



Ariel

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

The Journal of the Newport-Kutaisi Twinning Association Issue No 2 April 2001



- Presentation to Rosemary Butler AM
- Dream of Georgian Vineyards
- Brief History of Georgia
- Much, much more

*Celebrating the friendship links between
Kutaisi and Newport*

ARIEL

"I come to answer thy best pleasure." The Tempest Act1 Sc.ii

Happy Easter! Greetings from Newport to Kutaisi and all our friends there.

Again welcome to another edition of **ARIEL** and hope very much that it makes for interesting reading. Our first issue, last October, met with great approval which encouraged us to continue and hopefully to build on our experience so that each issue will improve – well that's the plan!!

Our huge thanks to everyone who has contributed this time. We know how busy everyone is but perhaps on reading this issue it will inspire others out there to join in. We welcome any articles, news items or perhaps transcripts from radio programmes, as we have done this time. Permission seems to be very gladly given to use this type of material.

Remember without your help there would be no **ARIEL** !

N.K.T.A. Officers for 2001

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Vice-Chair:	Caroline McLachlan
Secretary:	Vera Brown
Treasurer:	Rod McLeod
Membership Sec.	Pat Wright
Press Officer:	Mike Singleton
Journal Editor:	Catherine Philpott

Editorial Board:

Catherine Philpott
catherine.philpott@virgin.net
Tel: 01633 421103
Mike Singleton
mike.singleton@freemove.co.uk
Tel: 01633 85322

Grateful thanks to:

Mark Rudland – eagle-eyed for spotting errors.
Aled Singleton – know how.

Their help was invaluable!

Printed by NCBC Reprographics.



Medallions 10th Century

Rosemary Butler AM

Rosemary said she felt she was lucky to be the Mayor when the twinning agreement was mooted. She remembered the initial visit with the Leader of Newport Council, Harry Jones, the Chief Executive and the leader of the Conservatives. They did not really understand how Kutaisi had chosen us but soon realised when they got there that a tremendous amount of homework had been done and a lot was known about Newport. The delegation had been amazed to be the centre of media attention on arrival in Tbilisi, including TV cameras!

Rosemary was impressed with the importance attached to the link with Newport when an international telephone exchange was installed in Kutaisi. Once visited, she said, Kutaisi was never forgotten and she saw the signing of the twinning agreement as a personal commitment to the people there.

She paid tribute to others she felt had been vital to the success of the twinning. Caroline's visit, including her heroic adventure in travelling via Moscow in the snow, to assure the parents of the safety of their children if they came here had been vital. Derek had been a wonderful letter writer and a father figure to the students who had visited. She wished to thank him personally and on behalf of the Association.

on the support given by UWCN to the NKTA and KSU, providing many opportunities including help with the organisation of study. She paid a tribute to the astonishing response of the English dept. bearing in mind the limitations on resources.

A business centre had been set up by Newport council through the TACIS programme, where Brian Adcock had been invaluable. When the first elections were held in Georgia she and Derek were proud to be invited as the international observers in Kutaisi, even more so when they realised their counterpart in Tbilisi was Richard Nixon!

When Kutaisi celebrated its 1,000 years of history she was delighted when, amidst an illustrious gathering in the theatre, the name of Newport was mentioned first for praise. She wished to acknowledge the huge part played by Madonna – "a formidable woman". She was amazed by what Madonna had achieved when recollecting the huge difficulties faced, not being able to rely on electricity or water.

She was touched by the faith the people of Kutaisi placed in Newport. The NKTA had changed her life and her perspective on life; she felt that the relationship had changed Newport too. She noted that the NKTA included 1 honorary citizen of Kutaisi and 3 honorary professors of KSU.



L to R: Derek Butler, Bernard Tyson, Richard Atkin, Catherine Philpott, Mike Singleton, Helen Forshaw, Mel Harris, Tim Forshaw, Vera Brown, Jan Tyson, Eleanor Gower, Joan Edwards, Glenys Day, Beryl Harris, Clare Watkins, David Mindiashevili, Dr. Russell Rees, Jennifer Maylin, Dr. Clive Day, Brian Maylin.
Seated L to R: Mayoress O. Daly, Mayor G. Daly, Rosemary Butler AM, Caroline McLachlan.

On being told of the confirmation of the new arts centre in Newport she expressed her view that it would be marvellous to open the centre with a Georgian week featuring the excellent IMEDI and other talented young people of Kutaisi.

Returning to the recognition of other contributions, she praised the part played by Mel Harris and Professor Ken Overshott. She commented

She would be honoured to add the platter given by the Association to her prized collection of Georgian ones.

