

Posted

A visual history of football grounds, stands, terraces & fans as seen on historic postcards





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A visual history of a variety of football grounds, stands, terraces and fans as seen on historic postcards.

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Designed by Mike Floate. With thanks to John Daniels for both the title and many of the cards included in the book.

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Left: A player stands proudly for his portrait but neither he nor his team is known. The stand behind is magnificent.

Front cover: The White City, left and Villa Park.

Back cover: Newmarket Road, Norwich City FC (main postcard), The City Ground, Nottingham Forest FC (top left) and Stamford Bridge, Chelsea FC.

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Above: The small structures by the fence were used by players who wore blazers to matches. Below: No further information other than that on the caption has been found, but the card publisher seems confident in his knowledge.



Going back many years to when I was editing Jon Weaver's series of three books grounds covering grounds in Essex I realised how worthwhile it was to be collecting and gathering historic footballing images as well as building up my own archive of photographs. Being able to buy The Book of Football from 1905 and other books from the same era enabled me to produce The Football Grounds of the Early 1900s. My collection of programmes with photos of grounds on the cover gave me the material for Covered and Covered non-League. I now have sufficient old postcards to be able to publish this book, Posted.

My good friend John Daniels not only suggested the name of the book but also allowed me to borrow many of his postcard collection. I am most grateful for his help in compiling this book which allowed me to include so many postcards. His collection of footballing memorabilia has been featured in From Football Memorabilia to Girls' Cricket in Bexley, a book which I edited and published for John. The book is available directly from John or through his ebay listings and is thoroughly recommended with profits going to promoting cricket for girls.

The remaining postcards are from my collection, almost all bought through eBay. Some cost well into three figures while others were bought for considerably less. A number of the cheaper cards were of unidentified teams or grounds and the challenge of gleaning sufficient information from the image and any details included on the card or the reverse was an interesting challenge. Sadly some remain unidentified but are included as they are still of sufficient interest, and of course

some may be identified by readers who are invited to keep me updated with their observations. I would actively encourage the reader to do as I have and closely inspect the cards with a magnifying glass, and then look for the match reports, maps and aerial photographs mentioned in the text. Editing these books is always a pleasure but the research involved in this book has been especially enjoyable.

Three websites provided most of the information which helped me to write the captions. The incredible archive of Ordnance Survey maps uploaded on the National Library of Scotland website enabled many grounds to be located and descriptions written more accurately.

Years ago it was possible to visit the Aerofilms offices and have access to their folders of photographs, and days were never long enough to look through sufficient books. Today the archive is available on the Britain from Above website.

The British Newspaper Archive has a growing number of national and regional newspapers and I hardly ever drew a blank when searching for specific clubs, grounds or even matches. An annual subscription is well worth buying.

Detailed information about specific matches played is found on the Association of Football Statisticians website which has an extensive archive of games between clubs and nations.

Other individual websites have provided information ground by ground but are too numerous to list individually.

Of course many books have been used from my own bookshelves. The most useful unsurprisingly were books by Simon Inglis. His Football Grounds of England and Wales was the first football history book I bought and I still remember the excitement of it being delivered. This and Football Grounds of Britain were enormously useful in making sense of maps and aerial photographs. His later book Engineering Archie has long been another favourite and over half of the chapters proved most useful in my research. Unsurprisingly my own Football Grounds of the Early 1900s also included images which helped identify grounds, most notably the previously unidentified BB London colour postcard on page 139 which we now know was taken at the Boleyn Gound.

Unlike the after the first Covered book I may still buy postcards but will not be publishing a second volume but this book may inspire others to collect and publish their own books. Finally, the full URLs of the websites used are listed below.

Mike Floate, Hinderwell, June 2019

Britain from Above:
<https://britainfromabove.org.uk>

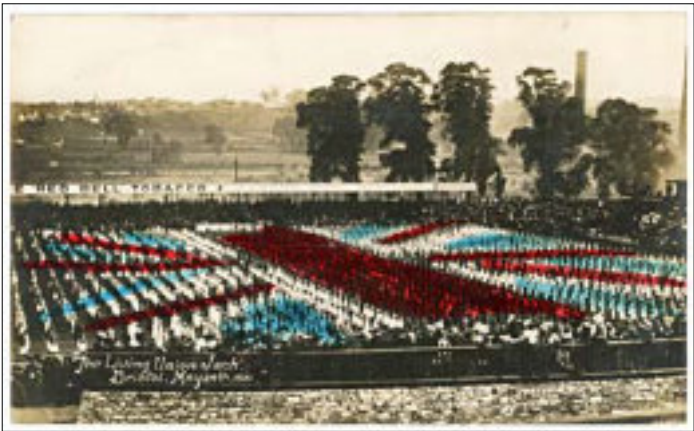
National Library of Scotland:
<https://maps.nls.uk>

The British Newspapers Archive:
<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

Association of Football Statisticians:
<https://www.11v11.com>

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Below: A postcard showing a celebration of Empire Day in 1911. A broadly similar card from another publisher appears on Page 20 but in that image the publisher has edited the image to remove the advertising on the far side of the ground.



Current Football League Grounds

Villa Park, Aston Villa F.C.

Many early postcards feature images taken at Villa Park. The two included can both be dated to before 1914 as the cycle track can still be seen curving around behind each goal. The barrel roofed main stand on Witton Lane must have looked dated within a few years with the three gables making up the central section, the central one being used as a feature to include a clock. Later the celebrated Archibald Leitch built a new stand opposite, and included a gable with the club crest on a pitched roof.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



Villa Park, Aston Villa F.C.

A section of the barrel roofed cover which had been built over the terrace on the other side of the ground can be seen on this postcard. The curved open terrace at the far end would eventually be rebuilt in line the pitch, with the removal of the cycle track, and become the Holte End. As can be seen the cycle track was used to accommodate spectators at games both in front of the main stand and at the ends.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



Oakwell, Barnsley F.C.

A remarkable survivor - the central section of the main stand featured on this card taken at Oakwell, home of Barnsley F.C., is still in use today. The stand was later extended to the full length of the pitch and a clear difference can be seen on the older and newer sections of roof looking at images of the ground from Britain From Above.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



Oakwell, Barnsley F.C.

This group photograph includes all but two of the team which represented Barnsley at the club's F.A. Cup triumph of 1912. It was taken at the Spion Kop end of the ground, now the North Stand. Images taken in the early 1950s on Britain From Above include the buildings in the corner although the terracing has been enlarged and the half time scoreboard has gone.



St. Andrews, Birmingham City F.C.

Woolwich Arsenal and Sheffield Wednesday played their FACup Semi Final at St Andrews on 23rd March 1907. This image appeared in the London Daily News the following Monday and the caption notes that Ashcroft, the Woolwich goalkeeper is seen to be out of position but the header is gathered and cleared. This image is well-known and was used on many postcards, but without it being made clear the importance of the game nor the venue.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



St. Andrews, Birmingham City F.C.

A further image from the game can be seen on this postcard, with the full extent of the newly-built stand being seen. The central gable and clock give a focal point and the deep fascia allows for advertisements but the multiple stanchions supporting the roof show that the design of stands with consideration given to sightlines is still evolving. Almost every seat in this stand has a restricted view in some way.



12

Ewood Park, Blackburn Rovers F.C.

This is the first example in the book of a photo having been hand tinted and printed in colour. The effect even today is remarkably good but at the time must have most impressive. The small building housing the changing rooms seen behind the team is in the south-east corner between the Darwen end and the Riverside stand.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Ewood Park, Blackburn Rovers F.C.

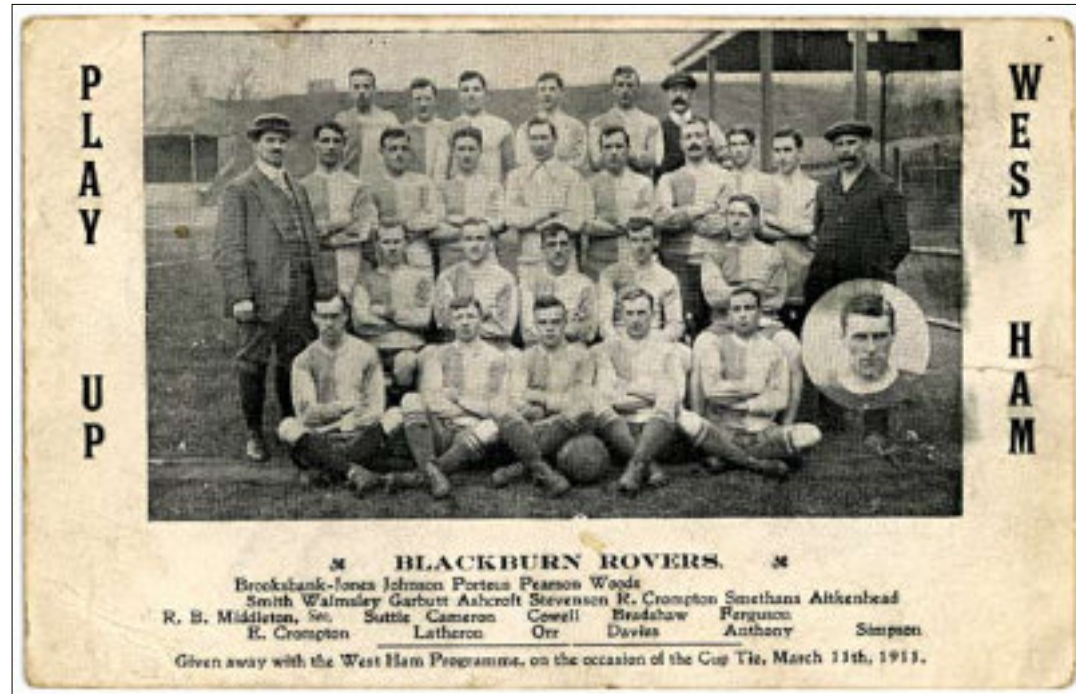
13

As will often be seen on other postcards clubs did not always have their team photos taken at their home ground. There is little to go on to identify where this was taken but luckily the Cand E on the stand roof End the word Palace, the first three letters of which can be seen in a photo of the Darwen End in my book The Football Grounds of the Early 1900s. This advertised the Palace Theatre of Varieties, which at this time screened films as part of the variety bill.



Ewood Park, Blackburn Rovers F.C.

It may seem odd for a club to pass a free postcard featuring their opposition with the matchday programme. In 1910/11 West Ham United were playing in the Southern League Division 1 and would eventually finish fifth. Blackburn Rovers ended the season in third place in Division 1 and were already five times winners of the FA Cup and would have been seen as the most glamorous of opponents for a non-League club in this quarter-final tie. The photo shows the corner between the Darwen end and what is now the site of the Riverside Stand.



Bloomfield Road, Blackpool F.C.

My first thought when seeing this card was that the team was likely to be Bradford Park Avenue. Research was difficult as even with many adverts on the stand fascia many were dead ends. I eventually identified the stand as being a rare view of the Motor Stand at the north end of Bloomfield Road. The real interest in the image is the kit in the colours of the Belgian flag, worn by Blackpool between 6th November 1915 and 26th February 1916. This was in recognition of the plight of the many Belgian refugees living in the town at the time. I never cease to be amazed how much information can be so easily accessed using the internet.



Griffin Park, Brentford F.C.

I had worked through to page 110 before identifying this ground such was the challenge it presented. I had bought the card assuming it had been taken at a home match but the stand is longer than that which can be seen on page 26. The clue to identifying the ground was the short terrace of houses which are still to be found at the Brook Road of Griffin Park. Vince Taylor of Groundtastic confirmed the location having compared features to those seen in an aerial photo from the Aerofilms archive.



postcard courtesy of John Daniels



Valley Parade, Bradford City F.C.

Team photos of football teams lent themselves well to the hand tinting process, as can be seen with Bradford City's shirts giving a superb impression of the colour and style of this unique kit. It has been interesting to read about the skills and dangers involved in the process of tinting, research I most likely would not undertake without having been prompted by editing this book.



