



# Ariel

"I come to answer thy best pleasure." The Tempest Act 1 Sc.ii

The Journal of the Newport-Kutaisi Twinning Association Issue No 1 October 2000



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- Much, much more

*Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the  
Newport-Kutaisi Twinning Association*

## To the Members of the KNTA from Rosemary Butler AM

Dear Friends,

Unfortunately my duties as Secretary for Education and Children in the new National Assembly for Wales prevent me from joining you as you commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Twinning of Newport and Kutaisi. However I am sure that the celebrations will be a great success and enjoyed by all. Like you, I could not be more pleased when I think how the ties between our two communities have expanded and strengthened over the years.

When, as the two Mayors, Temuraz Shashiashvili and I signed the Twinning Agreement in 1990 I believe we both appreciated not only the opportunities but also the difficulties before us. Positioned at opposite ends of the European continent, Newport and Kutaisi were then separated by far more than just the daunting distance of a thousand miles. Telephone and postal links were non-existent, travel between Newport and Kutaisi depended on a long and arduous journey via Moscow and visa applications were inevitably a long drawn out nightmare. It is hardly surprising that some observers believed that the project was destined to failure.

Well, as we all know, they were wrong. The linking of Newport and Kutaisi has proved to be a triumph, thanks to the hard work and dedication of every member of the two Associations and in particular to the tireless efforts of my dear friend Madonna Megrelishvili. I am sure we will agree that Madonna has been an inspiration to us all.

During ten of the most important years in the history of both Georgia and Wales, hundreds of our citizens have had the opportunity to visit each others city, forming friendships, exchanging views and expertise and getting to know each others culture and history.

The result is that the people of Newport and Kutaisi have surprised ourselves and each other by discovering how much we have in common – the warmth and friendliness of our people, mutual traditions of hospitality, superb countryside, a shared love of music, a joint enthusiasm for learning and the knowledge that the future of both our ancient nations now lies in our own hands.

The Newport – Kutaisi twinning has been described, with justification, as a model for all other linked towns. Continued success will, of

course, depend on the constant hard work of us all. But I have no doubt that now we can build on the solid foundations that have been established over the past decade. Together the people of Newport, Wales and Kutaisi, Georgia can face the challenges before us as mutually supportive and ever closer friends.

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Butler  
Assembly Member for Newport West

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## Professor Madonna Megrelishvili

On behalf of the Newport delegation I would like to pay tribute to Professor Madonna Megrelishvili and the part she played in bringing together this Ten Year Celebration of the Twinning Agreement.

It is impossible to appreciate the amount of time, thought and organisational skills that Madonna showed over the two-year period it took to plan.

Without her drive and enthusiasm there would have been no visit.

It was a carefully thought out event with great attention paid to detail. It involved hundreds of people, young and old, both as individuals and in groups. There were civic dignitaries; the university, the host families, the drivers, schools, choirs, and societies all contributed to making the event the success it was.

Thank you Madonna so much. We join you and the members of the Kutaisi Association in looking forward to another fruitful ten years of partnership between our two communities taking us into the twenty first century !

CP



Professor Madonna Megrelishvili with Mayor Fred Sweeting and Mayor Ramaz Mkhelidze



## The Easter 2000 Delegation to Kutaisi.

### A brief outline of the programme

In this issue we include fuller descriptions that have been written by members of the group giving their individual response to the experiences they had during their 10 day stay in Kutaisi. There is not room to give total coverage but we hope in further issues to fill in the gaps.

### Wednesday-Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> April

Ten members of the NKTA: Vera Brown, Caroline McLachlan, Julie McLeod, Rod McLeod, Catherine Philpott, Dr Russell Rees, Mike Singleton, Jan Tyson, Bernard Tyson and Annette Wells - arrived in Tbilisi in Georgia en route for Kutaisi, the principal city of the Imereti Region that lies westwards between the capital and the Black Sea coastline. The visit was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Twinning Agreement between Newport, South Wales and Kutaisi. The group was later joined by Councillor Fred Sweeting, Mayor of Newport and Alf Ropke, Director of Leisure & Tourism for Newport Borough Council

### Friday

Received by the Avtandil Nikoleishvili Rector of Kutaisi State University

Visits to:

English Department KSU

Jakob Gogebashvili Primary School concert

Arsen Pochkhua's studio to see his exquisite carvings

Meeting with the Townswomen's Guild with recital

### Saturday

The delegation visited the Bagrati Cathedral. As always it looked splendid in its setting with its distinctive architecture. From here could be seen a wonderful view of Kutaisi, conveying its sheer size across the plain towards the magnificent backdrop of the Caucasus Mountains. It was remembered that this has been designated as a World Heritage Site

In the afternoon we travelled to Bagdati where we met the British Ambassador, Mr. Richard Jenkins, who joined us for lunch. En route we passed through a glorious ancient forest of oak trees.

