

= Cardiff Arms Park =

Cardiff Arms Park ( Welsh : Parc yr Arfau Caerdydd ) , also known as The Arms Park and the BT Sport Cardiff Arms Park for sponsorship reasons from September 2014 , is situated in the centre of Cardiff , Wales . It is primarily known as a rugby union stadium , but it also has a bowling green . The Arms Park was host to the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in 1958 , and hosted four games in the 1991 Rugby World Cup , including the third @-@ place play @-@ off . The Arms Park also hosted the inaugural Heineken Cup final of 1995 ? 96 and the following year in 1996 ? 97 .

The history of the rugby ground begins with the first stands appearing for spectators in the ground in 1881 ? 1882 . Originally the Arms Park had a cricket ground to the north and a rugby union stadium to the south . By 1969 , the cricket ground had been demolished to make way for the present day rugby ground to the north and a second rugby stadium to the south , called the National Stadium . The National Stadium , which was used by Wales national rugby union team , was officially opened on 7 April 1984 , however in 1997 it was demolished to make way for the Millennium Stadium in 1999 , which hosted the 1999 Rugby World Cup and became the national stadium of Wales . The rugby ground has remained the home of the semi @-@ professional Cardiff RFC yet the professional Cardiff Blues regional rugby union team moved to the Cardiff City Stadium in 2009 , but returned three years later .

The site is owned by Cardiff Athletic Club and has been host to many sports , apart from rugby union and cricket ; they include athletics , association football , greyhound racing , tennis , British baseball and boxing . The site also has a bowling green to the north of the rugby ground , which is used by Cardiff Athletic Bowls Club , which is the bowls section of the Cardiff Athletic Club . The National Stadium also hosted many music concerts including Michael Jackson , David Bowie , Bon Jovi , The Rolling Stones and U2 .

= = History = =

= = = Early history of the site = = =

The Cardiff Arms Park site was originally called the Great Park , a swampy meadow behind the Cardiff Arms Hotel . The hotel was built by Sir Thomas Morgan , during the reign of Charles I. Cardiff Arms Park was named after this hotel . From 1803 , the Cardiff Arms Hotel and the Park had become the property of the Bute family . The Arms Park soon became a popular place for sporting events , and by 1848 , Cardiff Cricket Club was using the site for its cricket matches . However , by 1878 , Cardiff Arms Hotel had been demolished .

The 3rd Marquess of Bute stipulated that the ground could only be used for " recreational purposes " . At that time Cardiff Arms Park had a cricket ground to the north and a rugby union ground to the south . 1881 ? 2 saw the first stands for spectators ; they held 300 spectators and cost £ 50 . The architect was Archibald Leitch , famous for designing Ibrox Stadium and Old Trafford , amongst others . In 1890 , new standing areas were constructed along the entire length of the ground , with additional stands erected in 1896 .

= = = 1912 redevelopment = = =

By 1912 , the Cardiff Football Ground , as it was then known , had a new south stand and temporary stands on the north , east and west ends of the ground . The south stand was covered , while the north terrace was initially without a roof . The improvements were partly funded by the Welsh Rugby Union ( WRU ) . The opening ceremony took place on 5 October 1912 , with a match between Newport RFC and Cardiff RFC . The new ground was opened by Lord Ninian Crichton @-@ Stuart . This new development increased the ground capacity to 43 @,@ 000 and much improved the facilities at the ground compared to the earlier stands .

In 1922 John Crichton @-@ Stuart , 4th Marquess of Bute , had sold the entire site and it was

bought by the Cardiff Arms Park Company Limited for £ 30 @, @ 000 , it was then leased to the Cardiff Athletic Club ( cricket and rugby sections ) for 99 years at a cost of £ 200 per annum .

= = = North and South Stand redevelopments = = =

During 1934 the cricket pavilion had been demolished to make way for the new North Stand , which was built on the rugby union ground , costing around £ 20 @, @ 000 . However , in 1941 the new North Stand and part of the west terracing had been badly damaged in the Blitz by the Luftwaffe during the Second World War .

