

= Ibrox Stadium =

Ibrox Stadium is a football stadium located on the south side of the River Clyde in the Ibrox district of Glasgow . The home of Rangers F.C. , Ibrox is one of the largest football stadiums in the UK , and the third largest football stadium in Scotland , having an all @-@ seated capacity of 50 @,@ 947 .

It was opened as Ibrox Park in 1899 , but suffered a disaster in 1902 when a wooden terrace collapsed . Vast earthen terraces were built in its place , while a main stand , which is now a listed building , was built in 1928 . A British record crowd of 118 @,@ 567 gathered in January 1939 for a league match with Celtic . After the Ibrox disaster of 1971 , the stadium was largely rebuilt . The vast bowl @-@ shaped terracing was removed and replaced by three rectangular , all @-@ seated stands by 1981 . After renovations were completed in 1997 , the ground was renamed Ibrox Stadium .

Ibrox has also hosted the Scotland national football team , particularly when the national stadium Hampden Park was redeveloped in the 1990s . Ibrox also hosted three Scottish domestic cup finals in the same period . It has also been the venue for concerts by major performers , including Frank Sinatra .

= = History = =

Rangers played its first match in May 1872 , on Glasgow Green . The club then played home matches on public pitches across Glasgow , first moving to a regular home ground at Burnbank in 1875 . A year later , Rangers played at the Clydesdale cricket ground in Kinning Park . This ground was improved to give a capacity of 7 @,@ 000 , but it was not owned by Rangers . After hints by the landlords that they wished to develop the site , Rangers left in February 1887 . The club shared Cathkin Park with Third Lanark for the remainder of the 1886 ? 87 season .

Rangers first moved to the Ibrox area later in 1887 , playing on a site immediately to the east of the current stadium . The first match at this stadium was an 8 ? 1 defeat to English side Preston North End on 20 August 1887 , watched by a capacity crowd of over 15 @,@ 000 . This inaugural match had to be abandoned after 70 minutes due to a pitch invasion . The first Ibrox Park was a success in the short term , as three Scotland international matches and the 1890 Scottish Cup Final were played at the ground . Celtic Park , built in 1892 , was more advanced , however . Rangers opted to construct a new stadium , raising funds by forming a limited company . The last match at the old ground was played on 9 December 1899 . The new Ibrox Park was formally opened with a 3 ? 1 victory over Hearts on 30 December .

= = Ibrox Park = =

Ibrox Park , as it was known between 1899 and 1997 , is almost completely different from the Ibrox Stadium of today . It followed the model of most Scottish stadiums of the time , comprising an oval track around the pitch , with a pavilion and one stand along one side . The ground had a capacity of 40 @,@ 000 . Celtic Park , Ibrox and Hampden Park all competed with each other to host Scottish Cup Finals and Scotland matches , one of which could generate up to £ 1 @,@ 000 in revenue for the host club . To aid their chances of gaining that revenue , Rangers constructed a large terracing , holding 36 @,@ 000 people , behind the western goalmouth . The terracing , designed by Archibald Leitch , was formed by wooden planks bolted onto a framework made of iron . A similar wooden terracing was constructed at the eastern end , giving a total capacity of 75 @,@ 000 .

The structure was passed by the Govan Burgh Surveyor in March 1902 , but there were newspaper reports that it was unstable . A crowd of 68 @,@ 114 assembled for a Scotland v England match on 5 April 1902 , but shortly after the kick @-@ off one section of the terracing " collapsed like a trap door " . A gap of 20 square yards appeared , causing about 125 people to fall to the ground 50 feet below the terracing . Most survived due to the fact they fell on top of other bodies , but 25 people were killed . 517 people were injured , some due to being crushed in the panic caused by the

collapse .

Most people in the stadium were unaware that the (first) Ibrox disaster had happened . People even re @-@ occupied the damaged area , despite the danger of further collapse . A definite reason for the disaster was not agreed upon , partly because there was no public inquiry held . Some experts blamed the quality of wood and the supplier was tried for culpable homicide , but was acquitted . The design was also cited as a possible cause . Generally , wooden structures of that size were not trusted . Rangers removed the wooden terraces , reducing capacity to 25 @,@ 000 . The criticism of the design did not deter Rangers from hiring Leitch in the future . He designed an expansion of Ibrox to a 63 @,@ 000 capacity by 1910 , using slopes made of earth . By this point , the city of Glasgow had the three largest purpose @-@ built football grounds in the world .

