

Entertaining South Wales – An Encyclopaedia Introduction

The idea of compiling an Encyclopaedia of South Wales theatres derived from the publication of Ian Parson's "Swansea's Grand" – a comprehensive study of live performances in Swansea and District. Ian's book uncovered so much fascinating information for just this one area of South Wales, that it raised the thought: what about the rest of South Wales?

In its heyday the industrial South Wales valleys offered rich pickings for touring theatre shows and entertainers. As well as the "proper" theatres in the big centres like Cardiff, Swansea, Merthyr and the like, there was money to be made and employment to be obtained in a large number of portable, fit-up and temporary buildings as well as the growing number of workmen's halls throughout the region. And so the idea was born: why not make a list of ALL the entertainment venues, past and present, in the South Wales area?

Originally the idea was to restrict the listing to theatres, but the vast number of early cine-variety houses – where early films were shown in between variety acts – and the popularity of live shows at the workmen's halls suggested a wider range of venues should be included.

So, what follows is a listing of over 600 separate buildings: theatres, cinemas, halls and the like. There are many missing dates, many requests for further information, and doubtless a number of serious mistakes – but this is a start, no more than a work in progress.

Help wanted!

Hopefully enthusiasts and knowledgeable experts will send corrections, updates and comments to me at overthefootlights@gmail.com so that the errors can be corrected, and a more accurate encyclopaedia can be created before we all get too old to remember!

Vivyan Ellacott

Much of the information has been collated from individual recollections recorded in person or via the internet, with especial thanks to

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Principal websites consulted

arthurlloyd.co.uk
cinematreasures.org
cinemawales.homestead.com

theatrestrust.org.uk
Welsh Cinema Photo History (Facebook)
John Miles Pontardulais Photo collection

Principal Publications:

John Earl & Michael Sell – "Guide to British Theatres 1750-1950"
Rob Firman – "Theatres & Performance Buildings of South Wales"
Paul Howells – "The Rink – Pontycymmer"
A.J. Marriot – "Chaplin Stage by Stage"
Ian Parsons – "Swansea's Grand"
Cecil Price – "The English Theatre in Wales"
Cecil Price – "The Professional Theatre in Wales"
Beth Thomas – "Fleapits & Picture Palaces"
The Stage Newspaper

INDEX OF THEATRES & CINEMAS LISTED BY LOCATION

ABERAMAN

Miner's Public Hall & Institute
Grand Theatre / Poole's Palace

ABERCRAVE

Adelina Patti Theatre
Miners' Welfare Hall

ABERCWMBOI

Workmen's Hall

ABERCYNON

Workmen's Hall & Institute
Picture Palace / Super Cinema / Empire

ABERDARE

Hippodrome / New Theatre/ Palladium
Star Music Hall
Constitutional / Palace of Varieties/ Empire/ Pictorium
Little Theatre
Lyric Theatre
Playhouse
Coliseum, Trecynon
Canon Street Cinema
Park Cinema
Kosy Kinema
Rex

ABERFAN

Public Hall
Pitt's Palace/ Palace

ABERGAVENNY

Tithe Barn Theatre
Cymreigyddion Hall
Borough Theatre
Melville Theatre
Electric Picture Palace / Dooner's Palace
Park Hill Cinema
Coliseum / Dooner's Coliseum
Pavilion
Baker Street Cinema

ABERSYCHAN

Pitt's Palace / Empire

ABERTILLERY

Metropole
Pavilion
Palace Cinema
Empress Cinema
Gaiety
Scala / Studio

ABERTRIDWR

Workmen's Institute
Empire

AMMANFORD

Ivorites Hall
Poole's Pictorium
Hippodrome
New Theatre / Palace
Miners' Theatre & Welfare Hall

BARGOED

Dooner's Empire
New Hall Playhouse
Electric Palace / Cameo
Hanbury Cinema

BARRY

First Theatre Royal
Second Theatre Royal
Vint's Palace / Barry Dock Palace
Memorial Hall
Butlin's Empire
Court Cinema / Plaza / Regal
King's Hall/ Savoy / Electric Deluxe
Palace
Romilly Hall / Kinematograph
Tivoli

BEDLINO

Workmen's Hall & Institute
Picture Palace
Pavilion

BEDWAS

Workmen's Hall
Rialto Picture Palace
Pavilion Cinema

BLACKWOOD

Pavilion Theatre / Capitol
Miners' Institute
Little Theatre
Picture Palace/ Peoples' Bioscope
Oakdale Picture House / Workmen's Hall
Maxime