An early evening meeting was arranged in the Mayor's office with:

Imereti Governor - Teimuraz Shashiashvili

Mayor of Kutaisi - Mr Ramaz Mkheidze

Chairman of Kutaisi City Council

Mr Malkhaz Asatiani

Here greetings and good wishes, together with civic gifts were exchanged with the Mayor of Newport Mr Fred Sweeting.

### Sunday

This was Palm Sunday. In Georgia the faithful take boughs of box to church to be blessed

The opening of the Gynaecological Hospital with Dr Zurab

To the Opera House to see a presentation of Shakespearean plays by the students of KSU in honour of the Anniversary of William Shakespeare's birth. A truly high quality production both by direction, students' acting, choreography and stage design

### Monday

Visits were made to the:

The Fine Arts Lycee

National Bank

English Speaking Club to meet with the students of KSU English Dept

The day was completed with a visit to the superb monastery at Gelati followed by a fascinating visit to Motsameta and a meeting with the charismatic Father Gagi.

### Tuesday

Today was one of the highlights of the visit - the renaming of Myakovsky Street, a beautiful tree-lined boulevard. This had been formerly named after the Russian poet and we felt most honoured that such a central street should carry Newport's name. Mayor Fred Sweeting cut the tape to officially open the street, accompanied by the Mayor of Kutaisi.



At the opening of Newport Street  
Fr Gagi with Caroline, Jan, Russell & Bernard



**The Millennium Meeting** held at the Drama Theatre was dedicated to the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Twinning. It took the form of a musical concert, at the end of which the soloists were presented to Mayor Fred Sweeting.

There followed a visit for a performance of the Imedi Dance Troupe. Their dancing displayed the legendary beauty of Georgian women and the courage and ferocity of the Georgian warriors. It is impossible to convey the passion and intensity of both the music and the dance.

### Wednesday

#### Press Conference

Visit to attend Forum on Human Rights in Imereti NGO House

St. Nino's, School. To attend concert that was given by students. The centrepiece being a puppet play based on the classic Cinderella story delivered in flawless English demonstrating the high level of teaching in the Language Department. Cinderella and her Prince were shown to be from Newport and Kutaisi which gave a new twist to that famous tale!

### Thursday

Sixth Conference of Georgian, British and American Studies KSU

Papers delivered by students in the English Department

Visit to offices of small business and international network "Abkhazintercon"

Farewell Party – goodbye to all our wonderful friends new and old made over this wonderful week spent with them in Kutaisi

### Friday

Sad day but what a memorable and wonderful send off with so many people coming to wave us off on our journey to Tbilisi.

An evening meeting with the British Ambassador Mr Richard Jenkins at the Embassy, high up in the Mateki Palace Hotel which provided wonderful views of old Tbilisi. Later a visit to an outdoor Folk Museum, very like St. Fagan's, containing ethnic styles of architecture brought from all regions of Georgia. From here too were magnificent views of the city.

### Saturday

Early morning flight to London.  
CP. MS.

### Bernard Tyson Chair NKTA writes:

During the course of delivering a vote of thanks at one of the many dinners we attended, I inadvertently referred to our Association visit to Kutaisi as a "holiday". There were many similarities: beautiful weather, exotic locations, good food and warm friendship. However, preparing to address a meeting at the Kutaisi Drama Theatre on the importance of institutions in Georgia adopting policies to combat social exclusion was hardly relaxing!

The Mayor of Kutaisi, Ramez Mkheidze, however, was sufficiently impressed with the concept to ask me afterwards for a copy of my speech.