Although she could no longer play the former part she played in NKTA she would be proud to remain a member; she was pleased to see the new blood ensuring the future of the Association.

**A Summary of
Newport Kutaisi Twinning Association
AGM 20th June 2001**

Chairman Bernard Tyson reported on:

- * The visit by the Delegation from Kutaisi State University to UWCN.
- * The presentation of an Honorary Professorship of KSU to Professor K. Overshott. A very happy occasion that celebrated the excellent links between the two Universities.
- * The presentation made to Rosemary Butler AM by the President of the Association the Mayor of Newport in recognition of the ten years she gave as Chair of NKTA.
- * The visit by two students from Kutaisi who plan to continue a further period of study at the UWCN in the coming year.
- * The return visit of a former student who now resides in America.
- * The first two publications of Ariel, NKTA's new journal.
- * Newport CBC having issued an invitation to the Mayor of Kutaisi and his Civic Delegation to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Twinning in Newport.
- * NKTA having issued a parallel invitation to the sister Association in Kutaisi.

The Officers for 2001-2002.

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Treasurer:	Rod McLeod
Membership Sec:	Pat Wright.
Publicity Officer:	Mike Singleton
Journal Editors:	Catherine Philpott Mike Singleton

CP

**UWCN VISIT TO GEORGIA
9-15 MARCH 2001**

During March 2001, John Roberts - Tempus Tacis project co-ordinator, and Paul Relf - European Officer attended the Final Dissemination conference of the Tempus Tacis project with Kutaisi State University.

This is a brief account of that visit by Paul Relf.

This was my first visit to Eastern Europe, and despite the many stories relayed by UWCN staff who have travelled to Georgia during the Tempus project, I was overwhelmed by the warmth of greeting, and outstanding hospitality shown by our colleagues from KSU. From the moment we arrived at 5am on Saturday 10 March, we were treated to a packed programme of work and entertainment, including a visit to the Vani archaeological site and museum, a stunning performance of the 'Imedi', and a visit to the tranquil Gelati monastery.

The main purpose of the visit was to attend the Final Dissemination conference of the Tempus project which took place on the Monday of our visit. In two years a great deal of work was carried on by both sides in developing new ways of looking at organisation and curriculum. Also the new Alumni association was launched, and Georgian President Mr Eduard Shevardnaze has already agreed to become a member, as one of the more well-known of KSU's graduates. While there is still much work to be done, it was pleasing to see how far KSU has come in a very short space of time.



Display board showing the work of the TACIS project

As this was the first international conference organised by KSU, I was very impressed with the excellent job KSU staff did of organising the various conference materials, preparing the conference room, and co-ordinating the range of speakers from KSU, UWCN, the European Commission representation from Tbilisi, and local Kutaisi representatives. I should also mention the warm words of the Rector in relation

invited to sit in on a teacher training course, where presentations were given by student teachers on pedagogical techniques, supervised by Professor-Madonna Megrelishvili and Baia Koguashvili. The presentations were of a very high standard, and we were invited to participate in the group discussions following each presentation. The Western European delegation were not an easy audience,



L to R Mr. Vakhtang Amaglobeli, Mr. John Roberts, Ms. Nino Kalatozi, Ms. Baia Arsenidze, Mr. David Tkeshelashvili, Ms. Malvina Davituli, Mr. Paul Relf, Mr. Alouis Ter Haar (from their Dutch partner Fontys International)

to the importance of the Newport-Kutaisi Association as the foundation of the co-operation between UWCN and KSU, and the input of Mrs Rosemary Butler.

The conference was also attended by our second partner on the project Mr Alouis Ter Haar of Fontys College, Eindhoven. It was also pleasing to see new partners to KSU in attendance from Turkey and Belgium. The whole proceeding was captured by video camera, and KSU will be forwarding a copy to UWCN in due course.

The conference was rounded off by a substantial evening banquet, at which I was fully inducted into the many interesting aspects of Georgian culture, including the tamada and the Georgian cuisine. As the evening drew on, we were also treated to some interesting Georgian dancing - not quite the same as the Imedi, but nevertheless an interesting spectacle.

