

# *‘no more worlds to conquer’*

The story of Newport's University

Peter Brown



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*There is a higher object to be pursued in the vast fields of practical science and extending knowledge now opening up and yet to be revealed by the research of our fellow men, and relying on the continued cooperation of those honoured names which have so frequently, and so gracefully been connected with the Athenaeum, there must be no rest, no indolence, till the Institution has really accomplished its mission – until there be **‘no more worlds to conquer’**.*

From The Monthly Journal of the Newport  
Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute, March 1864

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# Foreword from the Vice Chancellor

This book appears at an important time for the University, as the new campus is taking shape on the riverfront in Newport, marking the beginning of a new era and the return of higher education into the city centre.

Over its 168 years of development, the University has changed in many ways to adapt to changing demands and opportunities. The University now has nearly 10,000 students from over 50 different countries, many studying at the Wales International Study Centre (WISC) at the Caerleon campus. It has ambitious plans to expand and provide excellent courses for an even greater number of students in an environment where research and enterprise flourishes. The University and its predecessors has always maintained close relationships with employers and whilst in the nineteenth century this would have been predominantly with the local coal and steel industry, in the twenty first century these have been superseded by the creative industries through exciting new initiatives such as the Institute for Advanced Broadcasting and the Skillset Screen Academy but strong links with local authorities, schools and small businesses have been maintained.

It has been 13 years since Deborah Mogg produced our first history *Shun All Ignorance*, and this book brings the story up to date covering such significant events as the award of the new University title and affiliation to the University of Wales as well as the shift towards becoming a more entrepreneurial University. It offers a detailed account of the history and work of the University that I am sure will be enjoyed by all of our staff, students and colleagues, as well the people of Newport.

My thanks go to the Development Office for overseeing the work, Peter Brown for writing the text and to all of those who contributed to its production.



Peter Noyes

Dr Peter Noyes  
July 2009

# Introduction

This book tells the story of the University, past, present and future and is a change from the original brief, which was to update the earlier history of the University, titled *Shun All Ignorance*. After investigating this idea, it was clear that the exciting developments under way warranted more than just an updated history of past events and I am pleased that the Development Office agreed to my suggestion of broadening the scope of the book to include the current developments.

There were two items in the research that were very personal to me. Firstly, when my ancestors came to Newport in the Victorian period (to work on the docks) they lived in Canal Parade, which only survives now as a few houses behind the Newport Centre. Where the houses once looked over a scene of ships being loaded and unloaded, if they were there now they would be looking straight at – or rather through – the new campus on the riverbank. Secondly, the first computer at the University was introduced in 1963 and was described then as being available to local 6th formers. In 1969 I was one of those students who spent some evenings at Allt-Yr-Yn starting programming with Fortran, although the computer has long gone and no photograph of it could be found.

I actually pursued a career in archaeology, but even though I lived in England for most of my adult life, I retained an active interest in the history of Newport and Monmouthshire. This book gave me the opportunity to actually contribute to Newport’s history and I hope that the result is as much of a pleasure to read it was to research and write.



Courtesy of Carys Brown

Peter Brown  
May 2009



**Newport  
in the early  
nineteenth  
century**



In 1801 Newport had a population of only just over 1000 people and was a small market town with a growing importance as a port. This importance accelerated with the completion of the local canal network and in 1799 the town shipped 18,000 tons of coal; by 1824 this figure had increased to 375,000 tons and steady growth also occurred with exports of iron and tinplate. In 1822 a steam-packet service linked the port with Bristol and in 1834 Newport was declared a bonding port, while the new Town Dock that opened in 1842 was capable of holding the largest ships in the world. Railway connections were also complete by mid century, linking the town with Wales to the west and north and England to the east.

**Newport in 1847**

*‘Few places have risen more rapidly during the present century than Newport... At the opening of the new docks in 1842, the chairman spoke of Newport as ‘an infant Liverpool’, and little doubt can be entertained that it will become a large and very important place before the end of the century. The traffic of five great mineral valleys – Crickhowell, Pontypool, Ebbw, Sirhowy and Rhymney – converges at this, their natural outlet to the sea...Bristol, now arising from her lethargy, begins to be jealous.’*

C F Cliffe, *The Book of South Wales* (1847)

The growth of the port and its ancillary trades acted as a magnet for workers, with the population exceeding 7000 in 1831, 13,000 in 1841 and 19,000 by 1851. This swelling population created a boom town, with all the associated advantages of employment, opportunity and property development and against this background there were growing demands for technical skills for the workers who staffed the new industries, as well as a growing interest among adults to improve their education. There were also negative effects, such as bad working conditions, poor health, poverty, squalor, crime and drunkenness.

The Chartist Rising of 1839 - which reached its climax in Newport - was a popular protest in favour of voting rights for workers, within the industrial capitalist system that was driving the economic development. The failure of the Rising - and the deaths of 22 protestors - had a profound effect upon the town, but this did not alter the pattern of growth and development. It did provide the additional impetus of promoting the need for educational opportunities for the working class population of the town, after a succession of government commissioners visited Monmouthshire to enquire into the physical and social condition of the labouring population. This resulted in the establishment of Works’ Schools, Reading Rooms and Mechanics Institutes for the instruction and recreation of both children and adults (Wilson 1993).

The time was right for the introduction of learning opportunities for working adults and the chief initiative to fill this gap came from the Mechanics Institute movement that was spreading across south Wales: Swansea (1826), Dowlais (1830), Merthyr (1837), Pontypridd (1839) and Pontypool (1839). The *Monmouthshire Merlin* newspaper first broached the idea of a Mechanics Institute for Newport in 1838 and this eventually materialised in 1841, the same year that Institutes opened in Cardiff and Llanelli.

Photograph overleaf

**View from the Railway Bridge at Newport, c. 1860**  
By James Flewitt Mullock (1818-1892)  
By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / The National Library of Wales

This view shows the ships along the river as far upstream as the town bridge. St Woolos Parish Church (now the Cathedral) stands on the hilltop above the town. The castle, on the right, was in use as a brewery at this time!



# The Mechanics Institutes

In the early eighteenth century, efforts were made to provide facilities for workers and tradesmen (who could not afford subscriptions to libraries) to further their education. Benefactors and benevolent groups created ‘Mechanics’ Institutes’ that contained inspirational and vocational reading matter, for a small charge to the user. Some Mechanics Institutes also provided lending libraries, lecture courses, laboratories, and in some cases museums for the members’ entertainment and education.

Their founder was George Birkbeck, who trained as a doctor in Edinburgh before becoming Professor of Natural Philosophy at the Andersonian Institution, which later became the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. After mechanics started asking questions about the apparatus he used in his lectures, he had the idea of holding free public lectures on the ‘mechanical arts’ during Saturday evenings. These commenced in 1800 and by the fourth lecture, 500 tradesmen (and many women) were attending, with geography and astronomy joining the lecture programme soon afterwards. Due to financial difficulties with the programme Birkbeck left for London in 1804, although some classes still continued in Glasgow.

Working as a doctor in London, Birkbeck, with others, established the London Mechanics’ Institute in November 1823, with himself as first President. It was later renamed Birkbeck College (now abbreviated to Birkbeck), a part of the University of London where it is still a major provider of adult education, carrying on its great historical traditions. When the Glasgow Mechanics’ Institute was also established in November 1823, Birkbeck became its patron.

George Birkbeck looked to the Institutes as a means of liberating the mind, while for others the key slogan was self-improvement, which was often just another way of describing the gaining of particular skills for work. In their different ways, these pioneers all hoped the Institutes could become an important means of working for a changed society.

The idea led to a rapid expansion across the country, with 100 Institutes by 1826, 300 by 1841 and 700 by 1850 - in the UK and overseas - but many of these closed during the later nineteenth century due to financial pressures and because some library functions were simply taken over by the developing local authorities. Despite this, many Mechanics Institutes still operate throughout the world, offering services such as libraries, parts of universities or adult education facilities, theatres, cinemas, museums, recreational facilities and community halls.

## George Birkbeck (1776-1841)

Doctor, academic, philanthropist, early pioneer in adult education and founder of the Mechanics Institutes.

This portrait was commissioned by the Mechanics’ Class at Anderson’s Institution in 1823.



Courtesy of The University of Strathclyde

# The Newport Mechanics Institute (1841-1870)

There is a long tradition of Higher Education in and near Newport, while Caerleon enjoys particular prominence with Geoffrey of Monmouth’s fanciful but influential twelfth century *Historia Regum Britanniae* referring to a ‘college of two hundred philosophers, learned in astronomy and other arts’ in ‘Arthurian Caerleon’.

However, it was the opening of the Newport Mechanics Institute in 1841 that started the long and complex development of educational provision for adults, from which the University of Wales, Newport evolved. The Newport Mechanics Institute was launched at a public meeting held at the Town Court Room on Tuesday 20th April 1841, where the four ‘objects’ of the Institute were described as: ‘a reading-room, a library, mutual instruction classes and the delivery of public lectures’. The Institute’s educational activities commenced in May 1841, with a lecture on Philosophy by the Rev. D. R. Stephen, held in the Police Court. In June of that year the Institute secured a room in the Commercial Buildings, which also served as the venue for the Town Council meetings before the Town Hall in Commercial Street was completed in February 1843.

From 1841 working men and women were able to attend a variety of lectures in Newport (for 2 shillings per quarter) and the 1841 programme included the following subjects in the first year of operation.

- Geology
- Ancient and Modern Philosophy
- The Pursuit of Attainment and Knowledge
- Druidical Temples and the other Stone Erections of the Ancient Britons
- Galvanism and the electrottype
- Popular Superstition
- The Economy of Bees

The Institute’s forward-thinking attitudes were also highlighted by the feminist lectures of Mrs Clara L. Balfour in the late 1840s, such as ‘The Moral and Intellectual Influence of Women on Society’.

In September 1841, the Institute held an ‘Exhibition of Pictures’ at William’s Large Room in Commercial Street, featuring over 170 paintings loaned for the occasion including a work by Titian (valued at 500 guineas) and works by other masters such as Van Dyke, Velasquez, Rembrandt, Sir

## Commercial Street, Newport in 1874

Source: *The Prince’s Album of Newport*

The view shows Newport’s first Town Hall (The Council House) built in 1842 and demolished in 1884, which was replaced in 1885 by a new Town Hall with a clocktower, on the same site. The view is taken from Westgate Square, looking down Commercial Street, with Corn Street leading off to the left. The Town Hall provided the first premises for the Newport Mechanics Institute, which ran a library and reading room in the building from 1843-59.



Courtesy of Newport Past website [www.newportpast.com]

**James Flewitt Mullock**  
**Self portrait (c1845-50)**

James Flewitt Mullock (1818-92) was Newport's most significant Victorian artist, who witnessed the rapid growth of Newport, the Chartist Rising of 1839 and the establishment of the municipal infrastructure of the town. He was a leading figure in the Mechanics Institute, serving as both Secretary and Librarian and using the Institute as a vehicle to organise the first art exhibitions and art classes in the town. His influence led directly to the establishment of the town's Art Gallery and to the teaching of Art, for which Newport has long been renowned.



*Courtesy of Newport Museum and Art Gallery, on loan from the Mullock family in Australia*

Godfrey Kneller and Reubens, as well as local artists including Institute members James Flewitt Mullock and S J Evans. There was also '*a valuable museum in natural history, conchology and botany, together with an admirable selection of specimens in geology and mineralogy, coins, models and antiquities connected with the history of Monmouthshire*'. Single admission cost 1 shilling and a season ticket 2 shillings and 6 pence, with all proceeds going towards the new Institute.

On 27 September 1842, the Institute was presented with a '*splendid portrait of Lord Brougham, procured by private subscription*', that had been painted by Mr S J Evans, who was a Member of the Institute. As Lord Chancellor from 1830-34, Lord Brougham oversaw the passing of the Great Reform Act and the Slavery Abolition Act. He was also instrumental in establishing the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (in 1826), which sought to publish inexpensive texts for the public and had a close association with the Mechanics Institutes.

The town also hosted an 'Exhibition of Arts' by Mr Clapton in September 1842, held in the Great Room at the Parrot Inn. '*The Mechanical Exhibition comprises a grand selection of Picturesque Views, embellished with numerous animated Objects, each forming a piece of Mechanism, which gives to it a movement resembling that of Life.*' This was a travelling exhibition - apparently unconnected with the Mechanics Institute - but perhaps seeking to emulate the success of the 'Exhibition of Pictures' exactly a year earlier.

The Institute rented premises from 1843 in the Town Hall, with a library upstairs and a reading room downstairs next to the Assembly Room, but the rooms were small and inconvenient and when the Assembly Room was used for certain functions such as concerts, members were required to vacate the reading room. In 1852, the Institute also lost a room to the newly established Public Health Officers.

For 15 years this unsatisfactory situation continued, but the poor quality of the premises was also believed to have a negative effect on membership levels and the 'sub committee for the acquisition of new premises' sought a new venue in 1858. High Street and Commercial Street were considered as the ideal locations and enquiries were even made regarding use of rooms at the Parrot Inn, but the owner declined. This inn (built in 1814) stood in Commercial Street at the bottom of Charles Street and was famed as a meeting place for the Chartists prior to the Rising of 1839. A piece of land belonging to the Tredegar Wharf Company was then identified in Great Dock Street, '*at the upperside of Hope New Chapel*', but this did not proceed.

Eventually, the Institute negotiated the rental of a '*well-situated and commodious building in Dock Street*', belonging to the Monmouthshire Diocesan Board of Education, which opened it in 1840 as a Diocesan School. This school (known as the Middle Training School) had provided '*...for the middle classes a superior English and commercial education, combined with sound religious instruction according to the principles of the Church of England*'. The school also trained young men as schoolmasters, by arrangement with the National Schools. With the new premises, the success of take up for membership of the Institute was evident after the opening in 1859 and by 1864 they had acquired the property.

The initial phase of the Institute was a concerted effort to recruit a working class membership and to provide an alternative to the public house, but in common with other Institutes, this was later adapted as it had largely failed to attract its chosen clientele or to raise sufficient financial support. The new emphasis saw a programme built more around cultural and entertainment lines, with concerts, dramatic readings, soirées, tea parties, excursions and lectures in general subjects. A leading patron in the early days was Sir Thomas Philips, who had been Mayor of Newport at the time of the 1839 Rising, for which service he received his knighthood. The artist James Flewitt Mullock served as an early Secretary and Librarian, being influential in the Institute's use of art exhibitions as a means of promotion and also attracting financial support.

In 1847 the Institute was renamed the Newport Athenaeum and Mechanics' Institute as a reflection of the changed scope of activities, attempting to cultivate a more middle class clientele in order to support its financial viability in line with developments elsewhere. The Great Exhibition of 1851 boosted interest in technical education generally and on 18th August 1852 the Institute was admitted into union with the Royal Society of Arts - the body that had promoted the Great Exhibition. The Institute held a major 'Exhibition of Fine Arts and Manufactures' in the Town Hall in April 1853 - the first of its kind in Wales - and James Flewitt Mullock also taught the first drawing classes in 1859. This period saw the inception of Newport's long association with the teaching and promotion of Art.

During the 1850s and early 1860s, the Institute struggled to establish classes, but the directors were instrumental in attracting the South Kensington Department of Science and Art to deliver classes in the town. There was also competition at this time from a rival organisation called the Newport Working Men's Institute, set up in 1851 to offer discussion and literature, with an excellent library that proved to be a popular attraction.



NEWPORT ATHENÆUM

ESSAY AND DISCUSSION CLASS.

This Class is constituted for the purpose of affording facilities for Moral and Intellectual Improvement to the Members of the Newport Athenæum—by means of original Essays and Discussions, on all topics of general interest, excluding Controversial Theology, and Local Politics.

LIST OF SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION.

Affirmed by	SUBJECT.	Denied by
	FEBRUARY 9th, 1855.	
MR. J. A. DAVIES.	"That Oliver Cromwell was honest, as a man, and brave, discreet, and powerful as a ruler."	MR. W. N. JOHNS.
	FEBRUARY 16th, 1855.	
MR. T. D. FRANCIS.	"That woman is mentally inferior to man."	MR. J. ADLAM.
	FEBRUARY 23rd, 1855.	
MR. J. GWYTHER.	"That Voting at all elections should be by Ballot."	MR. FLANNIGAN.
	MARCH 2nd, 1855.	
MR. J. ADLAM.	"That Byron as a Poet, is superior to Burns."	MR. HUGHES.
	MARCH 9th, 1855.	
Essay—MR. W. A. DIXON, "On the properties of matter with experimental illustrations."		
	MARCH 16th, 1855.	
MR. H. JAMES.	"That Wellington, as a man, general, and statesman, is more worthy of the admiration of mankind, than Napoleon."	MR. HUGHES.
	MARCH 23rd, 1855.	
MR. L. L. MORRIS.	"That the law of Primogeniture and Entail is beneficial to society."	MR. J. A. DAVIES.
	MARCH 30th, 1855.	
MR. M. JOHNS.	"That Trade Combinations are not conducive to the welfare of the working-classes."	MR. J. ADLAM.
	APRIL 13th, 1855.	
MR. J. A. DAVIES.	"That Universal Suffrage is just and desirable."	MR. FLANNIGAN.

N. B.---The Class meets every Friday Evening, at Eight o'clock.

All Members of the Athenæum are admitted Free, but cannot take part in the Debates, without being first elected Members of the Class.

J. GWYTHER, } HON. SECS.  
H. JAMES, }

J. H. AND W. N. JOHNS, PRINTERS, GAZETTE OFFICE, NEWPORT.

The Institute survived for nearly 30 years, but the failure to find a qualified teacher, falling attendances and lack of financial support caused problems of viability. The final blow to the Institute came in 1870, when the Town Council considered establishing a Free Public Library that would be subsidised from the rates, when the Institute was struggling to raise its running costs of roughly £150 per year. The Institute met to discuss this on 31 January and at a later meeting on 19 April a resolution was passed to offer their resources as the nucleus of a Free Library for the town. The value of all property was around £500, which included over 3000 volumes in the library. A delegation from the Institute formally offered their resources to the Free Library Committee at a meeting on 26 April and this marked the end of the Institute, but although no more classes were held for the next two years, the library and reading room still remained open.

Like some other Mechanics Institutes, the classes proved to be too expensive and at too high a level for the people they were targeting. The Mechanics Institutes' movement stalled for these reasons, but Newport's survived longer and had more impact than many and the Institute was an early instance of a great tradition that the University of Wales, Newport is proud to maintain.

The evolution of public education provisions and museum and art facilities in Victorian South Wales provides an important chapter in Victorian municipal reform - a space for radical reformers to institute the public educational facilities that we enjoy to this day, and a space for the emerging professional middle class to engage in political and cultural activity.

**The Mechanics Institute building in the 1870s**  
The Newport Athenæum and Mechanics Institute in Dock Street had previously been a Diocesan School. In 1870 the Institute closed and the building became the first library reading room, also a lending library in the following year. The sign on the building said 'Newport Free Public Library'

A new Central Library in Dock Street replaced this in 1882 and served the function until the current Central Library was opened in John Frost Square in 1968.



Courtesy of Newport Community Learning and Libraries

**'no more worlds to conquer'**

*Without entering further into dry details we urge the directors to renewed energy, not to forget that the end of Mechanics Institutes will never be attained by the establishment of mere reading rooms, libraries and pleasant assemblies.*

*There is a higher object to be pursued in the vast fields of practical science and extending knowledge now opening up and yet to be revealed by the research of our fellow men, and relying on the continued cooperation of those honoured names which have so frequently, and so gracefully been connected with the Athenaeum, there must be no rest, no indolence, till the Institution has really accomplished its mission – until there be 'no more worlds to conquer'.*

From The Monthly Journal of the Newport Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute, March 1864

The Chartist events in Newport in 1839 galvanized the municipal sphere into action in an attempt to dissipate the threat of any recurrence. The resulting Mechanics Institute played an important role in this as an influential voluntary body, clearing the way for adoption of the permissive legislation of the various Public Library and Museum Acts and likewise the formal association with the South Kensington Department of Science and Art. This led, in turn, to the School of Art and Science and eventually a modern Art College (Wilson 1993).

The new Newport Technical Institute in Clarence Place (opened in 1910) provided the ultimate expression of municipal enterprise and pride – a fully equipped and purpose-built institution that was a model technical institute and art school of its day.

The Mechanics Institute was an important catalyst in shaping the future of adult education in the town, and can be regarded as the linear ancestor of the present University. It also provided the foundation for art appreciation and education, which led to the establishment of the town's Art Gallery and also the Art College, which evolved into the School of Art, Media and Design, one of the academic schools of the present University.

## Newport Athenæum & Mechanics' Institute ELOCUTION & DISCUSSION CLASS.

### R U L E S .

1.—That the title of the Class be the NEWPORT ATHENÆUM AND MECHANICS' INSTITUTE ELOCUTION AND DISCUSSION CLASS, and that the Annual Subscription be Sixpence, payable in advance.

