Band</sup> ~~rate~~ of corporation tax at 35%.

Boyer's vision of retaining a large sum as deposit in order that the income will balance current losses is a form of fiscal madness. It means loss of roll-over relief - decimation of the capital sum by inflation and high levels of taxation on the current income.

It also avoids the real problem of the restructuring the NAC. This substantial capital sum



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of a modern stadium on a green-field site elsewhere. Piecemeal liquidation of the land as suggested by the Chairman will inevitably result in lesser proceeds than sale of the whole, and will result in the retention of a patched-up stadium built in 1923 and designed for that austere era. £50,000 was the cost of re-roofing the stand in 1978; £200,000 at current prices - how much in 2010? Look at the rear of the Grandstand; how long before major repairs are necessary in that area?

It must be noted that Rugby Football in Wales is a fast diminishing spectator sport and interest will only be revived by acceptance of the evolutionary developments <sup>of the game</sup> particularly competitive leagues ~~and~~ television exposure <sup>and its accompanying sponsorship</sup> which will probably <sup>only</sup> retard the loss of spectator interest.

The Welsh Rugby club of the future needs a smaller stadium, national social facilities, ~~with a land~~

~~of luxury for players, committee members~~  
~~Sponsors etc~~ and modern dressing  
~~accommodation~~ and <sup>superb</sup> training facilities  
for the players. and a touch of  
luxury for all

The Newport Rugby Club grew out  
of the Newport Cricket Club, it achieved  
and maintained <sup>a position as one of the</sup> ~~greatness in~~ the  
~~great~~ <sup>great</sup> ~~reputation~~ <sup>reputation</sup> of its world  
international rugby world for 100 years  
~~a part of~~, the jewel in the crown of  
~~a sporting~~ a conglomerate sporting complex  
a closely-knit sporting conglomerate with  
its influential benefactors and stream  
of talented <sup>dedicated</sup> administrators. It has  
now been placed firmly in the hands  
of the spectators whose aspirations rarely  
seem to reach beyond achieving a  
comfortable seat in the bar and a  
cheap pint of beer.

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gives a once only window of opportunity to restructure the club and ensure the survival of rugby for the next 100 years; and I believe ~~it~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~it~~ rugby which ~~is now at risk of extinction~~ while in the control of the incumbents, is more at risk of extinction than cricketers.

Dear Editor

"Newport Athletic Club is a town institution which flows like a broad river through the social life of the people. It is as little possible to trace all the runnels and streams of influence and effort which have gone to swell that great river as it is to tell how the town itself came to its present fulness of civic life; but outstanding influences, exceptional efforts there have been and it is possible to point to men and events which have helped to shape the destiny of the club."

This <sup>quotation</sup> is a delightful example of the prose of W J T Collins (Stonio), a great Argus journalist and a man with a special affection for the Newport Rugby club.

What would he write of the club now? Three short years following the change of constitution, the sacking of the Vice-Presidents and the domination of the management committee by the Rugby members, only the rump of the playing sections remain.

The uniquely successful Netball section moved elsewhere, the Badminton section was closed down in order to convert the gymnasium into a function room.

The hockey players abandoned the fight to preserve the only first class grass pitches in the area. Cricket is threatened by the sale of the <sup>1st class</sup> cricket ground ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~tennis~~ section was bribed with <sup>indirect</sup> ~~special~~ subscription to return to the fold.

The heritage of 100 years of work and effort and investment <sup>which survived 2 world wars and a number of economic depression</sup> by ~~the~~ ~~cricket~~ ~~club~~ has been denuded in a brief period at a time when sporting clubs elsewhere thrive and develop.

Historically the management committee consisted comprised of an equal number of members from each section plus elected members with a large ballast of vice president, inviolable persons with distinguished sporting careers and a long record of service to the club. ~~with all sections~~ The "outstanding influences and exceptional efforts" were born in equal proportion in the playing section each of which in ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ten generated gifted ~~administrators~~ and dedicated administrators.

The club was <sup>conceived</sup> ~~born~~ in the early 1870's <sup>by</sup> ~~from~~ the amalgamation of the Weymouth Cricket club and an Athletic club who <sup>signed</sup> ~~used~~ ~~together~~ an area of land then known as the Marshes and latterly as Shaftesbury Park. ~~and~~ which subsequently became Shaftesbury Park with the aid of a gift of land <sup>at Lodsworth</sup> ~~from~~ cricket enthusiasts here. ~~Therefore~~ the Athletic Club was born.