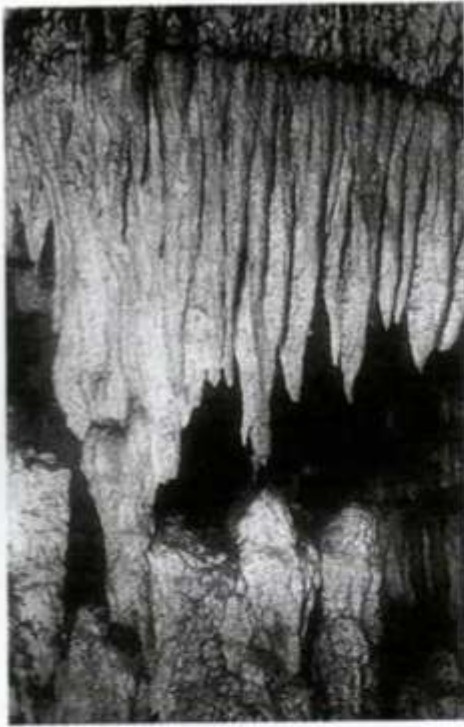
I was particularly impressed by the English-speaking club, who held a special event for John, myself and Alouis on the Wednesday of the visit. The enthusiasm and confidence of the students is surely the key to the future success of Georgia, and I was impressed by the high standard of English demonstrated by the speakers. We were also

but the students coped well with our difficult questions. On my return to Wales, and compiling the final report on the Tempus project, on a personal level I must admit to mixed emotions regarding my experience of Georgia. I am very thankful for the opportunity I had to visit Kutaisi, and pleased to say I have made some new friends, which I hope to visit again in the coming years. During the drive from Tbilisi to Kutaisi we passed through many derelict villages and industries - Georgia faces many problems. However, I am convinced that co-operation such as that between our Universities, and the longer-standing co-operation between Newport and Kutaisi is a helpful step towards the future development of Georgia.

For information, the new KSU website is now online at <http://KSU.gateway.ge/>

Along with a wide range of information about KSU, a report on the Tempus Tacis dissemination conference has been posted to the 'news' section. The website also displays the new KSU logo, developed as part of the project work with UWCN.

The Caves of Kolzhid, Mt. Sataplia *"The Honey Mountain".*



Spectacular stalactites hanging from the roofs of the Kolzhid caves.

A highlight of my recent visit to Kutaisi at the end of May was a visit to the site at Kolzhid. It is situated in the mountains above Kutaisi at the end of a lengthy traverse (although the Bradt guide says it is 6 km) of some of the more demanding of the roads in the region, arduous enough to challenge the very capable Mercedes we travelled in.

First of all we were given a guided tour of the caves. A Kutaisi teacher discovered these in 1925. They are well illuminated, with substantial concrete paths. One of the most impressive features is "The Stone Heart" - a huge stalagmite, formed over more years than my maths or imagination could handle: I felt we humans are little more than one of the drops of water which have accumulated so aesthetically. It is quite a thought to consider that one day, after millions of years, the "Heart" will form a solid column - when we shall long have vanished. The caves are also thought to have a therapeutic effect on sufferers from bronchial asthma.

After emerging from the caves we were introduced to the Director. As usual the first mention of "Newport" brought a response, this word seems to have a magical power. An assistant was sent somewhere, re-appearing with precious commodities, a guide to the caverns and a set of postcards. These were from the Soviet era and consequently were in Russian. I have them in safe keeping and would welcome the chance of passing them to any member who has access to a Russian speaker who could translate them for us.

The main attraction for me though were the dinosaur footprints, my appetite had been whetted by the charming topiary in front of the offices of the director. A short distance down the mountainside we came upon the site. Skewed at a steep angle on the mountainside was the trail of prints. A number of amazed thoughts filled my mind: how is it that one day a number of immense creatures walked across a stretch of muddy ground and by total chance those prints were preserved? Later the whole piece of ground, now turned into rock, was lifted thousands of feet into the air and then tilted at a crazy angle so that it is now at the top of a mountain. Finally, the rocks covering those prints becomes removed and they are then visible



Dinosaur's footprint but not the Dinosaur's foot!

for creatures on a much smaller scale to see. I was told that these prints were amongst the best half dozen such in the world. If you get a chance to go and see them - grab it!

Mike Singleton.

THE KNIGHT & THE DRAGON

When the twinning of Kutaisi with Newport was first established it was soon clear that Georgia and Wales had several features in common. They were both small countries that had been invaded over many centuries but had maintained their cultural identities with their own languages (and in Georgia their unique script) and traditions.

The essentials of these traditions were embodied in two literary products viz. the Georgian "Knight in a Panther Skin" and the Welsh "Mabinogion".