2.—That the Session of the Class commence on the FIRST MONDAY in OCTOBER, and terminate the LAST MONDAY in MARCH.

3.—That a President, Vice-President, and Secretary be appointed at the commencement of each Session. That in the absence of President from any meeting the Vice-President occupy the chair, and that in case of absence of both, the members present thereat have power to appoint a chairman for the evening.

4.—That the exercises consist of Reading, Discussion, Extemporaneous Speeches, Essays, Prepared Speeches, and Recitations, and that for the delivery of Extemporaneous Speeches five minutes, and for other exercises, twenty minutes be allowed to each member.

5.—That in a Discussion, the Affirmative and Negative Speeches rank as exercises; the affirmer being allowed ten minutes for his reply, and the other Members taking part in discussion and criticism be limited to five minutes each (chairman excepted).

6.—That the Members be appointed for the several exercises as their names stand in rotation on the book.

7.—That no Member be allowed to speak more than once on each subject, except in explanation, and by permission of the chairman.

8.—That each Member be expected to take part in the proceedings of the class, and during criticism to rise in his turn and offer some remarks on the subject of the evening.

9.—That at each meeting the business for that night month be settled, and that the subject of each exercise be made known to the Secretary one week before the time of delivery.

10.—That Members of the Class only be admitted to its proceedings.

11.—That any Member absenting himself for four consecutive nights without assigning sufficient cause, be subject to a fine of Sixpence or forfeit the privileges of the Class.

12.—That any Member having undertaken any exercise, in case of his not being able to attend to deliver it, shall send an excuse in writing to the Secretary, assigning the reason for such non-attendance, and in default shall be fined Sixpence or forfeit the privileges of the class.

13.—That if the conduct of any Member of the class be considered objectionable to a majority of the Members present at any meeting, he be dismissed, on a vote to that effect being carried.

14.—That these Rules be printed and a copy thereof presented to each Member of the class



# The Free Library Committee (1870-1891)

Following the Public Library Act of 1870, in the following year the Committee of the Newport Free Library considered the advisability of forming classes in connection with the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education, which was effectively the Government's embryonic Education Department, created in 1839 with a primary task to establish a national college for the training of teachers. This was hampered by the lack of suitable premises and in 1872, the Committee decided to run classes in Science and Art, which were held at several school venues in Newport (under the direction of Mr and Mrs James Bush of Cardiff). This arrangement continued and they were not brought together as a single institution until 1894-5, when they came under the control of the School of Science and Art and the Technical Instruction Committee, which had responsibility for coordinating adult education.

## The British School

The first British School in Newport was opened in 1815 on the Old Green, close to Newport Castle, admitting children from 6-12 from all religious denominations. The Stow Hill premises were erected in 1856 and used for evening classes from 1872-73.



Courtesy of Newport Past [www.newportpast.com]

In 1872 free use was granted for evening classes in the British School on Stow Hill and after a second year in the British School, more suitable rooms were provided for the classes from 1873 in the Savings Bank Chambers at the foot of Stow Hill. These Chambers had already provided a single room for use (since 1869) as the birthplace of the YMCA in Newport and space for Newport Junior Conservative Club later (in 1886). It was described then as *'well fitted up for chess, cards etc' and having 'rooms for debates, lectures, smoking concerts etc'*. Mr William Bush (brother to James) was then made Headmaster and the authorities in London raised the status of the classes to that of a School of Science and Art. Links were also being established with universities at this time, with Cambridge organizing lectures and examinations on various subjects (including Chemistry and Literature) from 1875 to 1883; similar extension schemes were run through University College Cardiff and Oxford.

More suitable accommodation was found in the Albert Hall Chambers from January 1880, consisting of one large room, two smaller ones and a Master's room; these chambers were attached to the Royal Albert Hall on Stow Hill, just above St Mary's Church. The Hall was built in 1875 and described in Kelly's 1901 Directory as *'... a structure of brick, capable of seating 1,100 persons, and has numerous anterooms; it is used for lectures, concerts and other entertainments'*. It hosted a range of popular events in the 1880s, including Tayleur's Great American Circus (which included the performance of 'Dr. Carl the Demon Marksman' – the finest shot in the world), Newport Choral Society's performance of Handel's Messiah, with two hundred voices and a band of fifty instruments and in 1893 General Booth addressed the massed ranks of the Salvation Army there to rapturous applause.



## The new Free Library

This was built in 1882 in Dock Street. Kelly's Directory of 1895 states that *'...the library numbers about 20,515 volumes, a large proportion of which has been contributed; since the erection of the present building, the issue of books for 1894 was 101,429 volumes, number of borrowers 5,420...'*

Courtesy of Newport Community Learning and Libraries



The improved facilities for the classes led to a steady influx of students and meant that the Free Library was needed to cater for the increasing demand.

In 1882 the Town Council authorised the Free Library Committee to spend a sum ‘*not exceeding £4,000*’ for the building and furnishing of a new Free Library, which would include the School of Science and Art. The building in Dock Street was opened on 7th November 1882, providing a significant improvement on the earlier facilities that was marked by a public holiday with processions. At the opening ceremony, the Mayor (Thomas Beynon) used a golden key to open the building and he was also issued with the first book from the new building. In his speech the Mayor reviewed the history of the public library movement in Newport that linked with the Mechanics Institute. Recalling also his own role in the adoption of the Public Libraries Act, he stated that he believed:

*“... that there was not a single rate payer who regretted the action taken thirteen years ago. That was a grand educational institution and would mould for good the destinies of the town, and would make better men and women of the boys and girls who availed themselves of its advantages. It would also keep people from the public house, and it was an institution that was deserving of their most cordial support.”*

Lord Tredegar had presented the land for the building, and the premises, which included a Museum, served these functions until 1968 when they were relocated to the present site in John Frost Square. Inside the building, the rooms were large, well lit and attractive, resulting in many new students joining. These were Art students, and also ‘*...those engaged in various industries in the locality, who desired to gain some knowledge of the sciences on which their daily work was based.*’

During the 1880s, several other subjects were introduced, which started long traditions for which Newport is noted, with the first Shorthand courses (in 1884) marking the beginning of Commercial and Business Education, which are still core functions of the Newport Business School. Two years later, formal teacher training began with Saturday morning classes in Maths for teachers and all teacher-training functions were eventually transferred to Caerleon College during World War One.



Courtesy of Newport Community Learning and Libraries

**The Reading Room**

This splendid photograph shows the Reading Room at the Central Library in Dock Street, around 1900-10. The last stand on the right holds the *Manchester Guardian* – the forerunner of *The Guardian* newspaper that is sold in the campus shops today. Kelly’s Directory of 1895 states that ‘*...the reading room is abundantly supplied with newspapers, magazines etc. and is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m...*’



With thanks to Tredegar House, Newport (Newport City Council)

**The Right Hon. Viscount Tredegar (Godfrey Charles Morgan)**

Lord Tredegar (1830-1913) fought at Balaclava and took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade before becoming MP for Breconshire from 1858–75 and the first Honorary Freeman of Newport. He owned around 40,000 acres of land and was generous with his gifts for public works, including the land for Belle Vue Park and the Royal Gwent Hospital, as well as Newport Castle. He also supplied the land for the new Free Library in Dock Street and the new Technical Institute in Clarence Place, where he presented the prizes to the first successful students at the new School of Art.



# Newport Technical School and School of Art (1891-1898)

Following the Technical Instruction Act of 1889, additional rooms were taken at 182 Dock Street so that the teaching of Science could be developed, and the Newport Technical School formally opened in 1891. This Act allowed local authorities to raise up to one penny in rates, in order to provide technical education, but the local Council chose not to do this initially, preferring instead to use ‘whisky money’, based on grants to local councils from Customs and Excise duties. In 1893-4, the classes were funded by £1304 received through these duties, and an underspend of £651 12s 10d meant that the budgets for 1894-5 were to supplement this with £1100 from the rates.

At this time also, the Pupil Teachers’ Centre was opened in 1894 at Spring Gardens School. Pupil Teachers undertook a four-year apprenticeship, attending the Centre on two half days during the week, with the remainder of their instruction taking place at Stow Hill School on two evenings and Saturday morning of each week.

The Centre in Charles Street was opened in 1898 and alterations in the Government Regulations brought more changes from 1905, with the period of apprenticeship being reduced from four years to two, but Pupil Teachers were then required to attend the Centre for five half days each week and also had to complete a period of probation. The demands of this teaching education led the Town Council to incorporate the work of the Pupil Teachers’ Centre into the new building in Clarence Place, in order to ensure that the conditions of the Government grants were adequately fulfilled.



**182 Dock Street**  
The building as it is today, standing close to Newport market.

In January 1893, classes held in this building offered French, Shorthand, Carpentry, Plumbing and Chemistry for 186 students.

(The image of the shop front is reminiscent of Robert Doisneau’s ‘Sunday morning in Arcueil’, 1945) [<http://www.robertdoisneau.com/sundayarcueil.htm>]

# Newport Technical Institute (1898-1910)

Temporary premises for the technical classes were opened in 1898 at 24 Bridge Street, which belonged to Mr Moses Wheeler, who was for some years Chairman of the Intermediate Schools in Newport, as well as an active member of the Technical Instruction Committee. The name of Newport Technical Institute was given to this building, but it was not large enough to house all of the aspiring science students in Newport at that time.

New classes in Commerce and Technology proved to be very popular, but space was inadequate. The Chemistry Lab was an upper room with ventilation in the roof and the Physical (Physics) Lab was formerly a billiard room! The yard behind the building was covered over and together with the adjoining room on the first floor provided the Plumbing workshop. A Carpentry workshop was created on the ground floor, by making two rooms into one with the removal of a partition wall. There were five other classrooms and two small rooms for storing material. The number of students rose to 500 and a room in Caxton Place, opposite the main building, was also taken over for additional accommodation for about 60 students. Despite the persistent problems of inadequate rooms and equipment, many first class certificates in advanced stages of various subjects were gained in the Exams of the Board of Education.

In 1898 the functions of the Art Department and Science, Technology and Commerce were separated under two Heads: John Joseph Stewart was appointed Head of the latter, while William Bush (who had been Head of the School of Art and Science since 1874) remained as Head of the Art Department. Bush had many quarrels over the years with the Town Council and Education Committee, but the souvenir brochure for the new Technical Institute described him as holding ‘...the highest awards in the kingdom for Mechanical Engineering, Photography, Mathematics and Mechanics and other sciences...’. Stewart was a scientist who presided over a big increase in student numbers and achievements, until his resignation in 1915. These two men were particularly responsible for the great expansion of Adult Education in Newport in the period 1898-1915.

Despite the pressures of space, the Technical Institute achieved great results with its students, with honours being achieved in various Science examinations for the Board of Education and the University of London, as well as a King’s Prize from the Board of Education for Advanced Chemistry. The City and Guilds of London Institute awarded a bronze medal for the highest place in an examination in Chemistry Applied to Brewing, as well as a silver medal for the highest position in the ordinary stage of Mechanical Engineering and several First Class Technological Certificates with honours for Carpentry and Plumbing.

These were great achievements for both the students and the Technical Institute, as they were national awards, open to students all over the country. With the growth in demand for classes – particularly those in the Technical Institute – the Technical Instruction Committee seriously contemplated a scheme for the erection of a new building, which could accommodate all of the departments on one site.

Following the 1904 Education Act, the Town Council commissioned a report on Education in Newport. Amongst other recommendations, the report highlighted an urgent need for a permanent and adequately-equipped building in which Technical Education could be suitably carried out. This gave new impetus to the planned development in Clarence Place, for which land was purchased in 1899, but this was delayed due to several factors including the death of the designer. A Sub-Committee was formed to investigate the situation and in compiling its report, fact-finding visits were made to Technical Institutes at Worcester, West Bromwich, Birmingham, Poplar and Paddington.



**Newport Technical Institute**

From 1898 to 1910 the premises at 24 Bridge Street were known as Newport Technical Institute.

The impressive building is occupied now by a firm of accountants and also houses the offices of the Newport Harbour Commissioners.



Courtesy of Peter Brown

**JJ Stewart**  
Principal of the Department of Science, Technology and Commerce at the Institute



Photo by A & G Taylor

**William Bush**

Head of the School of Art. Bush held national awards in Mechanical Engineering, Photography, Mathematics, and Mechanics.

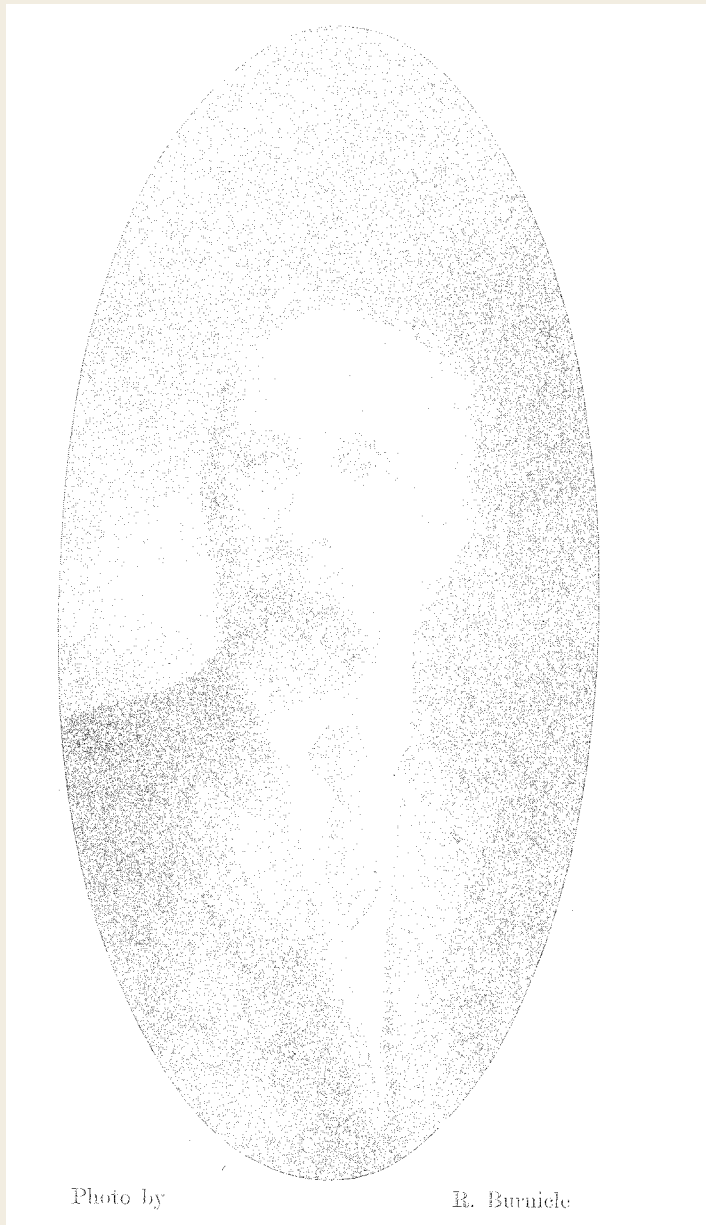


Photo by R. Burnicle

Newport had the chance in 1904 to obtain the status of a University College within the University of Wales, if the Town Council had been prepared to invest as Swansea did, but this did not happen. Friction arising from a lack of co-operation between the County Borough of Newport and the County of Monmouthshire on the provision of Further Education also held back developments for years. An opportunity slipped through the fingers of the politicians and University College status was not achieved until 1996.



**Newport  
Technical  
Institute  
(1910-1958)**





In 1899, Lord Tredegar was persuaded to sell the College a plot of land in Clarence Place for £4,500 for the new Technical Institute and the building remained in use up to 1996 as the Newport School of Art and Design. Norman M Brown won the competition to design the new building, but he died in 1904 and a reworked design by the Borough Architect, Charles Ward, was finally chosen in 1908. The foundation stone of the new Institute was laid on 24th June 1909, with the building officially opened on 29th September 1910 by the Mayor, William Blackburn (not Lord Tredegar as the official brochure states).

**Charles Ward**

As Newport Borough Architect, Charles Ward was responsible for Stow Hill School, the Carnegie Public Library on Corporation Road and the Pillgwenlly Police Station. His chief work was the new Technical Institute, which was the largest building of its type in Monmouthshire.



Photo by A & G Taylor

The building was (according to the souvenir brochure) a remarkable example of early 20th-century architecture ‘...in the modern classic style, the proportions being carefully considered to obtain effect rather than using superfluous ornament...’. It had advanced facilities for technical work such as engineering, as well as art rooms. The lighting in particular was state-of-the-art, with ‘...the laboratory and other rooms...lit by inverted arc lamps to minimize shadows and to enable Art students to carry out colour work in evening classes...’. In the College’s Annual Report for 1909-10, William Bush stated that “...in the fine building in Clarence Place, so thoroughly well-designed and equipped for every branch of Technical Instruction, we have an Institute second to none in the country...”.

In the first year (1910-11) the Institute attracted 305 Art students and 813 for Technology and Commerce - a significant increase on the earlier numbers - but as the politicians had failed to obtain University College status in 1904, the new Technical Institute could not offer degrees despite its great success. In the Department of Science, Technology and Commerce alone, Stewart had 32 full-time and part-time staff.

New classes in 1913 included Physics, Pure Maths, Applied Maths and Mechanics. Before this time, most students had studied in the evenings after their day jobs, or on occasional day release from their employers, but the Institute was built in co-operation with the town’s industrial and commercial sectors, which now supplied many of the students for daytime study. The Head (J. J. Stewart) also suggested Mechanical and Electrical

Engineering and Chemistry, so that students could prepare for University of London examinations in Science and Engineering. With so many full-time classes, the Institute must have looked like a modern college for the first time, but the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 delayed the new plans for two years.

The 1912-13 session was a milestone in the Institute’s development when the first Photography class was introduced, beginning the great tradition of Photography at Newport. It was probably William Bush (Head of the School of Art) who was instrumental in establishing this course, as he was a keen photographer who had been adjudicator of the Photographic Section of the Royal National Eisteddfodau at Newport, Cardiff and Llanelli.

Bush was asked (for undisclosed reasons) by the Secondary Education Committee to resign his position as Head of the School of Art in late 1914. However, in February 1915 he was offered the post of Assistant at the School, on half of his former salary. This caused problems with the other staff and by March he had been moved again, to the position of Art Advisor to the Borough’s primary schools, holding this post until his death in 1926. He was prominent in Newport Higher Education for 43 years, but never managed to get on with the influential people who controlled education. By contrast, he was popular with the working-class college students, as demonstrated by ‘a mechanic’ who wrote to the newspaper *The Star of Gwent* in 1891.

“...Perhaps some would think more of him if, instead of interesting himself in ornithology, he spent his own time shooting pheasants, and dressed in riding breeches, and did the heavy with some of our swell folks; but working men prefer him as he is, and admire him for what he is...”

On Bush’s departure, the Committee decided to appoint an overall Principal for the Schools of Art, Science, Technology and Commerce and appointed the 35-year-old R W Holland, although many people had expected Stewart to get the job. One Labour Councillor expressed his disapproval by saying “He would be better engaged in digging trenches in France or helping to make guns in Birmingham”. As a result of this appointment, Stewart resigned in August 1915, leaving Newport never to return.

Many of the students did go to the trenches in France, but despite the wartime disruptions, the College attempted to keep things as normal as the circumstances allowed. A new Head of Art, Donald Sinclair, was appointed in Bush’s place, and the Principal himself became Head of Science. The Institute also emphasised the importance of Engineering by creating a Head for that subject. Student numbers were increased by classes to train munitions workers and for mechanics from the Royal Flying Corps (the forerunner of the RAF). Other classes (from 1917) trained disabled servicemen in Clerical Work, Draughtsmanship, Jewellery Repair, Cabinet Making and Upholstery, so that they could find employment after the war. By this time, students could attend on a full-time daily basis.

**The Art School in the 1920s**

“The Art School was positioned on the left side of the main entrance and occupied the three floors. The ground floor was devoted to Architecture and Crafts, and on the second floor Design and Sculpture, and on the enormous third floor the Antique Room, which was divided into three units by large, thick green curtains. Here was taught lithography, drawing from the antique reproduction sculptures, and underneath a huge glass dome, the Life Room.”

