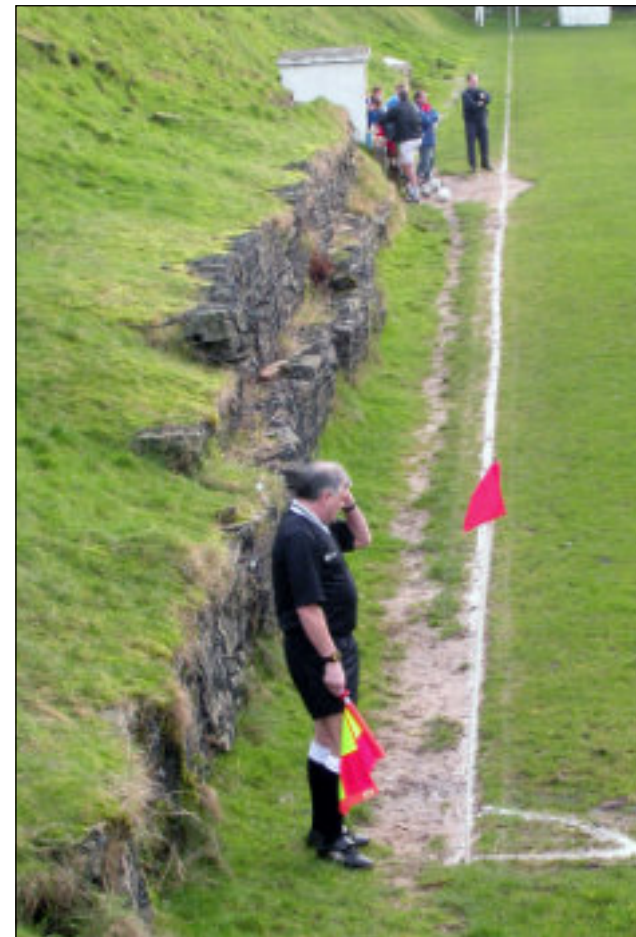


Nutty Turnout Wales

Archive images of football grounds in Wales

Mike Floate



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Mike Floate

Published by Newlands Photographic,
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Designed and edited by Mike Floate © Mike Floate 2024

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Left: 'No, he actually has named it *Nutty Turnout!*' (Garw in 2002)

Special thanks go to the Football Club History Database, www.fchd.info
Richard Rundle has an amazing website which has allowed me to check the names and historical dates of so many clubs over the years.

A big mention to Dave Collins and his *Welsh Football* magazine.
A labour of love if ever there was one, Dave deserves wider recognition for his contribution to the game in Wales. Arise Sir Dave!!

Dedicated to the memory of Mishi Morath, Dave West and Andy Hilburn, better known as The Duke of Lard. Three true groundhoppers who really appreciated my books and were always excellent company at matches.

Front Cover: Bangor City, Blaenau Ffestiniog Amateurs, Caerau Ely, (top, left to right)
Ynysybwl, Milford United, Llandrindod Wells (bottom, left to right).
Back Cover: Cardiff City (top), Pontardawe Town, RTB Ebbw Vale (centre),
Tonyrefail Welfare (lower)

This book is a delve into my archive of images taken at football grounds in Wales since 1994, the first images I took being just of the stands and larger features such as terraces. It didn't take long for me to see photographic potential in the backdrops and surroundings, sometimes valley locations with terraced houses but often with hills in the background. I soon realised that I was taking photos that I could not take elsewhere in the country. Football grounds in Wales are unlike any others.

My intention with going through my archives is to use as many images as possible in two books. This first volume shows the stands, terraces and other features at every ground I managed to visit. I make no comment or add any captions, leaving the photo to tell the story of what was to be seen as a snapshot of a moment in time for each ground. Whenever possible the setting of each ground is shown, many being photos I'm most pleased with. The images I'm especially proud of form the content for a second book, *Football Grounds Frenzy Wales*. The content of this book will focus on the impressive, the quirky and the visually interesting with composition, content and framing of utmost importance.



I pay attention to the backdrop in each photo in Dave Collins' amazing *Welsh Football* magazine to see what changes have taken place. Some grounds have seen alterations and development and

some of course no longer host football or have been sold for re-development. One regret I have is seeing the use of portable structures to satisfy ground grading requirements. So many of the covers in the book reflect the skills and ingenuity of club members in their own unique interpretation of what their community needs at their ground, often taking into consideration challenging locations. Maybe it is the decline of manufacturing industries and the availability of grants that sees few new home-built facilities nowadays. Photographers building an archive today will have nowhere near as much of interest to look back on in 2054 as I do now.

I moved to Swansea in 1972 from within walking distance of Crystal Palace's Selhurst Park. I thought nothing of the Vetch Field being even closer to home; I guess the teenage me thought everyone could walk to a League ground. My first game at the Vetch was a friendly against Manchester City, but earlier that day I was sat in the main stand as City's manager Malcolm Allison had invited fans in to watch his team train. The whole place looked interesting but at the time I'd only been to four other grounds so didn't know how special it was.