The former is a long heroic poem written by Shota Rustaveli in the late twelfth century. The narrative is long and complicated but in essence describes the search by *AVTANDIL*, a hero in the lands east of Georgia, for the knight *TARIEL*. He in turn is seeking his beloved *NES-TAN-DAREJAN* who has been kidnapped and disappeared. The two knights became close friends and, after many adventures, all is resolved so that *TARIEL* and his love ascend the throne of India whilst *AVTANDIL* and his *TINATIN* reign over Arabia.

The Mabinogion, by contrast, consists of eleven prose tales in Welsh, collected into two fourteenth century manuscripts, though the stories themselves are of a very much earlier origin. There is great diversity in the stories, which cannot be read as a single linear narrative. However there are elements of unity within them as the four 'branches' of the Mabinogion proper deal with the birth, exploits, imprisonment and death of a great hero *PRYDERI*. Many of the remaining tales deal with Arthurian romances looking back to an earlier age.

Although no different to form, structure and authorship the works serve as vehicles for the expression of some of the essential characteristics of their native peoples. For the Georgians their epic helped to keep alive their culture over centuries of oppression. The poem was an inspiration to the peasantry and the nobility and is today a required element in the school curriculum. The work, whilst describing adventures, celebrates heroism, friendship, courage and loyalty interwoven with the joys of physical passion set against a rich background of wealth within a framework where Christians, Jews and Muslims lived in harmony.

The Mabinogion, though treasured in Welsh as a monument to a history of heroism and myth, has not existed as a rallying point for the nation's pride and emotions. The term itself was not used until the nineteenth century when Lady Charlotte Guest introduced it in her translation of the works into English. The tales have no



known authors and are the result of tales told by bards from the sixth to the fifteenth centuries. The stories, as with the Georgian Knight deal with the exploits of great heroes undertaking dangerous adventures. Often these heroes are involved in acts where the boundaries between the human and spirit world are blurred. A giant can ford the Irish Sea; a magic cauldron can bring a man back to life; there is a bag that cannot be filled and a maiden is made out of flowers. Within this mystical setting the heroes express a life where friendship, bravery, loyalty and cruelty all exist within a context of song, carousal and passion.

For modern Georgians the Knight in a Panther Skin is a powerful reminder of their long cultural history which has underpinned much of their national character. Today many features are reflections of earlier characteristics of the people. They treasure the strength of family ties; friendship and loyalty are part of their lives, courtesy to visitors is incumbent on all as is a strong sense of patriotism and reverence for the past. But all of these elements are given expression in a joyous extrovert manner with lavish language and dynamic song and dance.

In Wales the Mabinogion has much more limited currency among the majority of the people – and then only in translation. Despite this, there are still features in Welsh Society that mirror some



features of these ancient stories. There is still the strong attachment to family ties and the land which is identified as home; there is still a strong sense of loyalty to friends and past and present heroes often expressed in extrovert and emotional terms of language and music.

It would be unwise to overstate the similarities of the two peoples.

However, anyone who has enjoyed hospitality in Kutaisi when the wine has flowed and the singing and dancing have started will have found it easy to imagine oneself at home; Georgians are warm, exuberant, emotional friends who share with the Welsh views on life and how it should be lived.

Wel HARRIS

Second in the series of articles by Mike Singleton giving a brief outline of the history of Georgia.

Part II: Into the First Millennium

David III ruled in the second part of the 10th century. He freed more provinces from the Arabs and began the unification of the Georgian lands. His adopted son Bagrati Bagration completed the unification with the exception of the Tbilisi emirate. The first king of united Georgia bore the title "King of the Abkhazians, Kartvels, Hers and Kakhs". Kutaisi was the capital. The so-called "Great Turkish Conquests" started in 1080. Only a small part of Western Georgia escaped the destruction. King Giorgi 11 (1072-1089) had to pay tribute to the Sultan. The throne was passed to Giorgi's 16 year old son David known as David the Builder (1089- 1125), possibly the greatest monarch in Georgian history. Personally leading his loyal forces he gradually expelled the Turks from Kartli. On August 12, 1121 King David IV won a decisive victory and moved the capital to Tbilisi. He died on January 24, 1125.



During the reign of Queen Tamar (1184- 1213), the great granddaughter of King David, the Georgian kingdom reached the apex of its political might. This was the era of great building projects such as Gelati and Vardzia and the flourishing of a literary tradition revered to this day. It was to Queen Tamar that Shota Rustaveli his great epic poem, "The Knight in the Tiger's Skin", a poem exemplifying all the virtues of chivalry and honour that were celebrated throughout the expanded Georgian kingdom during her reign.