“Along the corridor to the Life Room there was a marvelous aviary where they kept rabbits and hedgehogs, anything for the students to paint and draw.” Stanley Lewis, Art student 1923-26



### Engineering workshops

One of the workshops, with semi-enclosed 'economy' arc lamps

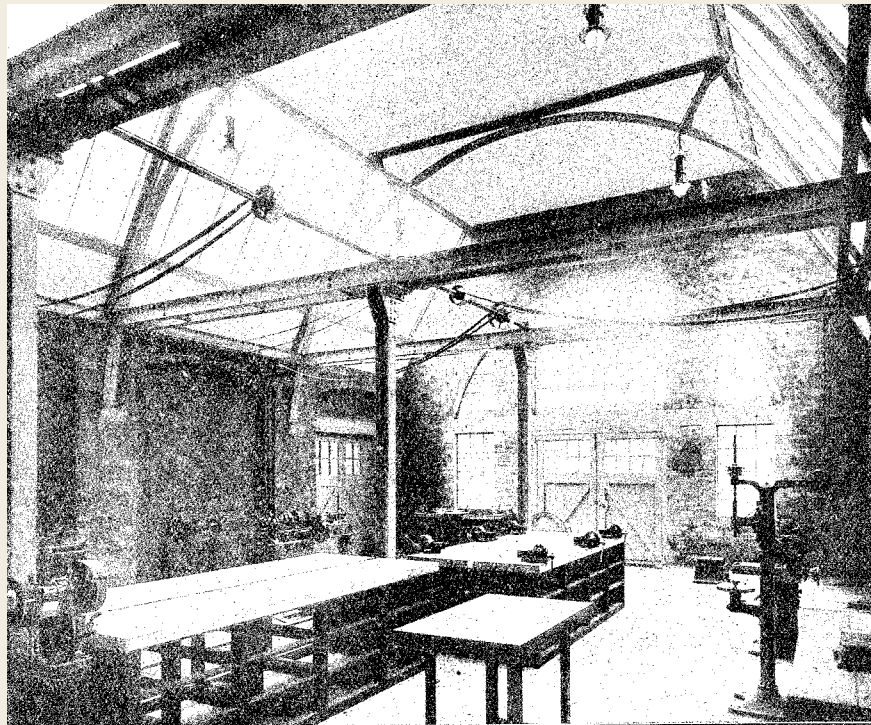


Photo by G Marshall Smith

In 1917, the Principal again argued that due to this expansion, Newport should become part of the University of Wales, but the Royal Commission on University Education in Wales rejected the proposal. Holland resigned as Principal shortly after the war (February 1919) and according to the *South Wales Argus*, he 'reorganized the Institute, gave it a new impetus, and started it upon the path of progress'. He had '...made the Technical Institute a power'. In the month before his resignation he was awarded the OBE for his work as Honorary Commissioner for Military Service (Civil Liabilities). The new Principal was George R Bennett, a Physics and Maths tutor, whose retirement in 1933 severed the last link with the 19th-century history of the College.

### The inter-war years

Student numbers increased substantially following the end of the war, with returning ex-servicemen and a general desire for progress, but the number of students granted day release to attend was still very small. During the 1919-20 session there were 1762 students and a satisfying feature was the increasing desire of the evening students to follow integrated programmes, instead of selecting isolated courses. Bennett expressed his intention of developing work "of a University standard", and by 1920 the Institute was renamed "The County Borough of Newport Technical College and Institute" in recognition of its evolving character.

The growth of Engineering illustrates the expansion: before the war only 80 student hours per week were required to satisfy demand, but by 1919-20 the figure was 900. This caused some problems with resources, and following a quarrel over fees between Newport and Monmouthshire Councils, some Monmouthshire students were sent to study in Cardiff for several years in the mid 1920s. In 1921-22 the College began to issue Certificates and Diplomas of the Institute of Mechanical Engineering, and in 1923 Ordinary National Certificates (ONC). In 1938, the Higher National Certificates in Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering were instituted, the former being the first in the country to include Metallurgy.

### Stanley Lewis – Art student 1923-26

At 103, Stanley Lewis is the oldest of the University's alumni. Born locally in 1905, Stanley studied Art at Newport, before winning a free studentship for a three-year course at the Royal College of Art in London. He returned to Newport as Painting Master before military service in World War II and after the war he spent 22 years as Principal of Carmarthen Art School. Stanley was awarded the MBE in 2006 (aged 100) for his services to painting and illustration.

While a student at Newport, Stanley produced a large volume of work, including murals that adorned the walls of the Antique Room in the Art School in Clarence Place.

He also painted a large-scale version (8' x 4') of his study of the Crucifixion on an old window blind. In 1936, the Crucifixion was chosen to be displayed in an exhibition of arts and crafts in honour of King Edward VIII, who was on a Royal visit to Monmouthshire to 'boost the Welsh spirit'. The King was reported to have been completely absorbed by the painting and commented that the artist had 'captured passion'.



### Stanley with students (c1940)

Courtesy of John Wilson, Guest Curator, Documenting the City, an exhibition produced for Newport Museum and Art Gallery, 2007

Copyright Newport Museum and Art Gallery



### **The Welsh Molecatcher (1937)**

This is probably Stanley's best-known work, painted when he was a Lecturer at the College. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in London (1937) and in The artist in Wales at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, in 1952



Courtesy of John Wilson, Guest Curator, Documenting the City, an exhibition produced for Newport Museum and Art Gallery, 2007

The Art School maintained its high reputation by sending seven of its students to the Royal College of Art in 1927-28. Sinclair's successor as Head of the School of Art was W H Dudley, who exhibited paintings at the Royal Academy on many occasions, and continued the current tradition of employing art tutors with their own distinguished reputation as artists.

### **Art students at Newport in the 1930s**

Courtesy of John Wilson, Guest Curator, Documenting the City, an exhibition produced for Newport Museum and Art Gallery, 2007



Copyright Newport Museum and Art Gallery

In 1933, Bennett retired as Principal and was succeeded by A G Webb, a 40-year-old engineering tutor with ambitions to strengthen the links between the College and local industry. A full inspection in the same year revealed, once more, inadequacies in the standard of equipment for technical subjects, so the gifts and donations from industry encouraged by Webb were welcome. The following year, five new classes were started and extra equipment was acquired. The name was changed once again (in 1934), to the Newport Technical College, when Webb defined the College's mission as "... the provision of systematic courses in full-time day, part-time day, and evening classes, in the principles and practice of Engineering, Pure and Applied Science and the Arts and Crafts, to meet the needs of the industrial and commercial community of this area..."

This can be seen as the real beginning of the modern College at Clarence Place. When Webb resigned to take up another post in 1936, he left an institution far clearer in its goals and organisation than the one he found on his arrival. F W R Harrison succeeded him and remained Principal until 1957 during which time he transformed the College into a recognizable modern institution.

### **Clarence Place and Technical Schools**

A postcard view from the end of the town bridge around 1925.



Courtesy of Newport Past website

### **The Second World War and after**

The Second World War began in September 1939 and, as during World War I, student numbers declined sharply, although the Edwardian heating system was put to good use for air-raid shelters. The building suffered some shrapnel damage during the bombing of Newport, which allowed rain into the upper rooms and contributed to the destruction of the Victorian antique statues, which had long been neglected. Fred Harrison remained as Principal throughout the War and Harry Lea, who was excused military service, became Head of the Art School.

In December 1939, the unique Metallurgy classes prompted the *South Wales Argus* to resume its call for Newport to become a University College. However, Cardiff also began to offer Metallurgy classes and that institution was already offering Engineering degrees. Once again, the proposal was ignored.

As in 1914-18, classes connected with the war effort made up to some extent for the students who had joined the forces. In 1940-41 the Ministry of Labour ran courses for machine operators and fitters at the College, and



the Engineering Department in particular benefited from being expanded and provided with modern machinery. The forces' training schemes also introduced more students to the College, but these came to the technical departments rather than the Art School. Some members of staff also drew maps for the RAF at that time.

**The location of the Institute**

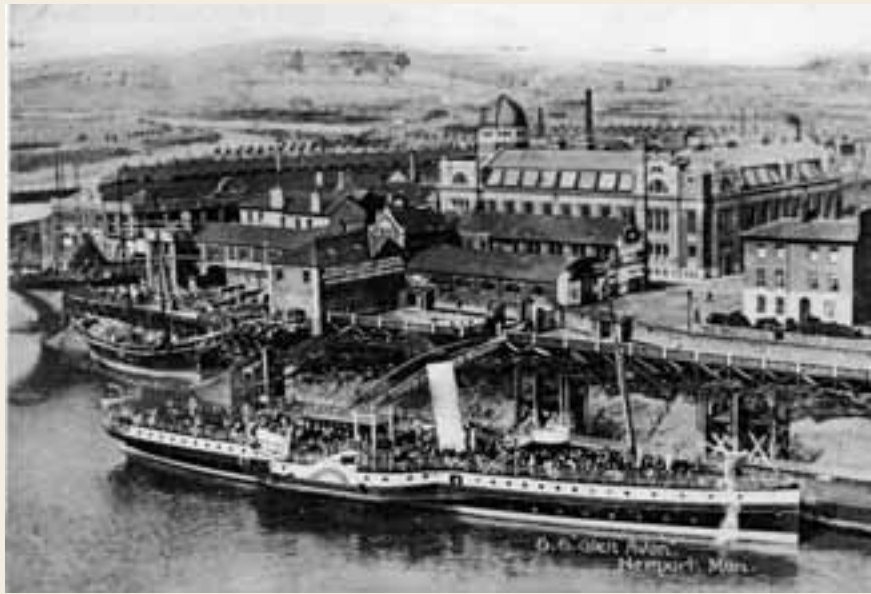
The Technical Institute between the wars with its familiar dome, showing its proximity to the river Usk, with Newport town bridge at the extreme left.

The ship is the SS Glen Avon, one of the Campbell steamers that ran pleasure trips in the Bristol Channel. She saw action as a minesweeper in both world wars and supported the evacuation from Dunkirk in 1940.

*“It used to be wonderful when the paddle steamer came in at night-time. When I finished at half past nine at the technical college, I came out by the steps, you know, by the bridge, and there would be the paddle steamer just beginning to turn to come to the landing place.*

*All the lights and everything, and then you'd look at the other side, the great bridge with the engines off to London. It was wonderful then. It was the best period.”*

Stanley Lewis, Art student (1923-26) and Lecturer in the 1930s



Courtesy of Newport Past website

Student numbers increased after the war as a consequence of the founding of the modern education system by the 1944 Education Act, which placed a statutory duty on Local Education Authorities to provide facilities for Further Education. Expansion continued steadily in the post-war period, with increased numbers of students and courses now including the building trades alongside the School of Art, Higher National Certificates in Metallurgy, Ordinary National Certificates in Chemistry and Mechanical Engineering for ex-servicemen, with many students obtaining National Diplomas in Design.

In 1949, discussions were held between the Ministry of Education, Monmouthshire County Council Education Committee and Newport Education Committee over the provision of technical education in the boroughs, which was the beginning of the process that would lead in 1958 to the establishment of Newport and Monmouthshire College of Technology. In 1950 the first Vice-Principal was appointed and a record number of 63 National Certificates was awarded. From this time onwards, the Board of Governors was given more say over the running of the institution, with the Further Education Committee becoming mainly concerned with grants and awards. Art students and staff exhibited their work both locally and nationally, although the nature of art education was changing during the 1950s from its traditional craft base to a greater sensibility, partly resulting from the

growing influence of American Expressionism. These changes were later to influence the Coldstream Report of 1960, which helped to change the structure of art school teaching in Britain, introducing the compulsory study of art history for art students and eventually leading to degree status being awarded to recognised art school courses.



Courtesy of Brett Breckon

The final few years of Newport Technical College were ones of great achievement, with record numbers of students taking technical qualifications and in 1957, Joan Davies won the South Wales Institution of Engineering scholarship for the most promising Engineering student – the first woman to do so.

This success was tempered by acute accommodation problems, because the College had clearly outgrown the old Clarence Place building. By 1955-56, there were more than 4000 students, compared to just over 1,100 when the building opened in 1910 and by 1957 classes had to be held in six other buildings in Newport as well as Clarence Place. The years of Newport Technical College were coming to a close, and by 1957, F W R Harrison was appointed Principal of Newport and Monmouthshire College of Technology (in Allt-yr-yn Avenue), which took over the technical education functions of the old College. Several other staff joined him over the next year. In the final report, the acting Principal, J C Winter, wrote “...This Report may be considered as the last Report of the College, for during the session so many changes were made in the work and aims that it is no longer carrying out the functions for which it was originally brought into being”. In 1958 the College ceased to function as a Technical College, but the Clarence Place building itself continued as the Newport and Monmouthshire College of Art.



**Caerleon  
Training College  
(1914-1975)**



*Caerleon College.*



Caerleon College (originally known as Monmouthshire Training College) was almost the contemporary of the new Technical Institute, having been first mooted in 1908 in discussions between Monmouthshire County Council and the Board of Education. It was later decided between Monmouth, Glamorgan, Newport and Cardiff that two teacher training colleges were needed, one at Barry for female students and one at Caerleon for men, initially taking 40 from Monmouthshire and 60 from Glamorgan as well as Newport students.

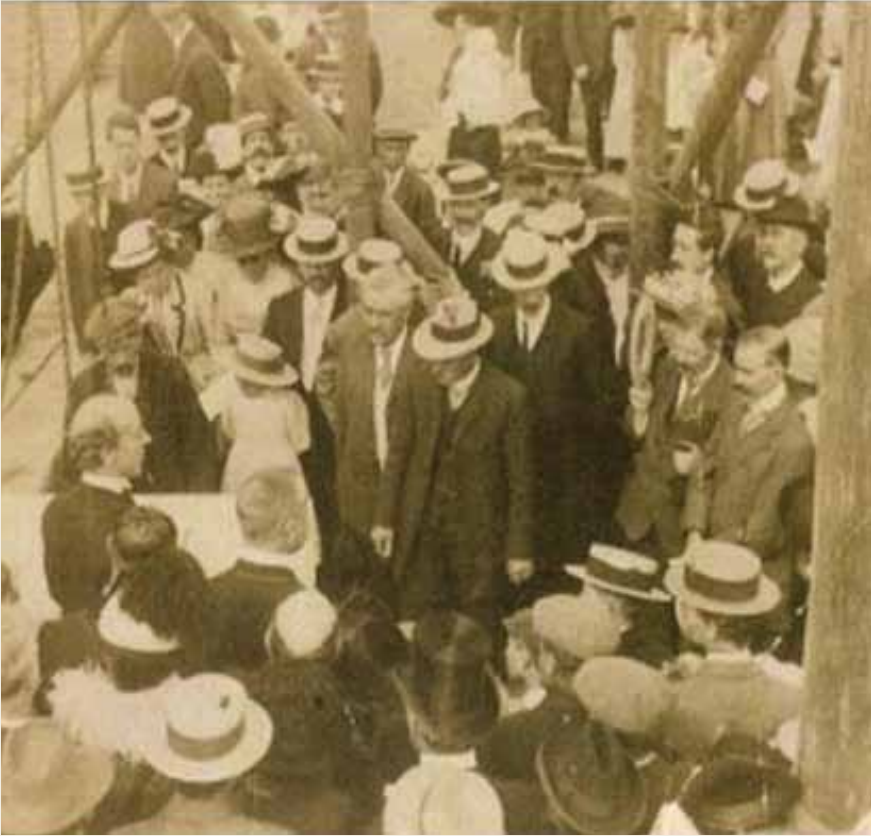
The College at Caerleon was built on land that had been purchased by Alderman Parry and sold on to the Education Committee. In 1913 the Education Committee also acquired the land to the east (now occupied by the playing fields and the redgra), which had originally been reserved for children with disabilities. The land to the north of College Drive (where student accommodation now stands) was also acquired later; this had been earmarked in 1920 for a tuberculosis sanatorium, but there were natural concerns about building this so near to the students.

**Laying the foundation stone at Caerleon, 1912**

The Liberal Home Secretary, Reginald McKenna (MP for Pontypool), laid the foundation stone of the new building on 18th July 1912. In this photograph of the ceremony, Mr McKenna is the balding figure standing on the left. The man facing him in the centre (with a mark on his hat) is Mr Charles Lock, the Clerk of Works, whose family still own the photograph. His great grandson Peter Thomas recently studied Family History at the University.

Following the speeches and the lowering of the stone, the guests were 'invited to take Tea in the Marquee'. The tradition of the marquees still continues, as they are used for additional accommodation on the front lawns for the Awards Ceremonies and the May Ball every year.

The ceremony was not without incident. On the previous evening - in an effort to disrupt proceedings - suffragettes objecting to the force-feeding of detained suffragette campaigners on hunger strike used building materials to start a fire. The blaze, however, was controlled before much damage was done.



Courtesy of David Norris Thomas

**The first students at Caerleon in 1914**

One of the first students was Gerald Buck, who featured in the University's Alumni News magazine in 1994 on his 101st birthday. He died in 1996, aged 103.



The first Principal of the new College was Sir Edward Anwyl, a Welsh and Celtic scholar from the University College of Wales who laid the foundations of the College's high academic reputation by appointing to his staff several distinguished academics who went on to high public office. One of these was David Brunt, a lecturer in Maths who later became Sir David and Head of the Meteorological Office. Such was the calibre of the first staff appointments that it was suggested as early as 1914 that the College should offer degree-level courses. Unfortunately, Sir Edward did not live to see the College's development as he died in 1914 (even before the official opening) and was succeeded by I B John.

**I B John**

The Principal who presided over the early years of the College at Caerleon was Ivor Bertram John, of whom one student wrote in 1914

*"...The Principal, Ivor B John, has already stamped himself as a distinct personality amongst us, leaving to us the freedom which is naturally ours the moment we realise the limits of absolute freedom... Under his care both from the professional and the academic side, we feel that we are citizens of a free state..."*





**From 1914 to 1945**

The development of the College began under difficult circumstances - as the First World War had already broken out – and the first planned student intake was drastically reduced from 56 to 18 students, as some joined the forces and others did war work in government departments. The College also had to fight for its survival against proposed merger plans as well as suggestions to use the building either as an internment facility for German prisoners, or as a military hospital. Several staff members also left to take up war work, yet the College was so successful that the Principal’s report of 1917 claimed that every student entering the examinations since the opening had passed.

In the immediate post-war years, the College was lively and active, with reports on the academic work very favourable. For the first time, World History was offered, and extra-curricular activities also flourished, particularly drama and sport, with major successes on the rugby field. Disabled ex-servicemen were able to enjoy use of the front lawns, which had been transformed into a bowling green.

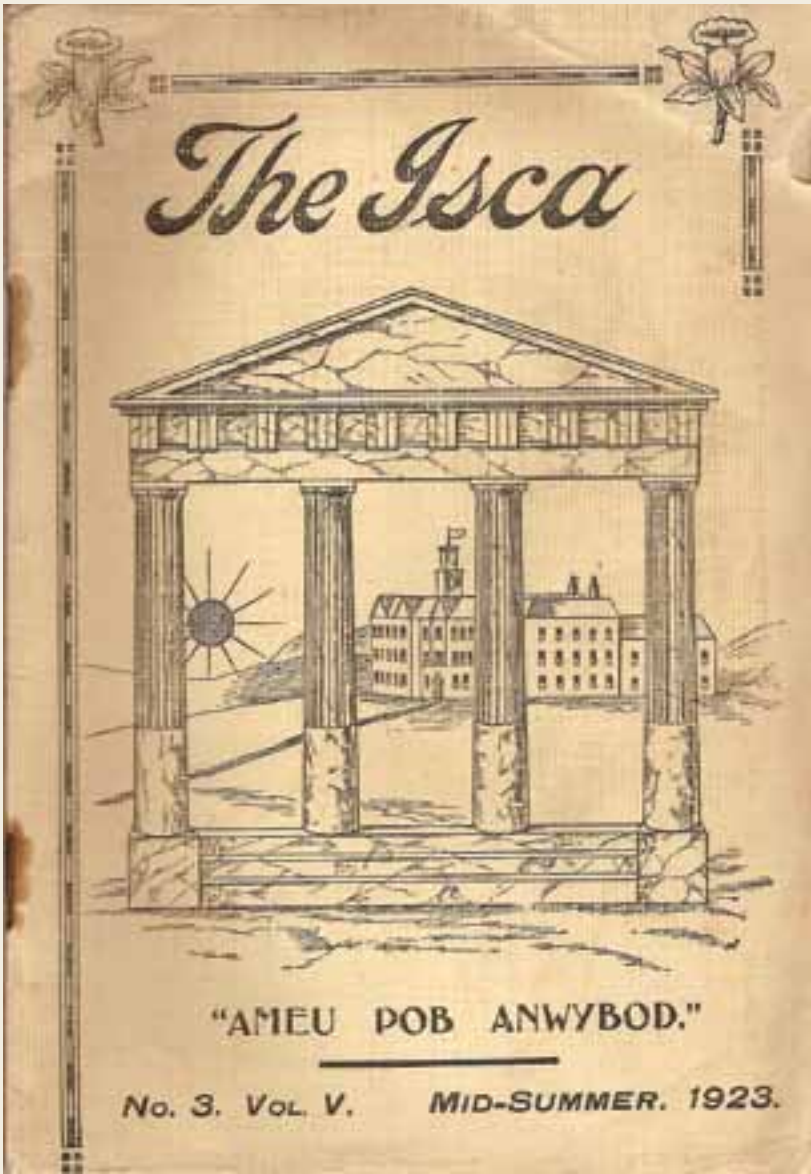
**Drama at Caerleon**

Drama has been a feature of the activity at Caerleon since the first days of the Training College, with the first production of ‘The Poacher’ in 1914.