I was first aware of the club in their run to the FA Cup semi-final in 1963/64 but never imagined that their quirky home ground would come to mean so much to me.



The decade ahead for the Swans was the classic bottom-to-top journey, through an awful set of thugs under Harry Gregg and on to the gung-ho adventurous play of Harry Griffiths, sadly ignored when the rise under John Toshack is mentioned. The Vetch was rammed for the home League game of 1979-1980 on 19th August, the first for the club back in Division 2 since 1965 and for some reason I took my camera. I pretty soon found that it was hard to both watch and take photos, and that the lens I had was not up to the task. It was to be another ten years before I took a camera to a ground again.

The photos I took are now really interesting, but how I wish I'd turned to take one of the old double-decker stand. The image opposite shows the main stand but attention is drawn to the advert for the Moon Raker Lottery. This was the source of income paying for the excellent players bought by Toshack, but also the reason for the club's downfall and eventual drop back to the basement division. The images of the Swans attacking the old East Bank show how full the ground was with a 20,000 crowd inside. Also, I now see the classic talking-point of fans watching having climbed onto the floodlights.



I became more interested in local football having had a season ticket which also gave admission to Welsh League matches. The Saturday Evening

News Football Edition included news of local clubs, and at times short historical features were included and an article about Llanelli's unsuccessful applications to join the Football League led me to visit Stebonheath. The large stand, covered end terrace and enormous bank, cut into the hill on the opposite side, were impressive and all but unchanged since the 1930s. There was a sad air of dereliction but it was easy to imagine that an impressive League ground could have evolved here. If covered, the bank would have been the match of the North Bank at the Vetch. Llanelli Library have a battered photo from the club's League application and is one of just three in the book which I did not take myself (see page 37). I took some photos at Stebonheath in 1976 but over the years they have been lost. Luckily I was able to buy the aerial view below for publication before Aerofilms shut down.



For a while Swansea Reserves played at Skewen dog track, a venue which I often passed but never visited so again an aerial photo was worth buying. The only other non-League ground I was aware of was Tonyrefail Welfare, which I saw a number of times from the other side of the valley during visits to the town. I was able to see matches there more recently and visited a further couple of times to take ground photos. Sadly, I never visited Somerton Park with a camera, only as a spectator.

A move back to London in 1980 sparked my interest in non-League football as I found Selhurst Park much less enjoyable than the Vetch. With grounds like Dulwich Hamlet's Champion Hill and Bromley's Hayes Lane I lost interest in League football. I began taking photos of grounds as Tony Williams expanded from his Directory to include books covering grounds, and I started to send in action photos for his new monthly magazine.

1995 was a pivotal year as I turned 40 and also had the idea of publishing my own small book detailing the



grounds to be found in Kent. I also started working for the WJEC, the exam board in Wales, through my job teaching Design & Technology. The National Curriculum meant that every student had to take D&T

at GCSE and the pressure on exam boards to expand their teams to cover every school was enormous. I was most fortunate to be appointed as a Moderator which involved me visiting schools to match their marking to the WJEC standard. That first year I was working in and around Aberdare and spent a couple of evenings visiting grounds such as Tonyrefail Welfare, Ferndale and Blaenrhondda. Over the years I was sent all over Wales and England so the vast majority of the grounds included in this book were visited courtesy of the WJEC.

The work for the exam board was always in late May, usually the week after the FA Cup Final, so there was little opportunity to watch games. I did see two games over the years, a Cup Final at Ffostrasol and a Play-Off final in Cardiff. I forget why, but I was driving my 1973 VW Beetle one year and my 1972 campervan the other. It was too good a chance not to pose them both outside the Vetch. The resulting images now seem so far back in time, with barbed wire and broken bottles on top of the bleak walls outside the North Bank.

Through the book there are a number of grounds where matches are in progress, watched by crowds way above those that usually attend. These games were part of GroundhopUK's Welsh Groundhops, with multiple games played each day over a long weekend, grouped to give just a short drive between grounds. I usually went with my late friend Dave West whose advice to anyone taking ground photos was to get them of the ground empty or full. He always felt just an odd one or two people in an otherwise empty ground spoilt the shots. My preference has always been, whenever possible, to visit a ground when empty.

Whether with or without a crowd there is something special about many locations in Wales with the hills and scenery around the grounds often impressive and beautiful, or in other places bleak, but without fail always impressive. I try to present the grounds in their environment with the backdrops sometimes more important than what is within the ground, but giving an idea of how great it must be to watch football there.

Each image has the date taken in a bottom corner and whenever possible I have tried to show as much of each ground as possible with images composed and framed carefully to present interesting or impressive views. Many grounds have changed beyond recognition and a number no longer exist or host games. I have not captioned or commented, so the collection of images can act as a resource for readers to consult in order to understand developments or to see how a ground looked at a specific moment in time.

The title needs explaining. Non-League football is full of characters but few so colourful and charismatic as Mishi



Morath. Living near the Den, Mishi had joined his family in going to watch Millwall as a youngster but like many others in South London, he found his way to Champion Hill, home of Dulwich Hamlet.