18

Dean Court, Boscombe F.C.

The 21st March in 1913 was Good Friday and Boscombe won this Hampshire County League game 2-0. The Bournemouth Guardian reported that a heavy storm blew in during the first half. The heavy ground at Dean Court along with a now-heavy ball made it difficult for both sides. The report's sub headline reads Cherry Stripes Return to Victory giving an insight into both the club's nickname and playing strip at the time. Boscombe soon became known as Bournemouth & Boscombe and more recently A.F.C.Bournemouth.



Dean Court, Bournemouth Wanderers F.C.

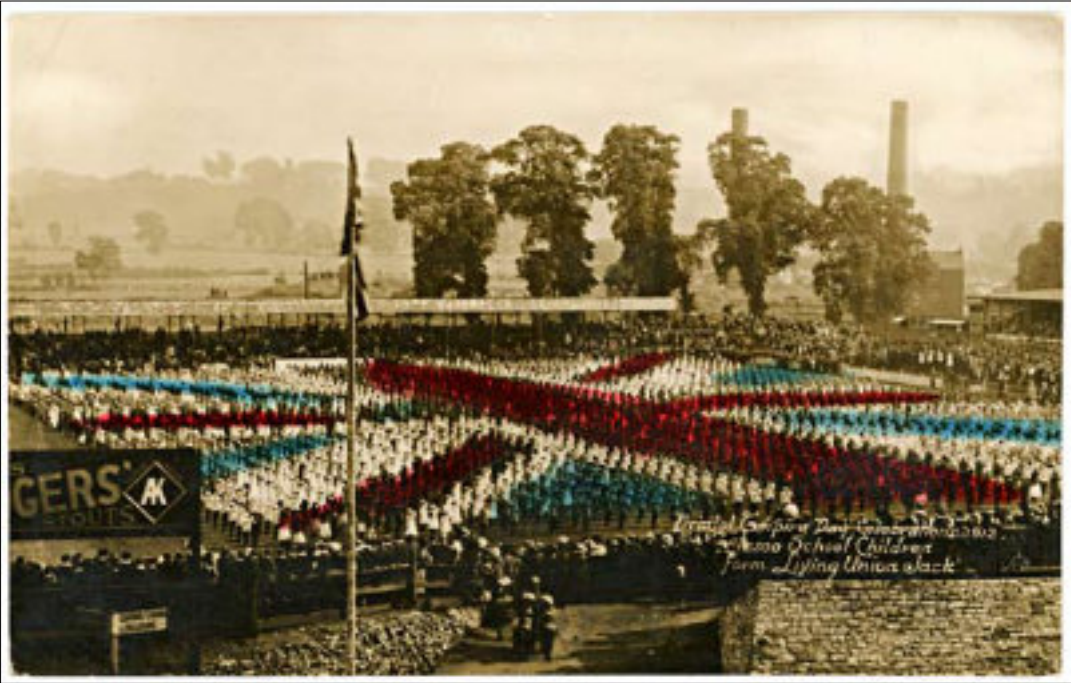
19

The postcard gives a snippet of information but research has unearthed a team photo in the Bournemouth Graphic of Bournemouth F.C., who also played in the Hampshire County League alongside Boscombe. The team is likely to be Bournemouth Wanderers of the Dorset League who also played their home games at Dean Court.

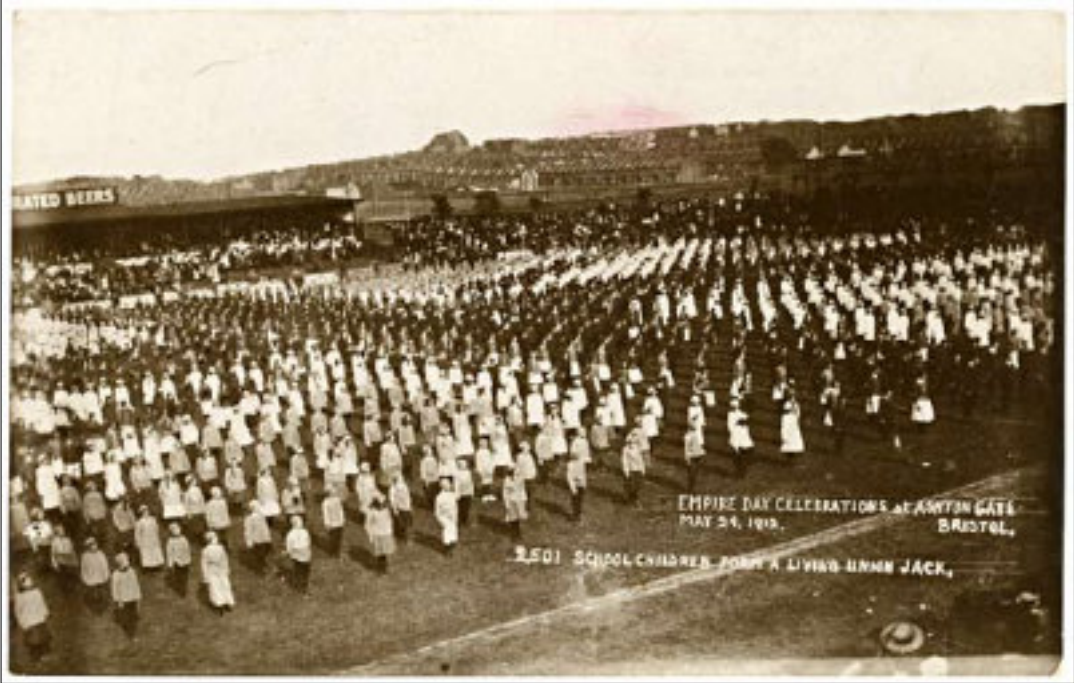
postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



This is the first of a number of cards on which the football ground and stands were not what the photographer was intending the image to be of but is of great interest to us as the background to an event. This postcard shows the end of the Number One Stand and the cover over the south terrace. Simon Inglis notes that this blew down in a gale in 1916. The chimneys are part of an industrial area which can be seen on Ordnance Survey maps from the time.



A second image taken on the same day shows the Number Two Stand which had been the original stand at the ground at the ground. This had been built prior to the merger between Bristol City and Bedminster in 1900, and which had to be moved when the pitch was repositioned in 1904. Unfortunately the end cover to the south, which became the Winterstoke End, is not clear to see as that section of the image was over exposed.



This team photo dating back to Charlton Athletic's first year in the Football League is taken in front of what became the enormous East Bank. Taken just two years after the club had begun to develop their home ground in an old chalk pit, a simple picket fence separating the pitch from a small area for spectators can be seen. To see how such a ground looked so early in its development makes this postcard a most valuable item of visual history.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



By the time this team photo was taken the Main Stand at Stamford Bridge had been built and is a prominent and proud feature behind the team, as if emphasising the club's resilience in spite of having been relegated to the Second Division the year before. The roof vents differentiate the stand here from the almost identical stand at the nearby Craven Cottage and help in identifying the unnamed ground on the card seen on pages.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Stamford Bridge, Chelsea F.C.

As previously mentioned purchases were sourced away from the standard searches of football grounds and the like. The images on these two postcards are of a Mass held at Stamford Bridge on Sunday 29th June 1930 at the start of a week of events at the 4th Anglo-Catholic Congress. Over 25,000 people are said to have attended, coming from all over the country on special trains. Remarkably Police had to keep demonstrators apart from worshippers as the crowd entered the ground. The newspapers of the time make for interesting reading although the reason behind the reported abusive cries of Mrs. Grundy are lost on me.



Stamford Bridge, Chelsea F.C.

This image of the High Altar erected to one side of the pitch in front of the west side of the ground. The terrace is split into sections but the flights of steps and classic Leitch crush barriers can be seen. The terrace would remain largely unaltered until the early 1990s. Readers may be interested in searching for an incredible aerial image of the ground taken in 1909 by Sir Norman Lockyer from a balloon filled with helium which gives a better idea of the sheer scale both of this terrace and the whole ground.



This terrific postcard showing the ground at Goodison Park, home of Everton F.C. features the original Bullens Road stand. Close inspection of the stand will show that the ends angle in towards the pitch at each end, which can be confirmed by viewing a map of the time. As with the stand already seen at St. Andrews the numerous stanchions would have impeded the view from most seats. The improved sightlines from the later Leitch stands must have been appreciated by those fortunate enough to be able to afford to sit at games.



Along with the main stand at Barnsley's Oakwell ground the continued use of the Stevenage Road stand designed and built by Archibald Leitch at Craven Cottage is remarkable. Many readers will have seen or sat in the stand and I for one can recall standing in the paddock in front of the stand as seen on the postcard as recently as 2002. Although little of the ground is seen for me the image is a reminder of going to Football Combination fixtures at Selhurst Park, feeling privileged to be allowed entry to the Paddock in front of another Leitch stand and just once managing to bunk through corridors to gain access to the seats.

postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Little could the sender of this card, Dick, have imagined when writing to his friend Horace that the image on the postcard, unrelated to his message in any way, could generate so much interest over a century later. Leyton Orient now play at the ground, renamed Brisbane Road, and after their eviction the former tenants later played nearby at the Hare and Hounds ground until 2011. The simple stand was built in a style which was relatively common at the time but which survived into the 1950s by which time those sat in it were watching Football League games.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



By the time this team group was taken the Osborne Road ground had become the home of Clapton Orient, but little had changed since the photo opposite had been taken. An image on Britain from Aboveshows the ground in the 1920s when the small boxes in front of the stand had been removed. Some readers, like myself, may form an opinion about which of the stand's stanchions can be seen in the photo. A small sign on the stand identifies a section of the stand as being for Press & Ticket Holders only.



City Ground, Nottingham Forest F.C.

The images on the two postcards of the City Ground are not only interesting for the detail visible but for showing the ground in context with the landscape, the close proximity to the river still being a feature for those arriving at the ground along the Trent Side footpath. The ground is well described by Simon Inglis in *Football Grounds of Great Britain*, and this view is rare in showing all sides of the ground without being an aerial photo.



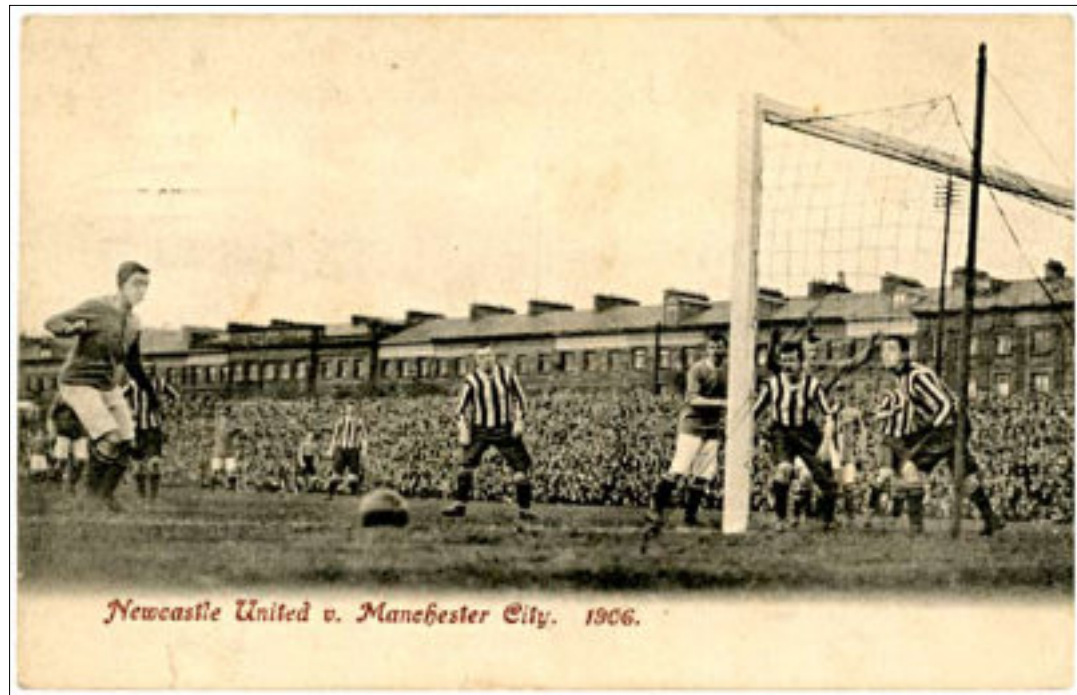
City Ground, Nottingham Forest F.C. 31
Meadow Lane & County Ground, Notts County F.C.