At a general meeting of the WRU in June 1953 , they made a decision , " That until such time as the facilities at Swansea were improved , all international matches be played at Cardiff " . At the same time , plans were made for a new South Stand , which was estimated to cost £ 60 @, @ 000 , however the tender price came out at £ 90 @, @ 000 , a compromise was made , and it was decided to build a new upper South Stand costing £ 64 @, @ 000 instead , with the Cardiff Athletic Club contributing £ 15 @, @ 000 and the remainder coming from the WRU . The new South Stand opened in 1956 , in time for the 1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games . This brought the overall capacity of the Arms Park up to 60 @, @ 000 , of which 12 @, @ 800 spectators were seated and the remainder standing .

The Arms Park hosted the 1958 British Empire and Commonwealth Games , which was used for the athletics events , but this event caused damage to the drainage system , so much so , that other rugby unions ( England , Scotland and Ireland ) complained after the Games about the state of the pitch . On 4 December 1960 , due to torrential rain , the River Taff burst its banks with the Arms Park pitch being left under 4 feet ( 1 @. @ 2 m ) of water . The Development Committee was set up to resolve these issues on a permanent basis . They looked at various sites in Cardiff , but they all proved to be unsatisfactory . They also could not agree a solution with the Cardiff Athletic Club , so they purchased about 80 acres ( 320 @, @ 000 m<sup>2</sup> ) of land at Island Farm in Bridgend , which was previously used as a prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camp . It is best known for being the camp where the biggest escape attempt was made by German prisoners of war in Great Britain during the Second World War . Due to problems including transport issues Glamorgan County Council never gave outline planning permission for the proposals and by June 1964 the scheme was abandoned . At that stage , the cricket ground to the north was still being used by Glamorgan County Cricket Club , and the rugby union ground to the south was used by the national Wales team and Cardiff RFC .

By 7 October 1966 , the first floodlit game was held at Cardiff Arms Park , a game in which Cardiff RFC beat the Barbarians by 12 points to 8 .

= = = National Stadium redevelopment = = =

The National Stadium , which was also known as the Welsh National Rugby Ground , was designed by Osborne V Webb & Partners and built by G A Williamson & Associates of Porthcawl and Andrew Scott & Company of Port Talbot .

After agreement from the Cardiff Athletic Club , the freehold of the south ground was transferred solely to the WRU in July 1968 . Work could then begin on the new National Stadium . Glamorgan County Cricket Club would move to Sophia Gardens and the cricket ground to the north would be demolished and a new rugby union stadium built for Cardiff RFC , who would move out of the south ground , allowing the National Stadium to be built , for the sole use of the national rugby union team .

On 17 October 1970 , the new North Stand and the Cardiff RFC ground was completed , the North Stand cost just over £ 1 million . The West Stand was opened in 1977 and the new East Terrace was completed by March 1980 . By the time the final South Stand had been completed and the Stadium officially opened on 7 April 1984 , the South Stand had cost £ 4 @. @ 5 million . At the start of the project , the total cost was estimated at £ 2 @. @ 25 million , although by time it was finished in 1984 , it had risen by nearly four times that amount .

Both stadia had approximately east @-@ west alignment : the rugby ground to the north ( Castle

Street ) end ; the National Stadium to the south ( Wood Street ) end . The original capacity was 65 @, @ 000 but this had to be reduced in later years to 53 @, @ 000 for safety reasons . 11 @, @ 000 of these were on the East Terrace and the conversion to all @-@ seater stadium would have reduced the stadium capacity still further to 47 @, @ 500 . This capacity would have been much less than Twickenham and the other major rugby venues and also less than the demand for tickets to major events .

A world record crowd of 56 @, @ 000 for a rugby union club match watched Llanelli RFC beat Neath RFC by 28 points to 13 points in the final of the Schweppes Cup ( WRU Challenge Cup ) on 7 May 1988 . The first evening game to be played under floodlights was held on 4 September 1991 at 8 @. @ 00 pm , between Wales and France . The last international match to be held at the National Stadium was between Wales and England on 15 March 1997 , and the last ever match that was held at the National Stadium was on 26 April 1997 between Cardiff and Swansea , Cardiff won the SWALEC Cup ( WRU Challenge Cup ) by 33 points to 26 points .