Interest never waned, despite the war-time interruptions, and the first post-war performance was ‘A Modern Quixote, a Two-Act Playlet’ in 1920. This play had the added distinction of being written by the then Principal, I B John, and produced by T J Webley who became Principal afterwards.

Such strong support from senior figures at the College allowed drama to flourish, despite the setbacks of two world wars and a lack of adequate facilities. Early performances had no stage, and it was not until the 1936 production of ‘Captain Brassbound’s Conversion’ that the players had the benefit of a stage and electrical equipment. Lack of facilities was still an issue in the 1960s until a new hall and stage were built.

Male students played women’s parts in the early performances, but from 1926 guest actresses were engaged and this practice continued until the first female students were admitted at Caerleon in 1962. T J Webley met his wife Iris when she came to act in one of the plays at the College.



**The Isca magazine**

The College had its own magazine (founded in 1914) and one of the magazine’s regular writers, Edgar Phillips, won the poetry crown at the National Eisteddfod in 1934.

**Sport at Caerleon**



**The Invincibles**

The 1933-34 rugby team was never defeated. Principal T J Webley sits at the centre.



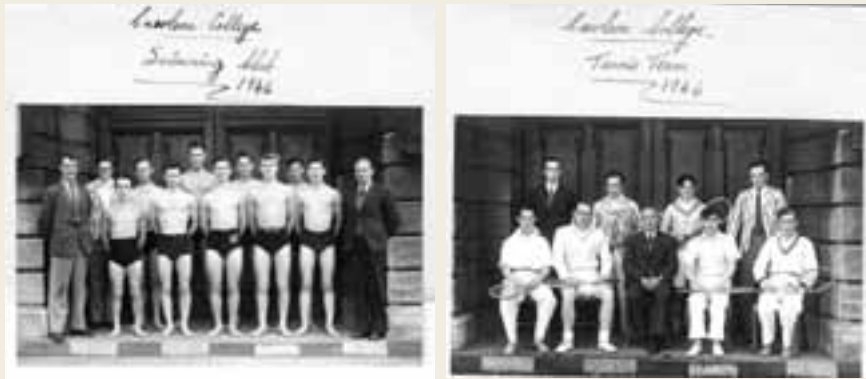
### Leighton Jenkins

The first Caerleon player to be capped from the College. While captaining the College in 1954, he was called up to play against Ireland. He went on to play in each of the five nations in 1956.



The early years of sport at Newport are synonymous with the Caerleon Training College, where sport was an important feature from the first days. With Newport at the heart of fervent Welsh rugby tradition, it is not surprising that rugby was always the dominant game, enjoying strong support from staff such as T J Webley (later Principal), who ensured that all games had a fair share of financial and staff support. Since the early 1920s, the College RFC has been an affiliated Welsh Rugby Union club. Despite the problems caused by war, the teams thrived, producing many Welsh caps and other accomplished players. The most capped former student is Malcolm Thomas, who played for Newport after leaving Caerleon and won 23 caps between 1949 and 1959. The first Caerleon player to be capped from the College was Leighton Jenkins in 1956, although the first former student to play for Wales was Ernie Finch in 1924.

Barry Llewelyn became a British Lion while still a student playing regularly for the College and won 13 caps between 1970 and 1972. Barry set another college record by being permitted to sit his finals in New Zealand while he was on tour!



Swimming Club and Tennis Team, 1946

In 1937 Principal Ivor Bertram John died and was succeeded by John Owen, who had been a teacher at the College since its beginning.



### John Owen

The Principal from 1937-44 had been a member of staff since the College opened.

*"Near the church stood the Greyhound. This was counted as the first when after their exams the students of Caerleon College raced to have a drink in each of Caerleon's 13 pubs. The last was the Sun (or Star) out on the Usk road."*

Brian Blythe, 'Memories of Caerleon, 1935 – 1950'

Caerleon Net website [www.caerleon.net]

As in World War I, the Second World War produced similar problems of student and staff numbers, but unlike the Great War, the College actively encouraged its use by the armed forces and other agencies, when the Assembly Hall was used for extra-mural lectures to troops and the College tower was used for observation purposes by the Defence Corps. Temporary huts were erected in the grounds for accommodation for the National Fire Service and evacuated pupils from Dover County School for Girls. The students who remained at the College during the war also actively participated in the war effort by joining the Air Training Corps and learning drill, signalling, map-reading and engineering. Students also took part in fire-watching, first aid and demolition squads, also taking over some of the domestic running of the College due to the shortage of staff. Activities such as dances were used to raise money for war charities. Another 19 of the College's students died in action during the war.

### Life at the College during the War

*"There were 90 students here back then. You had to be in your rooms from 8pm. There was a roll call at ten and then lights out at 10:30. We could go home to Abertillery at weekends if we wanted, but only after attending compulsory lessons on Saturday morning and supporting any football or rugby matches that were being played in the afternoon."*

Eric Cox, Certificate of Education student, 1943-45

Principal John Owen died in 1944, just before the War ended, after 30 years of teaching at the College. He was, according to the College's Jubilee Celebration publication (1964), '...a great and dedicated teacher and one of the outstanding figures in the history of adult education in South Wales.' T J Webley who succeeded him was the Vice-Principal, who had joined the College's staff in 1919.

**T J Webley**

The Vice Principal from 1944 until his retirement in 1952.

He was a leading and enthusiastic figure in the local community, being involved in the Newport Playgoers, the Monmouthshire Drama League, Army Welfare and the Church.



**Post-war developments**

After the war, T J Webley acquired an additional parcel of land along the west side of the campus to extend the estate. In 1952, Gwilym Prichard Ambrose was appointed Principal and presided over some of the most significant changes in the College’s history up to that time. A notable development was the admission of women students for the first time in 1962, with separate halls of residence for them. The first female lecturers were appointed in 1961, and the first female Vice-Principal in 1963. These developments would not have been possible if Principal Ambrose had not fought off an attempt by the Ministry of Education (in 1959) to close the College and transfer all teacher training to Cardiff. He was described on his death in 1995 (at 91), as ‘...*the man who put Caerleon College on the map...*’.

**Gwilym Prichard Ambrose**

The Principal from 1952-70 oversaw the profound changes in the post-war decades, including the threatened closure in 1959 and the introduction of female students in 1962.

*“I also remember the Principal, Mr Ambrose, with great affection. He was a kind, sympathetic and gentle Welshman.”*

Fred Stedman-Jones, Teaching Certificate, 1952-54



**Life at the College in the early 1950s**

*“Birthdays were celebrated at the Bull and followed by a challenge that fills me with dread now but then was the test of having attained true manhood; a rite of passage equal to earning one’s spurs. Before our peers we walked the humped parapet of the Usk bridge, a ‘Pons Perilous’ indeed, ignoring the long drop into the yellow water and deep mud below. I survived this ritual on my 21st birthday; a feat that demonstrated my worthiness to wear the coveted gold wire badge which bore a red cross, two dragons and a Roman lamp of learning – the badge that marked us out as ‘Caerleon College boys’ at local dances and gave us the cachet that must once have been carried by the Knights of the Round Table at the quarterly Caerleon hops.”*

*“The girls of Barry College came every year on the Thursday night, two coaches filled with predatory young females – hunting lionesses ready to break free from the watchful custody of their unsmiling bluestocking keepers. After the performance there was fraternisation and hospitality in the common rooms, junior and senior, terminating in a late departure of the fair ones whose tutors were now smiling and benevolent – Doc. Metcalfe stocked a mean brew of home-made country wines for such events.”*

Fred Stedman-Jones, Teaching Certificate, 1952-54

*“September 1953, after a period of chasing bandits across the deserts of East Africa with the South Wales Borderers Regiment, I arrived at the front door of Caerleon College on my bike from Pontypool carrying a suitcase.”*

*“Our evening activities were enthralling even without television or radios in our rooms. Alcohol was not permitted on the premises, or guests in the rooms, but being of a similar age we enjoyed each other’s company. We had choir practice, chess and pingpong in the common room and an occasional telephone call.”*

Don Watkins, Certificate of Education student, 1953-55

**The Ghostly Matron**

In January 1960, the College matron, Bertha Ramsey was found dead at the foot of the stairs in the Main Building, apparently toppling from the second floor landing. This was during the Christmas holidays when there were no students present and there was some speculation at the time about whether she fell, or was pushed.

Since her death there have been numerous sightings – said to be her ghost – roaming the corridors near her room on the ground floor. Several security officers have reported strange sounds at night, pictures knocked crooked and the lift operating of its own accord. These are popularly attributed to ‘Big Bertha’.

**The first female students, 1962**

*“The arrival of the ladies was looked forward to with great anticipation, but any chances of ‘visiting’ the women’s dorm was forestalled by the Dean of Women who took guided tours before the preceding summer holidays, with the admonition that “anyone I catch can’t use the excuse that ‘I just wanted to see what it was like’ ”.”*

*“Meals were taken in the college dining room (turn right inside the entrance and go all the way to the end) and breakfast required appropriate dress when the ladies arrived (pyjamas and dressing gowns had been the preferred costume until then).”*

David Holmes, Certificate of Education 1960-63



**Newport  
College of Art  
(1958-1975)**





*“The Clarence Place building was something of a maze and some adventurous Fine Art students discovered working spaces in such hideouts as the disused caretaker’s flat in the roof or behind the lecture theatre’s raked wooden seating. As a result the staff didn’t find them for months. The whereabouts of those students working at the top of the narrow, vertical staircase that lead to the dome remained a permanent secret...”*

Derek Butler, Art Lecturer, 1962-92

The College of Art, situated mainly at Clarence Place but with several annexes, achieved much success in the years immediately following the Second World War with many of its students, mostly from Monmouthshire, progressing to prestigious employment or to post graduate study. Its students were particularly successful in gaining places in the Painting Department at the Royal College of Art. This was largely due to Principal Harry Lea’s success in attracting high-calibre staff. The result was that from the 1950s onwards it was Newport that was widely seen as the outstanding Welsh art school and one of the top art schools in England and Wales.

In 1963 the College was amongst the select few art colleges in the country awarded Diploma in Art and Design (Dip AD) status in the areas of Fine At and Graphic Design, introduced to replace the former National Diploma in Design (NDD). Following the culmination of a very successful career, Harry Lea retired in 1964 and was replaced by John Wright, the youngest Art College Principal in Britain at the time. Over the next few years, the number of teaching staff was considerably increased and students began applying for places at Newport from Art and Design Foundation Study courses around the country. The new Dip AD status led to prestigious commissions from BBC Wales and other major organisations. Meanwhile, highly successful non Dip AD courses in Documentary Photography, Graphic Design, Film & Television, Fashion & Textiles and Foundation Studies were established .

**Reflections of an Art Lecturer in the 1960s**

*“By the time I arrived, Newport had overtaken Cardiff as the liveliest and most prestigious art school in Wales. In 1962 the full-time staff at Newport College of Art consisted of less than twenty people. This included two staff teaching academic subjects, two teaching Fashion and Dressmaking and one teaching Painting and Decorating...”*

*“The primary cause of the College’s enviable reputation was its outstanding Painting Department, headed by Tom Rathmell, although other areas of study such as Illustration, taught by John Wright, Sculpture, run by Tony Stevens and Graphic Design, taught by Bob Falla, were also growing in strength...”*

*“Lecturer John Selway invited his old Royal College chum, David Hockney, down to Newport to meet and chat with the students. After a busy morning John and some of the other painters thought they would impress David by taking him to the Queens Hotel in Bridge Street for lunch. However, when they entered the dining room the manager stopped them and informed Britain’s most famous living artist that he couldn’t be served as he wasn’t wearing a tie. Naturally, John reverted to his usual practice and took Hockney to the nearest pub.”*

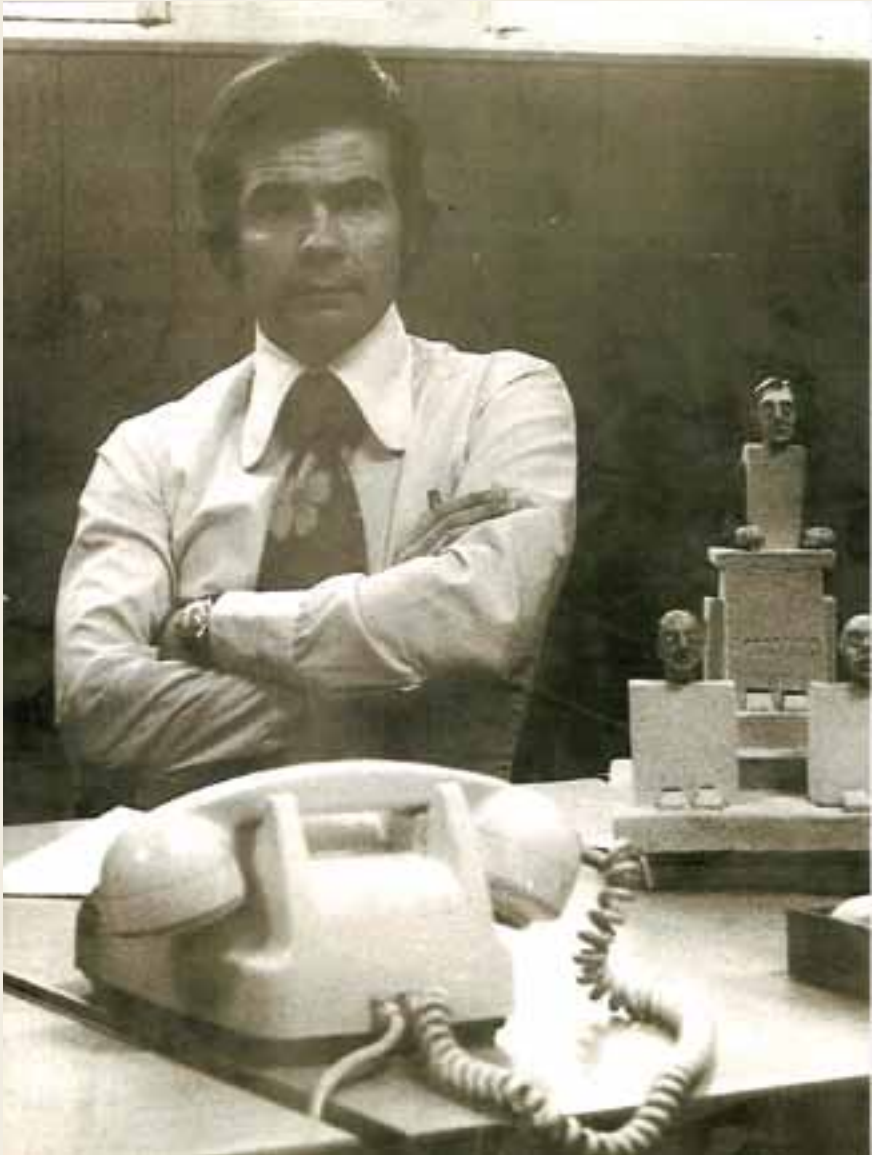
Derek Butler, Art Lecturer, 1962-92

**John Wright, Principal of the Art College from 1964-75**

*“At mid-morning we squeezed into the tiny staff room for tea while John Wright, a natural entertainer, would stand by the sink and tell limericks and tall stories or elaborate on the latest gossip. I remember how much we enjoyed the Profumo Affair.*

*Students taking their break in the hall could hear gales of laughter coming from the staff room and tea intervals inevitably went on long beyond the timetabled fifteen minutes. It was a great time to be an art teacher or art student, particularly at Newport, and I loved every minute...”*

Derek Butler, Art Lecturer, 1962-92



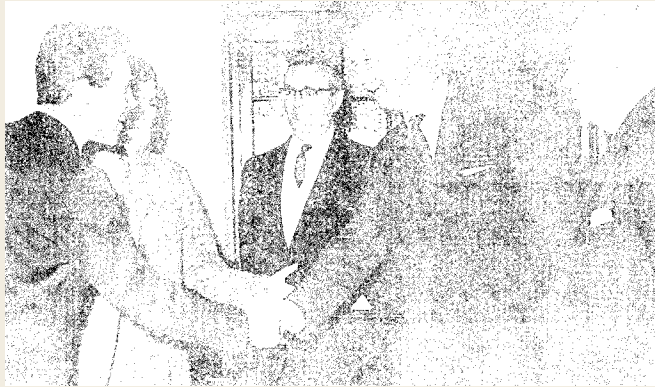
Courtesy of Derek Butler

The College’s reputation in the mid 1960s was summed up by Tudor David in an article in the *Western Mail* ‘...Newport College of Art is one of the few and much-envied colleges to have been recognized for the new art degree – the Diploma in Art and Design; within a few years it will have on roll more than 300 full-time Dip Art & Design students, drawn from all over the country. It is already one of the top six art colleges outside London.’ This prophetic 1965 article also suggested a merger between the art, teaching and technical colleges, and status as a University College, but it would take another 30 years for this to become a reality.



**Lord Snowdon (left) visits the Art College in 1965**

A few years later, Princess Anne (now the Princess Royal) also made an official visit, when she told the assembled staff that “My Uncle Tony told me that if I wanted to take up Art I should come to Newport”.



The Art College’s reputation was given Royal approval in 1965 by an official visit by Lord Snowdon, who unsurprisingly showed greatest interest in the Photography Department. Eight years later, a Diploma course in Documentary Photography - unique in Europe - was set up, becoming one of the College’s most prestigious areas of work in subsequent years. The course was initially devised and taught by David Hurn - a member of the celebrated Magnum Co-operative - and the University still produces some of the most prominent photojournalists from the UK and beyond. David Hurn was awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the University College in 1997, in recognition of his contribution to the course development and his 15 years as director of the programme.

**Documentary Photography class in the 1970s, with David Hurn seated on the table**

*“The aim of the course is not just to turn out professional photographers. Hurn feels that a number of sociologists, archaeologists and anthropologists, for whom documentary photography could be an important tool of recording, may wish to take the course. He looks forward to a time when it will be normal for social service departments, for example, to have social workers on their staff who will be as skilled at using photography as they are in collecting statistics.”*

*New Society*, 12 April 1973



*Courtesy of David Hurn*

**David Hurn**

*“David Hurn had an enormous impact into the School”*

*“When the Queen had some sort of celebration there were all these street parties in the valleys and everyone had a day off. David got his students to shoot pictures of the street parties, bring them back to Clarence Place, develop them, print them up. They took them to the station in Newport, they got them on the train to London, they had a motorcyclist in London who ran them across to Victoria and train out of Victoria and they were in Paris that afternoon. They were in French magazines the next day.”*

*“They didn’t have trade cards so they couldn’t be printed in British magazines. He showed them how to do a rush job, how to market it and how to place it. He had the contacts to do that, you couldn’t do that without the contacts.”*  
Anthony Stevens, Art Lecturer, 1950s-1979

Film-making at the College has also been of national importance, with a Diploma course launched in 1966, as the first of its kind in Wales. Students’ films in the late 1960s were shown on the BBC and at the National Film Theatre in London, also winning awards at several major festivals such as Edinburgh and Locarno. The course was designed not merely as an artistic exercise, but, as befitted the College’s traditional links with industry, to produce technicians, producers and directors of the highest calibre.

**The ‘way out’ College of Art**

In the 1960s and 70s the Fashion and Textiles Department also reached national prominence for the fashionable designs of its students. A front-page report from the *Newport Civic Affairs* freesheet (in January 1968) captures the atmosphere at the height of the ‘swinging 60s’.

*‘...stealing the scene – and the boys – are sheelagh (Straughan), alla (Wilkosz) and jayne (Ruffel), sheelagh looks good in a disposable ‘paper’ shift, alla knocks everyone out in her silver pvc tunic which has an imitation chain-mail effect, jayne swings in a full length caftan. Three dresses designed and made by newport education committee’s ‘way out’ college of art.’*

By the end of the 1970s these designs had given way to ‘granny dresses’ and floral prints, and the annual fashion show of the students’ work always attracted media attention.



*Courtesy of Newport Community Learning and Libraries*

All of this development happened under the management of John Wright, who was appointed Principal in 1964 at the age of only 29. He taught Illustration and was a widely-exhibited artist himself, who had radical plans for the College’s expansion and integration into national life. The Vice-Principal was Thomas Rathmell, a successful portrait and landscape painter, whose portraits of distinguished South Walians hang in many institutions. The School of Art, Media and Design at Caerleon is housed in a building opened in 1985 and named after him.