The image on this postcard is quite remarkable in showing two current and one former League grounds. The City Ground and Meadow Lane are seen to their best before the modernising of the grounds from the 1950s on. There is little to suggest that football was played at the Trent Bridge cricket ground other than the far corner which is still broadly rectangular to this day.



St. James's Park, Newcastle F.C.

It may appear odd that many photos taken in the early days of football show the side opposite the main stand, as in this postcard showing the bank in front of Leazes Terrace, the impressive Georgian houses still standing behind the East Stand. This is often because the main stands were built on the west side, sheltering the occupants from the prevailing wind, as well as the light being better from photography when looking east during afternoon fixtures.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



Fratton Park, Portsmouth F.C.

Another example of the far side of the ground being seen in an old photo, and all the more interesting in this case. The view is over to the north side, and reading up about the history of the ground suggests that the cover on the far side was over a terrace not seats. By this time the classic pavilion had been built on the south side and would be seen in the corner had this been taken that looking to that side. So maybe this rather poor image actually has a lot to say about the development of this ground.



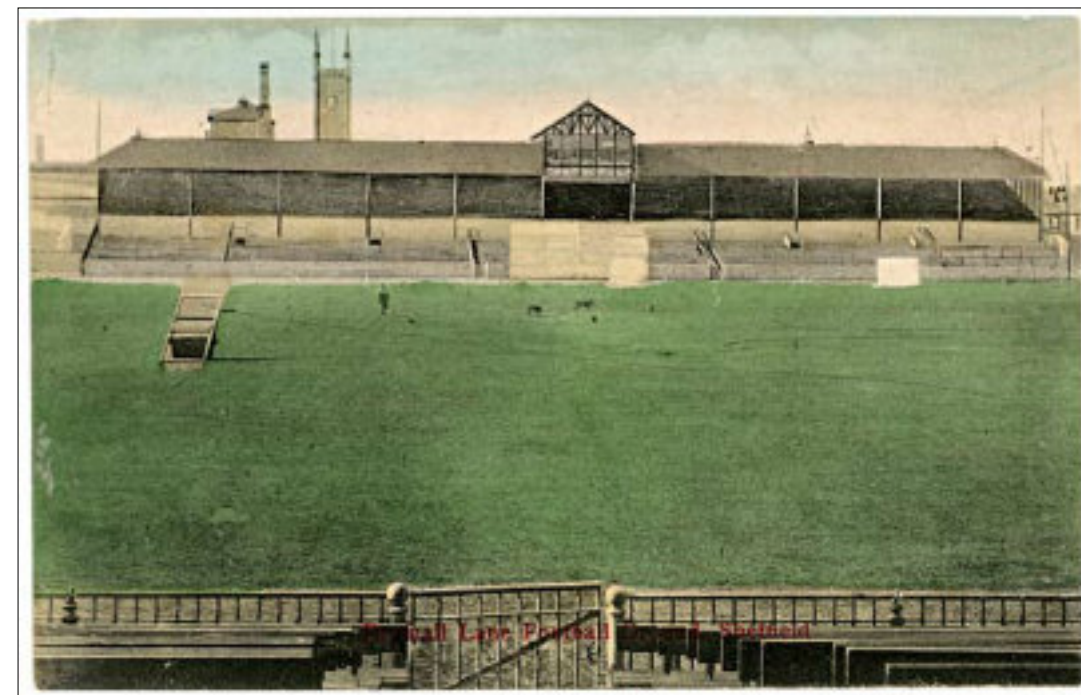
Owlerton, Sheffield Wednesday F.C.

This is one of my favourite cards in this book. The game was a Third Round tie played on 23rd February 1907 and ended in a 0-0 draw. I have always loved a pitched roof on a stand so one with two is even better. The rear of the stand, situated on the north side of the ground, had been brought from the previous ground at Olive Grove. Without ever thinking about why I'd always just accepted that the club nickname is the Owls, from the original name of the ground we now know as Hillsborough.



Bramall Lane, Sheffield United F.C.

Over on the other side of Sheffield the impressive John Street stand, an early Leitch design, also served as accommodation for cricketing crowds. This delightful hand tinted view fore-shortens the view from the cricket pavilion across both the cricketing outfield and the football pitch, and as with any dual purpose ground the spectators' view from the near side was somewhat distant.



36

Bramall Lane, Sheffield United F.C.

The Empire Day celebrations of 1906 in Sheffield again provide us with interesting images, in this case of the Bramall Lane ground. Technically at the time, May 24th, the stadium was a cricket ground but for our interest key features can be seen. The ornate roof-top press box on the John Street stand can just be seen as can part of the terrace at Shoreham Street end.



Bramall Lane, Sheffield United F.C.

37

Careful research using both the maps on the NLS website and Aerofilms confirmed that this postcard shows the Bramall Lane end, confirmed by looking at the shadows on the pitch. The crowd have filled the terraces around to the cricket pitch side, on which the current South Stand was eventually built. The cover of course only extends as far as the corner flag on the football pitch, giving a clear indication of the distance some fans would have been from the action on the pavilion side of the ground.



38

The Victoria Ground, Stoke City F.C.

This postcard presented difficulties in identifying where Bristol City had posed for this team photo. Fortunately through posts on Twitter Dominic McKenzie, the Northern Premier League statistician and Historian, realised that the town name written on the advert at the far end was Hanley, and a newspaper advert for J. Miller Taylor confirmed the town. Looking at the maps on the NLS website confirmed that the barrel-roofed stand is at the Stoke End of the Victoria Ground, and that Bristol City were playing Stoke City that day.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



White Hart Lane, Tottenham Hotspur F.C.

39

The postcard on this page illustrates both the development of Tottenham Hotspur's White Hart Lane ground but also the transformation of the surrounding area from nurseries and market gardens to the busy suburban area it is today. Close inspection of the image shows not only the classic Leitch stand but also the Park Lane End under construction. This dates the photograph to 1923, the year the stand was built.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



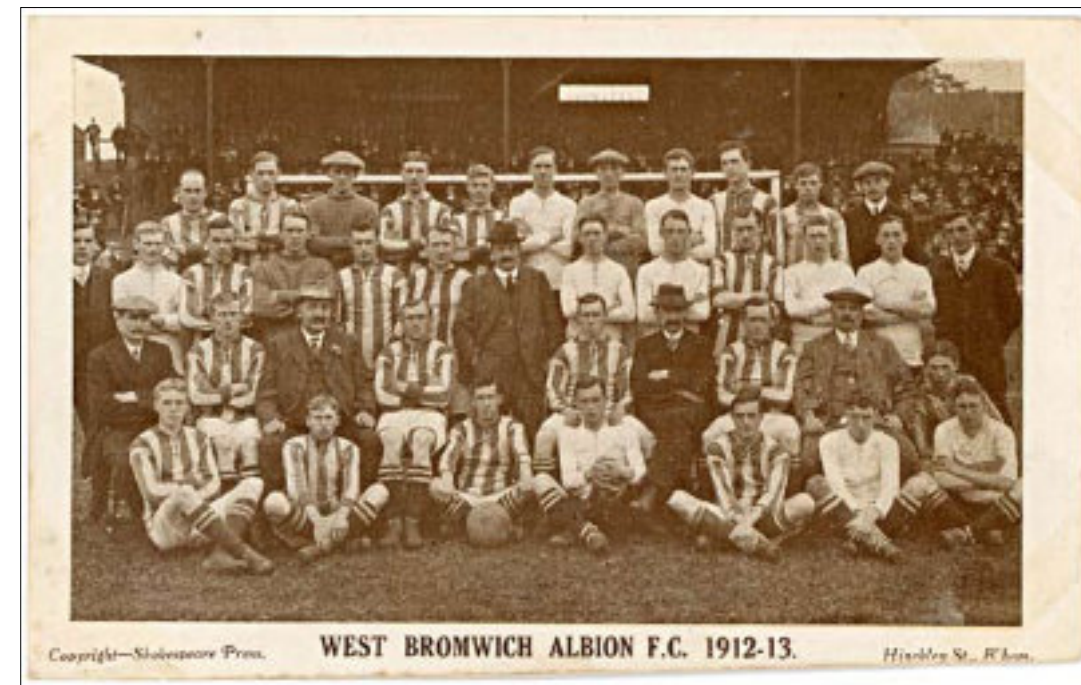
Prenton Park, Tranmere Rovers F.C.

A big crowd watches attentively at a Pyke Cup Final, and the publisher of the card notes that Pugh of the Cement Works makes a great save'. The address noted at the bottom of the card in Rock Ferry led me to check the area on old maps. The angled end terrace and cover on the far side strongly suggests that the game was played at Prenton Park, with the far side being the Main Stand and that Prenton Park Road West runs behind the bank to the right.



The Hawthorns, West Bromwich Albion F.C.

I have always been surprised at how quickly grounds evolved with characteristic features still to be seen being established early on. I like this photo for showing a covered end terrace, my position of choice at a ground with terraces. The cover in this image is at the Smethwick end of The Hawthorns.



42 Molineux, Wolverhampton Wanderers F.C.

This image is undated but is far less old than most of the other cards in this book. I wanted to include it as Molineux means a lot to me. It was the first awayground I had ever visited for a game in 1965 and was the only time that I attended a game with both my father and grandfather, passing the passion down the generations. The ground had a big impact on me as until then I thought football grounds all had a single Leitch stand, a few steps of terracing and then mud banks and wooden barriers, as Selhurst Park was at the time.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



Racecourse Ground, Wrexham F.C.

43

Clues to confirming the location of this ground as being the Racecourse Ground are limited to there being an industrial chimney and what appears to be a signal on a railway line behind the goal. Fortunately a further card from the same game is on the Wrexham Supporters' Trust website, along with a map from the NLS archive and the shadows from the players confirm that this image was taken looking towards the Town End goal. The actual date cannot be established but the game is likely to have been a Birmingham League match.



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Below: A massive crowd watches the the F.A. Cup Quarter-final replay on 11th March 1908 between Southampton and Everton from every vantage point both inside and outside the ground.



Lost and former Football League Grounds

46

Athletic Ground, Aberdare Athletic F.C.

Oftenwhen buying on eBay a bar gin can be found when the seller does not fully understand what he is listing, as was the case here. As on other cards included in this book the away team has been named first, but the background quickly confirms this as being a home game for Aberdare. Although a photo showing the stand would be interesting this view of the east side and northern end are a great historical record of what soon became a Football League ground when spectators were watching from behind, and for some leaning on a simple post and rail barrier.



Athletic Ground, Aberdare Athletic F.C.

47

Thisundated view of Aberdare was not listed on eBay as having any football interest. However, with a keen eye the terrace at the north end of The Athletic Ground can be seen, the same end as shown opposite. Thephoto includes most of the town, an indication of how small Aberdare was in comparison to other towns with a team in the Football League.



Peel Park, Accrington Stanley F.C.

Another card which is not as old as others having been taken in 1961 but which I felt had to be included as the interest Accrington Stanley's lost Peel Park ground makes it one that any football fan would want to take a closer look at. History tells us that the club's finances never recovered from moving the stand from the Aldershot Military Tattoo to Peel Park. This view shows that this was an appropriate development which enhanced the ground, but sadly led to the club being unable to complete the 1961/62 season and the eventual demise of the club.



Portland Park, Ashington F.C.