BLAENAVON

New Theatre Royal
Pitt's Palace Theatre
Workmen's Hall
Coliseum

BLAENGARW

Workmen's Hall
Blaengarw Cinema / Central Cinema

BLAINA

Public Hall
New Theatre / Theatre Royal
New Empire / Pitt's Picture Palace
Gaiety Cinema

BRECON

Royal Theatre
Guildhall / Town Hall Theatre
New Theatre
Theatr Brycheiniog
Coliseum Cinema
Palace
Electric Theatre

BRIDGEND

Town Hall
Drill Hall/ Electric / Pitt's Palace/ Palace
New Electric Cinema / County Cinema
Embassy / Ritz
Pavilion
Sony Theatre
Odeon

Recreation Centre
BRITON FERRY
Assembly Rooms
Palace Kinema (The Kin)
Picturedrome
Public Hall / People's Cinema / Institute
Lodge Cinema
BRYNAMMAN
Public Hall / Palace
Alpha Cinema
New Theatre
BRYNMAWR
First Market Hall
Second Market Hall / Market Hall Cinema
Litho Cinema
Gem Theatre
Cosy Cinema
BURRY PORT
Parish Hall
Adelphi
Coronation Hall
Burry Port Kinema
Twm's Cinema
CAERAU
Coliseum
Cosy Cinema
CAERPHILLY
Empire
Pitt's Picture Palace / Palace Music Hall
Memorial Hall, Newbridge
Workmen's Welfare Hall & Institute
Castle Cinema
Tonyfelin Hall
Caerphilly Castle
Double Diamond Club
CARDIFF
Theatre Royal
Victoria Music Hall
Philharmonic / Panopticon / Pavilion Picture Palace
New Theatre Royal / Playhouse / Prince of Wales
Grand Theatre/ King's Theatre / Palace & Hippodrome
Levino's Music Hall/ Empire/ Empire Palace / Gaumont
New Theatre
Capitol / Odeon Capitol
Sophia Gardens Pavilion
Chapter Arts Centre
Sherman Theatre
Mike Barlow YMCA Theatre
St David's Hall
Gate Arts Centre
Wales Millennium Centre
Richard Burton Theatre
Park Hall Cinerama
Stacey Hall Cinema
Andrews Hall / Olympia/ ABC / Cannon / MGM
Electric Theatre
Central Cinema
Electric / Imperial / New Imperial / Odeon
Queen's Cinema
Gaiety Cinema

Splott Cinema
Castle Picture Theatre
Coliseum / Canton Coliseum
Ninian Palace
Coronet Electric / Coronet
Canton Cinema
Rialto
Clifton Cinema
Globe Cinema
Tivoli
Plaza
Regent
Monico Cinema
County Cinema
Avenue Cinema
UCI Cinemas /Oden Atlantic Wharf
Showcase, Nantgarw
Cineworld
Vue, Cardiff

CARMARTHEN

Bridge Street Barn Theatre
King Street Theatre
Water Street Theatre
Assembly Rooms / Lyric
Vint's Electric Palace / Empire Theatre
Parry Theatre / Halliwell
Market Cinema
Picturedrome
Capitol Cinema
Apollo /Vue

CHEPSTOW

Pavilion Varieties / New Pavilion
Assembly Room & Market House/ Electric Picture House
Drill Hall
Palace Theatre
Gaumont / Regal

COWBRIDGE

Market Theatre
Royal Cinema
Empire Cinema
Pavilion

CRICKHOWELL

Clarence Hall
Picture House

CROSS HANDS

Public Hall

CRUMLIN

Pitt's Picture Palace / PaLACE Cinema
Coliseum
Empire Music Hall / Empire
Regal Theatre

CRYNANT

Memorial Hall

CWM

Dooner's Electric Picture Palace
Miners' Institute
Coliseum

CWMAMAN

Public Hall & Institute
Palace Cinema

CWMBRAN

Congress Theatre
Olympia Cinema
White Rose Cinema
Studio 1,2,3
Vue Multiplex

CWMFELINFACH

Nine Mile Point Workmen's Hall

CWMLLYNFELL

Palace Electric Theatre
Miners' Welfare Hall / Millennium Hall

DOWLAIS

Oddfellows' Hall
Palace Theatre / Palace Cinema
Victoria Electric Theatre / Victoria Cinema