In line with our Delegation's desire to be as inclusive as possible with our contacts, we visited the newly opened Non-Government Organisations (NGO) House for the setting up of a discussion group on human rights in Georgia. We were most impressed by the number of NGOs present, from environmental action groups to youth organisations, to Red Cross/Crescent to the Soroptomists. During a lively two-way discussion, members of the NGOs present asked us about similar groups in Newport and we explained how the voluntary sector operates in Wales.

I would like to build on this meeting by putting like-minded groups in our twin towns in touch with each other. We have dubbed this idea the Pigeon Hole Project having been impressed by the thirty or so labelled in/out boxes for NGOs in the entrance hall of the House.

I regretted not having taken a book of quotations.

As we learnt early on in our visit, Georgians have turned dining and speech making into an art form. Punctuating every meal is a ceremony of toasting, each toast to be followed in a prescribed order. At some stage guests are expected to respond and as well as thanking the host for hospitality, a few wise words, preferably laced with a bit of humour do not go amiss. That was where I missed my little book!

What was not missed, until we left Kutaisi, were the wonderful friendship and hospitality shown by our hosts. In particular I must mention the Chkbadze family who made Jan and I so welcome in their home during our stay. We hope to see them again soon.



## My Jolopi

Let me tell you about my little bit of Georgia that sits on my roof overlooking the garden. I gaze at it everyday as I dream away whilst washing up. I think of the roofs and houses of Kutaisi.

Once upon a time there was no one in the whole of the British Isles, I swear, that owned what I have – a piece of craftwork in tin. It was lovingly made, especially for me, by Salukio, a skilled metalworker, living in Kutaisi and given to me by the friends there.

As I wandered through the streets on my visit in 1998 my eyes beheld the jolopi – that item which is so unique to Georgia. It seems to me. A Jolopi is a hopper – am I clear? Probably not. If you look up to your roof and see the guttering, let your eye travel along until it arrives at the downpipe. You will then see a triangular-shaped container that allows rainwater to flow down into the drain. That is, for us a hopper.

In Georgia, it is called a Jolopi and what a creation it is. Not a pre-moulded bit of plastic this, but a wondrous piece of three-dimensional artwork.

Mine is fashioned into a shape that is circular, a crown, a diadem with the most intricately cut pattern work. This sets off the base of a conical turret on which is poised a dove, wings outstretched, embracing the world. On my roof it sits for all Welsh eyes to behold. It suffers a damper climate than that of Georgia. The rain and wind here can be harsh in winter but it remains high in the air gleaming out, even on the duller of days.

I said at the beginning of this piece that once I was the sole owner of a Jolopi. Now no longer. I have been joined by our Chair, Bernard Tyson. He too was equally fascinated by these pieces of architectural detail. It was a gift from his host family, an exact replica of the one that is on their roof. It travelled back to Newport with him in April and so it is that Newport is the home of two fine examples of Georgian Jolopis! The British visitors, on seeing them, exclaim in wonder, for they have seen nothing like them before. The Georgians who come are greatly amused because I know they do not quite fathom our enthusiasm for something that is ordinary for them but for us is so characteristic of Georgia and Kutaisi!!!

CP

## Georgian Art

Almost 10 years ago 3 of Kutaisi's finest artists, Jaba Cheisvili, Vitali Capanadze and Avtandil Leladze visited Newport as guests of what is now known as the School of Art, Media and Design, UWCN, bringing over 30 of their paintings. They include landscapes, portraits and still lifes. The canvases are of a very high quality and many are large in scale. The works have been exhibited at the University, Newport Art Gallery and at a Birmingham venue. On each occasion they received very favourable press comment.

Recently they were shown in the Georgia 2000 exhibition at 27, Cork St. together with work by Georgia's much acclaimed child prodigy Beso Kazaishvili and Stalin's great grandson, the artist Jacob Dzhugashvili. The exhibition was reviewed in both the Spectator and the New Statesman. The attractive catalogues carried a reproduction of one of Jaba Cheisvili's landscapes on the covers.

Derek Butler



Domestic Vineyard by Jaba Cheisvili

### Julie McLeod writes:

When Rod had the opportunity to visit Kutaisi for the second time I knew he desperately wanted to return. Then he told me that he would not go unless I accompanied him. I would never willingly have chosen Georgia of all the places in the world to visit and did not want to go, but in the end I thoroughly enjoyed my visit.