The caption naming Dog Track before football reflect the changes seen at Portland Park since Ashington dropped out of the Football League. The industrial area in the background confirms that the view is across to the north west corner of the ground. The stand appears to have had additional seats installed under a new roof on what would have previously been a paddock. The view for football may not have been great at this time but the income enabled the ground to survive until 2008.



Park Avenue, Bradford Park Avenue F.C.

Little of the stand at Park Avenue can be seen behind the Bradford Park Avenue team but the decorative feature in front of the seats is clear to see. This style became a feature of many further Leitch stands.



52 Goldstone Ground, Brighton & Hove Albion F.C.

Of all the grounds in this book it is the Goldstone ground, home of Brighton & Hove Albion, which features on the most postcards. This is in part down to the entrepreneurial spirit of local photographers. As can be seen a spectator is holding a sign which would later identify the image for anyone wishing to buy a copy.



Goldstone Ground, Brighton & Hove Albion F.C. 53

The ornate wooden stand sited on the west side of the ground reflects the class and aspiration of Hove, an area of Victorian villas and wide boulevards which contrasted with the hustle and bustle of Brighton. It is interesting to speculate as to whether the club intended the area in front of the stand to be seated or whether this was an afterthought. I am reminded of the two rows of bench seats, which were also sited behind a picket fence, in front of the old wooden stand at Bromley when I first started watching non-League football.



54 **Goldstone Ground, Brighton & Hove Albion F.C.**

At the south end of the ground was another wooden stand, this time with a paddock area for standing. Even this stand displays a decorative flourish, the fascia forming a gentle curve with each board a different tone in sepia and presumably picked out in the club colours of blue and white.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



Goldstone Ground, Brighton & Hove Albion F.C. 55

The National Newspaper Archive confirms that this match was played at the Goldstone Ground, and study of an O.S. map on the NLS website shows the large building in the distance as being the Hove Goods Shed. The shadows let us be certain that this image shows the west side of the ground with the main stand being situated to the right of the crowd stood on the bank.





These postcards feature action photos from three matches all showing the east side of the ground backing onto Goldstone Lane and the backs of the houses on Fonthill Road.

Left: A good crowd has gathered to see Brighton & Hove Albion beat Crystal 4-1 on a Tuesday, 9th April 1912 in a Southern League fixture.

Below Left: Brighton's first goal in a 2-0 win against champions Swindon Town in a Southern League fixture on 26th April 1913.

Below: Another action shot from the same game, published by Wiles of Hove. Seen on the right in both photos is Goldstone House, which even in the 1890s was surrounded by open countryside.



Photographers in both Brighton and Hove took every opportunity to sell their postcards to crowds at the Goldstone Ground, and many survive to be sold to collectors today.

Right: A crowd of 13,000 saw Brighton & Hove Albion and Coventry draw 0-0 in the Second Round of the F.A. Cup on 4th February 1911. Close inspection of the image shows boys helping others to climb over the fence to gain free admission to the ground.

Below right: This and the card above are again published by Wiles of Hove. The photo was taken at the Sussex Senior Cup Final in which Southwick beat Lewes 1-0 on the 18th April 1911.

Below: It is a shame that publishers Brighton Camera Exchange did not record the game at which this crowd scene was taken.



58 **Goldstone Ground, Brighton & Hove Albion F.C.**

This is an interesting postcard, but the image shows a part of a ground not normally seen. The background in part has to be guessed but could this be an informal photo taken without alerting a rival commercial photographer of an opportunity to create and sell a celebratory card? For us the location appears the site of the changing rooms and maybe an officials' area.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Millfields Road, Clapton Orient F.C.

The north side of Clapton Orient's Millfields Road ground can be seen on this postcard, with the tower behind being by the filter beds of the Lee Bridge Pumping Station. This side was known, as were many other such popular banks, as the Spion Kop, and had been formed using ash and clinker from the power station situated to the east. This is of great interest as shortly after the bank was terraced, this being a great record of the early days of the ground.



The Nest, Croydon Common F.C.

This is a most meaningful postcard for me, and one which I was happy to pay a great deal to win. I first saw the image in a copy of the Footballer magazine in 1989. The article it was illustrating was about Croydon Common F.C. and gave information on the publication of a book by Alan Futter. I so enjoyed the book that I wrote a review for Tony Williams' Non-League Football magazine, my first contribution to a non-League publication. Alan thanked me and in his letter suggested that I may go on to write a similar book myself.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



The Nest, Croydon Common F.C.

Now very much in the heart of suburban South London, at the time that Croydon Common were playing at The Nest from 1907 - 1917 the ground was bordered by woods and fields. The ground rises in the distance to the area now known as Crystal Palace, which had been developed with fine villas in the mid 1800s.



The Nest, Croydon Common F.C.

The ground may have been semi-rural but was ideally placed to attract spectators, given a successful team, which sadly Croydon Common were not. The mainline Selhurst station was opposite the ground entrance across the main road between Penge, Anerley, Norwood and Croydon. At the time of this photo the ground was very much a non-League venue yet briefly went on to host Football League fixtures from 1921 to 1924.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



The Nest, Croydon Common F.C.

This postcard was untitled, without any publisher details, had been printed in reverse and someone had scratched Millwall 4 on the card. I came across a thread on a Crystal Palace forum with a similar image taken at another game. I was drawn to the Sportsman advert, and then checked the drainpipes and stanchion to be able to confirm that this photo was also taken at The Nest. The advert can be seen in a Croydon Common photo from 1909 but is not there in a 1914 team photo nor in later Crystal Palace photos, so is included under the former club's name.



By the end of the Great War Croydon Common had folded, the only member of their division of the Southern League not to join the new Division 3 of the Football League in 1920. This was greatly to the advantage of another local team, Crystal Palace who had been playing a distance away at Herne Hill since 1915. In 1918 they secured a lease on The Nest and proudly posed for this team photo in front of the main stand which had been built in 1908 after the original had burnt down.



The image on this postcard was taken by Surrey Flying Services and unintentionally includes a part of The Nest. The company evolved into Aerofilms, and their archive now forms Britain From Above. Sadly this image, and a different crop of this image which includes the whole ground, do not form part of the archive. It would appear that the terraces and facilities have been demolished which dates the photo as being after Crystal Palace moved to Selhurst Park in 1924.



Northholme, Gainsborough Trinity F.C.

This postcard was correctly listed on eBay as being from Gainsborough, but the seller had included every possible sport each with a question mark in order to attract bidders. How much easier was it to simply check the maps on the NLS website and confirm that this is indeed Northholme and that it is taken looking to the west so that the small stand is sited approximately where the current stand is positioned. Had the question mark in the offer asked whether this is the earliest image of the football ground I think I am sure I would have had to pay a lot more than I did for it as I think it possibly is the oldest surviving photo of Northholme.



North Road, Glossop F.C.

It is easy to confirm the location of this photo as being at the North Road ground as the decorative cricket pavilion was a distinctive feature. Looking at images from the Britain From Above website the position of the pavilion and football pitch can be clearly seen. The names provide interest as the Chairman went on to be Chairman of Arsenal, and Harry Stapley, sat beside him, enjoyed a most distinguished career including winning a Gold Medal at the 1908 Olympics as Great Britain triumphed in the football tournament.

*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



68

Dunstable Road, Luton Clarence F.C.

Luton Town moved on from their old Dunstable Road ground to Ivy Road in 1905. The club hosted the Bedfordshire Cup Final on Easter Monday, played between Luton Amateurs and Luton Clarence. Photos of the time shows that the club erected tarpaulins at the railway end of the ground but the crowd of 1000 or so seems not to have justified the effort. There is little to see in the background but the close proximity to the railway, running at an angle to the goal-line, confirms the location of the photo and in part shows the limited spectator facilities at the ground.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Bank Street, Manchester United F.C.

69

One of the few interesting kits in the Premier League era was that launched by Manchester United in 1992, retro-styled and lace collared, modelled on that worn by the original club, Newton Heath. Not only the old green and yellow halves but the club's former ground at Bank Street are fascinating to the football historian, especially with the ground being described as being hemmed in by factories and the accompanying smoke and noise. Here both a stand and some of the chimneys give some idea of the humble origins of one of the best-known of all clubs.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



⁷⁰ Tower Athletic Ground, New Brighton Tower F.C.

This card is not as old as others in this book but was intended to be the last addition to the book, although in the editing process some which were too good to ignore were bought. I saw buying this as a time to stop and make use of the archive as I was a keen customer of the publisher, Collectorcard of Croydon, in the early 1970s. The passing of time now makes even those cards collectable. The image shows the ambitious development by entrepreneurs trying to corner both the tourist and sporting markets. Both the tower and stadium are amazing for us to look back on but neither were destined to last very long.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



Trent Bridge, Notts County F.C.

The image on this postcard was included in my book *The Football Grounds of the Early 1900s*, having been published in *Association Football and the Men Who Made It*. The photo had been taken by Howard Barrett of Southwell, a prolific photographer of the time. As was often the case clubs used photographers at away games to take team photos and this was taken at the southern end of Trent Bridge cricket ground.



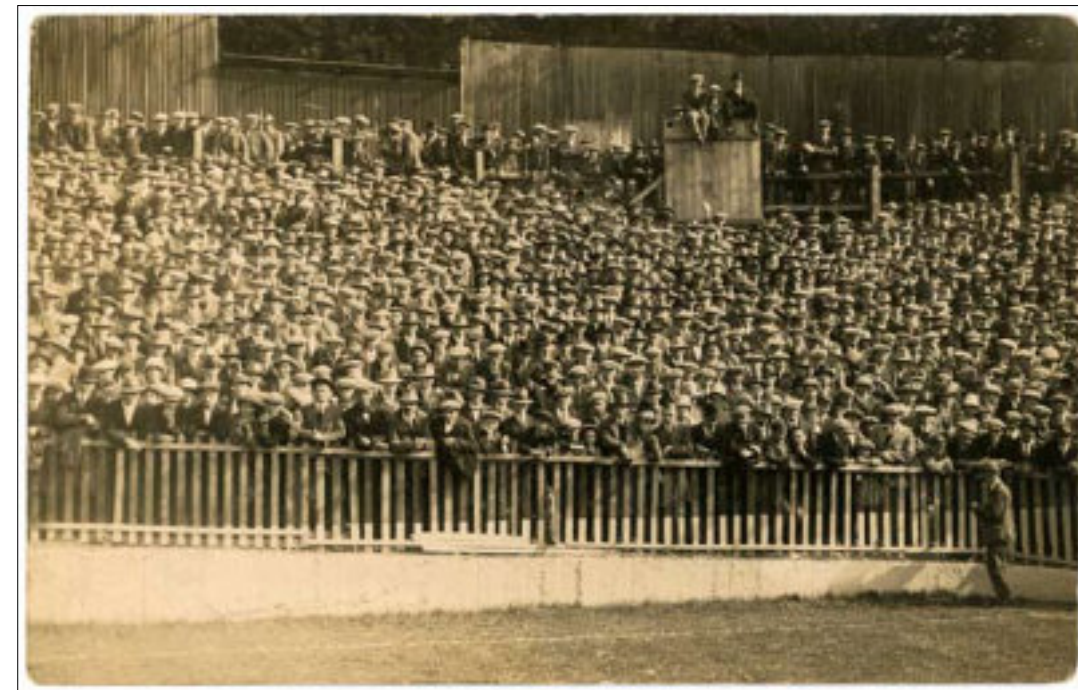
Newmarket Road, Norwich City F.C.

This team group was taken in 1927, with names written on the reverse but no further details. It had been taken at the old Newmarket Road ground of Norwich City, who had left for The Nest in 1908. The ground was later used by Norwich CEYMS, and the stand survived intact. It is not clear whether the team were part of the club but we can thank the photographer for including the side of the ground backing onto Daniels Road in his shot.