Unlike my solitary visit to the ground, which was more worthy of hosting League football than many which have done so over the years, Mishi became a passionate supporter and enormously important to the club over the years. If you don't know of Mishi please look him up as he was truly a one-off and is greatly missed since his death in 2019. His *Grounds For Concern* blog is still online and his visit to my old club Crockerhill sums up both the ground and his own character so well and, if nothing else, read his description of Dulwich Hamlet.

Mishi could tell a good yarn, especially when returning from an away game. In the years before the club was as well-supported as it is today, only a handful of Hamlet fans would follow the team to away games but I recall an excited Mishi telling of a trip to Carshalton Athletic when a number of others joined Mishi at the game. He excitedly said 'there were loads there, it was a real Nutty Turnout!'. What better title could there be for this book, a trawl through the folders, files and negatives randomly collected and saved over thirty years?

Mishi never joined Dave and I on a Welsh Hop weekend

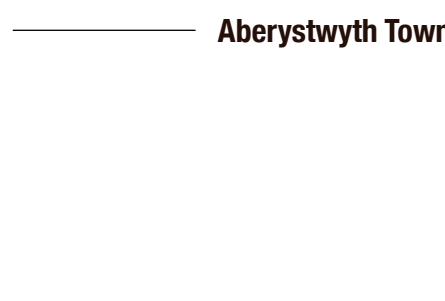
but I think he may have used his own phrase had he seen crowds of such a size gathering to watch games at some of the wonderful small venues hosting matches.





Abergavenny Thursdays

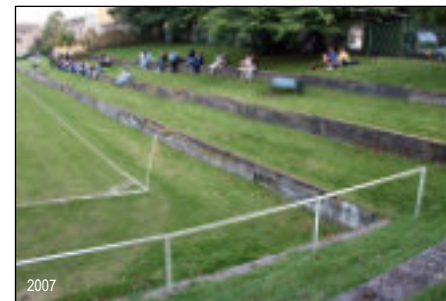








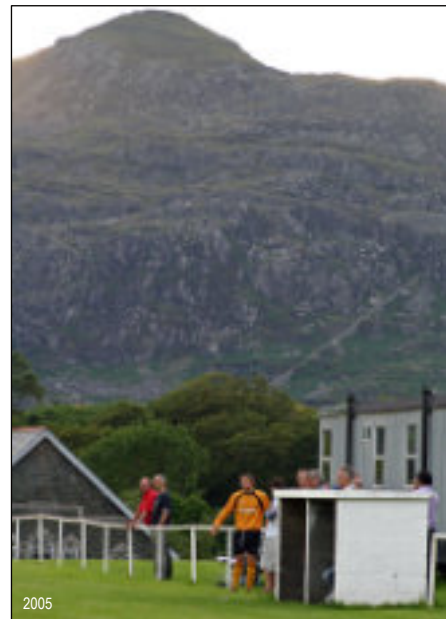
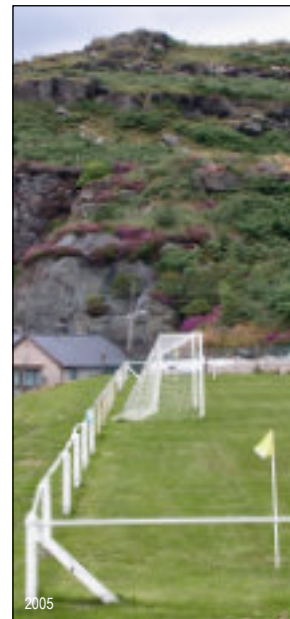
AFC Rhondda / AFC Porth