From the moment we arrived until the time we left we were all treated like royalty. We stayed with a wonderful family. Our hostess was Tamriko who worked as an English teacher at the University. She not only acted as our hostess but personal advisor to Rod as well. Being a person who absolutely hates wearing a tie she



would always advise if he should be wearing one or if he could get away without one on any particular day. Her parents Giuli and Tsisana would wait up for us every night when Giuli was only too pleased if Rod would sit with him and participate in a glass or three of their wonderful home-made. (They had a cellar where they stored some 400 litres of wine that Giuli and Tamriko made each year). If you drink alcohol you have to eat. This usually meant that Tsisana would prepare another meal for us- when you have just returned from a 3 or 4 hour meal there is a limit to how much more that you can actually eat. Mirian, brother to Tamriko drove us everywhere, acting as our personal taxi driver.

The food at every table we sat at was far in excess of what anyone could possibly manage to eat, and when we thought we had finished still more was placed in front of us, foods which were simply delicious. The vegetables included the likes of beetroot that were stuffed with a paste made from walnuts. I have tried making this sauce, called *bazhe*, since we got home- with surprisingly good results.

The countryside is extremely beautiful. I would have loved to have seen more but sadly time was short and this was not possible. The churches are magnificent. Even the ruins are magnificent pieces of architecture with long histories behind them. - slowly Kutaisi is repairing the damage. It is a city with many remarkable features and of great beauty.

I enjoyed my visit to Kutaisi very much. It has a city and people to be extremely proud of. I look forward to returning and meeting again all the people I met during my stay who showed us such kindness and generosity that I was saddened to leave them on my return to the UK.

I cannot finish without mentioning the IMEDI concert. The stage was never empty, before one group of children had left the stage the next group were already on. Young boys danced throwing knives and fighting with swords so quickly you could see the sparks flying. The young girls appeared to be on wheels. In places it appeared to be a little like ballet, children going on points, without point shoes to aid them.

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#### Dr Russell Rees writes.

I had prepared myself before travelling, by reading the fascinating stories of this most famous land with its exquisite legends: the Golden Fleece and so forth. I had also read some of its ancient and valorous history.

As a Welshman I had a fellow feeling with much of this history. Like them I lived in a small country enveloped by a much more powerful neighbour with whom at various periods one has been at variance and, at others, united. This close intimacy doomed our country to travel as fellow with another nation's destination. This stifling national contiguity has appeared again and again in Georgia's history too.



Dr Zurab Murculia at the opening of the Gynaecological Hospital

Despite my preparation I found there was no preparation for the reality of what we, the delegation, were to experience. The welcome we received came beyond my grandest expectations, the scenery that we saw beyond my wildest dreams, the material poverty of the infrastructure below my worst consideration. Yet this poverty of the infrastructure- with which we have now become unaccustomed in Millenary Wales- was no new experience to me as an older man. It reminded me of my youth, in the Welsh heart-lands during the course of our great Patriotic War. At that time we also were materially poor and lacked many of the luxuries, which by now have come to be regarded as necessities. Yes, Georgia reminded me of this period, which was indeed the happiest time of my life, a time when people were kind to each other, truly welcoming, with an enormous sense of true sharing. There was a sense of a happy country facing up to its many problems with resolution, determination and a sense that it could not be defeated.

One sensed that Georgia will certainly overcome its present difficulties, and become once again the easily accessible country of the Golden Fleece. The visit was a great success and the group behaved in an exemplary way I am sure they maintained the honourable traditions of preceding visitors. I certainly enjoyed Georgia. It made me determined to do what I can to help the Newport-Kutaisi Association and to go again to Georgia - the next time as an ordinary tourist.

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# Vera Brown Secretary NKTA writes:

Looking back on my first trip to Kutaisi, the overwhelming impression now is of the great variety of experiences we had all of them memorable as the other: the people, the scenery and above all the overwhelming hospitality on formal and informal occasions. In particular the generosity of host families was amazing. In my case I stayed with Madlen Makhviladze (whom I met on her visit to Newport) her sister and family who made me, a total stranger, feel immediately part of the family. It is difficult to pick out any memory above another, but the formal opening of Newport Street is one. It seemed as if most of the city had come, either to watch or to take part - if not in the programmed ceremony, then to walk down the street afterwards under its new name. After the ceremony I went with Madlen to the end of the street and beyond, here we went into a church. Because it was the week leading to the orthodox Easter, services were held continually throughout the day. The church was full of people of all ages, all standing (there were no seats or pews). Holding the candle they had lit on entering, they listened intently to the priest chanting - a moving experience. On another afternoon, we went for a leisurely walk around the city using the bridges across the River Rioni as

was fascinating to see the local fruit and vegetables and, in particular, the spice stall with its heaped bowls of colourful spices.