**Thomas Rathmell (1912-90)**  
**Self portrait (1981)**

*“The strong links between Newport College of Art and the Royal College were due to the close friendship between Tom Rathmell and many of the painting staff at the Royal College. They knew of Tom’s abilities both as a painter and a teacher and had been trying to persuade him to join the RCA staff for years. We’ll probably never know why Tom stayed in Newport rather than move to South Kensington. Whatever the reason, Newport College of Art gained immensely from his presence...”*

Derek Butler, Art Lecturer, 1962-92



Courtesy of John Wilson, Guest Curator, Documenting the City, an exhibition produced for Newport Museum and Art Gallery, 2007 Copyright Newport Museum and Art Gallery

**1968 - The revolution comes to Newport!**

Like 1848 - the year of revolutions - 1968 was a turbulent year across the world. There was widespread opposition to the Vietnam War and disillusionment at the crushing of the Prague Spring by Soviet tanks. Students were on the streets of Paris and there were ‘sit ins’ at the London School of Economics and Hornsey College of Art, over such issues as the small number of Diploma places available for Foundation students and an excess of articulate part-time staff that were given few responsibilities. Several part-time staff involved were dismissed at Hornsey, further inflaming the situation. Students were angry and their voice was being heard.

The dispute at the College began over control of Student Union funds, but this led to other grievances surfacing, such as the teaching facilities, the awards structures and the subjective nature of some of the teaching and assessment methods. Following a visit by a delegation from Hornsey, a Student Representative Committee was established, to detail and present the emerging grievances. Former student Tom Smith recalls those events well, when *“the scars and detritus of heavy industry overshadowed Newport and the town offered few attractions for bohemian spirits”*.

*“The following day, worried by student unrest in Paris and London and now faced with a possible threat in their own College, the senior management withdrew to the Principal John Wright’s palatial office for their own series of meetings. A large banner had appeared in the college emblazoned with the phrase ‘Amelioration through Participation’ and that sent everyone scurrying for their dictionaries. Studios and workshops became a hive of discussion and though we didn’t take over the college there was a sense that the balance of power had changed.”*

*“A battle for ‘hearts and minds’ developed. One day a television crew outside Clarence Place was interviewing John Wright, who was an astute publicist. This was quickly scuppered by a quick-thinking student with the unlikely name of Jim Grim, who put on a crash helmet, picked up a wooden spar and casually walked out of the front entrance waving it. The television crew was no longer interested in what John Wright had to say – they had their scoop - the revolution had come to Newport!”*



**Tom Smith’s student card**



**Tom Smith in 2005**

A public forum on June 25th discussed many of the issues and Tom recalls that this highlighted general satisfaction with the teaching, but concern over other issues such as assessment and the course structures.

*“Coming back to our documents forty years on I am surprised at the number of key issues we tackled and also those we ignored. At that time the feminist movement was in its infancy and there was nothing about women’s issues. Then, many women had a difficult time at art colleges and their views were generally not taken seriously. There is nothing about student welfare or support – tutorial staff often handled mental health problems, sexual health,*



pregnancy and inadequate accommodation very poorly. Safety was of little concern as no one wore protective clothing, xylene was splashed about like water and fire regulations were commonly flouted. There was no concern about equal opportunities. In most art colleges at that time there were few black or Asian students and it would have been a very difficult environment for anyone wheel chair bound.”

“Whatever our shortcomings it was indeed a seminal moment in art and design education. Across the country it was the students who demanded reform; we organised collectively for what we idealistically believed to be for the common good. I think Newport was the only Welsh College to take this form of direct action.”

As it was the end of the academic year the momentum evaporated, but although small changes occurred, many problems remained and the world moved on. Former Lecturer Derek Butler recalls that he and other younger staff members at the time were sympathetic to the students’ cause and one of the main consequences was that from 1968 on, student representatives were included on all panels and boards. In an echo of the Newport Rising of 1839, the town found that for another brief moment in its history it stood centre stage in the fight for justice and rights.



A 1969 caricature of Principal John Wright by Robert Chapman (Fine Art degree student 1966-69), drawn some months after the events, but capturing some of the disillusionment that followed.

The caption reads ‘A sad man going somewhere but he doesn’t know where’.

The grand building in Clarence Place was eventually sold after the Art School was transferred to the campus at Caerleon, but the building later suffered badly from vandalism and neglect.



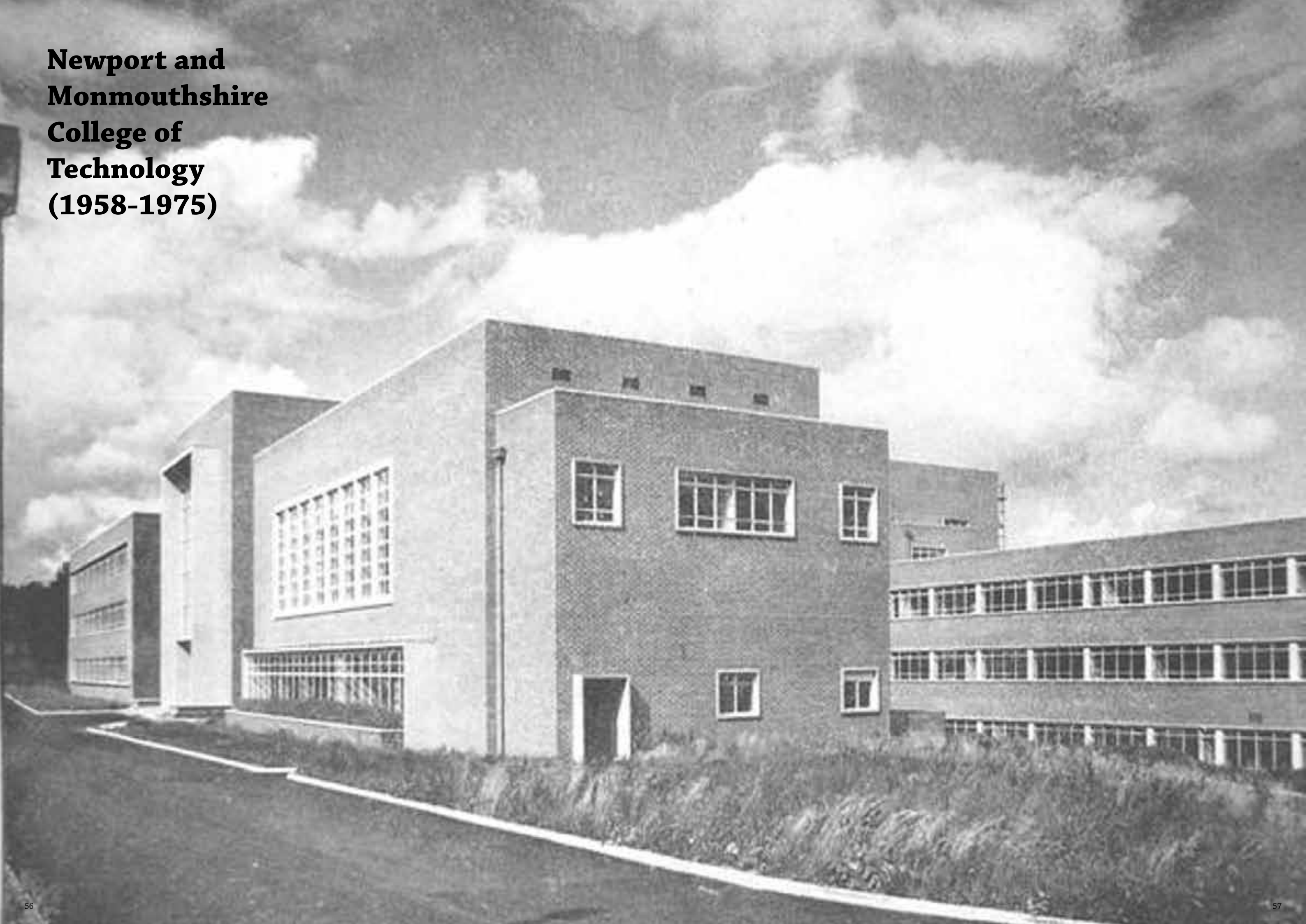
#### The main staircase at Clarence Place in decay (2007)

The staircase has a surprising resemblance to those of the Titanic and her sister ships. No photo of the Titanic’s staircase is known, but the reconstructions for the film were based on photos of the sister ship Olympic which was very similar and launched in 1910, the same year that the Clarence Place building opened.

The use of glass domes with delicate wrought iron frames was a feature of the time over elaborate staircases.

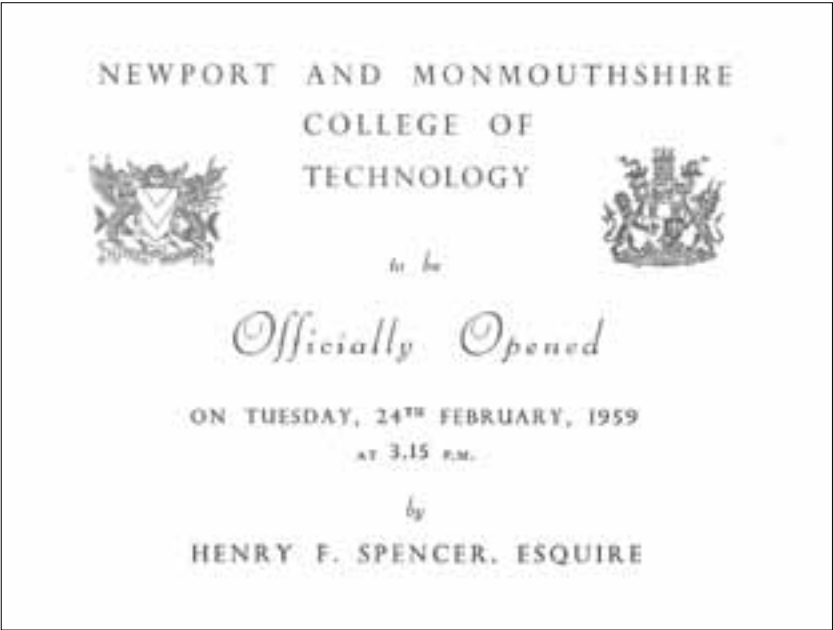
Photograph by Richard Saunders <http://www.flickr.com/photos/richardsaunders>

**Newport and  
Monmouthshire  
College of  
Technology  
(1958-1975)**





The Newport and Monmouthshire College of Technology opened in 1958 in Allt-yr-yn Avenue, taking over the functions from Newport Technical College in Clarence Place. Building work began in 1955, but the site presented problems as it was located on an old landslip, meaning that the plans needed adjusting to accommodate deeper excavations and load spreading, by using steel framing and reinforced concrete. The total cost of construction came to roughly half a million pounds.



Opening ceremony brochure

Courtesy of Newport Community Learning and Libraries



**Henry Spencer**  
The College was officially opened on the 24 February 1959, by Henry Spencer, the Managing Director of Richard Thomas and Baldwins Ltd (a major local steelworks at Llanwern).  
  
The company later donated the College's first computer and was a strong supporter of the College in many ways.

Courtesy of Newport Community Learning and Libraries



**The original teaching staff of the College of Technology at its opening in 1958**  
Principal F W R Harrison sits at the centre of the front row.

The new College had an initial intake of 858 students and housed impressive technical facilities covering Engineering and Science, Chemistry, Physics and Metallurgy for mainly advanced study in these subjects. There were also full-time courses for Marine Engineers and Radio Operators.



**The Physics Lab**  
  
From the early 1960s there were also Departments of Business Administration and Management. These were strengthened by the gift of a computer in May 1963 from Richard Thomas and Baldwin, costing £29,000. This was an 803 Elliott computer system, described in the South Wales Argus as a 'brain', to be used '*...for general work with data and statistics, the computer will also offer 6th formers, industrialists and other interested people ... an appreciation of what a computer can do.*'

Courtesy of Newport Community Learning and Libraries



### **The first computer 'The Brain'**

The Elliott 803 was one of the most successful computers of the 1960s with over 200 sold, many to universities and colleges.

Programs were typed onto five-hole paper tape and output would come out on the same tape, which was then fed into a Creed teleprinter reader to show the answers!



Courtesy of the Science & Society Picture Library,  
Science Museum, London

Overcrowding had become a problem by 1963 and, on advice from the Inspectorate, courses for over 300 students on non-advanced courses were transferred from the College to Further Education establishments. This move allowed the College to concentrate on the advanced courses, but despite this, a number of stores in the existing building needed turning into classrooms and an extension to the building was planned.

Lord Butler opened the extension to the Main Building (named the Harrison Building after its first Principal) on 30 April 1968, and by the time of the opening enrolment had grown to almost 2000, assisted by the new motorway and good geographical location. The extension also made available more specialist rooms for work arising from the expanding demands of the Industrial Training Boards, across a broad spectrum of technical subjects. The installation of CCTV was an innovation, installed *'with the possibility later of linking with schools and of helping with the new Open University'*.

By the time the College merged to create Gwent College of Higher Education in 1975, it was also offering Certificate and Diploma courses in Computer Studies, anticipating the direction that technical studies would take in the next decades. The emphasis on links with local, national, and now international industry and commerce - prominent since the days of the Mechanics Institute - has been retained to the present day.



**The extension at its opening in 1968**

Courtesy of Newport Community Learning and Libraries



**Gwent College  
of Higher  
Education  
(1975-1996)**





The 1972 Government White Paper entitled *Education for Expansion* suggested the merging of colleges in response to increasing costs, and in particular that teacher training be combined with other facilities. The Gwent Director of Education (Trevor Morgan) recommended a merger, seeing the advantages to trainee teachers of mixing with Art and Science students.

There were other reasons for restructuring the local Higher Education provision, because the changes in industry were demanding this, as the traditional heavy industries such as steel and coal mining waned, in favour of growth in the service industries. The nature of the courses offered locally – then, as now - needed to reflect these major changes, and the new skills required.

Thus it was that in September 1975, Newport College of Art, Caerleon College (formerly Training College) and Gwent (Newport and Monmouthshire) College of Technology merged to become a single institution – Gwent College of Higher Education - after discussions between trade unionists, college principals and councillors. This was a logical step for the three institutions, which had long had a close relationship, to create a single College to cater for the whole of the new county of Gwent, which had been created in 1974 under the Local Government Act.

Each of the colleges brought to the merged institution established regional and national reputations, but some people were initially concerned that the individual characters of the colleges would be lost, as these were very distinctive to each: the College of Art was relaxed and informal, with an atmosphere of ‘artistic chaos’ existing in the relationship between staff and students; the College of Technology with a more formal, school-like regime; and the College of Education, with a residual family-like atmosphere. There were also differences with the level of the awards available, with some of the technical subjects still being regarded as ‘inferior’ and some not able to be accredited at degree level until the 1990s. As the new institution established itself, the greater part of the Further Education portfolio that the Colleges brought with them was transferred to other colleges; in terms of the range and level of courses offered by the new institution, it became the most strongly polytechnic in character of all public-sector institutions in Wales.

*“The relationships between students and staff in the different faculties were totally at odds. For instance, the staff at Caerleon and Allt-Yr-Yn were appalled to find that in the Art Faculty, students always called staff by their first names.”*  
Derek Butler, Art Lecturer from 1962-92

**Mel Harris**

Transferring from Caerleon College, he became the first Principal of Gwent College of Higher Education. His leadership prepared the way for the College’s admission to the University of Wales in 1995.



**The Graphic Design Studio at Clarence Place (c1978)**



**The Wait**

Student band ‘The Wait’ perform at the Students Union in Emlyn Street, Friday 15 June 1979  
(L-R) Robert Wyatt, Claire Sinnott, Simon Barber and Neil Carroll



The original plan at the merger was to retain three separate principals for the College, but eventually a single Principal was appointed, Mel Harris, who had been the Principal of Caerleon College of Education since 1972. Under his astute leadership, particularly in fostering links with the funding authority (Gwent County Council), the new College prospered and offered Degree and Masters courses validated by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) and the University of Wales. It was always his aim that the College would become part of the University, and he presided over an expansion of the library, research facilities, resources and staff as well as creating an increased sense of community within the College.

Four new faculties were created, to carry on the work traditionally done by the colleges.

- The Faculty of Education (at Caerleon)
- The Faculty of Art and Design (at Clarence Place)
- The Faculty of Management and Professional Studies (at Allt-yr-yn)
- The Faculty of Science and Technology (at Allt-yr-yn)

In 1992, these would become the Faculty of Education, Humanities and Science, Newport School of Art and Design, Newport Business School and the Faculty of Technology.



Staff and students from Documentary Photography, with two students from Graphic Design - Steve Barnes and Chris Carpenter - who worked on the design of the first two Newport Surveys (c 1979)

The Newport School of Art and Design transferred completely from Clarence Place to Caerleon in 1996, although the Diploma in Foundation Studies (designed to prepare students for advanced Art and Design courses) remained at Fairoak Annex in Newport for a period afterwards.

**From Higher Education College to University College**

By the 1990s, the funding and nature of Higher Education was changing and on 1st April 1992, the College left Gwent County Council control to be funded directly by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and run by a Board of Governors, including representatives from education, industry, business and public service in south-east Wales, who held responsibility for finance, estates and personnel.

**The Rathmell Building**

By the 1980s it was clear that the expansion of the School of Art and Design had made the facilities at Clarence Place inadequate, and Norman Robson Smith designed an innovative new building for the Caerleon campus. It was built on a steel frame, with glass walling to utilise the full natural light. The building opened in 1985, and the 1988-9 prospectus reported on it as follows.

*‘The new building at Caerleon is in itself a bold architectural statement of the unique nature of the course. Students are able to circulate as their work demands through open, flexible studio spaces, large well-equipped workshops and to use the extensive telematic systems incorporated into the building. From September 1988 the College will possess some of the finest facilities in Europe in Fine Art and 3D design. These will reflect, as do the facilities across the College, the importance attached to developments in high technology and preparing students for careers in the 21st century.’*



Gwent College Student Paper from 1987



### The student village

The new student village on the north-east side of the campus was opened in September 1994. This provided another 414 en-suite bedrooms and increased the number of study bedrooms at Caerleon to over 700, enabling the College to guarantee a place in halls to all first year students.



In 1995 a College-wide computer network was installed, linking all the separate campuses and providing access to the Internet, while an Information Technology Centre provided a full range of IT services to the new University College. Email was still referred to as electronic mail at that time!

### Fire at Caerleon

The main building at Caerleon suffered a major fire on the evening of 17th March 1992, only weeks before the College opted out of local authority control. A candle left burning in a student's room probably started the fire; smoke was spotted coming from the room as the fire took hold, but due to swift action by staff and students the building was evacuated and no one was injured.

More than 50 firefighters with 10 appliances battled the blaze, which was not brought under control until several sections of the roof had collapsed and bedrooms and academic offices were damaged. Some records on the first floor were lost and students lost personal items as well as irreplaceable course work. Professor K J Overshott assured all the students that no one would suffer academically because of the fire.



In 1995 the University of Wales Court petitioned the Privy Council for the admission of the College as a University College, but the application was held up due to a legal debate on the use of the word 'University' in the title; a term protected by the Trade Descriptions Act. Although a few Colleges had used the title University College for some years, the legality of this use of the term University had never been tested in law. Progress was delayed while this issue was resolved and the Privy Council eventually approved the change of name from Gwent College of Higher Education to University of Wales College, Newport on 18th April 1996. On the following day, the University of Wales formally accepted and welcomed the new University College at a meeting of the University of Wales Court.

This designation superseded the Taught Degree Awarding Powers granted to the College by the Privy Council in March 1995, following a visit by a scrutiny panel on behalf of the Higher Education Quality Council in 1994. At the same time, delegated powers to supervise research degrees - including PhDs - were awarded to the College by the University of Wales. The first degree ceremony was held at Newport in 1987, attended by the Principals of other colleges and universities. This was a prestigious occasion, with the sight of gowned graduates in Newport raising the status of the College within the academic community and the town.

### Professor Ken J Overshott

Professor Overshott led the institution through the complex process of incorporation in 1992 and subsequent membership of the University of Wales in 1996. His attention to detail and previous links with the University of Wales enabled a smooth transition, while it is clear that the foundations established during this period of the University's history held it in good stead for years to come. The University has never posted a deficit budget since incorporation and has always enjoyed an excellent record in quality assurance processes overseen by the University of Wales and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

He was also a key member of the Newport City Status Bid Committee, playing a major role in writing the document that set out the case for Newport being granted City Status in 2002.



The College prepared for University status by developing into a broad-based, high-tech institution, while not losing touch with its traditional industrial and commercial base that the Colleges had always supported. Other developments at that time were an expansion of the curriculum offered, a growth of international links and an increasing use of European structural funds to support regional development work.