Bangor City





Blaenau Ffestiniog Amateurs



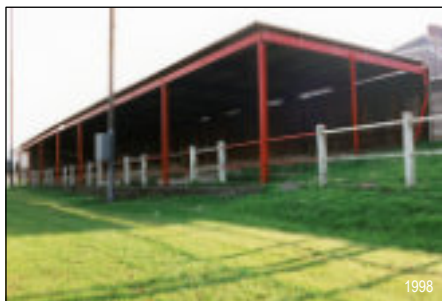


Blaenrhondda



Blaenrhondda





Caerau





Caersws

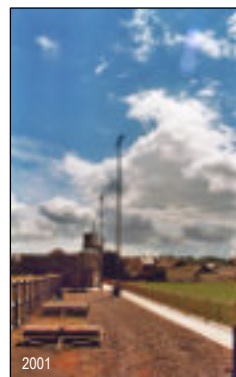


Caersws





Carmarthen Town





2005



2005



2005



2005



2005



2005



2005



2005



2005



2005



2005



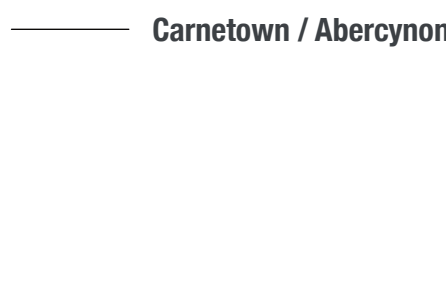
2005



2005



2005



2005

Carnetown / Abercynon



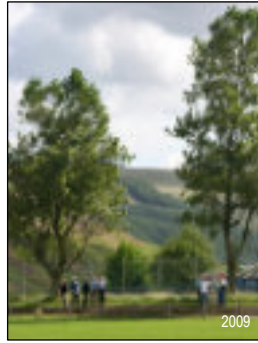
2005



2005



2005



Ferndale Boys Club





2007



2007



2007



2007



2007



2007



2007



2007



2007



2007



2007



2008



2007

Ffostrasol Wanderers



2007



Garw

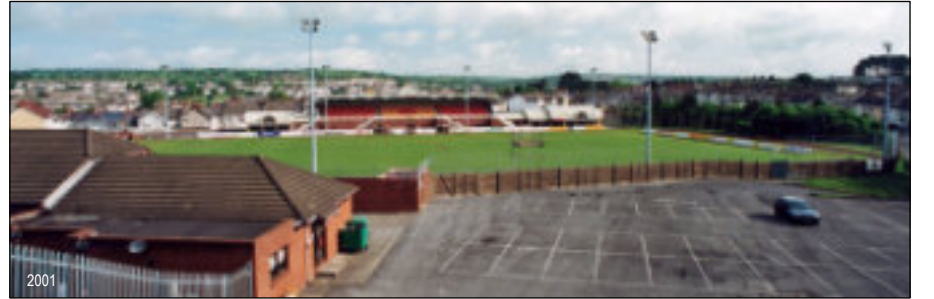


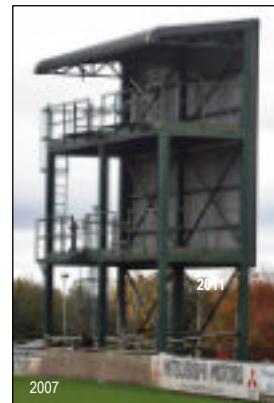
Guilsfield





Llanelli



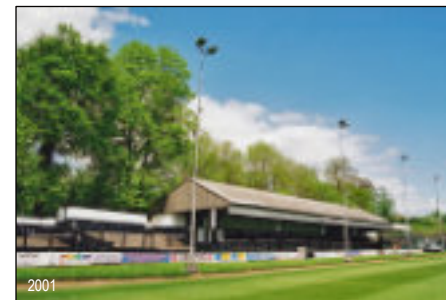


Llansantffraid Village





Merthyr Tydfil





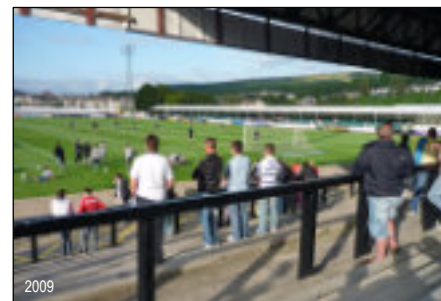


Mid Rhondda





BP Llandarcy / Neath





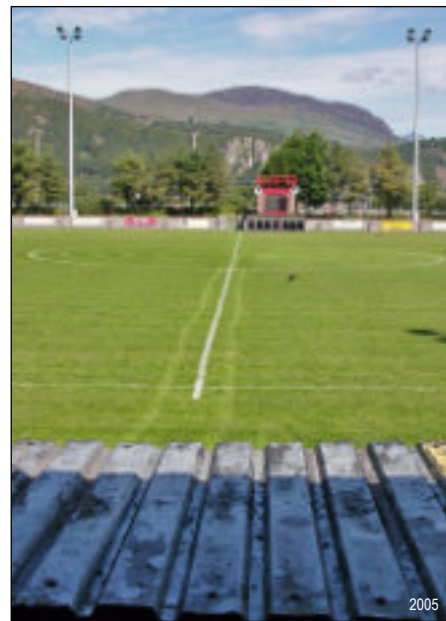
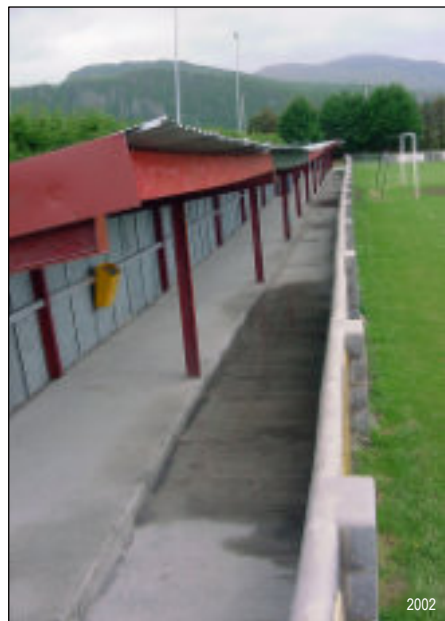
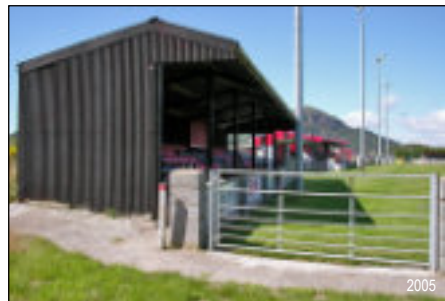
Newtown