During the reign of her heir Giorgi IV Lasha (1212- 1223) the Mongols invaded. The Mongols were unstoppable: Giorgi Lasha himself was killed in 1223. The more than a century long Mongol domination caused both the fragmentation of the kingdom and its gradual decline by the heavy burden of taxation. Giorgi V (1314- 1346) drove the Mongols out. However, the first of Tamerlane's 8 invasions in 1386 prevented any possible second golden age.

In 1453 the Turks seized Constantinople. The Peace of Amasia in 1556 between the

Turks and the Persians divided Georgia into spheres of influence, giving the west to Turkey and the east to Iran. Turkish and Iranian invasions became almost permanent. From 1632 to 1744 the shahs of Iran put Islamised Bagrationis on the throne of Kartli. Attempts to co-operate with Russia in this period failed and were punished.



In 1723 Turkish troops invaded Kartli. In 1752 Solomon 1 reigned in Imereti. He defeated the Turks; he banned slave trading and raised the standard of living of his subjects. The attempts of Irakli 11 and Solomon 1 to use Russian forces during the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774 in order to free themselves completely from Turkish and Iranian control failed. On July 24, 1783 Russia and Georgia signed the Treaty of Georgievsk which made Kartli- Khakheti a Russian protectorate. Russia did not live up to the terms of that treaty which led to a Persian invasion in 1795 when they demanded the renunciation of the treaty. On the battlefield of Krtsanisi 5,000 Georgians were defeated by 35,000 Persians. Tbilisi was destroyed and the population ruthlessly massacred.

To be continued



Map of old Georgia



Cardiff Singer of the World Competition June 10 – 16th

At this year's Singer of the World Competition organised by BBC Wales and held biennially at St David's Hall, Cardiff and representing Georgia was a young mezzo-soprano, Anna Kiknadze.

The internationally known event is considered to be the 'jewel in the crown' of BBC Music Wales and it attracts more than five hundred applicants from around the world with eventually only fifty chosen to compete.

Anna, a graduate of Tbilisi State Conservatoire and currently a member of the Marinsky Theatre of St. Petersburg, delighted a large and appreciative audience with a fine performance of works ranging from Donizetti to Tchaikovsky.

Anna's compatriots felt justly proud of winning an award in the preliminary round. Although Anna did not feature in the finals evening many people, including critics, felt that she merited special recognition.

Many congratulations go to Anna and our best wishes for her continued success from the people of Newport.



The fine façade of the Opera House Tbilisi.

A member of the NKTA has given her own response to this important musical event.

There was an exciting week's music to be heard at the 2001 Cardiff 'Singer of the World' Competition held in St David's Hall last June. Always, for me, an exhilarating and interesting event in the musical calendar! This year my friends and I decided to apply for the full programme, twenty-five performances in total!

Anna Kiknadze featured as one of my favourite performers with her fine mezzo-soprano voice, technique and emotional interpretation. Her winning performance included arias from 'Samson & Delilah' and 'La Favorita' as well as traditional songs from her homeland.