= = = Millennium Stadium = = =

In 1997 , just thirteen years after the National Stadium had opened , it was considered too small and did not have the facilities required of the time and it was demolished and a new stadium , the Millennium Stadium , was built in its place ( completed to a north @-@ south alignment and opened in June 1999 ) . This would become the fourth redevelopment of the Cardiff Arms Park site . Although the Millennium Stadium is on roughly two thirds of the National Stadium , Cardiff Arms Park site , it is currently no longer using the Arms Park name . The official website confuses the issue as well , one part states that " The Millennium Stadium is located on Westgate Street in Cardiff ; next to the Cardiff Arms Park " . whereas another section specifically refers to the stadium as " The Millennium Stadium , on the Cardiff Arms Park "

= = = Proposed redevelopment = = =

An agreement in principle was reached in December 2015 between the landlord of the stadium site ( Cardiff Athletic Club ) and its tenant ( Cardiff Blues ) to give the club a 150 @-@ year lease on the stadium site . This could see the redevelopment of the Arms Park , including a new 15 @, @ 000 seater stadium at 90 degrees to the existing stadium costing between £ 20 million and £ 30 million and surrounded by new offices and apartments .

More detailed negotiations will begin with a final approval expected early in 2016 . If the final agreement goes ahead , Cardiff Athletic Club would receive an upfront payment of approximately £ 8 million . As part of the agreement , the bowls section would have to vacate its current site at the Arms Park and move to a new facility . At present Cardiff Blues pay Cardiff Athletic Club rent of around £ 115 @, @ 000 per annum , however this would nearly double to around £ 200 @, @ 000 .

= = Rugby ground = =

Only the rugby ground and the Cardiff Athletic Bowls Club now use the name Cardiff Arms Park . The rugby ground has two main stands , the North Stand and the South Stand . Both the Stands have terracing below seating . The other stands in the ground are the Westgate Street end ( currently known as the Coastal Cottages Family Stand ) , which has rows of seating below executive boxes , plus the club shop , and the River Taff end ( the Barry Nelves Suite , named after Barry Nelves , the former Cardiff RFC captain ) , which has 26 executive boxes . The rugby ground has two main entrances , the south entrance , and the Gwyn Nicholls Memorial Gates ( Angel Hotel entrance ) , which was unveiled on 26 December 1949 in honour of the Welsh international rugby player Gwyn Nicholls . The Cardiff Athletic Clubhouse is situated in the corner of the ground between the South Stand and the Westgate Street end .

The South Stand of the rugby ground formed a complete unit with the North Stand of the National Stadium . Now the same structure of the South Stand of the rugby ground is also physically

attached to the North Stand of the Millennium Stadium . This section is known colloquially as Glanmor 's Gap , after Glanmor Griffiths , former chair and President of the WRU . This came about because the WRU were unable to secure enough funding to include the North Stand in the Millennium Stadium , and the National Lottery Commission would not provide any additional funds to be used for the construction of a new ground for Cardiff RFC . The Millennium Stadium was therefore built with the old reinforced concrete structure of the National Stadium ( North Stand ) and the new steel Millennium Stadium structure built around it .

There was doubt about the future of the Arms Park after 2010 following the move of the Cardiff Blues to the Cardiff City Stadium . Cardiff RFC Ltd , the company that runs Cardiff Blues and Cardiff RFC , still has a 15 @-@ year lease on the Arms Park , but talks are underway to release the rugby club from the terms of the lease , to enable the Millennium Stadium to be redeveloped with a new North Stand and adjoining convention centre . However , it still has the original requirement on the lease , that the land will only be used for " recreational purposes " , as stipulated by the Bute family . But the Arms Park site is a prime piece of real estate in the centre of Cardiff , which means that it may be difficult to sell the land to property developers . The estimated value of the whole Arms Park site could be at least £ 25 million , although with the " recreational use " requirement , its actual value could be a lot less than that figure . A decision by Cardiff Athletic Club on the future of the Arms Park has yet to be made . In 2011 , the Cardiff Blues regional rugby union team made a £ 6 million bid for the Arms Park , later the WRU made an increased bid of £ 10 million for the site . Both bids were rejected by the trustees of the Cardiff Athletic Club . However , in 2012 Cardiff Blues announced that they would be making a permanent return to Cardiff Arms Park following declining attendances at the Cardiff City Stadium . In the 2013 off @-@ season , the pitch at the Arms Park will be replaced with an artificial FieldTurf surface in time for the start of the 2013 ? 14 season . This change is intended to prevent any adverse weather conditions from affecting the rugby .