Newtown







Porthmadog





Rhyll





Tonyrefail Welfare

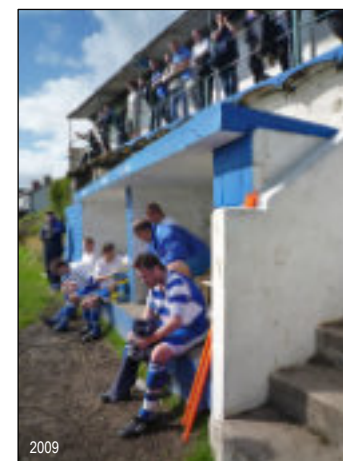
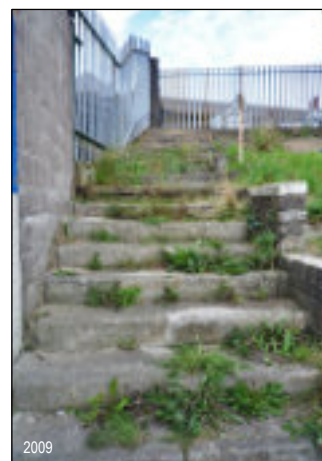
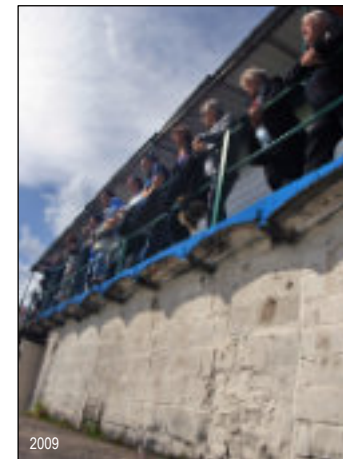
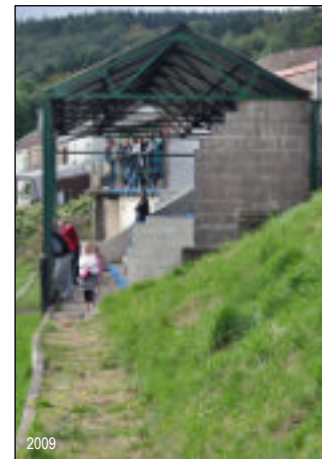
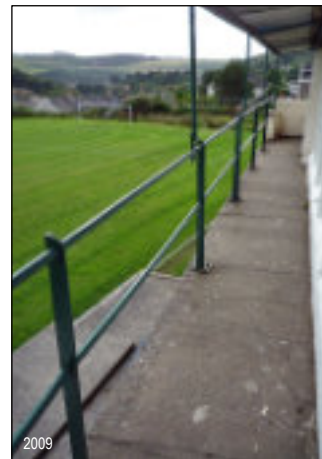