If compelled to select one of the high spots of the trip (and it is very difficult to choose) it would be the Millennium Meeting at the Drama Theatre for the 10th Anniversary of the Twinning. The speeches made reference to the contacts and visits through the previous ten years, celebrating what had been achieved through the twinning. They showed the warmth between the people of our two towns, no strangers to each other. An example of the first was the performance by Patti Jinjikhadze as pianist at the concert; a previous entrant in the Newport International Competition for Young Pianists, her studies had been supported by the Newport-Kutaisi Association. Some of the hosts of the current Newport group had visited Newport themselves in some cases as children at the beginning of the twinning activities. The concert by the Imedi Dance Troupe and the banquet in the Folklore Palace that followed, were equally memorable. The discipline of the dancers, combined with incredible energy, athleticism and gracefulness, was amazing. There were unforgettable moments - the sparks flying from the swords wielded by the boys, the girls gliding across the stage with complete



focal point. Each time we arrived at a bridge there, again, were the wonderful views of the snow-capped Caucasus Mountains on the one side, and Bagrati Cathedral on its hillside on the other. Our tour took us through the market - it

serenity. Finally there are memories to treasure of the evening banquet - the overflowing table, the warmth of the toasts, the ability of any group (women included) to break into harmonised singing, rounded off with dancing at the end.



## Georgian Hospitality

We all enjoyed the legendary hospitality of our hosts. If we keep a welcome in the hillside in Wales, how do we describe the welcome there?

Mike Singleton describes what he encountered with his host family.

On the last night I discovered the outcome of the sole shopping expedition I had been able to make in Kutaisi. I was looking for jewellery for my wife so I asked Shorena, my hostess and Lala, her sister-in-law, for aesthetic support. I was looking for a brooch and we soon found one, they bought it. I protested and they demurred. I was consoled by the thought that it wasn't very expensive; next a necklace and some earring "clips". We all admired a silver necklace but I really wanted a gold one. We found some "clips" which they bought it. Before continuing our search for the necklace I said I would not go into another shop and I would not say I liked anything unless I bought it; no I wouldn't, yes I would, etc etc.

Eventually they accepted but I was right to be suspicious. We saw some nice ones but we all agreed that they were too expensive. Lastly we went to a shop where a lengthy conversation ensued which was not explained to me. At the party we exchanged gifts – a few on my part and a tidal wave on theirs. There was the pellet I had admired; an ebony brooch and bracelet; the necklace which was the product of the unexplained conversation and as I had feared; eight bottles of wine, 12 bottles of beer.... I had learnt never to mention that you liked anything to a Georgian.

Though I returned home laden with material evidence of Georgian generosity the real wealth lay in the warmth of my host family, the memory of which will remain deep within my heart.

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## Letters:

From Tato Sandhadze

Sometimes it is very difficult to talk about your impressions, especially when there are so many of them. I'll try to sort out some thoughts about my visit.

First of all I want to say about the woman I've stayed with, about Pat Wright. She visited Georgia and stayed with my family, and became a member of our family. She is a wonderful person and she was like a mother for me during my stay in Newport.

I want to say it was so pleasant to be surrounded by friends, who are trying to make your living abroad easier and more comfortable. It is so kind of them. These people are the members of the Newport- Kutaisi Association, and not only Association members. I want to thank all of them, because they made me feel like at home. I didn't feel homesick even a single day here, that's because of their enormous support.

As for my education here, I think the main reason I've come here was breaking some kind of language brick and two days were enough for that purpose. As for the classes in Charles Street College, I don't want to boast, but they seemed quite easy for me as I had wonderful teachers at English in Kutaisi. I think all the students who graduated from Kutaisi State University's English Studies Department will agree with me. But of course some of the classes and methods of teaching were interesting for me. I've learnt some new words and phrases here.