= = Bowling green = =

Cardiff Arms Park is best known as a rugby union stadium , but Cardiff Athletic Bowls Club ( CABC ) was established in 1923 , and ever since then , the club has used the Arms Park as its bowling green . The bowls club is a section of the Cardiff Athletic Club and shares many of the facilities of the Cardiff Arms Park athletics centre .

The Les Spence Memorial Gates were erected in memory of the former Cardiff RFU player , who captained the team in 1936 @-@ 37 . He was born in 1907 and became chairman of the Cardiff RFU and president of the WRU between 1973 and 1974 . He was awarded an MBE and died in 1988 .

The Club has produced two Welsh international bowlers ; Mr. C Standfast in 1937 and Mr. B Hawkins who represented Wales in the 1982 World Pairs and captained Wales in 1982 and 1984 .

= = Usage = =

= = Association football = = =

The Riverside Football Club , founded in 1899 , played some matches at the Arms Park until 1910 , when they moved to Ninian Park , and later became Cardiff City Football Club .

On 31 May 1989 , Wales played its first international game against West Germany at the National Stadium in a World Cup qualifying match , which ended goalless . It was also the first ever international football match held in Great Britain that was watched by all @-@ seater spectators .

The adjoining Cardiff Rugby Club ground has also been used for Association Football . In July 1995 , Ton Pentre played two Intertoto Cup games there , against Heerenveen ( Netherlands ) and Uniao Leiria ( Portugal ) as their own ground was not suitable . The Heerenveen game - the first ever soccer match to be played there - kicked off at 6pm on Saturday 1 July 1995 and resulted in the Dutch side winning 7 @-@ 0 . The Wales U @-@ 21 team have also played a home game there in

the late 1990s .

### == = Athletics = = =

In 1958 , the British Empire and Commonwealth Games were held in Cardiff . The event was ( to date ) the biggest sporting event ever held in Wales ; however , it would not have been possible without the financial support given by the WRU and the Cardiff Athletic Club . Both the opening and closing ceremonies took place at Cardiff Arms Park , plus all the track and field events , on what had been the greyhound track . It would turn out to be the last time that South Africa would participate in the Games until 1994 . South Africa withdrew from the Commonwealth Games in 1961 .

### == = Baseball & British baseball = = =

Baseball was established early on in Cardiff , and one of the earliest of games to be held at the Arms Park was on 18 May 1918 . It was a charity match in aid of the Prisoner of War Fund between Welsh and American teams of the U.S. Beaufort & U.S. Jupiter . British baseball matches have also regularly taken place at the Arms Park and hosted the annual England versus Wales international game every four years . The games are now usually held at Roath Park .

### == = Boxing = = =

The first boxing contest held at the Arms Park was on 24 January 1914 , when Bombadier Billy Wells beat Gaston Pigot by a knockout in the first round of a 20 round contest . Boxing contests were held later on 14 June 1943 , 12 August 1944 , 4 October 1951 and 10 September 1952 .

Around 25 @, @ 000 spectators watched international boxing on 1 October 1993 , at the National Stadium with a World Boxing Council ( WBC ) Heavyweight title bout between Lennox Lewis and Frank Bruno . It was the first time that two British @-@ born boxers had fought for the world heavyweight title . Lewis beat Bruno by a technical knockout in the 7th round , in what was called the " Battle of Britain " . On 30 September 1995 , Steve Robinson the World Boxing Organization ( WBO ) World Featherweight Champion , lost against Prince Naseem Hamed at the rugby ground in 8 rounds .