Treharris Athletic







Trelewis Welfare

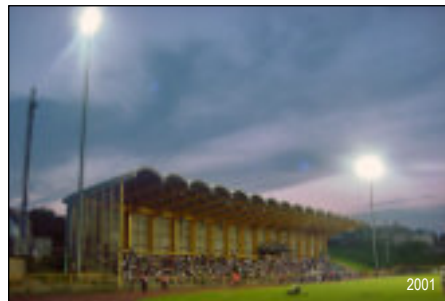


Aber Valley YMCA

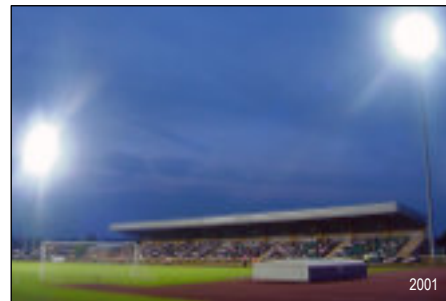


Abercwmboi





Barry Town



Borth United





Bow Street



Briton Ferry Athletic





Cambrian & Clydach Vale BC



Clydach Wasps





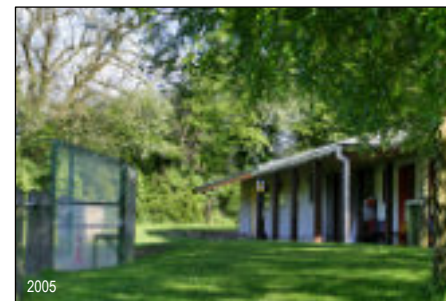
Colwyn Bay

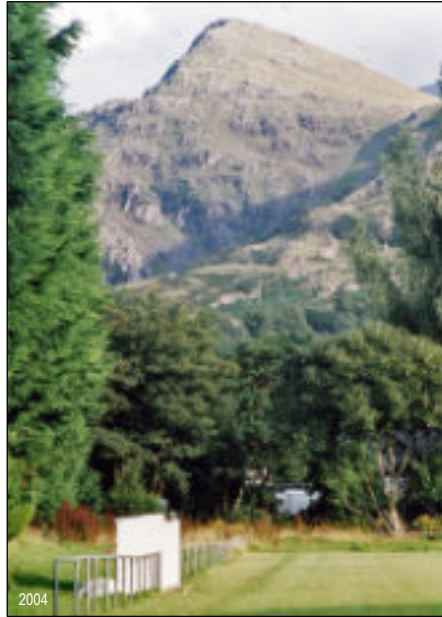


Ferndale Athletic



Gilfach Goch



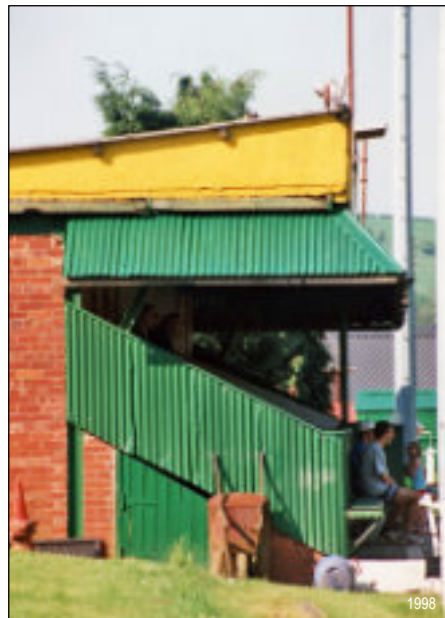


Holywell Town —



Llanberis





1998



1998



1998

Llanidloes Town



1998



1998



1998



2013



2004



2013

Llantwit Major



2004



2004



2004



2013



2004





Machynlleth



Newport AFC / Newport County





1996



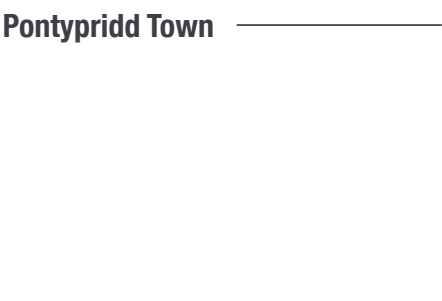
1996



2005



2005



2005



2005



2005



2005

Pontypridd Town



1998



1998



1998



1998



1998



1998

Seven Sisters



Skewen Athletic



The New Saints

Tredeggar Town



Trefelin BGC

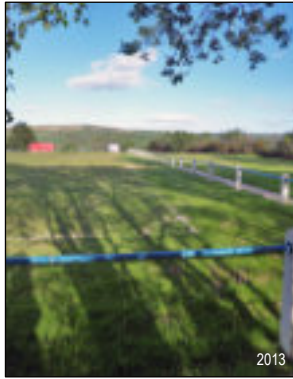




2013



2013



2013



2013



2013



2013



2013



2013

Treowen Stars



1998



2009



2009

Welshpool Town



2009



2009



2009



2009



Aberystwyth University —

Acrefair —

Aberbargoed Buds —

Aberaman —



Aberdyfi

Albion Rovers

Afan Lido





Ammanford _____ 

Bargoed _____ 

Barmouth & Dyffryn United - 

Bettws _____ 



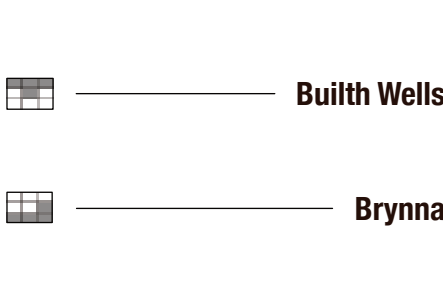
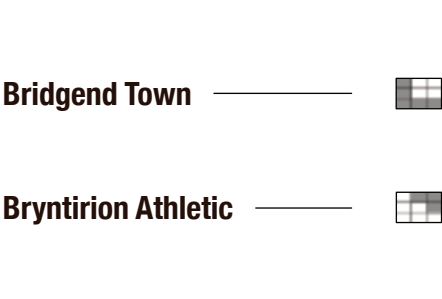
 — **British Steel (Port Talbot)**

 _____ **Bontnewydd**

 _____ **Brickfield Rangers**

 _____ **Brecon Corinthians**





Bridgend Town _____

Bryntirion Athletic _____

_____ **Builth Wells**

_____ **Brynna**

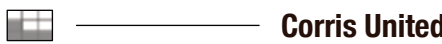
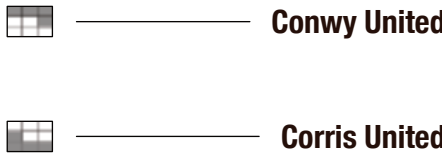
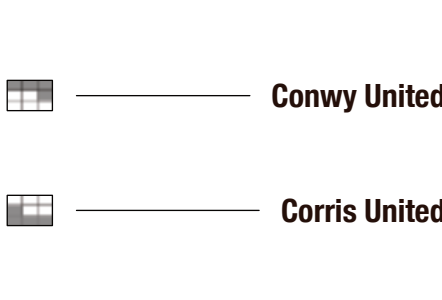
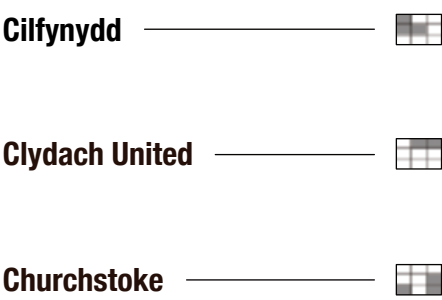