Still I preferred to attend classes with our private tutor, Richard Atkin, there were only two of us in his lessons. Richard chose very different and interesting subjects for discussion, he brought some very useful and interesting texts and of course he did everything according to the level of our knowledge. The main reason why I liked his classes is that one day in the week we left the room and went outdoors, the places we wanted to visit, for example old castles or we were playing golf. I can say that I enjoyed his classes very much and I am grateful for his attitude to us.

In Kutaisi they can ask me what was most impressive, memorable during your visit to Britain and I will say every day I stayed was interesting, as all the time I had some new experience and it's really great. I don't know how to express my feelings better.

In Kutaisi they can also ask was there anything disappointing during my visit and I can say frankly that there was nothing at all. Oh! I think I can remember one terribly disappointing thing and that was that all the football teams I supported here were losing all the time, some kind of curse- and that's not fair.

Now what can I say before my departure? The last days here are sad for me as I've discovered a second home town with friends who are ready to support and help. So I hope to return here one day in the future. I will miss this town, places I have seen and, most of all, friends I've met here. I again want to thank everyone who helped us here.

Well, some times you have a feeling something while writing, anyway it's better for me to finish sharing my impressions about my unforgettable visit.

Tato Sandhadze Newport April – July 2000



## Letters cont:

From David Mindiashvili

I'll introduce myself, I am David Mindiashvili from Georgia. I stayed with the Rock family in Newport. I like Newport. I like Wales. I like Welsh people – Welsh people are warm, good people.

Mr. & Mrs. Rock are very good people. She cooks very well. I liked staying with the Rocks. Everyday I studied in Charles Street College. I liked studying in the College because there are a lot of different people there – Greek, Italian, Turkish, French. Every day we talked about our countries. After study, every day we went on trips around Wales and Newport. I have been to London. I liked London because it is a very big city, a very nice city. I have been to Cardiff. Cardiff is a nice city, a very old city, to my mind the second city in Britain after London. But I prefer Newport because Newport is to my mind the second city after Kutaisi.

Every Thursday and Friday we have study with Richard, our private tutor. Richard is a very good man, a very good teacher. After study we have been around Newport, we have seen castles. Wales is a very old country, very nice. Welsh people are very hospitable – they look like Georgians people in hospitality. I am pleased with my stay here because the very good people from the Newport Kutaisi Association have taken us places every weekend. Thank you very much Welsh people.

David Mindiashvili

Newport April – July 2000

From Richard Atkin

By being personal tutor to David and Tato, the two Georgian students visiting Newport this summer, I have been privileged to learn a great deal about Georgia and the Georgian way of life. My knowledge of Georgia prior to our 8 weeks of lessons was a vague notion about the "Golden Fleece" having come from Georgia and a rough idea as to the country's location on the Black Sea.

My approach to teaching English as a second language has always been to teach to the strengths, needs and interests of my students to find subject areas where the students have an interest or knowledge and to find situations where speech can develop in a natural manner. I believe my role is to facilitate the students to transfer their thoughts, ideas, beliefs and experience into English. As David and Tato were spending a large part of the week studying at Charles Street it was agreed between Catherine Philpott, of the twinning Association and myself

that some of my lessons should take the form of educational outings. These trips were sometimes of historical interest, such as visits to the Roman Amphitheatre, Raglan Castle and St. Fagan's Folk Museum, sometimes of a socio-economic nature, or purely so that Tato and David could experience British ways of life. One trip I planned was intended to show the economic and population growth of Newport during the 1900's via its increasing importance as a port. We started at the Transporter Bridge and the docks then travelling back to the source of the exported commodities, the Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre and the industrial valleys of Wales. However, David and Tato were always at their most talkative when engaging in competition and some of our best lessons were whilst learning English through the medium of golf, darts and bowling!

It was a real pleasure to see the progress that Tato and David made with their English and I was very grateful for the opportunity to meet and teach them both.

Richard Atkin PGCE

Teacher of English

From Nicholas Okreshidze MSc  
Graduate of UWCN 1997-99

Dear Mrs. Rosemary and Mr. Derek,

My sincere thanks for your card in April. Unfortunately I was extremely busy with my new job to reply to you quickly. I want to apologise in advance for my English, because as I noticed I am beginning to forget it.