# The University of Wales College, Newport (1996-2004)

The Inauguration Ceremony of the new University College took place on 14th May 1996. The ceremony was performed by the Rt Hon Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, the Abersychan-born politician and historian, a former government minister also famous for his part in founding the Social Democratic Party. Lord Jenkins unveiled a plaque with the new university logo amid applause from 500 VIPs and guests and said:  
*“...This is a great day. Newport and surrounding areas need a university. It’s an independent major town with a distinct identity and history, which will be given a stronger focus by the University of Wales College, Newport...”*

Principal and Chief Executive Professor Ken Overshott added:  
*“Today is the culmination of 155 years of education in Newport since this institution can trace its ancestry back to 1841, when a Mechanics Institute was first formed in the town.”*

After the ceremony the trumpeters of the Prince of Wales Division played a fanfare from the top of the University clock tower and balloons were released in the four faculty colours of red, blue, purple and green.



**The Inauguration Ceremony**  
Vice Chancellor Kenneth Overshott (left) and Lord Jenkins watch the release of the balloons.

In the evening, staff and students continued celebrating with a musical evening held at the Caerleon campus. The Prince of Wales Division Band and Cantorian Creigiau provided the entertainment and the evening was rounded off with an impressive firework display over the historic Caerleon College buildings.

One of the first acts of the University of Wales College, Newport, was to present Honorary Fellowships as a mark of its commitment to the people of South Wales. The first of these were:

- Lord Jenkins of Hillhead.
- Dr Gethin Williams, the former Deputy Principal of University of Wales College, Newport.
- Sir Terry Matthews, Newport-born industrialist, owner of the Celtic Manor Resort and former student of Gwent College of Higher Education.
- Mr Michael John, retired Her Majesty’s Inspector and former College Inspector for the University of Wales College, Newport.
- Mr Mel Harris, former Principal of Gwent College of Higher Education.

The new University College and its predecessors can be seen to have responded to the demands of the times, providing a supportive

environment for its students; these numbered (in 1995) 3,462 part-time and 2,683 full-time. The times were to change after 1997, following the reporting of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Committee), which was the largest review of Higher Education in the UK since the early 1960s. The Committee’s extensive recommendations included the following main areas.

- A shift from undergraduate tuition being funded entirely by grants from the Government to a mixed system with tuition fees being supported by low-interest Government loans.
- An expansion of both sub-degree and degree-level courses at universities, proposing that there was sufficient demand from employers for applicants with higher qualifications for there to be a natural growth of Higher Education.
- The maintenance of standards by additional teacher training and a qualifications framework with a system of credit transfer between institutions.

The Awards Ceremonies in 1999 were the first where Doctorates of Philosophy (PhDs) were conferred on students wholly supervised and registered within the University College. This also completed the University College’s commitment as a Community University, by providing the full range of courses from Access and Foundation through Certificates, Diplomas, Bachelor Degrees, Professional Qualifications, Masters’ Degrees and Doctorates. The first doctorate awarded by the University College was gained by Marilynne Raybould in 1998, for her thesis based on her study of inscribed stone, metal and pottery from Roman Britain.

## The Sports Centre



In 1999 the Estates Department completed the construction of a 3000m<sup>2</sup> Sports Centre, complete with a sports facility management team. The remit of the Centre is to provide the University’s students and staff with the opportunity to undertake recreational and competitive sport. The 1000m<sup>2</sup> hall, dance studio, fitness suite and outdoor courts also offer the local community the opportunity to share the facilities with the staff and students. This partnership has strengthened the relationship that the institution has with its community.

Major investment in 2008 introduced a four-screen wireless entertainment system so that users can watch TV programmes while they work out! Other equipment includes the latest treadmills, cross trainers and bikes and an extensive range of free weights and stretching areas, as well as ‘Summit trainers’ the newest form of climbing machine. The fitness suite is also designed to ensure that the equipment is accessible to both able-bodied users and those with disabilities.



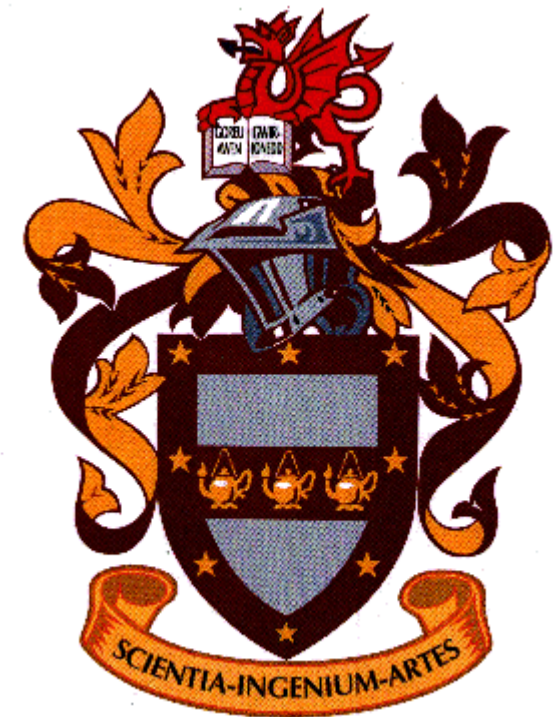
**Sprinter Melanie Stephenson,** who is the 5 times Welsh 200m Champion, currently ranked third in the Great Britain under-23s and hopes to compete in the 2010 Commonwealth Games and 2012 Olympics.



In 2001, the University College held merger talks with the University of Wales, Lampeter, but despite a constructive dialogue, the talks were suspended due to uncertainties in the future of Higher Education in Wales. These discussions were soon followed in 2003 by a publication from the Welsh Assembly Government called *Reaching Higher*, which set out their 10-year strategy for Higher Education in Wales that envisaged a reshaping of the sector with a series of mergers and collaborations. One of these involved the possibilities for formal integration of the University of Wales College, Newport, with Coleg Gwent, the provider of Further Education for Greater Gwent. As Coleg Gwent is one of the largest providers of Further Education in the UK, their 31,000 students combined with the University College's 9,000 would have created a combined student population of over 40,000, in an arrangement described at the time as '*unique in the UK*'. Although the discussions were fruitful, they did not continue to the stage of full consultation.

The new millennium also brought changes, with a stronger accent on 'community' and the concepts of lifelong learning that were gaining popularity, with Government support. The establishment of the Centre for Community and Lifelong Learning was a tangible sign of this, with its emphasis on outreach work in the community, including a teaching centre in Tredegar serving the valley communities of Greater Gwent. There was also a growing emphasis on regional development and the need for the University to play a role in addressing the local economic and social issues, in addition to the more traditional university roles.

## The University of Wales, Newport (2004 - )



### The arms of the University of Wales

In May 2004, the University of Wales College, Newport secured Privy Council approval to use the title University of Wales, Newport, as a full constituent member of the federal University. This was an endorsement of the work that had been done in the previous 10 years on quality systems, following the publication in 1993 of a manual entitled *Assuring Quality*, written by Dr Gethin Williams, who was later Deputy Principal of the University of Wales College, Newport and is now an Honorary Fellow of the University. This important document provided a strong foundation for the later award of Taught Degree Awarding Powers and the full University status within the University of Wales.

At the ceremony marking this transition, the Secretary General of the University of Wales, Dr Lynn Williams, congratulated the then Vice Chancellor, Professor James Lusty, with the following words.

*"I am sure I speak for everyone within the University of Wales family when I say Newport has earned its new status through hard work and through delivering quality results. In seeking to adopt its new name the University of Wales, Newport has shown that it takes pride in being a constituent institution of the University of Wales...."*

The occasion was marked by a week of events, launched by a spectacular fashion show and including a family fun day, headteachers' conference and a gala concert.

In May 2005, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales published an important report entitled *Future of 'post-92' Higher Education in South East Wales*. This report envisaged the University of Glamorgan, the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), and the University of Wales, Newport working together and building upon existing strengths. The result would have produced an enormous university of around 50,000 students, capable of competing against other institutions in England and strengthening the position of Higher Education in Wales. Subsequently, Newport held talks with UWIC about a possible merger, but these did not continue and the two



institutions agreed to maintain their individual identities on a collaborative basis.

As with the earlier merger talks with Lampeter and Coleg Gwent, the University displayed a willingness to explore options and strengthened its links with partner organisations as a result. Despite this, the third largest city in Wales eventually decided that it needed to have its own distinctive University, which met its specific needs.

**Professor Lusty**

Professor James Lusty who led the University from 2002-6. He oversaw the transition from University College to full University status and secured agreement for the new city campus. Sadly, Professor Lusty died in 2008 before the new campus had been built.



The other important document that affected the University in 2005 was an internal report by the Vice Chancellor, Professor Lusty, called *Achieving the Vision: Investing in the Future*. This report led to changes in the structure of the University and its strategic mechanisms. One important change was the reduction in the number of academic schools from six to four.

- Newport School of Art, Media and Design
- Newport Business School
- The School of Education
- The School of Health and Social Sciences

The Centre for Community and Lifelong Learning also holds and delivers curriculum, but it is not designated as an academic school.

**The Kegie Building**

The newest building at the Caerleon campus is the Kegie Building (opened in 2007), which houses a range of workshops for fashion design as well as the Wales International Study Centre.

The building is named after Helen Kegie MBE, a pioneer who helped to establish the social care infrastructure in the Newport area. She has also set up a major trust fund to help future students at Newport study the caring professions.



Photographer - Mei Lewis Mission Photography



Photographer - Steve Townsend, ZZZone Studios  
With kind permission of Stride Treglown

One of the fashion workshops



Photographer - Steve Townsend, ZZZone Studios  
With kind permission of Stride Treglown



In recent years the University has enjoyed an unprecedented growth in applications, with a 91% increase between 2003 and 2007, while in 2005, Newport had the largest increase in full-time undergraduate degree applications of any university in the UK; the increase of 42.9% was more than four times the national average. Professor Lusty attributed this continuing success to an exciting new range of courses and better focusing of courses on industry needs, such as the creative arts and IT. The current Vice Chancellor - Dr. Peter Noyes - also refers to the following reasons:

- Achieving the highest rating possible from the Quality Assurance Agency for the quality and standards of our academic courses.
- Receiving ratings for three years running as the best university in Wales for entrepreneurship.
- High ratings in the national student survey.
- Developing a research culture in all subjects as well as Centres of National Excellence.
- Highly successful staff and students in many fields.
- Major investment in resources for teaching.
- Achieving a range of quality kite marks.

The student population at the University is also unusual, reflecting the strong links with the local community. Of the roughly 10,000 students in 2009, 63% of these are part time, 50% are over 35 and 57% are female. The students coming from the former county of Gwent number more than 40%, with the total number of Welsh students standing at 79%. In addition to the growing national and international reputation, these figures also illustrate the University's achievements in pursuit of its goal to *'bring learning to the heart of our communities'*.

Shortly before his retirement in December 2006, Professor Lusty secured agreement on the construction of a new city campus on the Newport riverfront, to replace the campus at Allt-yr-yn. This development marks the return of Higher Education to the city centre after a long absence and plays an integral part in the regeneration of Wales' newest city.

### **School of Golf**

In 2006 the University opened an elite School of Golf to develop future top class golfers, in partnership with the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport, venue for the 2010 Ryder Cup.

The School admits three students per year, who are low-handicap golfers wishing to develop their golf to an international standard, whilst still studying for a degree through a flexible academic programme.

Members of the School have access to a dedicated Golf Programme Director, a personal academic tutor and the world-class golfing facilities at The Celtic Manor Resort.









# Newport School of Art, Media and Design

Art education in Newport has a long and distinguished history, since the Mechanics Institute ran the first Art classes in 1859. The Newport School of Art was one of the first art schools to be awarded degree status in 1963 and it enjoyed a high reputation in Painting and Sculpture throughout the 1960s and 70s. During the last four decades it has achieved international prominence for innovative programmes in Photography, Film and Design, as well as outstanding Interactive Arts and Digital Media courses.

The School offers the following to its students.

- One of the best graduate employment records of any comparable UK institution
- Some of the most respected courses in film and photography in the country
- Amongst the most advanced and best-serviced workshops for interactive art in Europe
- Some of the best-equipped fabrication workshops, photographic facilities and fashion studios in Britain
- Prestigious international research centres and postgraduate programmes

The School also has an enviable global reputation for teaching and research across the range of creative and cultural industries, scoring a 5 in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise - the highest for any art school in the UK. Students from more than 20 countries study at Newport and there are collaborative links across Europe, the USA and the Far East. The programmes respect both the creative demands of the students and the skills required by employers - regionally, nationally and internationally, while many are recognised as among the best in the UK Higher Education sector.

Many of the School's graduates are in top creative positions across the world, with some regularly featuring in National and International awards and everything from mainstream cinema, the BBC, international press, Cannes Film Festival, the International Sheffield Documentary Festival, Graduate Fashion Week London, television and advertising. Courses have been developed with both the creative demands of the student and the skills needs of employers in mind.

Many courses in Art, Photography, Film and Fashion have a long history of success and are recognised as some of the best in the sector, while others are relatively new, responding to innovative developments in the fields of Digital Art, Music, Design, Performing Arts and Media Communications.

The School has a long history of creative research and is a founding partner of the Wales Institute for Research in Art and Design (WIRAD) and offers a vibrant and significant research practice, drawing on and contributing to the creative possibilities offered by contemporary technological culture and the work of high-level practitioners operating at both national and international levels. It also has an important economic function, where the intellectual capital created by this research and scholarship underpins the University's 'Third Mission' activities, which actively contribute to the economic regeneration of Wales.

## **International Film School Wales (IFSW)**

The IFSW is one of the oldest film schools in the UK (founded in 1966) and is the leading institution for the promotion and development of the film and performance culture of Wales. Its students benefit from being located in a thriving production region, from the School's excellent links with industry and from some of the best facilities in the UK. Work includes film drama, documentary, animation, performance, screenwriting and computer games, with postgraduate opportunities in film and animation. The IFSW

draws on a wide pool of creative educators and practitioners, including Visiting Professor and Oscar-nominated director Ken Russell.

Notable graduates from IFSW include the film maker Justin Kerrigan, director of 'Human Traffic' and Asif Kapadia, who scooped two BAFTA awards for his first feature film 'The Warrior'. Animation students Tom Brown and Dan Gray's film 't.o.m' was invited to screen at Sundance Animation, after winning awards in the UK and across Europe. Other students and graduates have received nominations and awards for their work at a variety of UK and international film festivals including Cannes, Clermont-Ferrand, Thessalonika, Ffesh Festival of the Moving Image Wales, the Royal Television Society, the Celtic Film & TV Festival and BAFTA Wales.

IFSW is a lead partner of the Skillset Screen Academy Wales and has been approved by the UK film industry as a centre of excellence for film education and training. This provides funding for masterclasses, mentors, bursaries, industry placements, production costs, festival attendance and advanced equipment.



Acclaimed film director Peter Greenaway – who was born in Newport – provides a masterclass for students.

## **Institute of Advanced Broadcasting (IAB)**

The pioneering IAB was launched in 2009 with the primary focus of developing the latest generation of broadcasting applications in the areas of media, technology and film. It is run on a commercial basis in partnership with the private sector and will work alongside broadcasters, content developers, film makers and key industry players to develop research projects that will address the challenges of convergence in digital technology and media and explore suitable distribution and business models for the future.

IAB brings together business and academic expertise in order to explore new concepts in a creative environment called the "sandpit", where academic staff, students and business experts to work together to develop new ideas. It will be a key feature of the University's new city campus.



Documentary Photography graduate Anastasia Taylor-Lind displays some of the photographs taken on her trip to northern Iraq, to record the lives of a band of Kurdish guerrilla fighters called the Peshmerga Force for Women.

This photograph of a Peshmerga woman soldier won first prize in a 2006 national competition run by the Guardian Weekend, which attracted 9000 entries. The portrait attracted particular praise from one of the judges – the legendary photographer David Bailey.



### Documentary Photography

Newport is proud of its long tradition of excellence in teaching photography, since the first courses were offered in 1912-3.

Following this long experience, the European Centre for Photographic Research (eCPR) now provides a focus in Wales for high-quality research in photography that builds on both its institutional heritage and internationally-renowned scholarship. It aims to develop work that addresses both the cultural histories of photography and contemporary issues, together with debates informing photographic and film-based art and documentary practices. The School has evolved in order to have greater relevance to the shifting relationships and inter-dependencies between art and documentary.

The development of a thriving postgraduate research culture within eCPR has led to the current lively, experimental and contemporary engagement with photography that is not seen as a fixed discipline but an expanding, multi-faceted field of research, drawing upon a broad range of other academic disciplines ranging from Art History to Politics. eCPR seeks to be at the forefront of photographic research that can be undertaken through practice as well as history and theory.

### 2007 show in the Senedd.



### Design

Design is a broad field covering many different disciplines including Advertising, Fashion, Graphics and Interactive Media. The success of the Design Department rests on a commitment to creative problem solving, analytical thinking and social responsibility. Students are expected to develop new concepts that consider issues such as globalisation and sustainability and demonstrate an understanding of the market, the client and the opportunities offered by new technology.

The Design Department works closely with partners to ensure that graduates have the creative and professional skills needed to work across the creative industries. Students are also encouraged to undertake 'live' projects, competition briefs, work experience, field trips (in the UK and overseas) and exchange programmes.

Students from BA (Hons) Fashion Design have had opportunities to work with some of the top companies in the industry including Burberry, Toast and The Stirling Group, while some have been invited to spend time in Finland at the prestigious Wetterhof Institution. Examples of student work have been published widely and some students have won the Design Wales competition, where they receive all-expenses-paid work experience in Paris. Another project in collaboration with the Welsh School of Architecture resulted in garments going on a nationwide tour.

For their final year celebrations, the 2007 graduates were invited by Ministers of the Welsh Assembly Government to put on a catwalk show at the award-winning Senedd building at the heart of Cardiff Bay. This was followed by a two-night event held at Newport's Riverfront where an audience of more than a thousand viewed some of the hottest new talent, which was also exhibited at Graduate Fashion Week.



**Film Graduates get into gear with Aston Martin**

Aston Martin is just one company on the books of enterprising Newport graduates, Rhys Waters and Nathan Mackintosh, who provide a good example of how the University’s graduates form spin-out companies. After graduating from the Film and Television course they set up Zipline Creative, a media production company specialising in creating bespoke corporate and broadcast film and video productions, for DVD, the Internet and other platforms.

The 24-year-old graduates met whilst studying at the International Film School Wales and during their final year they were approached to work for the BBC. Since then, in addition to creating films for Aston Martin, they have made videos for the University’s Institute of Advanced Broadcasting, Gwent Police and Caerphilly Borough Council.

Based in New Tredegar, they started out in a garage but were so successful that they rapidly expanded and now run their thriving business from premises that include on-site studios and the latest state-of-the-art film and video equipment. The demand for their services has far surpassed all expectations and the enterprising duo were invited by the University to screen the promotional film they made for the luxury car maker at a Celebration of Enterprise dinner hosted by Vice-Chancellor Dr Peter Noyes, to highlight and celebrate the business achievements of recent graduates. Speaking about the secret of their success they said:

*“Our advice to any graduates wanting to set up in business is to work as hard as possible, believe in your idea, build up your network of contacts at every opportunity and get support from every source possible”.*



**Documentary Film and Television graduates Rhys Waters and Nathan Mackintosh pictured during the shooting of their promotional film for Aston Martin.**

# Newport Business School

Newport Business School brings together expertise across the areas of Business, Computing, Accountancy, Management, Marketing, Human Resource Management and Engineering. It has almost 2000 students enrolled on its courses from all over the UK and the world.

The School came top in Wales and second in the UK for overall student satisfaction in Business subjects in the 2007 National Student Survey, and has recently been awarded ‘Platinum’ Tuition Provider Status, the highest accolade, from the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, and re-awarded ‘Learning Quality Partner’ Status by CIMA, for its Professional Accountancy Courses.

The School’s international portfolio continues to draw an increasing number of students from Asia, Europe and Africa and this helps to make an important contribution to the UK’s knowledge economy. It offers more than just qualifications, such as support for employers in developing staff and organisations, across a wide range of subject areas.

**Praise from Wales’ First Minister**

In March 2007, the First Minister Rhodri Morgan described Newport Business School as playing a vital role in establishing Wales as a modern, vibrant, knowledge-based economy.

*“Newport Business School seeks to meet all the demanding roles of Higher Education such as providing research, innovation and knowledge transfer in partnership with businesses...As one of the larger providers of business and management education in Wales, Newport Business School has a key role to play in the development of the Welsh Economy and producing our managers of the future”*



**The hi-tech and exciting world of Forensic Computing**

Businesses are losing billions of pounds each year in a wide variety of computer-related crime and the rise in identity theft means individuals are suffering too. A new course on offer at the University enables people to help combat this threat by studying for a degree in the growing field of Forensic Computing. Senior lecturer Eric Llewellyn explains:

*“The new BSc (Hons) Forensic Computing will enable graduates to enter a growth sector in the business world, in addition to having the option of taking more traditional roles in the Information Technology (IT) industry,”*

*“The University of Wales, Newport is ideally situated between two good-sized police headquarters and close to the centre of the UK’s business world in London, to provide graduates who can aid in the fight against computer crime.”*

This is an example of cutting-edge education delivered by Newport Business School. Many of the students attended the 2008 ‘E-Crime Summit’ at the Celtic Manor, demonstrating just how topical and critical this area of IT is to the modern world.