-  — **Cardiff Civil Service**
-  — **Caldicot Town**
-  - **Cardiff International Sports Stadium**
-  — **Chepstow Town**



- Cardiff Corinthians** — 
- Caerau Ely** — 
- Cardiff Grange Harlequins** — 
- Caerleon** — 







2011



2011

Corwen 

Cwmamman United 

Croesyceiliog 



2011



2005



2005



2007



2007



2005

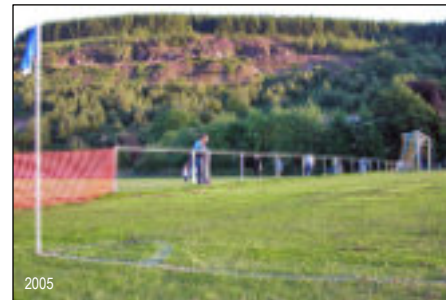


2001

 **Cwmbran Town**

 **Cwmaman Institute**

 **Dinas Powys**



2005



2005



1998



2005



2005



Ely Rangers



Ebbw Vale



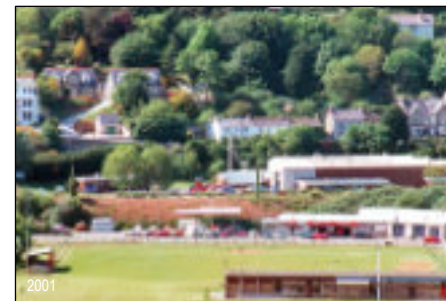
Dyffryn Banw



 — **Fields Park Pontllanfraith**

 — **Garden Village**

 — **Goodwick United**





2007



2007

Harlech Town



Goytre United



2000



2000



2000



2000



2000



2000



2007



1999



2000

Haverfordwest County

Gwynfi United

Inter Cardiff



1998



1998



1998



Kenfig Hill



Llandrindod Wells



Lex XI



Llandysul





Llanrug United



Llandudno



Llanharry



Llangynwyd Rangers



2002



2005



2005



2006



2007



2007



2007



Llangeinor



Llangollen Town



2003



2003



2010



2010



2010



2010



2010



AFC Llwydcoed _____ 

Maesteg Park _____ 

Llanwern _____ 

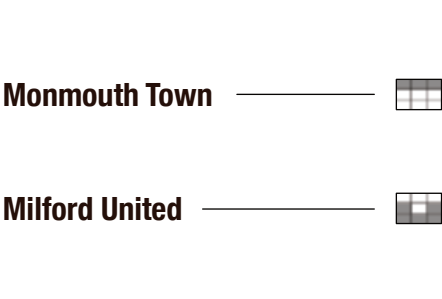


 _____ **Nantlle Vale**

 _____ **Maindy Stadium**

 _____ **Montgomery Town**





Merthyr Saints

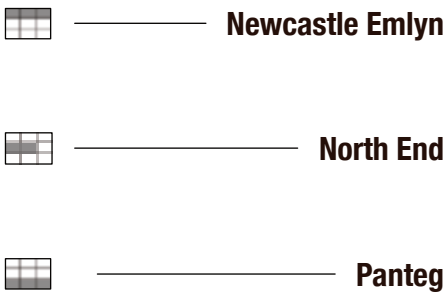


Morrison Town



Newport YMCA

New Quay