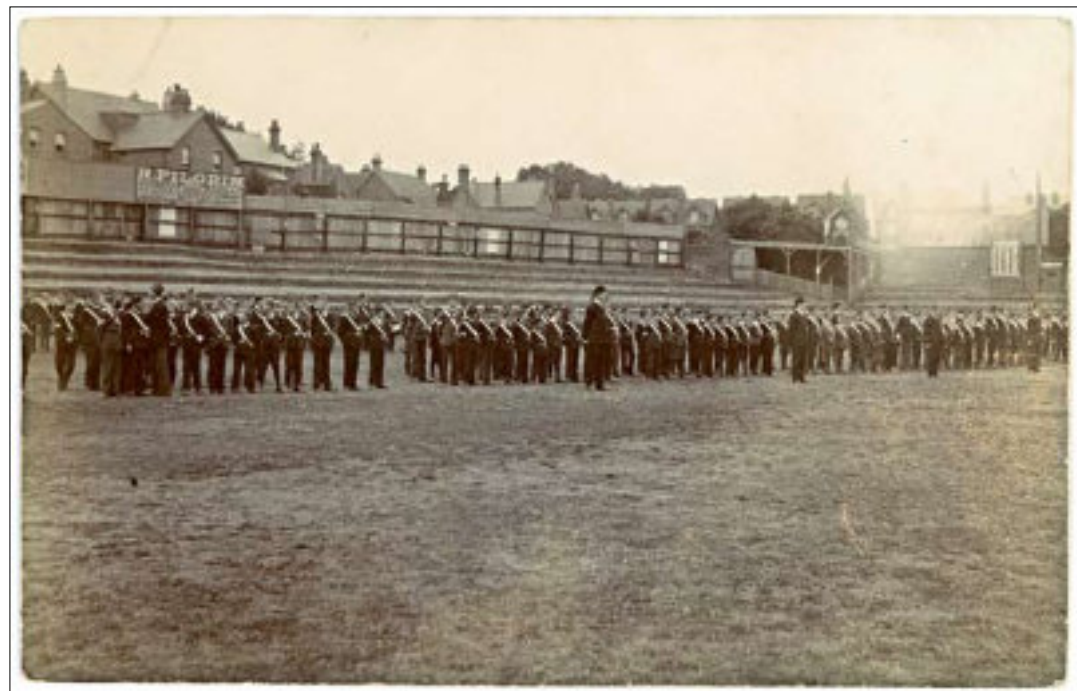
The Nest, Norwich City F.C.

As many grounds enthusiasts about places where they wish they could have seen a game and The Nest would be high on most lists. Images from the time show that in the northern corner spectators were required to watch from areas of steep terracing cut high into the face of the former quarry. The angle of the shadows in the photo would suggest that it was taken looking towards the south-east corner of the ground.



Elm Park, Reading F.C.

A photographer has been called to take a photo of a parade of over two hundred boys from the Reading and District Boys Brigade in July 1904. The image shows the roughly-terraced south side of Elm Park, looking towards the south-west corner. Of special interest is the small building built down the slope towards the corner flag. The purpose is unclear, it does not appear on any maps of the time. Looking closely it can be seen that an ornate clock has been mounted at the front corner above a narrow entrance.



Roots Hall, Southend United F.C.

At first glance the inclusion of this postcard may smack of desperation to fill pages but I have done so as it is so full of the visual history of the time. Football clubs were just a part of the expansion of towns and cities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The recently-built villas and shops, the street lighting, the tramway and the smooth road surface laid with bricks would all have been considered most modern yet for us very much places the new pastime of watching football matches in an appropriate historical context.

*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



The Athletic Ground, Scarborough F.C.

Some postcards are a lot easier to identify than others even without a caption or postmark. Another card labelled as being from Scarborough turned out to be of another ground, still unidentified. Luckily this image had sufficient information for Colin Peel and Vince Taylor to say the photo had been taken at The Athletic Ground by noting the location of the gas holder and quarry on Spring Hill in the background. It is likely that the game took place before 1922 as Simon Inglis reports that in that year a small stand was burnt down and replaced by a much larger structure.



Gay Meadow, Shrewsbury Town F.C.

This card was published by Airco Aerials Ltd of London, whose history is tied in with the emergence of Aerofilms as Great War pilots look to use their skills and planes in the uncertain days of the early 1920s. The small stand and railway carriage, mentioned by Simon Inglis in Football Grounds of Great Britain, can be seen despite the poor quality of the original card, which suggests the flight took place before 1922. The typed and pasted label suggest that the company's flying and photographic skills were not matched by darkroom techniques to a similar level.



The Dell, Southampton F.C.

The photographers of the Solent area, along with their counterparts working with Brighton and Hove Albion, have produced a rich variety of images from the late 1890s and early 1900s showing us how the clubs' grounds looked at the time. Furthermore they give an indication of the interest in seeing the action with spectators perched high on the stand roof and on fences in order to get a good view. It is likely that the game was the F.A. Cup Quarter-final replay on 11th March 1908 which attracted a crowd on 21,690.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



The Dell, Southampton F.C.

The precarious vantage points taken by some spectators are even clearer to be seen on this postcard, with even a telegraph pole outside the ground offering two supporters an elevated but restricted view of the game. The stand is the original East Stand which was destroyed in a fire in 1929.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



The image on this fine hand-tinted team postcard is perfectly composed both to show both the team and the north east corner of the ground. I wonder if it was actually taken at a game though as although a crowd appears to be gathered on the north terrace and in the East Stand nobody is stood on the terrace in front of the church. It is possible that in the tinting process the artist was able to give the impression of figures being stood at a distance and in the shadows of the stand but left the terrace empty as any painted in there would distract from the team group.



This early image is of interest as it shows a building encroaching into the ground and not only blocking the movement of supporters around the ground but also presenting a risk to a speedy winger facing a hard-tackling full back. This was in the north west corner of the ground and provided accommodation for the club secretary. It has been suggested that a single line of spectators could stand in front of the building during games but this image and a photo in my book The Football Grounds of the Early 1900s shows that was unlikely to have happened as even at games such as the Everton cup tie fans were kept behind the pitch-side barriers.

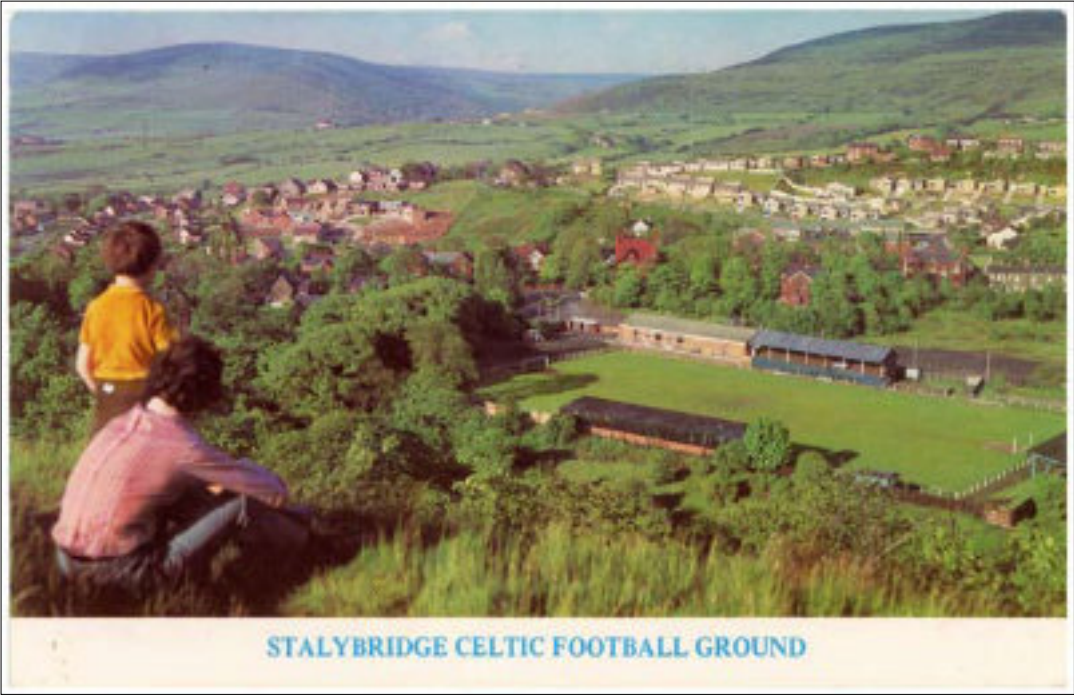
postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Over the years many photographers have climbed Hough Hill to reach the vantage point from which this image was taken. The card was posted in June 1959 and shows the ground at the time very much on the rural edge of the town with the Pennines rising in the distance.

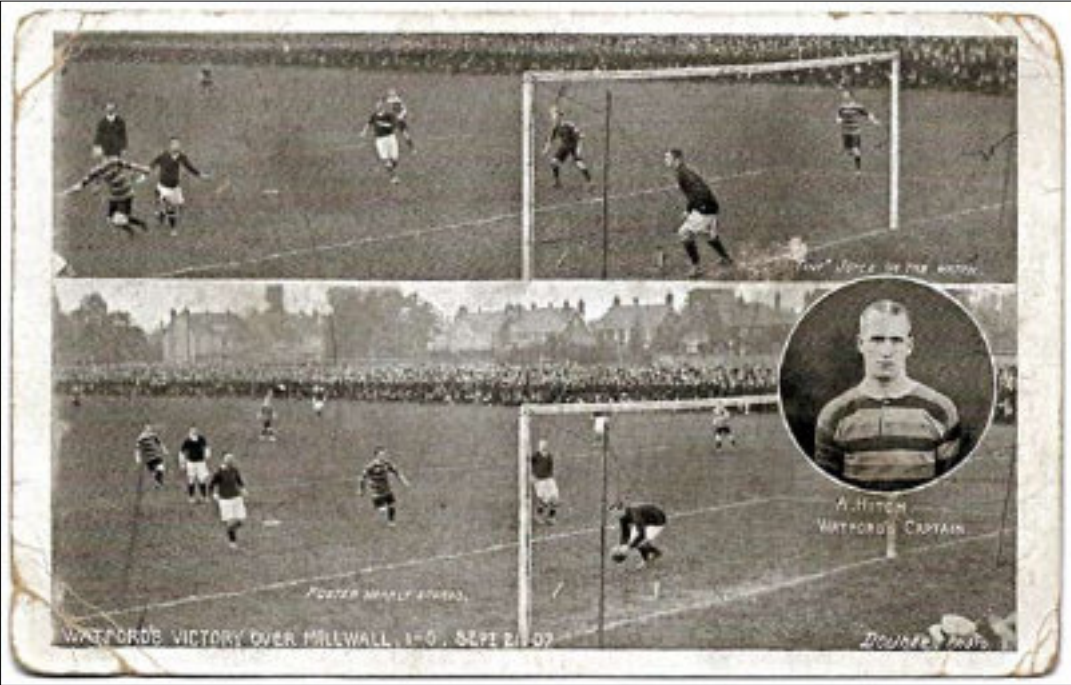


I have resisted the temptation to include too many cards published post war but the image here is both interesting and charming. The father and son gaze intently at the ground while their spouse and female siblings are probably waiting patiently in the car. Or am I stereotyping family life in the 1970s? The town has already expanded out past the ground but the impressive setting of Bower Fold can still be appreciated.



West Herts Sports Ground, Cassio Road, Watford F.C.

The West Herts Sports Ground in Cassio Road was Watford's home before moving to Vicarage Road in 1922. As with any club sharing facilities with cricket the larger crowds attending Football League games soon exposed the limitations of the ground. The bottom photo shows the crowd on the cricket field side of the pitch, with houses in Cassio Road leading up to two properties set at right angle in Rickmansworth Road.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



West Herts Sports Ground, Cassio Road, Watford F.C.

The ground is still in use today but with little indication of its footballing history. The maps on the NLS website and also images on Britain from Above make are most interesting. The limitations of the ground are clear to see. The cover seen below is shown to have survived into the late 20s and a section to the left by the pavilion was still in use in the 1940s.