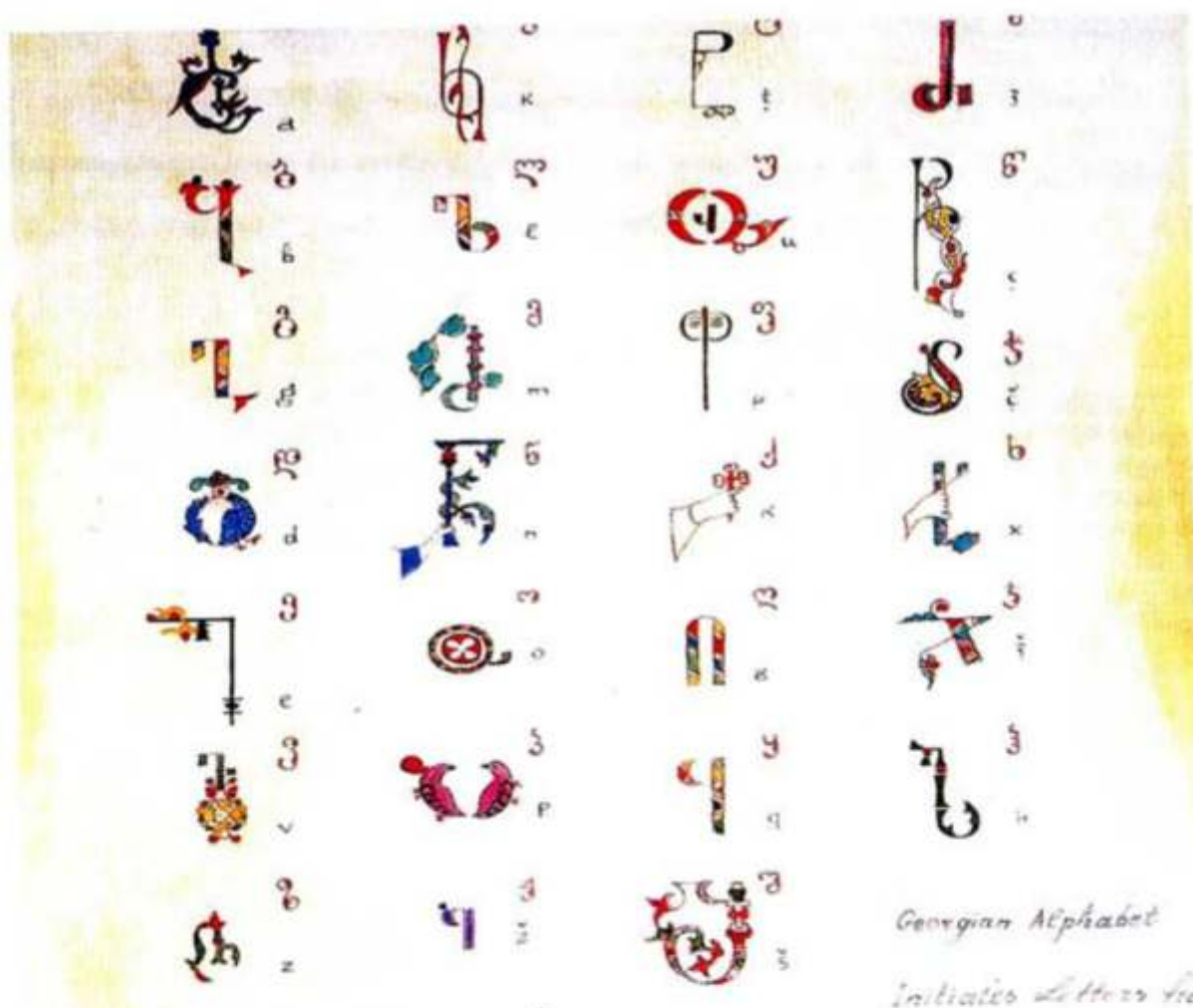
During the interval everyone debated the merits of each performance and we were delighted that the adjudicators decision coincided with ours – Anna's!!

I was equally pleased to congratulate briefly the distinguished Larissa Gergieva who accompanied Anna and other young professional singers trained at the Kirov.

Hopefully we shall hear Anna Kiknadze sing again in Britain – what about inviting her to Newport?

Our Georgian friends may share with us a keen interest in competition. In Wales it is especially evident at the Royal National Eisteddfod. In the meantime there are two years to wait before the next 'Singer of the World' here in Cardiff.

Elizabeth Joan Edwards



THE GEORGIAN ALPHABET

by
Rod Macleod

Alphabets have intrigued me for many years. I first learnt a foreign alphabet at the age of nine, when I started to learn ancient Greek at school. There were enough similarities between many of the symbols used that it was recognisably related to our own alphabet.

This was not the case with my next encounter at university, where I studied Arabic. With Arabic I could discern no similarity to European alphabets at all. It does not even run in the same direction, which leads to the question of how anyone decides which end of the line to start at. Indeed the ancient Greeks on occasions wrote "as the oxen plough", that is that they would start at one end of the line, write to the other end, and then start

from that end on the line below, writing backwards to the original starting point. It's enough to make anyone go cross-eyed.

Since then I have also learnt the Cyrillic alphabet, much of which is based on the Greek alphabet, though not quite so many letters are familiar to a Western reader.

However I had no inkling that the Georgian language had its own alphabet until I was visited in my office one day by two representatives of the bus industry in Kutaisi, and their interpreter, Ketevan Doghonadze, who was writing notes of

our conversation. I think I spent more time discussing the alphabet than I did discussing buses, being fascinated that a country with a fairly small population should have its own alphabet.

Apparently it is a thirty-three character alphabet, invented approximately in 337 AD, by St Mesrob, when Georgia became a Christian country, and possibly to write Christian literature in the Georgian language. It was used initially only in Kartli, that is Eastern Georgia, while Western Georgia used Greek for its religious writings for several centuries more. Anyone who has visited the churches in the Kutaisi area cannot have helped noticing Greek inscriptions on many of the icons, so perhaps this is why. The Russian alphabet was also invented as an aid to the spread of Christianity, by St Cyril, but not until six centuries after Georgia had its own script.