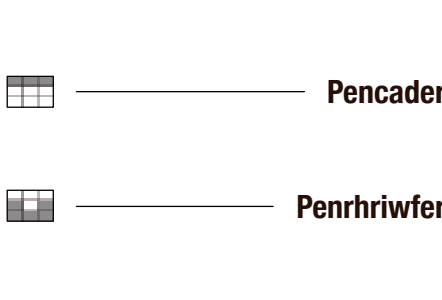




Pembroke Borough



Penmaenmawr Phoenix



Pencader

Penrhriwfer





Penrhiwceiber Rangers



Pentwyn Dynamos



Penrhyncoch



Penrhyndeudraeth





Pontyclun



Pontardawe Town



Port Talbot Town / Athletic



Penparcau





Porthcawl Town



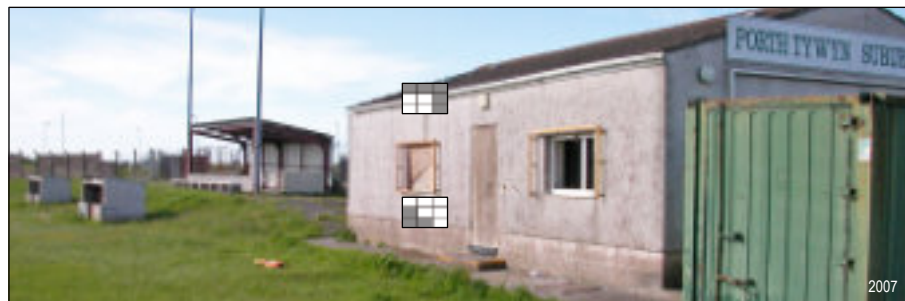
Penydarren BGC



Porth Tywyn Suburbs



2007



2007



1999



1999



2002



2002



2013



Prestatyn Town



Presteigne St. Andrews



2013



2013



1999



1999



Pwllheli _____ 

Rhymney _____ 

Rhayader Town _____ 



 _____ **RTB Ebbw Vale**

 _____ **Rhydyfelin**

 _____ **Risca United**



St Dogmaels



Taff's Well

Saron

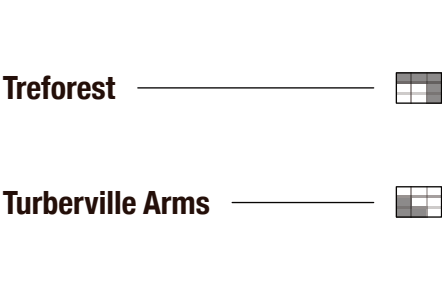


South Gower



South Wales Police





 Talysarn Celts

 Tondy Robins

 Sully





Ton Pentre



Tredomen



UWIC Inter Cardiff



Troedyrhiw



Tywyn & Bryncrug

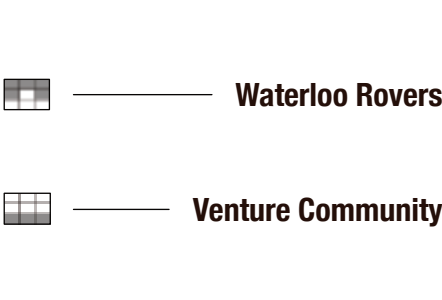




Ynysybwl _____ 

West End _____ 

Ystradgynlais _____ 



 _____ **Waterloo Rovers**

 _____ **Venture Community**





Swansea Town



Millennium Stadium





Cardiff City



Cardiff City



Cardiff City

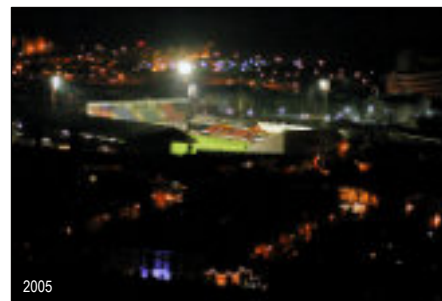
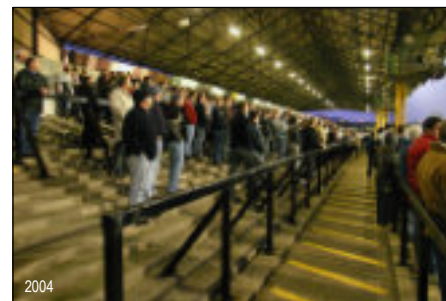
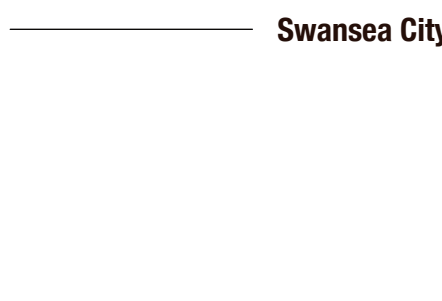
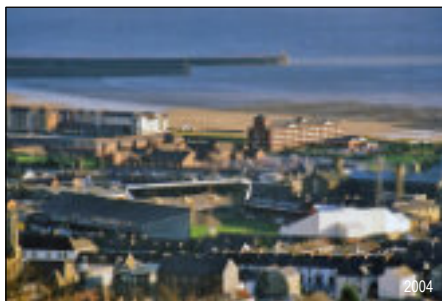


Wrexham



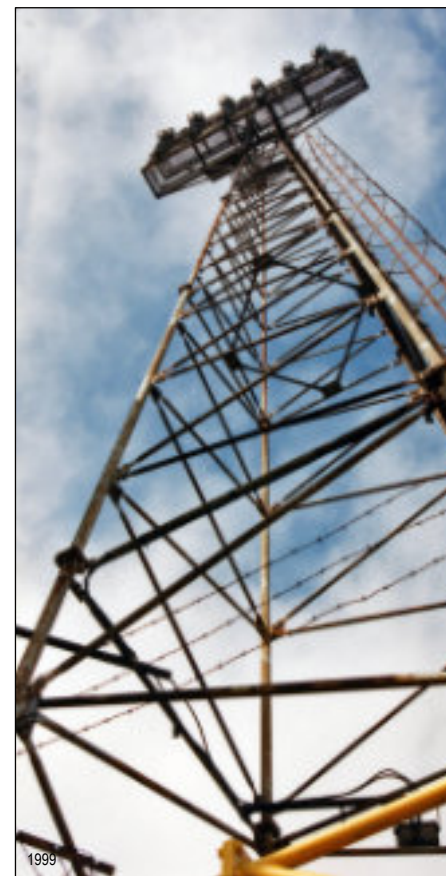
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