### == = Cricket = = =

In 1819 Cardiff Cricket Club was formed , by 1848 they had moved to their new home at the Arms Park . Glamorgan Cricket Club , at the time not a first @-@ class county , played their first match at Cardiff Arms Park in June 1869 , against Monmouthshire Cricket Club . They played their first @-@ ever County Championship match there in 1921 , competing there every season ( except while first @-@ class cricket was suspended during the Second World War ) , their last match being against Somerset County Cricket Club in August 1966 . Cardiff Cricket Club played their final game at the ground against Lydney Cricket Club on 17 September 1966 . Both Cardiff Cricket Club and Glamorgan then moved to a new ground at Sophia Gardens on the opposite bank of the River Taff to the Arms Park , following work on the creation of a national rugby stadium , later named the National Stadium .

The first first @-@ class cricket match actually to be held on the ground was between West of England and East of England , on 20 June 1910 . In all more than 240 first @-@ class cricket matches were played at Cardiff Arms Park .

Only one List A game was ever played at the ground , and this was only the second match of its type : Glamorgan 's Gillette Cup fixture against Somerset on 22 May 1963 . Except for the aforementioned 1910 game , the only major match not to involve Glamorgan was a Test Trial in July 1932 , which was badly affected by the weather and saw play on only one of the scheduled three days .

== Greyhound racing ==

To help pay for the upkeep of the site , a greyhound track was built in 1927 . The first meeting was held on 7 April 1928 . The Arms Park ( Cardiff ) Greyhound Racing Company Limited signed a 50 @-@ year lease in 1937 , with Cardiff Athletic Club ? the owners of the Arms Park ? having no rights to break the agreement or to review the rental until 50 years expired . A neighbouring track , the White City closed in 1939 and the Welsh Greyhound Derby was transferred to the Arms Park from White City , Cardiff in 1945 . This was one of the three races that formed the triple crown along with the English Greyhound Derby and Scottish Greyhound Derby . The track continued to host the race annually . In 1958 the entire surface required relaying after the Commonwealth Games had finished . In 1971 the Welsh Greyhound Derby was given ' classic ' status . In 1977 the Cardiff City Council announced that a revamp of the Arms Park site would not include greyhound racing . The Welsh Rugby Union required the Arms Park track to extend terracing at the National Stadium . The last Welsh Greyhound Derby was on 9 July and the last meeting was held on 30 July . 1 @, @ 128 greyhound fans saw Lillyput Queen , owned by Cardiff butcher Malcolm Davies and trained by Freddie Goodman , win the last race . Cardiff City Council had taken less than ten minutes to reject a plan to switch greyhound racing to nearby Maindy Stadium .

== Rugby union ==

In 1876 , the Cardiff RFC was formed and soon after they also used the park . On 12 April 1884 , the first international match was played at the ground between Wales and Ireland , when 5 @, @ 000 people watched Wales beat Ireland by two tries and a drop goal to nil .

The Arms Park rugby ground became the permanent home of the Wales national rugby union team in 1964 . Later , the National Stadium was also home to the WRU Challenge Cup from 1972 until the match held at the Stadium on 26 April 1997 , at a much reduced capacity , between Cardiff RFC and Swansea RFC . Cardiff RFC won the match 33 ? 26 .

The National Stadium is best known as the venue for what is considered to be " the greatest try ever scored " by Gareth Edwards for the Barbarians against New Zealand in what is also called " the greatest match ever played " on 27 January 1973 . The final result was a win for the Barbarians . The score , 23 ? 11 , which translates to 27 ? 13 in today 's scoring system .

The scorers were :

Barbarians : Tries : Gareth Edwards , Fergus Slattery , John Bevan , J P R Williams ; Conversions : Phil Bennett ( 2 ) ; Penalty : Phil Bennett .

All Blacks : Tries : Grant Batty ( 2 ) ; Penalty : Joseph Karam .

The National Stadium hosted four games in the 1991 Rugby World Cup , including the third @-@ place play @-@ off . The National Stadium was also host to the inaugural Heineken Cup final of 1995 ? 96 when Toulouse beat Cardiff RFC by 21 ? 18 after extra time , in front of 21 @, @ 800 spectators . The following final in 1996 ? 97 was also held at the National Stadium , this time it was between Brive and Leicester Tigers . Brive won the match 28 ? 9 , in front of a crowd of 41 @, @ 664 .