As you are aware, in April the Vice-Mayor of Kutaisi and I met the Mayor of Newport and Mr. Alf Ropke in Tbilisi. It was an honour for me to meet them there.

Concerning my new position in the Ministry of Fuel and Energy I began working as the Director of the Dept of Electricity. My dept has 2 divisions: Hydro-Power and Thermal Power. The essential work for my dept is the monitoring of the Hydro and Thermal Energy Power in Georgia.

My dept co-ordinates the maintenance of all generating plants in Georgia despite the form of their ownership. We take part in finding investors and in co-operation with other organisations and institutions we prepare proposals for potential investors for construction of new power plants.

The divisions of my dept take part in making and development of the technical and economic



policy for the energy sector rehabilitating and development. For creation of a legal base for the functioning of the energy sector in close co-operation with other Depts. in the Ministry, I participate in preparation and making changes for laws and other legal documents concerning the electrical sector.

Several months ago I became involved in the privatisation process that takes part in the Energy Sector of Georgia (which are my responsibilities as well). At present there are negotiations in progress between the State Property Ministry of Georgia and a French Consortium which is going to privatise several power stations and distribution companies in Western Georgia. For this my department and me process lots of technical and other documentation to ensure the right conditions will be placed in the contract.

Recently I was invited to the international conference on the theme: "Strengthening Regional Energy Linkages & Principles and Objectives of Regional Co-operation". The conference was in Gudauri (Georgia) and was organised by USAID. The energy system and electricity wholesale market of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Delegations from each country made presentations on the energy sector restructuring processes in their countries, after which we had discussions on different topics. The Georgia delegation (whose member I was as well) made good contacts with representatives from Azerbaijan and Armenia and we made plans for our future co-operation.

The next two Conferences on the same issue will be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> of July in Lithuania and on 9<sup>th</sup> July in Poland, where I am invited with the Georgian delegation as well. I am leaving for Lithuania and Poland on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July for 2 weeks. Currently I am busy with the preparation of documents and collecting information for these 2 conferences where I am to make a presentation on the Energy Restructuring in Georgia and the Electricity Wholesale Market.

I would like to say that I find my new job very interesting and I hope that very soon I will be able to put fully my knowledge and experience acquired in UWCN and in the UK into the restructuring and development process of the Energy System of Georgia.

At the end I would like to thank you for your kindness and assistance for giving me the chance to study for a masters degree in UWCN. Actually the knowledge I got from the course is very useful for me. I apply the knowledge acquired at UWCN to my every day job activities. Once again I would like to thank all the members of the Newport-Kutaisi Association and

wish them and their families all the best.

PS. I still have fine memories about Newport and the UK and about the people who were always very pleasant and kind. Once again I want to thank you for everything. While I was in the UK I felt that I missed something and now when I am in Georgia I know this something was my country. We have a small baby in the family. As you know my brother got married when I was in the UK and in September 1999 they had a son. They named him after my father- Vakhtang. As for me I am going to get married this year and settle down in Georgia. Despite everything I think it is a great country and I hope that in the future I will be useful in strengthening the friendship between the British and Georgian people as well as in the development of co-operation between these two countries.

Nick.

## Georgian Food Challenge

Anyone who has had the experience of arriving at a Georgian table that is laden with the delicacies and dishes of that country will never forget their first impression as they enter that dining room. It is a sight that makes one gasp. The table linen, the lace, the china, the glasses are all set to perfection, together with vases and high dishes laden with fruit and flowers. It is a work of art.



We come home vowing to have 'Georgian Evenings', feeding our guests with food using the recipes of Georgia. It never really works. Who here has made a successful khachapuri? No one I know, despite the vague promises made in a rash moment. No one manages to succeed. Many is the time I have watched the hostess in her Georgian kitchen prepare her khachapuri, that dish so special to every Georgian cook. They each produce a khachapuri that is like no other – never are two the same. The taste, the shape, the character seem always to be unique to that particular cook – and what a dish it is when it is hot, straight from the pan, deliciously melting with the cheese that is again so special to Georgia.

A Newport-Kutaisi Association Challenge –  
Make a Khachapuri!

All the Newport cooks out there – write to us and let us know how you fare!