The future promises to be very exciting for the Business School, with ambitious plans for growth, and a move to the brand-new city Campus from 2010, supported by a range of innovative, exciting courses and international development.

The School’s professional courses include accreditations and affiliations from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM); the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Chartered Management Institute (CMI)

The BA (Hons) Business Studies course is very popular, allowing students to specialise in Year 2 from a range of options including Law, Accounting, Economics, Human Resources and Marketing if they wish.

**Supporting Lego’s robot development**

A senior lecturer at the Newport Business School was selected to be part of a team of 100 robotics professionals and enthusiasts that helped Lego develop their next generation robotics product (NXT) in 2006. Dr Torbjorn Dahl, who is Head of the Intelligent Systems Research Group in the Department of Computing, beat off stiff competition from almost 10,000 people who applied for a place in the programme, which offered an opportunity to influence Lego’s product and policies with regards to robotics.



**Dr Dahl**

All members of the team had to sign a non-disclosure agreement promising to keep the details of Lego’s new robot development kit secret before release, when they were sent a prototype to evaluate and develop further. Dr Dahl commented “It was a great privilege to be chosen as a programme member, as Lego’s robotic development kit has been a huge commercial success and is used for education by thousands of schools world-wide. It is a compliment to both my own research efforts and the engineering traditions at the University”.

**Young Enterprise**

The Business School hosts the local Young Enterprise competition, where young entrepreneurs are encouraged to show off their business talents in a national competition for musicians.

The 2008 winners were St Joseph’s High School, who swept the board with their talent-scouting business Flair, scooping the awards for best team, best product, best presentation, best use of IT, best trade stand and best company report.



**Marketing Lecturer Jonathan Deacon shows his guitar skills to winners Demi Abidogun, Mathew Hughes, Samra Shah and Chloe Seivwright.**



# The School of Education (including Humanities)

As the original occupant of the Caerleon campus, the School of Education has a long history of achievement, with a tradition of innovation and pride in its ability to respond to trends in education and employment, and changes in policy both in the UK generally and Wales in particular. The School offers a wide range of relevant and challenging courses in teacher training, education and humanities subjects. The Access and Foundation programme provides an introductory year to degree programmes for adult students who need to enhance their skills before commencing a degree. The School is also responding to the major changes that are occurring nationally, where there is greater focus on education in a wider social context, by using both Humanities and Education programmes to create a range of innovative courses that will open up a variety of employment opportunities. These programmes have been developed to provide the sort of transferable skills that are essential in the modern world.

The students overall have very good employment rates, while those on part-time and professional courses show that their career potential has been boosted by the qualifications and skills they have gained. Thousands of teachers from many countries have been trained at Newport, with graduates contributing to education and learning throughout the world. The School of Education was awarded top marks for the support and guidance it gives to its students in the last (2005) inspection of its Primary and Secondary Initial Teacher Training programmes, by Estyn (the Office of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales). As well as excelling in Initial Teacher Training, students can access postgraduate and professional development courses and a range of related subjects, including English, History, Religious Studies and Philosophy and Creative Writing.

### Early Years Education

Students on the BA (Hons) Early Years, Education, Inclusion Programme learn about how children develop and learn in a variety of contexts including those in other European cultures. For seven students a visit to Roskilde in Denmark, accompanied by their lecturers, gave them a real insight into how another country educates its children and supports their development. The 2008 trip involved visits to kindergartens, primary schools and an International Centre for Children with a visual impairment. A particular highlight was the visit to Soro Forest School, which has an established link that developed from a conference on Forest Schools held at the University of Wales, Newport in partnership with the Forest Education Initiative in South Wales. For all the students, many of whom experience Forest School in their placement or work settings here at Newport, the freedom that the Danish children had to climb trees, saw up logs and generally explore and experience the forest freely was particularly interesting. After the visit there was a lot of discussion within the group about how effectively children in Denmark learn through play, develop the confidence to take risks and become increasingly independent.

Exciting new courses include a BA (Hons) Creative Therapies in Education degree, which is a groundbreaking course as the first of its kind in Wales. The Post-Compulsory Education and Training offered has also developed to include the PGCE/ Cert Ed in PcET Adult English as a Second Language, Literacy or Numeracy.

The range of research centres also indicates the breadth of activity in this area, which is constantly pushing the boundaries of conventional teaching methods.

- The Dyscovery Centre combines teaching research with clinical research into children with specific learning difficulties.
- The Institute of Digital Learning focuses on research into the application and development of digital learning approaches to the curriculum and learning and teaching strategies.

- The Centre for Ethics and Philosophy with Children and Young Adults is an international research centre where students and staff explore teaching that places questioning and dialogue at the heart of the learning process and allows children to explore spiritual, moral and ethical issues.
- The South Wales Centre for Historical and Interdisciplinary Research fosters better appreciation of the relationship between local, regional and national history by exploring the interaction between communities in different historical periods and environments.

### Newport and the Chartists

Chartism’s early history is inextricably bound up with the local area, when Newport saw one of the most stirring events in the Chartist movement - a clash over law and order between thousands of Chartist marchers and the authorities in November 1839. Troops opened fire from the Westgate Hotel, killing 22 Chartists and seriously injuring over 50 more. Hundreds were rounded up including local leaders such as former magistrate John Frost and Zephaniah Williams and arraigned in what was - and still remains - the last mass treason trial in British history.

In 2008, the University hosted the 13th Annual Chartism Conference - a gathering of high-profile historians who provided vivid insights into the Chartist movement in Wales and elsewhere. The conference attracted expert guest speakers from across the globe, including Dr Kate Bowan and Professor Paul Pickering from The Australian National University, Canberra, who explored the history of Chartist songs and popular oral tradition and leading expert Dr Fabrice Bensimon from Université Paris 10 – Nanterre, who talked about his research into British Workers and Chartists in France in the 1840s. They are pictured here at the Chartist mural in John Frost Square in Newport.







**Dr Rowan Williams with the first prize winners:  
Mary Davies, Heather Poole, Paul Martin, David Callander and  
Cassie Bowkett**

The Archbishop of Canterbury praised the creativity and imagination of student writers from all over South Wales when he presented prizes for the best stories, poems and plays in a competition organised by the University of Wales, Newport.

Dr Williams also gave a public reading of a selection of his own poetry following the prize-giving for the annual competition which had the theme of 'Conflict'. The entries were judged by the first National Poet of Wales, Gwyneth Lewis, composer of the words that adorn the landmark Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff, and Writer-in-Residence for English and Creative Writing at the University's School of Education.  
*"It's a very real delight to be back here at the University of Wales, Newport and see how it's growing in its service to the community,"* said Dr Williams, who was a member of the University's Board of Governors when he was Bishop of Monmouth.

*"It's especially important to see the University encouraging creativity in young people, and I've been deeply impressed by the high quality of all the entrants in this competition. They are a wonderful group of young artists. One of the most important things a university can do is to nurture the creative spark and nourish people's imaginations. I've been honoured to be asked to read from my poems, especially as I follow in a long line of very distinguished poets who have been here to present the prizes for this competition and read from their work."*

### The Institute of Digital Learning

In 2009, senior citizens in Newport welcomed a project that has equipped them with free computers and Internet skills to keep in touch. The University's Institute of Digital Learning (IDL) has studied how digital technology can help to empower individuals and communities. A website allows visitors to click on virtual homes of people from the Gaer district and then plays videos of residents sharing their personal experiences of discovering 21st-century technology and how it has been used to bolster the Gaer's sense of community.

The researchers were responding to UK Government policy documents, which indicated that only 37% of over 65s and 22% of over 75s had Internet access at home, against an all-adult average of 67%. The study - Community Empowerment through Digital Inclusion - was designed to look at the impact of giving computers to older people and teaching them how to use the Internet.

Fifty local residents were involved in the project, led by local social entrepreneurship that was later extended across other communities in Newport. Matt Chilcott, Development Director for the IDL said

*"Part of the University's mission is to serve as an agent for social change and inclusion. Among the research themes at the Institute is digital inclusion and, in particular, the impact of people's engagement with technology for learning and wider social and economic benefit".*

The research findings have been used by policy makers and other community groups in Wales, the wider UK and Europe, that are seeking to support their own community's social and digital inclusion. To find out more about the research project visit: <http://idl.newport.ac.uk/newportdigital>





# The School of Health and Social Sciences

The School of Health and Social Sciences offers a wide range of subjects that can be taken together or alone, on a full-time or part-time basis. Subjects in the School include Social Welfare, Criminology and Youth Justice, Sport, Counselling (including Cognitive Behaviours Therapy), Psychology, Health, Youth and Community Studies Social Work and Probation, alongside various combinations of these areas. Many of the staff are actively researching their own specialist areas and this is reflected in the teaching – both in the classroom and outside.

The School enjoys a reputation for cutting-edge facilitation of learning and a high-quality, collaborative student experience and the Social Studies area of the School scores very highly in the National Student Survey on a regular basis. Many of the professional programmes in the School are dually and occasionally trebly accredited. Students obtain degrees, professional qualifications and in some cases National Vocational Qualifications at the same time. Student destinations are also very strong and more than 80% of recent students found jobs in relevant areas to their degrees within six months of graduating.

Research in the School is diverse and at many levels, as the aim is to maintain a rich and inclusive educational environment, in which students are encouraged to become active learners and researchers in their own right. Thus the benefits of research are relevant in all spheres of activity in the School, for staff as well as students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with several dedicated research centres.

### Newport Centre for Counselling Research (NCCR)

The NCCR (founded in 2007) has a rapidly-growing reputation for research and innovation that complements the University's long-established reputation for teaching counselling in south Wales. The Centre is developing a lively counselling research culture and within the School it engages with other academics from a range of disciplines, leading to a creative and fruitful cross-fertilisation of ideas. It is developing a research culture that is rigorous and challenges the assumptions of everyday practice, which is useful to both practitioners and service providers. Much of the Counselling teaching at Newport is at postgraduate level. As a subject team, the tutors are committed to basing their teaching and practice on good-quality research in its broadest sense and to facilitating students at all levels to develop their own research interests.

Members of the NCCR have connections with a number of other institutions both locally and nationally, including holding a number of external examinerships and involvement with BACP, the national body for counselling. There are also links with the British Psychological Society and the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies.

The School enjoys international partnerships with the US, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Turkey, Spain, South Africa and many others.



### Newport Centre for Criminal and Community Justice

The Centre is involved in teaching, applied research, programme design and consultancy work in the Criminal and Community Justice Sectors, making links between theory and practice and attracting staff and students with an interest in developing these links. NCCCJ is now formally linked to the Wales Centre for Criminal Justice, where it collaborates with the leading Welsh Universities in research and specialises in the area of re-offending and rehabilitation. It also works with practitioners, academics, managers and professional bodies within the sector, including those working with offenders, victims and other service users.

The University offers several courses aimed at people working in areas such as probation, police and youth justice as well as those pursuing more traditional undergraduate and postgraduate programmes; topical issues include the death sentence, hard labour, stricter sentencing, prison overcrowding and the role of education in preventing prisoners from re-offending.

Students are also taken behind the scenes at Cardiff Prison to find out the facts about prison life, where they have the opportunity to meet prison staff and to look around the various parts of the category B prison, including the detox, life and segregation units.





### **The Elite Sports Squad**

Longitudinal research projects are under way, exploring how students who excel at sport juggle tough training schedules with studying and enjoying an active social life. A sport science support-and-performance lifestyle programme complements the ongoing research, in addition to generous financial scholarships and bursaries.

The University Sport Sector Strategy Group also provides an avenue for using sport as a tool for regenerating communities and industry in order to reduce social exclusion and build effective partnerships. This work was highlighted in 2008 by Dr Nicky Lewis, Head of Department in the School of Health and Social Sciences, at a major conference in Brussels. By 2008 the Elite Sports Squad at Newport had 26 athletes from 14 different sports studying for under-graduate or post-graduate qualifications, across all four Schools within the University. This clearly emphasises Newport's commitment to supporting and developing high-performance sport alongside the continued expectation of high academic achievement.



### **The Kegie Trust**

People living in south Wales's most deprived area now benefit from bursaries awarded to students who are studying on professional degree courses in the area of social, youth and community care.

The bursaries were donated by Helen Kegie MBE, a pioneer who helped establish the social care infrastructure in the Newport and Gwent area, and will enable the students to fulfil their ambitions to work with people in communities most in need of support.

Helen Kegie set up the Kegie Trust to provide ongoing support to the University and its students, with the aim of developing the full potential of individuals and building sustainable communities. The Trust provides bursaries for three students from South Wales each year to study for subjects at the School of Health and Social Sciences. To qualify for the bursaries, the students have to write an essay demonstrating that they have undertaken care work in the community and explaining how they would use their degree training to help those in need.



**Helen Kegie MBE at the opening of the Kegie Building on 5th March 2007. Also pictured are Rosemary Butler AM and Dr Peter Noyes, Vice Chancellor.**



# The Centre for Community and Lifelong Learning

CCLL was established in 2000 and is the central body at the University responsible for the promotion and coordination of widening participation. Building on the long-standing traditions of the University in providing second chance opportunities for mature men and women, the Centre offers educational programmes that target under-represented groups and progression routes into Higher Education Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates, as well as community-based learning and development. The Centre works with a range of adult education, voluntary and community organisations and groups, with the aim of encouraging access to education as a main driver for community and personal change and development. Most of the Centre’s teaching activities take place in the community, across the five counties of Greater Gwent (Newport, Monmouthshire, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, and Torfaen) and there is also a teaching centre in Tredegar that co-ordinates outreach courses across the eastern valleys.

## The Community University of the Valleys (East)

The outreach work in the valley communities is organised from a base in Tredegar, which also offers teaching and childcare facilities. The CUV(E) delivers courses across the counties of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen, in conjunction with its partners, the Workers Educational Association and the University of Glamorgan, within the overall project called Progression through Partnership. The project has used financial support from the European Social Fund to engage more than 3000 people in adult education since 2000.



## The Deputy First Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government visited the Tredegar headquarters of the CUV-E in 2008

Mr Ieuan Wyn Jones AM was shown the range of services offered to learners. On the left of the picture is Mr Chris O’Malley, the University’s Pro Vice-Chancellor (Regional and International Development).

A growing area of work is supporting businesses in the Heads of the Valleys area, to train managers and their employees in a wide range of top-quality IT and management courses. A Workplace Development Officer meets with employers to discuss their learning needs, which can be met either at the CUV(E) centre in Tredegar or at appropriate venues nearby or in the workplace. A growing number of accredited courses are being provided with support from the Newport Business School.

Rhodri Morgan, First Minister of the Welsh Assembly has described the Progression through Partnership project as “a beacon of inspiration for the learning culture in Wales and in Europe”.

Courses are offered in a wide range of subjects in small units, making it easier for learners to attain the Certificate in Higher Education through the Combined Open Studies programme. Some students choose to complete the Certificate, while others use the courses to help them gain entry to degree courses, or to seek employment.

The Centre undertakes a wide range of research in the areas of teaching and community engagement, as well as workforce development and employability of the learners it supports. Community development and regeneration are growing areas of involvement for the Centre, working with partners to support regional development.

## BeWEHL

The BeWEHL Project (Bettering Women’s Education Health and Lifestyle) has been funded mainly by the Welsh Assembly Government and works with women who live on selected estates in Newport. The overall aims of the project are identifying the impact of learning on the general confidence and well being of the project’s participants and evaluating the role and impact of action research on participants and the broader community.

Experience has shown that participants pass on their benefits by promoting and supporting learning within their families. Other effects are improved health and lifestyles, and a reduction in benefit dependency.



**The first three BeWEHL students to graduate:** (L-R) Suzanne Evans, Andrea Williams and Tricia Harris. Andrea had worked as a lollipop lady before joining BeWEHL five years earlier.



### Eunice Taylor

Eunice Taylor was crowned the Inspire Adult Tutor/Mentor of the Year for 2006, in a ceremony organised by NIACE Dysgu Cymru, which advocates adult learning in Wales. The Inspire Adult Tutor and Mentor Awards celebrate the cream of the profession, and Eunice, as a Community-Based Learning Development Officer in CCLL, scooped the overall prize, having already won the WEA Community Mentor Award.



A passionate community educator, Eunice dedicated herself to adult learning and to the community of Pill in particular. Her tireless efforts to engage black and ethnic minority communities in learning were recognised across Newport and throughout the region. In 2008 Eunice lost her long battle with the illness that was to claim her life, robbing the University and the City of a great talent.

### The Eunice Simpson-Taylor Memorial Trophy

NIACE Dysgu Cymru dedicated this award in honour of Eunice's memory for her work with adult learners. The trophy was created in stainless steel by Welsh artist Gideon Petersen and was presented for the first time in March 2009 at the Inspire! Adult Tutor & Mentor Awards by John Griffiths, Deputy Minister for Skills.

Richard Spear, Director NIACE Dysgu Cymru, said, *"We are delighted to dedicate the Tutor of the Year trophy to Eunice who sadly passed away a short while after winning the Award. This trophy is a fitting tribute to Eunice's shining example and will recognise other excellent lifelong learning professionals in Wales in years to come."*



Pictured with the trophy are Viv Davies, Director of the University's Centre for Community and Lifelong Learning, and Eunice's daughter Leanne and son Nathan.

### First Campus/Reaching Wider

This is a ground-breaking educational initiative launched across Wales by Jane Davidson (Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning) in 2003. It is designed to demystify education by encouraging school pupils as young as 10 /11 to have a taste of Higher Education. It is also about confirming the Learning Country's pledge to establish Wales as a learning country. To quote the Minister:

*"It is about unlocking talent, widening access and encouraging people into learning who have never considered it before. We have to tackle the poverty of educational opportunity and drive to overcome poverty of aspiration across Wales, whatever the age, class or background".*



Pupils from Caerleon Comprehensive School took part in a 2006 summer school as part of a pioneering First Campus project called 'Media4Schools', which uses digital media and programme-making to stimulate learning and develop media skills across schools in Wales.

All Higher and Further Education institutions in Wales are members of four regional Reaching Wider partnerships. Other partners include local authorities, schools, the voluntary sector, and Careers Wales. Based at the University of Wales, Newport, the Family Learning Coordinator is responsible for raising aspirations, and creating innovative study opportunities and learning pathways to Higher Education for the whole family, across the south-east Wales partnership known as First Campus.

Research into the impact of home background on educational achievement asserts that differences in support for learning at home are probably the greatest source of inequality in educational attainment among children of equal ability. The key aims of family learning are to develop the skills or knowledge of both the adult and child participants, and to help parents and carers to be more active in the support of their children's learning and development, while understanding the impact of that support.



### Family Learning

Strange and wonderful tales of Medieval rural Wales were on offer for families participating in the University's BeWEHL project, during a day out at Cosmeston Medieval Village in the Vale of Glamorgan. From peasants who lived off the land to local nobility, professional storytellers spun out fun and interactive tales.



**Regional  
development**





The University is committed to its role as a catalyst for the development of the Gwent region, with its five counties. It is also helping to build stronger bridges to the communities, industry and public services, by working on three major fronts.

- Providing expertise in regeneration
- Raising skills levels
- Directly promoting development of the region

**Regeneration**

For both social and economic regeneration, the key is to build on existing strengths from the inside out. Ultimately, regeneration is something communities and regions do for themselves and is not something that can be done to them – although help is essential.

Regeneration efforts in the past have not always succeeded in providing the prosperity needed to support and retain local communities. The University believes that subsidies for inward investment that are not based on any coherent strategy to build local strengths (in economic and social regeneration) are always vulnerable to companies simply moving on; partners in the region must work together to address the local skills gap.

The university is actively working with partners to promote and support a range of regeneration initiatives, particularly in the areas hardest hit by economic decline, such as the Heads of the Valleys and parts of Newport. One of the largest regeneration initiatives is the Learning Campus being built in Ebbw Vale on the site of the former steelworks there, where the University will work with a number of partners including Coleg Gwent and the University of Glamorgan, in order to offer the right range of courses to suit the developing needs in the Heads of the Valleys region.

**The Wales Institute for Community Currencies team were visited by Edgar Cahn, the American founder of timebanking, who discussed international developments.**

WICC is a partnership project between Valleys Kids, Timebanks UK and the University of Wales, Newport. It is part-funded by European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) under the Objective One Social Economy measure and operates across the valley counties, supporting community development.

The Institute researches and evaluates existing Community Currency systems, which are currencies where you exchange time and other measures of value that are relevant to communities, rather than money, which is referred to as a commercial currency. WICC encourages experimentation and the dissemination of knowledge about best practice in Community Currencies through seminars, conferences, training events, publications, articles, interviews, videos, web-site, email lists and step-by-step guides.