EBBW VALE

Market Hall
Central Hall / Palace Theatre
Coronet Theatre
King's Theatre
Workmen's Hall / Grand Theatre/ Studio 1 & 2
Beaufort Cinema / Beaufort Theatre
White House Cinema
Dooner's Picture Palace / Electric Theatre
Empire
Plaza
Astoria
Leisure Centre

FELINFACH

Theatr Felinfach

FERNDALE

Assembly Rooms / Tudor Hall
Workmen's Hall / New Theatre
Palaseum
Rink, The

FISHGUARD

Temperance Hall / Theatr Gwaun

GARNANT

Cwmamman Workmen's Hall
Picturedrome

GILFACH GOCH

Central Hall
Workmen's Hall & Institute
Picturedrome / Palace
Globe

GORSEINON

Palace Theatre / Lido Cinema
Picturedrome / Electra Cinema
Community Hall / Brighton Hall
Canolfan Centre
La Charette

GWAUN CAE GURWEN

Public Hall
Workman's Hall / New Cinema / Waun Welfare Hall

HAVERFORDWEST

Town Hall
Masonic Hall
White's Palace / New Palace Cinema
Super Cinema / County Theatre
Merlin Theatre

HIRWAUN

Victoria Hall
New Victoria Hall / Palace Cinema
Palace Theatre

KENFIG HILL

Welfare Hall
Kenfig Cinema

KIDWELLY

Town Hall
Kidwelly Cinema

LLANBRADACH

Hippodrome / Pitt's Palace
Kinema / Empire
Workmen's Hall & Institute

LLANDYBIE

Pavilion
Miners' Welfare Institute / Memorial Hall

LLANELLI

Athenaeum Hall
Theatre Royal
Royal Exchange Music Hall
Royalty / Haggar's Hippodrome / Argos Hall
Swan Theatre Vaults
Vint's Electric Palace / Palace
Picturedrome
Haggar's Picture Palace
New Dock / Astoria
Playhouse / Llanelli Cinema
Regal
Odeon / Classic / Theatr Elli
Y Ffwrnes
Odeon Multiplex / East Gate

LLANHILLETH

Miners' Institute
Playhouse Theatre / Cinema
Palace

MAERDY

Workmen's Hall & Institute
Tudor Hall

MAESTEG

Town Hall Theatre
North's Miners Library & Institute
Dooner's Picture Palace / Cinema de Luxe
Gem Cinema / Gem Theatre
New Theatre
Nantyffyllon Playhouse / Ritz
Plaza Cinema / White Wheat Club
Regal

MERTHYR TYDFIL

Theatre
Playhouse Market Square
Temperance Hall / Scala
New Theatre Royal / Drill Hall
New Theatre / Levino's / Palace of Varieties / Park Theatre
Empire
Theatre Royal / Royal Empire
Cosy, Penydarren
Olympia / Picturedrome
Victoria Electric, Dowlais
Palace, Pontmorlais

Castle Cinema / ABC Super Cinema
Vue Cinema
Myfanwy Theatre
Old Town Hall Arts Centre
Theatr Soar

MILFORD HAVEN

Theatre
Masonic Hall
New Theatre
Stratford Hall
Empire
Astoria
Torch Theatre
Danter's Picture Palace
Wadbrook's Palace/ Royal Palace / Dooner's Electric Theatre
Haggar's Picture Palace
Hippodrome
Standard

MONMOUTH

Town Hall
Monk Street Theatre / Masonic Hall
Theatre Royal / Rinkeries / Palace/ Magic Lantern / Savoy Theatre
Rolls Hall
Picture Hall / Hippodrome
Nimbus Concert Hall
Blake Theatre

MOUNTAIN ASH

Mount Hall / First Workmen's Hall
Nixon's Public Hall / New Theatre / Workmen's Hall
Theatre Royal
Hippodrome
Pavilion
Palace / Haggar's Picture Palace
Empire

NANTYMOEL

Public Hall / Workmen's Hall / Berwyn Centre

NARBERTH

Victoria Hall
Victoria Cinema/ Queen's Hall
Grand Cinema
Oakwood Theme Park

NEATH

Gwyn Hall
Theatre Royal/ Vint's Palace
Hippodrome
Gnoll Hall
Little Theatre
Picture Palace, Skewen
Palace / Welfare Hall, Seven Sisters
Glyncorrwg Memorial Hall
Empire
Ritz, Skewen
Windsor