In 2008 , the rugby ground hosted all the games in Pool A of the 2008 IRB Junior World Championship and also the semi @-@ final on 18 June 2008 , in which England beat South Africa 26 ? 18 .

Until February 2012 , it had been assumed that the last professional rugby union game to take place at the Arms Park was on 17 May 2009 , when Edinburgh beat the Cardiff Blues 36 ? 14 in a Celtic League match during the 2008 ? 09 season .

However , on Tuesday , 7 February 2012 , it was confirmed that Cardiff Blues would face Connacht at the Arms Park on Friday , 10 February 2012 . The Pro12 League game result was a win for the Cardiff Blues 22 ? 15 and attendance of 8 @, @ 000 . The following Tuesday , it was announced that the match against Ulster on Friday , 17 February , would also be at the Arms Park , resulting in a Blues win , 21 ? 14 and attendance of 8 @, @ 600 . The agreement signed during 2009 tied Cardiff Blues to a 20 @-@ year contract to play a maximum of 18 games per season for a set fee , rather

than per match at Cardiff City Stadium . But on 23 February , it was announced that the two Welsh ' derbies ' against the Scarlets and the Ospreys would be played at Cardiff City Stadium , rather than the Arms Park , because of Cardiff Blues ' anticipation that the attendance figures would far exceed the maximum capacity of 9 @, @ 000 . On 8 May 2012 , it was announced that Cardiff Blues would be returning to the Arms Park on a permanent basis after just three years at the Cardiff City Stadium .

On 23 May 2014 , the rugby ground hosted the final of the 2013 ? 14 Amlin Challenge Cup in which Northampton Saints beat Bath 30 @-@ 16 .

= = = Rugby league = = =

South Wales Scorpions played a Rugby League Championship 1 match against London Skolars at Cardiff Arms Park on Sunday , 27 July 2014 and on Sunday 10 May 2015 at Cardiff Arms Park , South Wales Scorpions took on North Wales Crusaders . The 2015 European Cup match between France and Wales was held at Cardiff Arms Park on Friday , 30 October 2015 at 18 : 30 GMT .

The highest attendance for a rugby league game at the Arms Park was recorded on 8 June 1996 during the first Super League season when 6 @, @ 708 saw St Helens defeat the Sheffield Eagles 43 @-@ 32 . The St Helens team at the time contained Welsh players Anthony Sullivan , Karle Hammond and Keiron Cunningham .

= = = Rugby league test matches = = =

List of rugby league test matches played at Cardiff Arms Park .

= = = Tennis = = =

Tennis courts were laid out in the Arms Park for Cardiff Tennis Club until the club moved to Sophia Gardens in 1967 . In 2003 , the club amalgamated with Lisvane Tennis Club to form Lisvane ( CAC ) Tennis Club , which is still a section of Cardiff Athletic Club ( CAC ) .

= = Music concerts = =

Major music concerts were also held at the National Stadium from 1987 until 1996 , they included Tina Turner , U2 , Michael Jackson , The Rolling Stones , Dire Straits , Bon Jovi and R.E.M. The last music concert was held on 14 July 1996 . Jehovah 's Witnesses held their annual conventions at the National Stadium .

= = Singing tradition = =

The National Stadium was known primarily as the venue for massed voices singing such hymns as " Cwm Rhondda " , " Calon Lân " , " Men of Harlech " and " Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau " ( " Land of my Fathers " ? the national anthem of Wales ) . The legendary atmosphere including singing of the crowd was said to be worth at least a try or a goal to the home nation . This tradition of singing has now passed on to the Millennium Stadium .

The Arms Park has its own choir , called the Cardiff Arms Park Male Choir . It was formed in 1966 as the Cardiff Athletic Club Male Voice Choir , and today performs internationally with a schedule of concerts and tours . In 2000 , the choir changed their name to become the Cardiff Arms Park Male Choir .