**Skills levels**

The University has built up a wide range of expertise and experience in the challenges of raising skills levels. This includes our role in hosting programmes such as the RISE partnership which has upgraded over 200 learning centres across the Five Counties; the Dyscovery Centre, which has internationally-recognised research expertise in learning difficulties such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyspraxia; the Community University of the Valleys (East); the Wales Institute for Community Currencies (WICC), which has been an international pioneer in new ways of promoting voluntary contributions by people to their communities; the BeWEHL programme which has empowered women in communities like Bettws and Ringland in Newport; and the Equinex programme which has pioneered new ways of tackling obstacles to people with disabilities. The insights gathered from such experience and the connections with all of our partners in those programmes can be drawn on to help drive the future development of our region.

**Equinex**

The Equinex project ran from 2005-7, funded under the European Union EQUAL Initiative and run by a partnership of organisations based in the Newport area. The project examined the barriers faced by disadvantaged groups to participation in training, education and employment, especially those people who had been unemployed for some time and people with disabilities, such as autistic spectrum disorders, sensory disabilities and learning disabilities. International partners in the project were from Ireland, Italy and Estonia.



Project partners signed agreements with the University in order to further the work of the Equinex Project. With Margaret Davies (the Project Manager) were representatives of the National Autistic Society, Careers Wales Gwent and Newport City Council.

The results of the project are being used to influence policy at local, national and European levels and it is expected that successful activities will be adopted by some of the mainstream service providers. As well as the research activities, the project worked with the University’s Institute of Digital Learning to produce Equality & Diversity and Homeless Toolkits, also other media resources.

Other work includes an increasing focus on local labour market needs; the University works with partners to adapt its course options and delivery to the needs of local employers in an ever-changing skills environment.



Newport has never been a typical, traditional university. Two thirds of the students are part-time, 80% are older than 21 and over half are over 30. This means that most of the students are already in the workforce in the region, with more than 2000 others pursuing programmes on a franchise basis with a dozen FE Colleges across Wales. We are particularly committed as a university to raising the skills of our current workforce and to bringing Higher Education to people who traditionally may never have darkened the door of a university! With 80% of the people who will be in the workforce in 10 years time already in the workforce now, it makes no sense to deal only with school leavers if we want the city and region to regenerate themselves.

**RISE - Making Learning for Everyone**

Organisations across Wales are constantly challenged to focus their activities to engage fully with communities and to assist and encourage the social, cultural and economic regeneration of areas of Wales. The University of Wales, Newport, has sponsored a number of initiatives that address this requirement, the largest of which is the RISE initiative, which was born out of the closure of the Corus Steelworks in Gwent. The aim of RISE has been to drive the best learning region and create communities that are better equipped and better skilled to meet the needs of the knowledge economy.



The RISE initiative is part of the Welsh Assembly Government’s regeneration agenda for south-east Wales, following research that revealed that 65% of all adults across the region had no intention of taking up formal learning.

The extent of the RISE partnership has grown well beyond its original plan and now has over 200 distinctively-branded, well-equipped centres that deliver work- and community-based learning.

The network is made up of organisations from the private, public, voluntary and community sectors and has a physical infrastructure of large Learning Action Centres, which are fully equipped and which support smaller,

specialised satellite centres. The key partners are drawn from learners, all major providers of lifelong learning, the business sector, and those who offer support and advice, including FE colleges, community education, library services, Careers Wales Gwent, the WEA, the TUC and a wide range of voluntary organisations.

Underpinning the physical infrastructure of RISE is a set of structures that has been developed as an enabling framework to ensure that the facilities and provision that the partners develop are demand-led and meet the needs of the learners and potential learners.

These structures are at the very core of RISE and were introduced to begin a customer-focused dialogue and to enable learners to engage with the partners of RISE at every level of decision making.

The RISE network, given its extensive reach and wide range of partners, has enabled the curriculum planning process and the facilities offered to learners to evolve, and to address the needs of the business sector by improving the skills set of the people in the five counties.



**UK Partnerships**

The University has a long history of working in partnership with Further Education colleges and public sector and voluntary organisations to provide a university education to individuals throughout Wales, and in some parts of England in areas where it might otherwise be difficult for them to access our programmes.



Over 1500 of the annual intake of students study at one of 12 franchise centres around Wales, which means that they are able to qualify for a University of Wales, Newport qualification, whilst still living and working in their home town - which might be as far away as Ceredigion in the west or Bangor in the north of the country.

There are currently partnerships with a dozen Colleges of Further Education around Wales, which deliver a range of programmes including teacher training, business and professional courses, construction and engineering, art media & design, health and sport. Other partner organisations include the Royal National Institute for the Blind, Mary Hare Schools for the Deaf and Fforwm, to provide accredited professional training and development for staff and members of those organisations.

At the heart of these successful partnerships are the relationships between the University and the staff and students in the partner colleges, with whom we meet and consult on a regular basis to ensure that we deliver a high-quality learning experience that is equivalent to the experience of campus-based students, while meeting the local needs of the communities that we serve.

**Promoting development**

Promoting inward investment is another key area of the University’s work and this is done on several fronts. One method used is cold-calling potential investors, to attract companies to consider the attractions of the region. Using its international links, the University can also take advantage of its contacts through student recruitment to promote the region – China being a current area of growing involvement.



**A visitor from Huanghuai University in China signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the Vice Chancellor, Dr Peter Noyes.**

Huanghuai have a strong record of sending Chinese students to study at Newport Business School.

The University is also developing the new city-centre campus to act as a magnet for inward investment to Newport, especially in the creative industries. This will involve the University’s expertise in this area from its teaching and research, combined with the business knowledge to promote and support enterprise start-ups. With its award-winning School of Art, Media and Design, Newport is superbly placed to promote the creative industries, which are a fast-growing sector in today’s economy. The University is also working with partners to help to attract other related projects such as a contemporary arts gallery and a national documentary photography archive. These will help in the creation of a new cultural quarter for Newport along the riverfront that will draw in visitors and attract people to work and invest here.

# International development

The University continues to develop its international profile, under the direction of the Dean of International Affairs. From its earlier franchise projects in Malaysia and China to student recruitment and internationalisation activities, the University now boasts an international alumni (ex-student) network of over 5000 students representing over 50 nationalities. At Newport teaching and learning are continually reviewed from an international perspective, as this aspect is vitally important in ensuring that our local communities have opportunities to engage with the global knowledge economy.

In addition to this continuous improvement the University has an active international recruitment policy with representation in over 20 countries and growing populations of students from West Africa, South Asia, China and the Middle East. Visits are made annually to these regions with participation in more than 50 recruitment events around the world.



**The first intake of Malaysian students in 1994.** The 14 students studied a fast track HND in Engineering and Computing, at the then Gwent College of Higher Education.



**One of the group – Faizal Hasan from Penang – revisited Caerleon campus with his wife in 2007**

Faizal is now the Production Executive for Infineon Technologies in Malaysia and still meets with many others from the group who studied with him.

Pictured with Faizal and his wife are University staff Sue Stevens (International Support Officer), Carolyn Jenkins (Alumni Officer) and Penny Jarman (Head of Development).

Building on these developments, the University is looking to widen its involvement with universities in Europe, North America and Asia, to ensure that students studying at Newport have access to international study opportunities; some recent examples include study visits to New Delhi (India) and Heidenheim (Germany). These activities announce to the



world that Newport is truly an international university. The University has travelled a long way since those early projects in Malaysia and China; in a rapidly-changing world, it is constantly looking for opportunities in new markets such as Central Asia and East Africa.



International students enjoy an outing to Bath



University staff from the School of Education among the delegation visiting Kutaisi in 2008

**Georgia**

The City of Newport has a twinning arrangement with Kutaisi, the second-largest city in the Republic of Georgia. This relationship is shared by the University, with its partner university in Kutaisi, the Akaki Tsereteli State University.

Staff from the universities exchange visits to share experiences and to collaborate on research and teaching activities.

**China**

Since the 1990s the University has worked in partnership with Chinese institutions, offering Masters in Business Administration awards. The Newport Business School and the Chinese institutions exchange staff and coordinate joint teaching arrangements.

The franchise partners are Hainan Overseas Education Centre, the International Academy of Management in Hong Kong and the Research institute of Renmin University, Shenzhen.

**The Belarus Fabric Project**

To celebrate the International Year of Planet Earth, Newport Fashion students created an innovative collection of clothing using organic linen from Belarus, which was personally presented to them by the Belarusian Ambassador.

The project supported the Newport and Gwent Chamber of Commerce’s efforts to help develop new European markets for Belarusian linen.



**Wales International Study Centre**

In June 2008 the University launched the Wales International Study Centre (WISC), which is a unique and superb new facility for international students wanting to progress to internationally-recognised universities across Wales. Situated on the campus at Caerleon, WISC delivers the International Foundation Year as preparation for degree study at institutions across Wales.

When launched by the Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM, the First Minister for Wales, he commented:  
*“The Wales International Study Centre is unique: it offers international students a pathway to some of the finest degree programmes in the world, alongside the opportunity to study in a country with a unique cultural heritage and a landscape of outstanding natural beauty. I’m delighted that both Study Group and the University of Wales, Newport, working together, have created this exclusive opportunity. Another first for Wales!”*





# The new city campus





The University's new campus will mark a welcome return to the city centre after an absence of more than a decade. From 1910 until 1996, one of the University's predecessor institutions occupied the prominent building in Clarence Place, close to Newport Bridge on the east side of the river. The new campus will see a move across the river and a short distance downstream, near to the Newport Centre and the new pedestrian footbridge. It is also near to the Riverfront Arts Centre, which the University uses as a venue for its Performing Arts productions and other events such as film screening and fashion shows.

The new campus will provide more space to accommodate a growing number of students and 'state-of-the-art' facilities and its completion will see the eventual closure of the Allt-yr-yn campus.

The city-centre campus is central to making Newport the 'cultural capital' of Wales and Newport's vision is to turn the riverfront - once devoted to moving coal and steel out of south-east Wales - into a space that attracts visitors. This whole area has been designated as a cultural zone, and among projects being pursued are a contemporary arts gallery and a national documentary photographic archive. The University's new riverside campus will be the hub for the creation of a new 'Left Bank', turning an area that has been derelict until recently into a place where local people, students and visitors will mix and visit cafes, studios, shops, exhibitions and shows. The city centre campus will place the University at the heart of the community and by housing the Newport Business School and many of the creative art departments, the new campus will provide a focus for entrepreneurship and enterprise, forging links between the best business brains and the cream of local creative talent.

Culture is seen as a vital ingredient for transforming and regenerating modern cities, by drawing on the combined support of the public, private and community sectors to promote the city's cultural activity and attractions. The University will contribute a rich heritage in the visual arts to this development, at the heart of Newport's cultural quarter.

**The 'Hothouse'**

The building is a striking design by architects BDP. Known as the 'Hothouse', it will stand out in the building's profile as a distinctive zone, suspended from the ceiling and connected by walkways. It will capitalise on the University's greatest assets - its people and ideas.

The building will be physically transparent and open to the city, rather than being enclosed behind high walls. It will be possible to see right through the building and visitors to Newport will be encouraged to come in and see a wealth of artistic and creative exhibitions that will be constantly on display. The new campus will help to make clear to visitors to our City that Newport is home to a unique university with an international reputation.



**The foundation stone**

On 30 June 2008, the construction phase of the University's new £35m City Centre Campus was officially launched by Ken Russell, legendary director of films such as 'Women in Love' and 'Tommy', who is a Visiting Professor at the University's International Film School Wales.

The director made his mark on the riverside site by leaving his handprints and autograph in concrete, which will be set onto a plinth and displayed in the new campus when it is completed. He commented *"I think the City Centre Campus is a brilliant idea – and the sooner it's completed and producing tomorrow's film-makers, artists and entrepreneurs the better!"*.



Ken Russell is pictured with the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Peter Noyes, and Newport's Mayor, Councillor Noel Trigg and his wife, Valerie.



The future

This book tells a story that is unfinished, because there are so many exciting developments underway to take the the University forward into the 21st century. At first glance it is difficult to recognise the early work of the Mechanics Institute and its successors within the high-tech, dynamic institution that we have today, with its broad spectrum of activities and its global presence. However, look more closely and it is possible to see several themes that run throughout the story.

Since the earliest days there has been an emphasis on providing courses for non-traditional students, so that all members of the community have the opportunity to access learning. The Mechanics Institute was responsible for starting this process, with its wide range of lectures, art classes and exhibitions of art, technology and the natural sciences. As the municipal authorities took control of developments, this approach was expanded from the 1870s to enhance access to learning with the development of scientific, commercial and other work-based subjects, but the struggle to get employers to provide day release for their workers’ studies is a battle still being fought sometimes today! With the growing need for flexibility of the workforce, the University is increasingly working with employers to provide the right training needed in an accessible and affordable manner.

The need for adequate funding and political support has also been a regular theme. Despite numerous threats to funding, the possible closure of the Caerleon College in 1959 and the likelihood of enforced mergers, the modern University has sustained and developed its unique character, built on the separate institutions that joined together in the embryonic University of 1975. With the vagaries of numerous political and funding issues, University College status - first suggested in 1904 - was not finally achieved until 1996, some 92 years later!

Perhaps the most persistent theme - since the days of the School of Science and Art in the 1870s - has been the struggle to provide adequate facilities to cater for the strong demand for the courses. This is still an important issue for the University and the new city campus and the building works at Caerleon are examples of the positive response to deal with the pressures of expansion. The continuing growth in the number of students has been a regular feature of the University’s history and the increase of applications for undergraduate places sees the University regularly topping the national tables for growth in student applications.

The University’s mission is to ‘*Inspire and enable individuals, organisations and communities to succeed through innovation in high quality learning, research and enterprise*’ and this is being achieved by a wide range of activities that are taking the University forward, within the context of its origins, serving Newport and Greater Gwent. In simple terms, these activities are referred to as teaching, research and enterprise, the last named referring to additional work related to local development and income generation. The combined results reflect the strength of the individual institutions that formed the University, together with subsequent developments that have enhanced these strengths.

The University plans to maintain its distinctive identity at the heart of the community within a growing body of activity and an increasing national and international presence. These are exciting times for the University of Wales, Newport!

Appendix 1: Significant dates and events

1841	Mechanics Institute opens in Newport with a room in the Commercial Buildings and holds first lectures and ‘Exhibition of Pictures’
1843	Institute occupies rooms in the new Town Hall
1845	Institute holds second art exhibition
1847	Renamed the Newport Athenaeum and Mechanics’ Institute
1853	Institute holds a third ‘Exhibition of Fine Arts and Manufactures’
1859	Institute moves to the former Diocesan School in Dock Street James Flewitt Mullock starts first Art classes for the Institute
1870	Mechanics Institute closes, Free Library Committee take responsibility for classes
1872	Classes in Science and Art begin under the Free Library Classes begin in the British School on Stow Hill
1873	Classes begin in the Savings Bank Chambers on Stow Hill
1881	Classes begin in the Albert Hall Chambers on Stow Hill
1882	The Free Library in Dock Street opens, incorporating the School of Science and Art
1884	First commercial and business courses offered
1886	Teacher training classes begin
1889	Technical Instruction Act Rooms taken for classes at 182 Dock Street
1891	Newport Technical School opens
1894	Pupil Teachers’ Centre opens
1894-5	Single institution created for Science and Art
1898	Newport Technical Institute opens at 24 Bridge Street Separation of Art Department from Science, Technology & Commerce Two Heads appointed
1899	Land in Clarence Place bought from Lord Tredegar
1904	The opportunity to obtain University College status lost due to lack of collaboration and investment
1908	Teacher training college at Caerleon suggested
1909	Foundation stone laid at Clarence Place
1910	New Technical Institute opens in Clarence Place
1912	First Photography class held
1914	First intake of students at Caerleon Training College
1914-18	FIRST WORLD WAR 12 Caerleon students killed in action
1915	Schools of Art and Science, Technology and Commerce combine under single Principal
1917	A request to become part of the University of Wales is rejected
1919	Newport Technical Institute renamed The County Borough of Newport Technical College and Institute
1923	Ordinary National Certificates offered for the first time
1934	Name changes to Newport Technical College
1938	First Higher National Certificates offered
1939	The South Wales Argus proposes a University College, but this does not happen
1939-45	WORLD WAR TWO Caerleon College used for troop lectures and evacuees Clarence Place used for air raid shelters 19 Caerleon students killed in action



1944	Education Act
1950	Board of Governors given more powers to run Caerleon College of Education
1958	Newport and Monmouthshire College of Technology opens Newport Technical College closes Clarence Place continues as Newport and Monmouthshire College of Art
1959	Caerleon College withstands an attempt to transfer all teacher training to Cardiff
1962	Female students admitted to Caerleon College of Education for the first time
1963	First computer installed at Newport and Monmouthshire College of Technology
1964	Halls of residence open at Caerleon
1968	Extension opens at Newport and Monmouthshire College of Technology
1972	White Paper Education for Expansion suggests merger of colleges
1975	Three Colleges merge to become Gwent College of Higher Education
1985	New Art and Design building opens at Caerleon campus (Rathmell Building)
1987	First degree ceremony held at Newport
1992	Fire at Caerleon campus Gwent College of HE leaves Gwent County Council control
1994	Student village opens at Caerleon campus
1995	Gwent College of HE granted taught-degree awarding powers First College-wide computer network installed
1996	Gwent College of HE formally changes to University of Wales College, Newport Remaining Art and Design facilities at Clarence Place transferred to Caerleon campus
1999	Sports Centre opens
2001	Merger talks with the University of Wales, Lampeter do not proceed
2003	Merger talks with Coleg Gwent do not proceed
2004	Becomes the University of Wales, Newport
2005	A Funding Council report suggests merging the University with the University of Glamorgan and the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), to create a combined university with 50,000 students. Merger talks between the University and UWIC do not proceed
2006	Agreement reached on development of a new city centre campus
2007	New teaching building opens at Caerleon (Kegie Building)
2008	Wales International Study Centre opens Work begins on new city centre campus

## Appendix 2: Former Principals

### The Free Library Committee (1870 – 1891) Newport Technical School and School of Art (1891 – 1898)

William Bush	
<i>Head of School of Art and Science</i>	1874 - 1898

### Newport Technical Institute (1898 – 1910) Newport Technical Institute (1910 – 1919)

John Joseph Steward	
<i>Head of Science, Technology &amp; Commerce</i>	1898 - 1915
William Bush	
<i>Head of Art Department</i>	1898 - 1915
R W Holland	
<i>Principal of Schools of Art, Science, Technology &amp; Commerce</i>	1915 - 1919

### Newport Technical College and Institute (1919 – 1934) Newport Technical College (1934 – 1958)

George R Bennett	
<i>Principal</i>	1919 - 1933
A G Webb	
<i>Principal</i>	1933 - 1936
Fred W R Harrison	
<i>Principal</i>	1936 - 1957

### Newport College of Art (1958 – 1975)

Harry Lea	1958 - 1964
John Wright	1964 - 1975

### Newport & Monmouthshire College of Technology (1958 – 1975)

Fred W R Harrison	1958 - 1964
George A Crook	1964 - 1971
Brian Robins	1971 - 1975

### Caerleon Training College (1914 – 1975)

Sir Edward Anwyl	1914
Ivor Bertram John	1914 - 1937
John Owen	1937 - 1944
Thomas John Webley	1944 - 1952
Gwilym Prichard Ambrose	1952 - 1970
Harold Edwards	1970 - 1972
Melville Isaac Harris	1972 - 1975

### Gwent College of Higher Education (1975 – 1996)

Melville Isaac Harris	1975 - 1990
Professor Ken Overshott	1991 - 1996

### University of Wales College, Newport (1996 – 2004)

Professor Ken Overshott	1996 - 2002
Professor James Lusty	2002 - 2004

### University of Wales, Newport (2004 - )

Professor James Lusty	2004 - 2006
Doctor Peter Noyes	2007 -



# Appendix 3: The Alumni Office

The Alumni Office co-ordinates the University’s links with its former students and also offers a channel through which you can keep in touch with one another as well as many other benefits. Newport Alumni Association members are people who have studied or worked at any of the following institutions, which became part of the present University.

- University of Wales, Newport
- University of Wales College, Newport
- Gwent College of Higher Education
- Newport School of Art and Design
- Caerleon College of Education
- Newport Technical College

The Alumni Office is also keen to receive photographs or stories of life and events in the past.



Alumni Officer Carolyn Jenkins displays some of the University’s collection of old photographs.



Caerleon students from 1944-47 hold a reunion at the University in 2006, to examine memorabilia and to renew old friendships.

For up-to-date information on the Alumni Office and Association, please visit the University website.

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## WEBSITES

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Caerleon Net  
[www.caerleon.net](http://www.caerleon.net)

Newport Past  
<http://www.newportpast.com/>

University of Wales, Newport  
<http://www3.newport.ac.uk/>



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