

## **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](mailto: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