NELSON

Palace
Cosy Cinema

NEW TREDEGAR

Workingmen's Hall / Empire
Victory Cinema
Palace Theatre

Church Hall
NEWBRIDGE
Victoria Hall
Public Hall/ Grand Theatre
Palace
Empire
Welfare Hall / Memorial Hall
NEWCASTLE EMLYN
Cawdor Hall / Attic Theatre
Central Hall / Emlyn Hall
Castle Cinema
NEWPORT
Dock Street / First Theatre Royal
Town Hall
New Theatre Dock Street
Albert Hall / Drill Hall
Victoria Hall/ Royal Victoria / Lyceum
Alexandra Theatre
Evans Concert Hall
People's Concert Hall
Second Theatre Royal
Prince of Wales / Gaiety / New Theatre / Empire Palace
Star Music Hall
Little Theatre
Dolman Theatre
Riverfront Theatre
Coliseum / Studio 1 & 2 / Cannon
Gem Cinema
Olympia / ABC Olympia
Regal
Tredegar Hall
Capitol Cinema
Odeon
Maindee Cinema
ABC / Metro / City Cinema
Virgin / UCG / Cineworld
OGMORE VALE
Workman's Hall & Institute
Olympia Cinema
Hippodrome
Empire
PEMBROKE /PEMBROKE DOCK
Theatre
Priory
Town Hall
Market Hall
Temperance Hall/Pater Hall
Ord's Theatre
Queen's Theatre
Haggar's Cinema
Picture Palace / Bargar's Palace
Grand Cinema
Garrison Theatre/ Astra Cinema
PENARTH
Lyceum
Andrews Hall / Hippodrome
Pitt's Palace / Gem Palace
Picturedrome
Paget Rooms / Regal Cinema
Windsor Kinema

First Pier Pavilion
New Pier Pavilion
Washington Luxury Cinema

PENCLAWDD
Memorial Hall
Cinema

PENRHIWCEIBER
Workmen's Hall & Institute

PENTRE & TON PENTRE
Bailey's Arms Music Hall / Temple of Varieties
Gaiety Theatre
Drill Hall
Workmen's Institute / Phoenix Centre
Lyceum / Grand Theatre
Tivoli Music Hall
King's Cinema
Vint's Picturedrome / Pictorium / Empire Pictorium
Palace

PONTARDAWE
Pavilion
Rechabite Hall / Palace Theatre / Lyric
Theatre Cwmtawe
Public Hall/ Pontardawe Arts Centre

PONTARDULAIS
Public Hall / Workmen's Hall & Institute/ Opera House
Pavilion / Hagggar's Palace
White's Palace
Tivoli

PONTLOTTYN
Danter's Palace / Hagggar's Palace
Palace of Varieties / Cosy Cinema / State Cinema

PONTNEWYDD
Public Hall
New Theatre / Pitt's Picture Palace
Pavilion

PONTYATES
Welfare Hall
Pontyates Cinema

PONTYBEREM
Miners' Institute & Memorial Hall
Palace

PONTYCLUN
Pontyclun Cinema
Public Hall
Park Hall Cinema

PONTYCYMER
Public Hall / Hippodrome / Opera House
Rink / Hippodrome
Palace
Memorial Hall / New Theatre
Silver Cinema

PONTYGWAITH
Cinema Palace
Cozy Cinema

PONTYPOOL
First Theatre Royal
Fowler's Music Hall
Morgan's Full Moon Music Hall
Town Hall
Clarence Theatre

Hanbury Assembly Rooms / Theatre Royal
Pavilion / West's Pavilion
Drill Hall
Pitt's Picture Palace / Hippodrome / Royal
Crane Street Cinema
Park Cinema
Scala

PONTYPRIDD

Howard's Hall / Victoria Theatre
Town Hall Theatre
Royal Clarence / New Theatre / County
New Empire / Empire Palace
White Palace
Palladium
Great Western / New Cinema/ Regent
Gaiety Theatre, Beddau
Municipal Hall / Muni Arts Centre
Hippodrome
King's Hall / Cinema Palace
Park Cinema

PORTH

First Palace of Varieties / Star Varieties / Hippodrome
Town Hall / Poole's Theatre / Theatre Royal & Opera House
Palace of Varieties / Poole's Picture Palace
Grand Cinema
Empire
Poole's Pictorium
Central Cinema

PORTHCAWL

Assembly Rooms
First Pavilion
Cosy Corner / Arcadia / Cosy Theatre / Cozy Cinema
Dooner's Empire & Bioscope / Coliseum
Hippodrome / Winter Gardens Theatre
Casino
Grand Pavilion