Amazingly legend has it that St Mesrob also invented the Armenian and Albanian alphabets as well. If this is so he must have been a very erudite man, but you have to wonder why he was not satisfied with one alphabet for all three languages. Another theory is that these alphabets were derived from Aramaic, though this is not incompatible with its invention by Mesrob.

My researches have been further complicated by the discovery that there is not just one Georgian script, but at least two. The "Khutsuri" seems to be the oldest, and was mainly used for religious writings. The "Mkhedruli" is a later version, probably developed from a cursive form of Khutsuri, and this is the script that is now in use.

It would be nice if any of our friends in Georgia could give us a more definitive history of their alphabet, and its relationship to other alphabets, perhaps correcting any errors and misunderstandings in this article. R.M.



Georgian Script

LETTERS FROM KUTAISI

From Maka Melkadze

In the spring of 2001 Kutaisi Newport International Twinning Association organised my visit to Newport for me to gain work experience in Newport's Civic Centre for eight weeks.

Professor Madonna Megrelishvili and Mrs. Catherine Philpott did everything to arrange my visit to the UK. I'd like to express my gratitude to both of them.

The well-known British weather was the first thing to greet me at the airport and it did not leave me during the entire seven weeks.

With the recommendation of Mr. Brian Adcock I had the chance to work in the Architects Department and the Urban Development Department which was very interesting and gave me much to develop my professional skills. I was taken to see building sites, town areas scheduled for future planning and even crossed the River Usk on the Transporter Bridge.

Catherine Philpott made my visit very busy, seeing interesting places and involved me in interesting things. With her help I met wonderful people including many members of the Association who did everything for me so that I spent memorable weekends away. I saw different places of interest such as churches and cathedrals and the lovely nature of North Wales, the Cambrian Mountains and Anglesey. I went all around Wales and the southern part of England. But London made the greatest impression on me. To see old and modern architecture, visiting museums

and exhibitions in London was the fulfilment of my dreams.

Especially I'd like to mention my host family Mr. & Mrs. Tim and Helen Forshaw. To live with them was a pleasure.

It was with the help of Mr. & Mrs. Forshaw I gathered information and got an interview with Dr. Punt, Head of Multimedia and Information Design Department at UWCN. From this I gained a place to study for a Master's Degree on this course which I will start in September 2002.

People I met were very kind, friendly and hospitable and have done everything to make my stay in Britain interesting and pleasant.

Thank you all.

I'll remember my first visit to Britain all my life.



Maka outside Buckingham Palace.



Tim & Helen Forshaw

To Mike from Maia Alavidze - Abduladze.

I know you'll be very glad to know that I am a MOTHER. I am really proud and happy and know you'll be happy for me. I have a boy. He is called Marlen after his grandpa. I didn't really want the name for him but there was some misunderstanding. We were all expecting a girl who was supposed to be called Mariam; when a boy appeared my husband asked me to call him Marlin - I agreed. Whatever his name all I want is for him to be healthy. He is very lovely and looks like his father. Delivery was not as difficult as I had expected. My husband was as nervous as you were while your children were born. He was next to me, calming me down and helping me somehow.

Now everything is OK. We are busy with our son. Bye for now. I'll be glad to have a word from you. Please give my love to everybody I know.

Love Maia.

Maia's second letter.

I knew you would be glad. Of course you can write about me in the newspaper, that's a great honour. Everybody will know about me and my family. I will definitely send a photo of him later. I don't really know what else to write. He is very calm, he only cries when he is hungry. The only problem is that he hates to be left alone, he loves you to talk to him all the time or hold him in your hands. I am really very happy that he already recognises my voice and knows me. Maybe he associates me with food as he is breastfeeding. Bye for now.

Best regards to your family and everybody I know,

Love Maia.

News of Mark !

Following a course of chemotherapy in September Mark Rudland underwent a successful operation to remove the tumour from his oesophagus.

He is making steady progress, though he does have some problems eating. He is increasingly mobile and expects to be back playing tennis by next spring. He is very pleased to see visitors but only if they are completely free of infection! He has to be careful with his bronchial system. Just phone to check he isn't off gallivanting somewhere.

Everyone wishes Mark all the very best and a speedy recovery.

CP. MS

BIRTHS



Delighted to hear of the birth of **Marlen**, a son for **Maia Alavidze-Abduladze** and **Zurab Abduladze**.

Congratulations too go to **Annette Wells** and her partner **Richard** on the birth of their daughter **Beatrice Isabella Wells Jackaman** on 14th August weighing 8lb 1oz.