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Other stadia and grounds in Ireland, Scotland and Wales

White City

TheFranco-British Exhibition ran for five months from late May 1908 on a site in Shepherd's Bush, which at the time was on the rural fringes of London. A stadium was built on a small part of the site in order to host the OlympicGamesbeing held in Londonthat year. Theexhibition celebrated the Entente Cordiale signed between Great Britain and Francein 1904 and many of the buildings were painted white over plaster, hence the name. As can be seen this official souvenir postcard presents an idealised version of the stadium.



postcard courtesy of John Daniels



White City

My research on White City was especially interesting. Growing up in the 1960s I knew that QPRhadplayedthere for a short while but had decided it was unsuitable, and so I like many others have been dismissive of the importance of the stadium. It is clear to me now that it was the first stadium purpose-built for the Olympicsin the modern way. As can be seen it included a velodrome, athletics track and space for field sports.



White City

This view of White City gives an idea of the scale of the stadium, and also its struggle to find a purpose other than for greyhound racing. The inclusion of both athletics track and velodrome took the spectators further away from the action on the field. The length of the cycle track at 600 metres and the athletics track at what we would see as the odd length of three laps to a mile gave additional space for other events than football, rugby and field events to be held on the infield.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



White City

Records for attendance at the Olympics record crowds of up to 68000 but later 92000 attended the 1939 Greyhound Derby final. An 1928 aerial photo on Britain from Above shows that the roof has been extended around the whole stadium, and also that the curved ends were still open-backed and as seen on this postcard. To our eyes the structure looks to be almost temporary but it we see that stadium design and construction were very much in their early days in 1908. A comparison with the images of Wembley Stadium make for an interesting comparison.



Wembley Stadium

The Exhibitions celebrating Great Britain's importance but declining position in the world can now be seen in a historical context. In 1924 the optimism following the Great War was soon to be wiped out by the Great Depression. The British Empire Exhibition was held at Wembley in 1924 and 1925 and was intended to both educate and entertain the public but also strengthen and develop trading links with the colonies over trading with Europe. An unintended consequence was a growth in the self-governing dominions' self-belief eventually leading to independence.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Wembley Stadium

Again a part of the plans was to include the building of what was originally known as the Empire Stadium, soon to be referred to as Wembley Stadium. In the years since the building of White City stadium the modern style of having a 400 metre athletics track with field sports on the infield had become the accepted approach. At the time of this postcard the sightlines for those standing in the terraced areas was acceptable but still at some distance from the action. However iconic the Twin Towers were from the outside the actual stadium was always just functional.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



The Crystal Palace

The stadium within the grounds of the Crystal Palace was built within one of two fountain basins down the terrace from the main building. The scale of the fountains was enormous with the main jet of water rising 45 metres, fed by tanks within the tower seen in the distance. The large crowds who attended FA Cup Finals held at the ground must have exceeded all expectations, and the facilities eventually provided for them on the far bank were probably less than ideal having simply built around the banks of the amphitheatre originally created for the fountains.



*postcard courtesy of
John Daniels*



The Crystal Palace

About the northern end of the ground spectators were accommodated close behind the goal-line but at the southern end and on the side now bordering the park the terraces simply followed the original fountain basin banks, and can still largely be identified to this day. The path down from the central transept can still be followed and the view over into the National Sports Centre stadium, built on the site of the old ground, is much as it was when the photo on this postcard was taken.



This postcard was published by J. Russell and Sons of Crystal Palace, many of whose excellent images of FA Cup Finals played at the Crystal Palace appear in my book Football Grounds of the Early 1900s. Another of my books, Football Grounds of South East London includes a photograph showing the full length of this grandstand situated in the velodrome which had been built in the old north fountain. No information is given on the postcard about the game being played but it is likely to be a trial match as one team is playing in a Crystal Palace kit of the time.



I could not resist buying this magnificent postcard but was sure, being a rugby ground, that it would have no place in this book. Research soon proved me to be wrong as association football had been played here even before the recently-rebuilt stadium has become the home for international matches. The first match was on 17th March 1900, when Ireland played England, resulting in a 2-0 win for the visitors. The card had been used as a promotional device when posted by C. A. Peters Ltd, whose preservative product is noted above the image.



98

The Admiralty Ground, Castletown

This postcard is often on offer on eBay and is an excellent record of an interesting location. The ground was a military facility on Bere Island, near Cork. A second pitch nearby is still in use but this ground is once again rough pasture. The history of the island is interesting in that it did not become part of the Irish Republic in 1922 under the Anglo-Irish Treaty, only being handed over in 1938.



Celtic Park, Belfast Celtic F.C.

99

Sometimes the information noted on postcards can be confusing, and with the publisher of this card being in Penygraig, Glamorgan, I sought help from Welsh Football magazine. An observant reader informed us that the team group is representing the Football League in a fixture against the Irish League on 8th October 1908. The game was played at Celtic Park in Belfast, and an image on the Britain from Above website confirms this as the building seen immediately behind the fence can be seen at the La Salle Drive end of the ground.



Hampden Park

Some of the crowd of 121,452 can be seen on the postcard with queues at the turnstiles, the end terrace full and spectators running behind the crowd hoping to squeeze in somewhere to see the game which ended 1-1. The Scottish newspaper The Referee reported that the gates were eventually closed and thousands turned away. On the south side of the ground can be seen one of the twin grandstands with the pavilion in between. The houses on Mount Annan Drive can be seen in the background, each still identifiable to this day.



Hampden Park, Glasgow

Two years later we see the vast majority of the 106,205 spectators inside the ground and watching Scotland beat England 2-0. Outside the turnstiles Police outnumber the few people still milling around, having seen fans through the turnstiles very much like stewards still do today. It is interesting to note that the ground owners Queen's Park F.C. had built permanent turnstiles since the last game and at a great height, presumably to stop those seeking free admission. Both photos were taken from the north-west corner of the ground, most likely from houses on Somerville Drive.



Bellsdale Park, Beith F.C.

Themaps on the NLS website shows there to be cabinet and net factories as well as houses on Mains Road behind the stand on the north side of Bellsdale Park in Beith, The ground was used for Scottish League matches between 1923 and 1926 but in Rejected F.C. of Scotland volume 2 Dave Twydell records that the stand in this image was opened in August 1927 and it is likely that this card was published as a souvenir of this event. The tinting artist clearly had trouble fitting the club name on the narrow grandstand.



postcard courtesy of John Daniels



postcard courtesy of John Daniels



Clune Park, Port Glasgow Athletic F.C.

Clune Park was a compact little ground tucked in between the Caledonian Railway's Gourrock line and Glasgow Road. The delightful stand seen in this image was on the south side, backing onto the road. The ground was the club's home throughout their time in the Scottish League between 1893 and 1911. The card was posted in 1907 and it would seem that the two clubs first met in the League in the 1902/3 season but the actual game in play on the postcard cannot be determined.



104

Glasbrook Field, Penrhiwceiber F.C.

This undated postcard shows the Glasbrook Field ground as it would have been post WW2 when the original Penrhwceiber F.C. played at the ground. The local Rhondda, Cynon Taff authority state that Glasbrook Field has been used for sporting purposes since at least the early 1920s. It is interesting to compare this image with the later one opposite with a few changes being noted around the ground. Of interest to us is the original layout at the Cynon Terrace end of the ground.



Glasbrook Field, Penrhiwceiber Rangers F.C.

105

This postcard was published by F. Frith & Co. and despite being hand-tinted the image was actually taken circa 1960 around the time the current club was formed and an original black and white copy can be found on the Frith Collection website. The pitch has been moved towards the Cynon Terrace end of the ground with the demolition of a building behind the goal in the earlier photo. A stand has been built, replaced by the structure still standing at the ground in the early 1990s, with the club being promoted to the Welsh League in 1992.



Park Avenue, Aberystwyth Town F.C.

The image on this postcard is as interesting historically for a railway enthusiast as those interested in football grounds. The Park Avenue ground can be seen to be bordered on three sides by railways, with the original route of the narrow gauge Vale of Rheidol line clearly visible as well as the old engine shed being seen by the river at the end of the houses in Maes Yrafon. The stand appears to be newly-built and so dates the card to some time in the 1930s.



Park Avenue, Aberystwyth Town F.C.

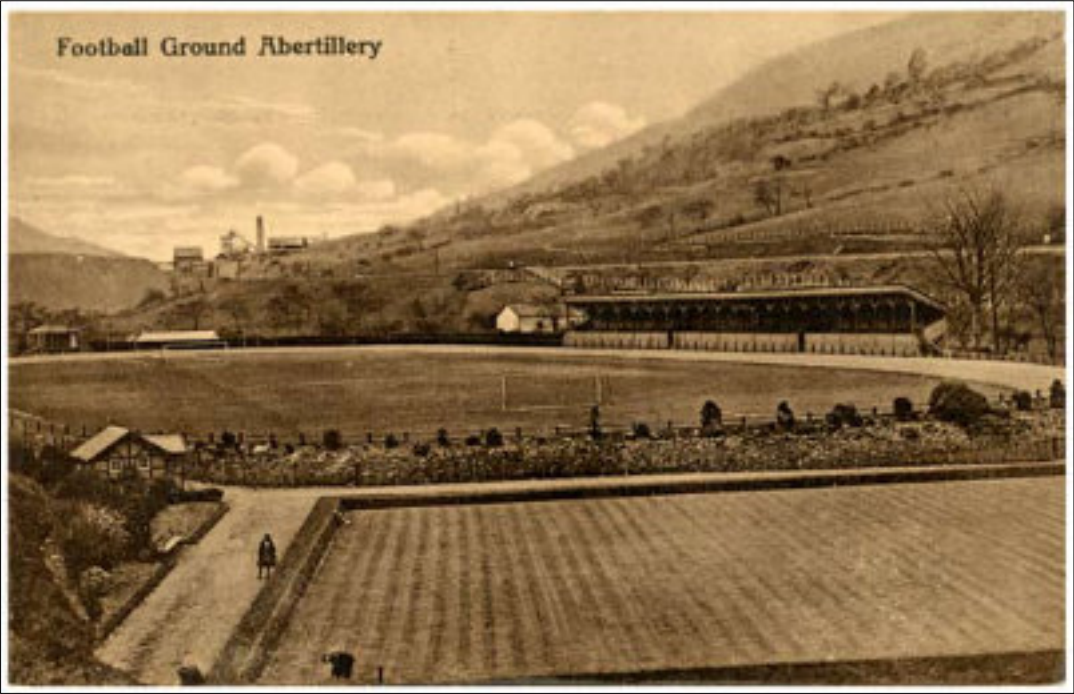
A later photo than opposite, the bank to the railway behind the stand no longer looking newly-formed, ladders suggest that the club is re-painting the rendering on the stand due both to the prevailing wind and rain as well as the steam locomotives passing by. An aerial view of the area on Britain from Above taken in 1949 shows a further building to have been built to the south of the stand away from the sea so suggesting that this dates back to the late 1930s or early 1940s. One of my favourite stands, this is also one of my most-liked postcards in this book



108

Abertillery Park, Abertillery F.C.

TheSports Ground at Abertillery Park was laid out for athletics, cricket as well as both rugby and football, with steps laid out up the bank on the side opposite the grandstand. The asphalt cycle track was laid in 1906 which helps date this image. The Frith Collection has a broadly similar photo taken in 1955, by which time rugby was the winter sport played on the ground. Southern League matches were played at the ground which is marked out for football in this image. Rugby is still played at the ground, but with a larger stand encroaching onto the cycle track.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Maindy Stadium, Cardiff Corinthians F.C.

109

Opened in 1951, Maindy Stadium was laid out with a velodrome, athletics track and space for field sports on the infield. An impressive grandstand was built but although the rest of the stadium is still very much as built the stand was demolished many years ago. There is a very tenuous footballing connection in that Cardiff Corinthians played their home games here for a single season.



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Non-League & Other Grounds

Eastlake, Branksome Gasworks F.C.