## Khachapuri

500g plain flour  
400ml or ¾ pt milk  
500g cheese – white crumbly goats (mature cheddar grated)  
20g fresh yeast (or 2 packets of Tesco dried)  
salt  
1 egg  
40g butter

Cream the yeast with 3 tbs of milk. Pour into a small bowl and mix thoroughly with enough flour (about 2 tbs) to make a soft dough.

Shape dough into a ball, sprinkle with flour, cover with cloth and leave in a warm place to double in size (around 1 hour).

Sieve remaining flour into a bowl, add the soft dough and knead well. Warm the rest of the milk slightly, add a pinch of salt and stir till dissolved.

Knead the dough, shape into a ball again, sprinkle with flour, cover and leave in a warm place to rise to double its size (approx. 3 hours, check after 2 hours).

When it is risen, shape into 4-5 balls, roll out each ball into a circle 20cm. in diameter. The dough is very wet, use plenty of flour on your surface and on the dough itself (ensure the dough is rolled to the thickness of a pancake).

Meanwhile prepare the filling: grate or crumble the cheese, add one egg and butter and mix thoroughly. Shape the mixture into 3-4 balls. Place a ball into the middle of a dough circle.

Collect the edges up together into the centre and press slightly. Roll into a circle to the size of the frying pan.

Grease the pan with melted butter and put the khachapuri in when the pan is very hot. The khachapuri will be very floppy – use 4 or 5 hands!!

Both sides of the khachapuri must be fried, first with the pan covered, the other side without the cover.

Serve hot cut into 4-6 pieces

Written by CP  
Tested by MS



## Birth Announcements

Bernard & Jan Tyson were delighted to hear from their hosts the news of the birth of a son, **Irakli** to Sophiko. He was born 14<sup>th</sup> June

Dr. Russell Rees and his wife Gillian announced the birth of a grandson, **Cai Sergi Rhys Manel**

## Georgian Studies Day 15th June 2000

On an incredibly hot day in June this year the annual Georgian Studies Day took place in the Lloyd's Building in London.

It was well attended and several of the NKTA members together with Tato Sandukhadze and David Mindiashvili were able to be there.

The emphasis was on what business initiatives could be started by both commerce and industry and the investment that would be required.

We were very interested to hear Governor Teimuras Shashiashvili speak so movingly and so directly stating facts and figures. His message was clear to the delegates that Western Georgia, with special attention given to Kutaisi and the Imereti Region were areas to be seriously considered by both business and industry. He was there, he said, to promote confidence in his country. It would be him that would take the full responsibility to encourage this growth and his promise was that he would do all in his power to build confidence in the minds of the investors.

There were very impressive packs distributed to all the delegates promoting Western Georgia and Kutaisi.

Brian Adcock, Director of Development and Transportation from Newport Borough Council and Newport Kutaisi Twinning Association addressed the meeting. He outlined the background to the TACIS project that he was closely involved with that covered the two-year period April 1995 to April 1997, extended to July 1997. He described the business plan that was put forward at the time that established the Business Centre in Kutaisi. He said how the building was refurbished and equipped with modern technology and at the end of the period the project, through donor funding, local funding and earned income had now become self-sustaining.

CP



A summary of the AGM 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2000.

## 3 The Officers for 2000- 2001.

## 1. Sub-committee

A sub-committee was set up to consider the following:  
membership subs  
payment for expenses for officers  
signatories on cheques.

Chair: Bernard Tyson.  
Vice-Chair: Caroline McLachlan.  
Secretary: Vera Brown.  
Treasurer: Mark Rudland.  
Membership Sec.: Pat Wright.  
Press Officer: Mike Singleton.  
Newsletter Editor: Catherine Philpott

## 2 Chairman's Report

- a 5 members of the Association attended a Georgian Studies day in London (see report).
- b A lap-top and scanner had been given to the Kutaisi- Newport Association with the essential assistance of Alf Ropke.
- c A successful event, including a video and slide show, had been held to record the visit in April.

## 4. AOB.

The proposal to name an open space in Newport after Kutaisi will be a future agenda item: the Council has confirmed its intention to do this.

MS.



Warm Georgian smiles

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Please let us have your news, articles, newspaper items, letters etc. so we can make a start.

We hope you have enjoyed the first issue of Ariel and look forward to producing No 2 but with your essential help.

We have appreciated the help given by Newport Civic Centre Reprographics Dept. in producing this first Journal for NKTA