Rosemary & Derek Butler are proud grandparents for the second time with the arrival of **Beatrix Elsie Fleur Needham** 7lbs 14oz a daughter for **Kate and Paul**. Born 8th October, a sister for **Oscar**. Many congratulations.

PUBLICISING KUTAI

As a result of an article in the South Wales Argus newspaper in which there was this picture below of Bernard and Pat - there have been several enquiries made already.

DISPLAY CASE IN NEWPORT LIBRARY

Regular visitors to Newport's Library have noticed a corner display on the staircase that contains some familiar items. This is now a small but permanent exhibition area in which we have displayed Georgian books, jewellery, icons, and maps as well as a wine bottle (empty of course). We are very grateful to the Borough of Newport for the use of this facility and we are open to suggestions and help with the display material in the future. The intention is to update it fairly regularly to give information to the general public in Newport of all things Georgian.

Pat Wright



Chairman Bernard Tyson and Pat Wright admiring the Georgian display case.

EATING OUT IN LONDON, GEORGIAN-STYLE

Authoritative Georgians told me I would discover a corner of Georgia in London where I would find food and a welcome usually associated with back home.

I set out to find this promised land. The tube carried me from the buzz of central London eastwards towards the area where I grew up – the mystic east of Bethnal Green and beyond. It was here that I found a gem!

I knew I was on a trip unlike anything I remembered in my youth. A voice in those days would announce over the Underground's speaker system the name of stations arrived at and that we were to 'mind the gap', now we are told that the driver's name is Paul and that he is a very nice man! This mateyness, even by East End standards, is something I do not recall.

And so it was I found myself bobbing along the road past the wondrous Museum of Childhood. On past long forgotten lock-up shops and car lots, over the Regents Canal, turning at this point towards a looming gasometer and here I found 'Little Georgia' tucked away on a corner, overlooking the still waters of one of London's canals.



This one-time pub was rebuilt in 1909, as it proclaimed in an inscription which could be clearly seen in letters cut in stone high on its front wall. Though once it rejoiced in the name of 'The Sir Walter Scott', it now seems very a la 'The Old Vic'.



L - Georgian craft-work, part of the decor.

Above - Tony Jones, owner of 'Little Georgia'.

Top - Front of 'Little Georgia' - note the old name.

of soap fame. Larger and lower down are now painted the words 'Little Georgia' and hanging from the wall, above the heads of the passers by is a huge walnut, perhaps in need of a bit of a polish, that can be taken as the symbol of the Georgian cuisine to be found inside.



Here I met its softly spoken owner, Tony Jones, with family roots in Tonypany. Three years ago, just before Christmas, he opened his restaurant offering food based on Georgian recipes.

He told me of his interest in Georgian culture and the excitement of all things Georgian. He runs a venue where you will find pictures of Georgian text on its walls, Georgian craft-work displayed, dried pomegranates, the red wines of Georgia, especially the Tamada Saperavi and Caucasus Valley Matrassa and the food that many of us have experienced – but only in Kutaisi. Here are dishes such as Chakapuli with lamb, Satsivi Chicken with its tangy walnut sauce and Gupta, the Georgian dish of pork meatballs with herbs, spicy red pepper and tomato sauce.

He told me that the restaurant was enjoying a growing reputation, not only with the locals but



Top left – Interior.

Top – Tony outside, above hangs the giant Walnut.

Bottom left – The Regent Canal.

also with people coming from far and wide across London. They are urged on by enthusiastic reports and reviews found in Time Out, the Good Food Guide and the Lonely Planet, all extolling the virtues of dining here.

And what of the food? Set before me was a plate with huge slices of delicious Khachapuri, cold Ajabsandali and both a Spinach and a Beet-root Pkhali. All this in the east end of London! I talked of the problems we faced when we attempted to cook khachapuri. Tony's tip was that he found the mix of feta and ricotta cheeses helped to achieve that particular taste so characteristic of the unpasteurised Georgian cheese used in the recipe. Ketevan Gabashidze is 'Little Georgia's' chef. I was unable to persuade her out of her kitchen so that I could express my appreciation of her cooking food that is helping to build the restaurant's reputation. I'd like to thank her and Tony, too, for the time he spent talking to me and for the wonderful afternoon – long to be remembered.

I urge anyone who find themselves in that part of London, to make their way along the canal and have an experience of Georgian fare which will serve to remind them of all the marvellous feasts enjoyed in Kutaisi.

Tony Jones
'Little Georgia'
Broadway Market
Bathnal Green
0207249907 for times of opening

Catherine Philpott