Originally bought as I thought this could be at the same ground as the Boscombe postcard featured on page 18, following research in local newspapers the card is even more interesting than I expected. The crowd have gathered for a local derby on a spring Wednesday at the Eastlake Ground (in some papers referred to as East Lake) to see Branksome Gasworkstake on Boscombe, eventually losing 2-1. The houses are still to be seen in Pearson Avenue. It is amusing to see the group stood on something against the fence outside the ground gaining a free view.



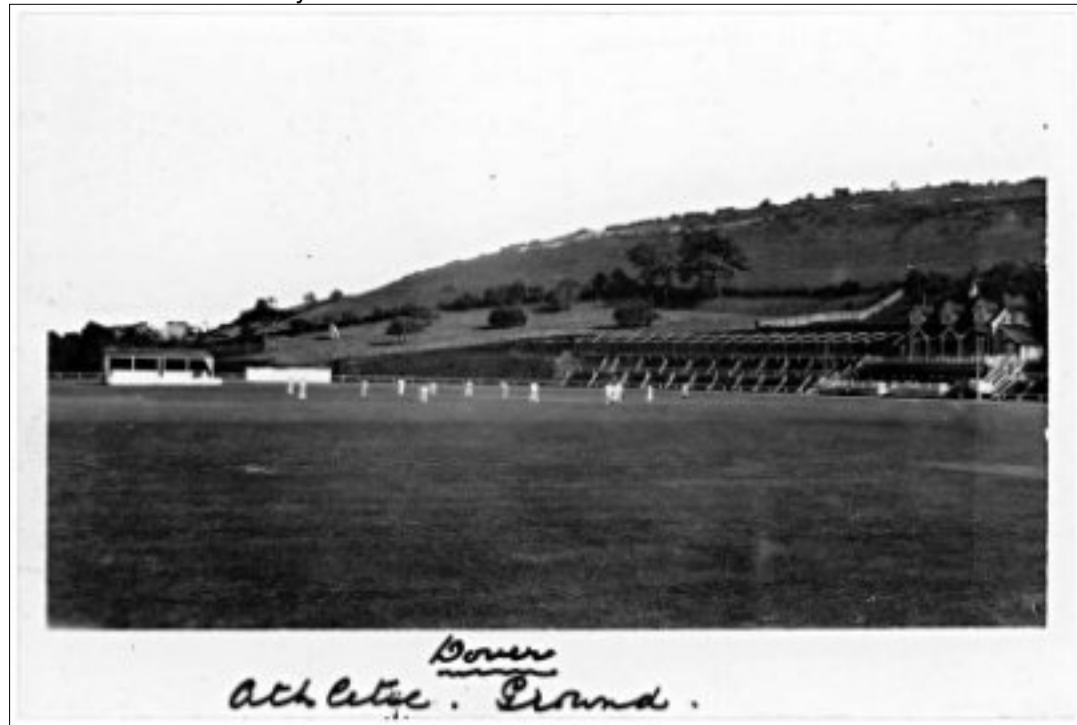
Meyrick Park, Bournemouth Civil Service F.C. 113

Although this game is not reported on in local papers another game had been played and won against Portsmouth Civil Service. This was in the South-Western District Surveyor's Civil Service Challenge Cup, the trophy must have been impressive to fit the name in, and this match is likely to have been in the same competition. The team played in Meyrick Park, and it is likely that the same pitch is now used by Oakmedians Rugby Club.



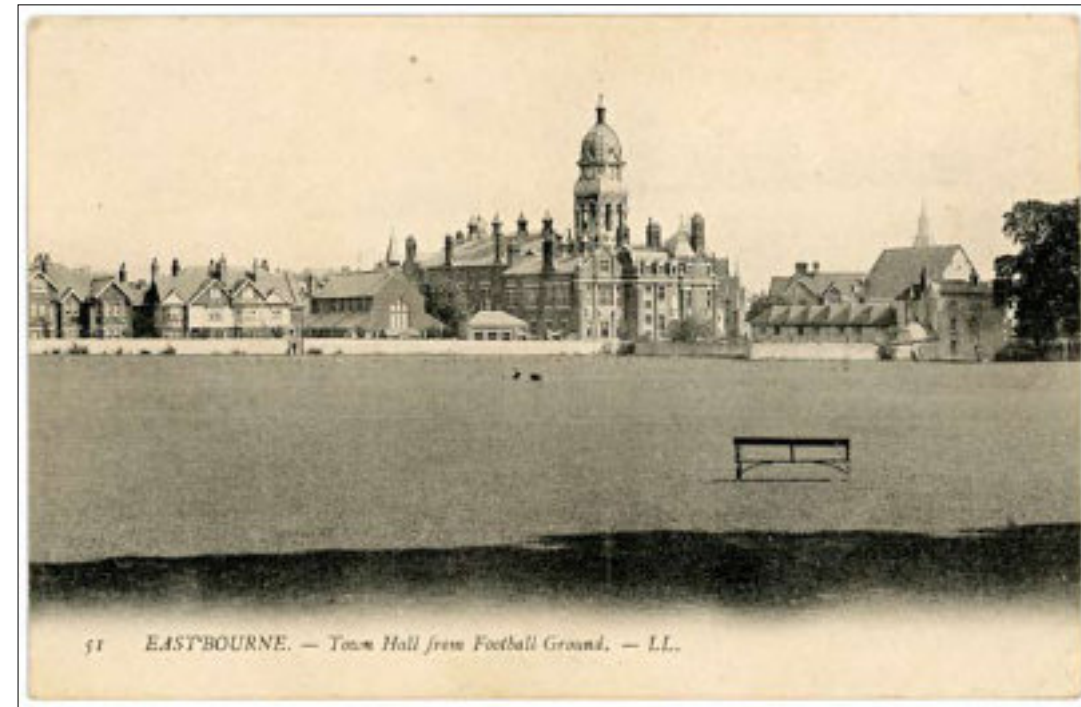
The Crabble Athletic Ground, Dover F.C.

The Crabble may have doubled up as a venue for both football and cricket but it is clear which sport was best served by the ground. A small wooden grandstand stands on what would have been the halfway line in the winter, and elsewhere spectators had the choice of standing beside the pitch or using the seats in the pavilion or the terracing beside, both a considerable distance behind the goal-line. The ground, now used for rugby in the winter, and facilities are still very much the same to this day.



The Saffrons, Eastbourne Town F.C.

The wide open space seen on this postcard again shows a ground shared by both cricket and football, but with a far more harmonious relationship between the two with both sports well-catered for. The view today is almost exactly the same but with an intrusive Caffyns' garage now blocking the view of the Church. Today cricket has lost out somewhat as the football ground has a permanent fenced site, with the cricket pitch boundary on that side being relatively short.



One of the most rewarding finds on eBay when buying for Posted was this card. It shows football being played on The County Ground, in front of a 700 seat grandstand built in the late 1890s with a velodrome and space for field sports within. The ground also was also used for speedway and greyhound racing over the years with a rich rugby history being worth the reader researching. A superb 1930s grandstand was standing when I visited in the late 1990s and the ground finally closed when Exeter Chiefs moved to their new stadium in 2006.



Luckily this postcard includes a postmark of Hyde, is franked in July 1910 and mentions in the message that the photograph had been taken at the football ground in Hyde. A gale is reported to have hit the North-West on 17th February 1910 and although there is no damage mentioned in Hyde the roof of the stand at Anfield is said to have been blown off. It is therefore not clear whether parts of the stand were saved for rebuilding but it had formed a delightful, if weak structure, presumably situated on the east side of the ground.



The Sportsfield, Littlehampton Town F.C.

This is one of two very similar cards which I bought because I thought the building behind the teams looked interesting. I assumed that it had been taken at the Sportsfield, home of both Littlehampton Town F.C. and Littlehampton Cricket Club and found a building labelled as a pavilion on the west side of the ground on an old map. I was amazed to discover that the cricket pavilion in use today is actually still the building seen in the photo, which makes the postcards all the more interesting.



Whitby Road, Loftus Albion F.C.

Loftus is a town which most readers will need to look up to find its location, but is just a ten minute drive from my house. Research having read a local free newspaper gives a great story behind this team group, labelled in biro as being from 1920/21. This was the season when Loftus Albion fought through to the semi-final of the Amateur Cup only to lose to eventual winners Bishop Auckland. Maps from the time to show the pitch to be in the same place as still used today. The building seen is presumably the pavilion shown by the corner of the pitch. Archive photos show that the cricket club had an ornate pavilion so the building seen here is likely to be for football only. Such a building is shown on the map to be situated by the corner of the pitch.



120 Glebe Street, Loughborough Corinthians F.C.

After the demise of the former Loughborough Football League club their Athletic Ground home was used by Loughborough Corinthians for their home fixtures. When the ground was sold and re-developed in 1908 the club moved to Glebe Street, a ground which bordered the Midland Railway line just north of the station. A map of the time indicates a Pavilion beside the railway, but as is often the case the term was often loosely used, and the length of the building would suggest that it was in fact a stand. No trace of the ground now remains.



Browns Lane, Loughborough United F.C.

121

The photograph on this postcard gives a tantalising glimpse of the Browns Lane end of Loughborough United's ground. The club played Midland League football here until 1973, but the ground had a long history before their arrival. Although the photograph is credited to Aerofilms images from this flight are not to be found on Britain from Above, which is a shame as a large wooden pitched-roof grandstand stood just out of the picture.



Tufnell Park, London Caledonians F.C.

London Caledonians were, as the name suggests, a club based in the capital primarily for players with Scottish roots. They club won the London Senior Cup in 1908 beating Dulwich Hamlet 1-0 at Herne Hill. It is interesting to read the reports from both London-based newspapers and those in Scotland having differing views of most aspects of the game. The club played at Tufnell Park, still an open space where sport is played today, and it is assumed that the photograph was taken in front of the stand there.



postcard courtesy of John Daniels



The Recreation Ground, Minehead A.F.C.

This very card appears on the Minehead A.F.C. website with the caption informing us that the three victories took place in the 1911/12 season. Of special interest to us is the mention that the stand in the background is the original stand which later burnt down. The Britain from Above archive includes an image which shows a different stand, eventually replaced with the current stand in 1969. This postcard therefore shows that it can be said that the stand burnt down after 1911 rather than in the early 1900s as another book states.



postcard courtesy of John Daniels



Penlee Park, Penzance A.F.C.

The supporters of Penzance A.F.C. must have been enormously proud of their achievements in creating the new home for their club. Having shared the facilities at the St Clare with the town cricket club the magnificent entrance was perhaps a statement of intent by the club that the future success of the club would ensure continued admissions through the turnstiles. The game in progress followed the official opening of the ground by Sir Stanley Rouse, and Luton Town are on their way to a 10-0 victory. The stand would eventually be built to the left of the turnstiles.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Loftus Road, Shepherd's Bush F.C.

Posted in 1905, this postcard shows a very early view of the Loftus Road ground soon after it opened in 1904. The houses on Loftus Road itself are at the far end of the ground and are still standing today. The small stand had been brought by Shepherd's Bush F.C. from their previous ground at Wormholt Farm, a few hundred yards north-west, just beyond Wormholt Park. On Queen's Park Rangers' arrival the stand was replaced by one the club brought from their old ground at Park Royal.



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County Ground, Southampton

The County Ground in Southampton was a short-lived home of Southampton F.C. and is also noted as having hosted Hampshire Senior Cup Finals. Here is the presentation of the trophy after one such final played on March 5th 1898. Although it shows more of the crowd than the ground it remains a rare example of football being played on this traditional cricketing venue. Eastleigh won the trophy by beating 2nd Gordon Highlanders 2-0.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



Victoria Ground, Stockton F.C.

127

It is often the case that early action photographers did not manage to get results which record the game in progress very well, with the best shots being taken from behind the goal, and is not surprising considering the equipment used at the time. This photograph may not show the game well but gives a good idea of how the Victoria Ground looked at the time. The stand and sizeable wooden pavilion are seen, along with a superb advert painted on the end wall of one of the adjoining houses.



Rectory Ground, Swanscombe United F.C.