PORT TALBOT & ABERAVON

Workmen's Hall / Taibach Palace / Picturedrome
Public Hall Aberavon
Assembly Rooms, Aberavon
Empire / New Theatre
Prince of Wales, Aberavon
People's Palace
Theatre Royal, Aberavon
Grand Theatre
Vint's Palace, Aberavon
Vint's Hippodrome / Empire Cinema
Picturedrome / Capitol
Afan Lido
Princess Royal Theatre
Public Hall Cinema
Ebley's / Olympic Cinema
Majestic / Odeon
Plaza Cinema
Regent, Taibach
Apollo / Reel Cinemas

RESOLVEN

Vivian Hall / Vivian Theatre
New Theatre
New Pavilion

Welfare Hall

RISCA

- Public Hall
- Central Cinema
- Globe / Empire / Hippodrome
- Palace Cinema
- Risca Leisure Centre

ST DONAT'S

- Arts Centre

SENGHENYDD

- Palace / Park Hall Cinema

SWANSEA

- Royal Pavilion
- Old Town Hall
- Swansea Theatre
- Theatre Royal
- Bustin's Concert Rooms
- Music Hall / Albert Hall
- Star Theatre / New Theatre/ New Theatre Royal/ Rialto Cinema
- Foxhole Music Hall
- Gloster Music Hall
- Corporation Music Hall
- Drill Hall / Prince of Wales Hall
- Fletcher's Music Hall
- Pavilion / Empire Palace / Palace Theatre
- Opera House / Picturedrome / Regal Morryston
- Grand Theatre
- Empire
- Llewellyn Hall
- Patti Pavilion
- Little Theatre Mumbles
- Brangwyn Hall
- Penyrheol Theatre
- Taliesin Theatre
- Dylan Thomas Theatre
- Townhill Theatre
- Tivoli, Cwmbwrla
- Tivoli, Gowerton
- Tivoli, Mumbles
- Gem, Morryston
- Olympic, Oxford Street
- Picture House, High Street
- Electric Cinema, Union Street
- Landore Cinema
- Castle Cinema
- Globe Theatre, Clydach
- Pictorium / Scala St Thomas
- Grove Picture House / Uplands Cinema
- Elysium Theatre / Elysium Cinema
- Carlton Cinema
- Tivoli, Pontardulais
- Manor, Manselton
- Dolphin Theatre, Clydach
- New Cinema / Regent / Casino Mumbles
- Welfare Hall / Welfare Cinema Fforestfach
- Plaza Cinema
- Tower Cinema, Townhill
- Maxime / Odeon Sketty
- Odeon Kingsway
- Studio Cinemas 1,2,3

Vue Cinema
TENBY
Theatre
New Theatre
Public Hall
Skating Rink & Varieties
Royal Assembly Rooms / Royal Playhouse
De Valence Pavilion
Super Cinema / Little Theatre
South Beach Pavilion
TONYPANDY
Town Hall / Theatre Royal / Royal Cinema
Hippodrome / Plaza
Empire
Judge's Hall
Picturedrome
TONYREFAIL
Picture Palace
Picture Theatre / New Cinema / Savoy
Meadow Vale Country Club
TREDEGAR
Hippodrome
Market Hall / Olympia
Palace of Varieties
Temperance Hall / Workmen's Hall
Queen's Cinema
Little Theatre
TREFOREST
New Cecil Cinema
TREHARRIS
Workmen's Hall / Palace Cinema
TREHERBERT
Public Hall / Opera House
Gaiety Theatre / Gaiety Cinema
Palace of Varieties / Picture Palace
TREORCHY
Parc and Dare Theatre
Abergorky Hall
Pavilion
New Theatre
TROEDYRHIW
Picture Palace
TUMBLE
Tivoli
Public Hall & Institute
TYLORSTOWN
Coliseum
Welfare Hall & Institute
WHITCHURCH
White Palace / Rialto
YNYSHIR
Workmen's Hall / Miners' Hall
Poole's Palace
YNYSYBWL
Workmen's Hall
YSTALYFERA
Coliseum
Public Hall / Central Hall / Central Theatre
Capitol Cinema
Playhouse

Palace Theatre
Empire Theatre

YSTRADGYNLAIS

Welfare Theatre / Super Cinema / The Welfare
The Cinema / Astoria

YSTRAD MYNACH

Penallta Workmen's Hall / Miners' Welfare
Palace Cinema & Variety Theatre