A secondcard, showing more of the stand, is ready to be included in a book of historic grounds in Kent. This card came up for sale a number of years after I outbid a well-known local collector but cost less than a tenth of the first. For me both were worth it as even now I have not seen a photo of the stand at this club's ground, a close neighbour of Northfleet United and at the time one of the oldest clubs in Kent. Part of the ground survives in the park but the rest is now a cemetery.



Football Ground, Taunton

Some postcards offer a tantalising amount of information yet full identification remains difficult. This card clearly announces the club to have been based in the Taunton area but it is neither clear who the team, when the photograph was taken nor where the impressive stand was located. One clue is that the card was published by Montague Cooper of Taunton a renowned photographer who was active until around 1920. Grounds listed in the local paper include Wellington Road and East Reach but no evidence on maps of the time helps us to name this ground.



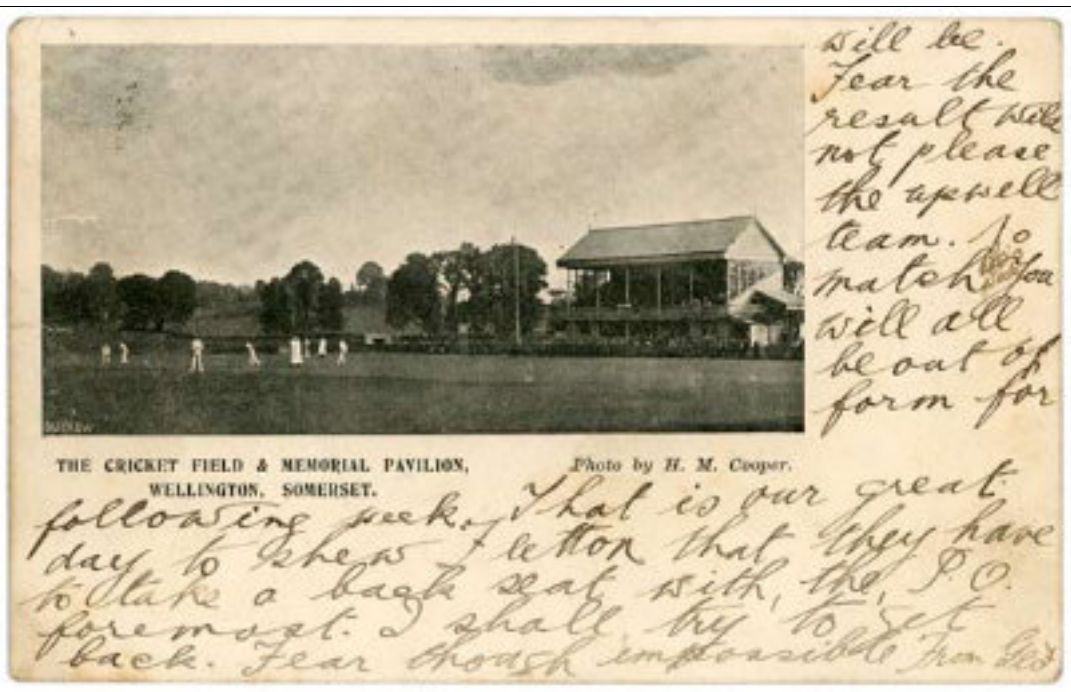
130 Summerstown Football Ground, Summerstown F.C.

This postcard records for posterity both the location and facilities at Summerstown F.C. who played in the Athenian League until 1928. The local newspapers of the time refer to matches taking place at the Summerstown Ground, while an archive photograph shows a sign announcing the Summerstown Football Ground. The ground was situated on Garratt Lane, Earlsfield and the stand survived, being sold to Weladstone F.C. and was only demolished in 1991.



The Cricket Field, Wellington F.C.

The local papers of the early 1900s are of no assistance in determining whether the magnificent stand was used by rugby or football spectator in the winter. It is also not clear whether this ground is the current rugby ground or the cricket ground, which is also home to the town's football team. Whichever sports used the ground the stand is superb and worthy of inclusion.



132

The Athletic Ground, Wells City F.C.

A photograph taken at what appears to be a practice is not initially of much interest but fortunately the small stand at the Athletic Ground is clear to be seen. The ground is still the home of the club and the current stand is built on the same site as this one. The houses in Alfred Street are still standing and with the end of the terrace seen the exact position can be determined.



Herne Hill Velodrome, West Norwood F.C.

133

Numerous velodromes were built in the London area in 1890s but Herne Hill was the one to survive and prosper when other, such as the track at Catford, closed within five years. West Norwood played at Herne Hill, and so did Crystal Palace between 1915 and 1918. The splendid old pavilion was only recently demolished. Although the ground hosted the 1910/11 FA Amateur Cup final photos even of a team group at Herne Hill are few and far between.

postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



The image on this postcard illustrates the Easter Tuesday football played out on the Cloffock in Workington to this day. First reports in the newspaper archive date back to the 1880s but the Carlisle Patriot refers to the game being played ‘from time out of mind’. Now one of just three events which date back to medieval times, they are a living history of how football was once played. Of interest to us is the small main stand to the right of the photograph which is on Workington’s old Lonsdale Park ground until 1937. A rare glimpse of a lost venue.



postcard courtesy of
John Daniels



This postcard is like one of those drawings which first looks like one thing and then another. With a magnifying glass the football pitch appears to have a cover along the road end, then all of a sudden it looks like a fence. At the time of the photo the ground was part of Ely Barracks, later to be the site of the Drill Hall. No mention of sport taking place here can be found but the pitch is clear to be seen so is worthy of inclusion.



Whale Island, HMS Excellent

HMS Excellent was a land-based gunnery school based on Whale Island, in Portsmouth Harbour. The Portsmouth Evening News of Friday 9th November 1906 records this Portsmouth Senior Cup Round 1 fixture as HMS Excellent v R.M.A. so the mention of Cordites is an affectionate nickname for the team. Their opponents were the Royal Marine Artillery, based at Eastney, on the other side of Portsmouth. The Whale Island pitch is still used but a lengthy grandstand positioned to the south of the pitch, behind the camera, has not been replaced.



Pitt Street, Royal Naval Barracks, Portsmouth

Once again the incredible search facility on the British Newspaper Archive enabled me to find information on this postcard. Royal Marine Artillery again feature, this time losing in the final of the Portsmouth Senior Cup. A crowd of 3000 watched the game, and again the Photographer Mr Cribb has been taken his photographs with the main stand (and the sun) behind him. The ground was later developed into an impressive multi-sport stadium and can be seen in a photograph on Britain from Above.



Stamford Bridge, Chelsea F.C.

A series of six football postcards were published by B. B. London as Series No. E41, all hand-tinted and set inside a representation of a wooden frame but with no details of the games given. This ground is easy to identify as being Stamford Bridge, as although identical in most ways to Fulham's stand at Craven Cottage the roof vents are different. This game has been identified as being the first Charity Cup Final played in 1908 but the other cards have generic colours so the QPR and Manchester United kits could have been applied onto a photo from another match.



Boleyn Ground, West Ham United F.C.

This postcard has always presented many obstacles to those trying to identify the ground in the photo. The card is printed in reverse (but correctly in this book), and the teams are not necessarily actually playing in the kits shown as these would have been coloured in the tinting process. Neither do the adverts help as none can be fully read. The clue to the ground strangely came from my own Football Grounds of the Early 1900s in which a photo shows the stand at the Boleyn Ground to have had such a roof and with the stanchions close together as on this card.



The Crystal Palace



These postcards feature action photos from three matches all showing the east side of the ground backing onto Goldstone Lane and the backs of the houses on Fonthill Road. .

Left: A good crowd has gathered to see Brighton & Hove Albion beat Crystal 4-1 on a Tuesday, 9th April 1912 in a Southern League fixture.

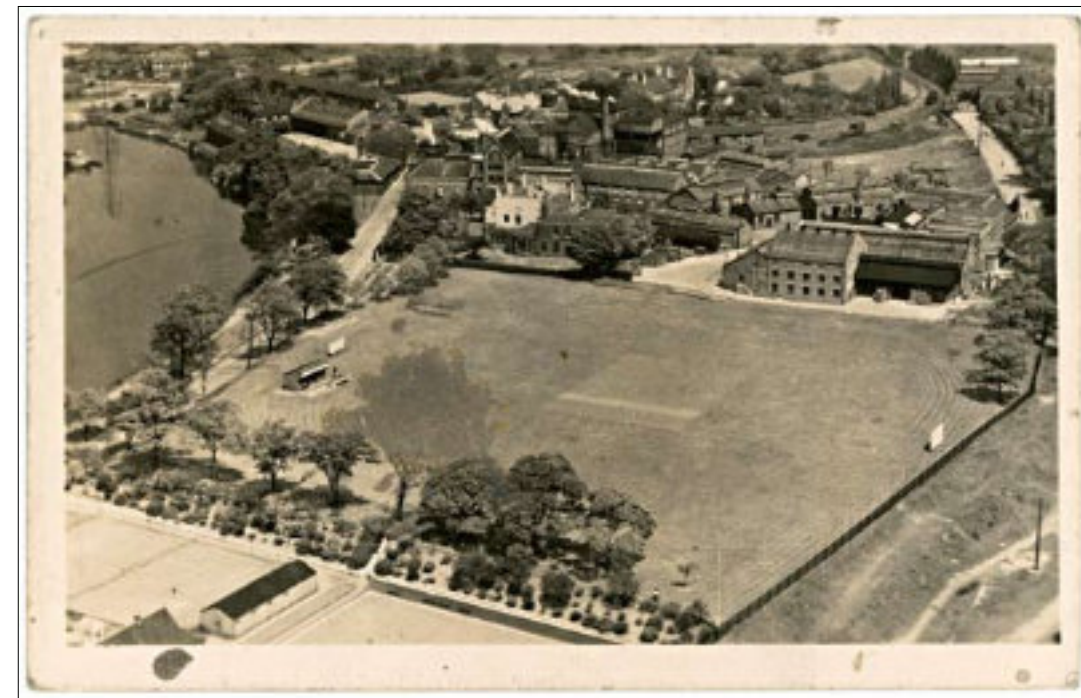
Below Left: Brighton's first goal in a 2-0 win against champions Swindon Town in a Southern League fixture on 26th April 1913.

Below: Another action shot from the same game, published by Wiles of Hove. Seen on the right in both photos is Goldstone House, which even in the 1890s was surrounded by open countryside.



The Sports Ground, Wilderspool Brewery

This was one of the first postcards I bought for this book and the last to be identified. A suggestion from Twitter helped me locate the meander on the river to the left of the photo and further research helped identify the site as the Wilderspool Brewery, owned by Greenall Whitley. There is so much to see in this delightful image other than the quaint stand that I have included it even though, say it quietly, the winter game may well have been Rugby League.



Unidentified Grounds



Unfortunately not every card has sufficient detail to enable identification of the location.

Left: The publisher of this postcard was a photographer in Scarborough but sadly no further information is on the postcard. The stand is of a good size but I found nothing with a house positioned to one side in the locality.

Below Left: The boys of St. Paul's School in London are noted as being presented to Tommy Laughton, but important as he may be at the time why he was present at what must have been a cup final has not been recorded for posterity.

Below: A good crowd is gathered at a ground situated behind some terraced houses but the postcard has no information whatsoever to assist our efforts to identify where the match took place.



Miscellaneous Postcards

These postcards are also worthy of inclusion but the two to the right had no further information to aid identification.

Right: One of the more frustrating postcards as the stand, with an uncovered top deck, is most interesting. Nothing on the card gave any assistance in identifying the location.

Below Right: An interesting view of a set of bleachers, a most precarious way of watching a game. I cannot work out why it was printed as a postcard though.

Below: Mr Cribb of Portsmouth was again taking photographs at an important game, this time at a United Services Cup Final. Sadly the local newspapers did not report on a game on this day and the buildings in the background do not tie in with those around the United Services ground. Sadly other than being in the Portsmouth area the ground cannot be identified.



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