The next major redevelopment occurred in 1928 , after Rangers had won their first double . A new Main Stand , to the south side of the ground , was opened on 1 January 1929 . The Main Stand , which has the familiar Leitch style criss @-@ cross balcony and a red @-@ brick facade , seated 10 @,@ 000 people and provided standing accommodation in an enclosure . Simon Inglis , a writer on football stadia , commented in 2005 that the Main Stand is Leitch 's " greatest work " and is " still resplendent today in its red brick glory under a modern mantle of glass and steel " . The architectural significance of the Main Stand was reflected when it became a Category B listed building in 1987 . Original seats in the Main Stand were made of cast iron and oak . When one was auctioned in 2011 , it raised a sale price of £ 1 @,@ 080 .

The banking of the terracing continued to increase in the 1930s . On 2 January 1939 , the Old Firm game against Celtic attracted a crowd of 118 @,@ 567 , the record attendance for any league match played in Britain . At this point , Ibrox was the second @-@ largest stadium in Britain . Floodlights were first used at Ibrox in December 1953 , for a friendly match against Arsenal . The first floodlit Scottish league match was played at Ibrox , in March 1956 . Covers were built over the north and east terracing during the 1960s . No structural changes were made to Ibrox , but capacity was cut to approximately 80 @,@ 000 by safety legislation .

Ibrox Park had the worst fan safety record in Britain before its complete redesign and renaming in 1997 . Two fans died in September 1961 when a barrier collapsed on Stairway 13 , resulting in a crush . Stairway 13 was a popular , often overcrowded , and very steep exit from the East Terracing due to its proximity to Copland Road subway station and parking areas for the Rangers supporters ' coaches . After this incident , Rangers installed safety measures , but further injuries were sustained in crushes on Stairway 13 in both 1967 and 1969 . On 23 October 1968 , the main stand at Ibrox was hit by fire . Just seven months later there was another fire , which destroyed more than 200 seats behind the directors box . The worst disaster to yet affect football in Britain happened on Stairway 13 after the Old Firm game on 2 January 1971 , when 66 people died of asphyxiation due to another crush on Stairway 13 . The game itself ended in a 1 ? 1 draw , with Colin Stein scoring a late equalising goal for Rangers . This led to a widespread belief that the crush had been caused by fans who had left the game early , but had turned back when they heard the roar that greeted the Rangers goal . A public inquiry discounted this initial story . It established that the crowd had been travelling in the same direction when the crush happened , with it perhaps being precipitated by some bending over to pick up items that had been discarded during the goal celebrations . The downward force of the crowd leaving the stadium meant that when people started to fall there was no means of preventing a crush .

The inquiry and subsequent compensation cases found that Rangers had been inept in their administration and complacent after the incidents in the 1960s . The disaster also highlighted , however , the fact that there were no established safety standards that should be adhered to , let alone any means of enforcing such standards . This had been first recommended nearly 50 years earlier , after the 1923 FA Cup Final . The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds was published in 1973 , and legislation was enacted with the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 . This law cut the capacity of Ibrox to 65 @,@ 000 . In the short term , Rangers took the stopgap measure of installing benches in the North Stand , which was renamed the Centenary Stand .

= = = Ibrox Stadium = = =

The 1971 Ibrox disaster led to the club developing a modern , safe stadium . Willie Waddell visited modern grounds in West Germany during the 1974 World Cup and believed that steep terracing and exits , such as Stairway 13 , had to be replaced . The cut in capacity and boardroom changes led to radical plans by architects Miller Partnership , which were published in November 1977 . The plans were modelled on the Westfalenstadion , home ground of Borussia Dortmund . They involved a radical reshaping of the stadium , with the old bowl @-@ shaped terracing to be replaced by three new all @-@ seated structures . Only the old Main Stand would remain , with its enclosure providing the only standing room in the ground .

Although later events , such as the Hillsborough disaster and the subsequent Taylor Report , vindicated this plan , Rangers were taking a significant risk . The whole plan was estimated to cost £ 6 million , which no other club could have afforded in a short period of time . The development was funded by the Rangers football pools operation , which was the largest club @-@ based scheme in Britain . The first phase of the plan , which began in 1978 , was the removal of the east terracing and its replacement with the Copland Road stand . The same process was repeated on the west side of the ground a year later , with the two identical stands each holding 7 @, @ 500 seats . The redevelopment was completed in 1981 with the replacement of the Centenary Stand by the 10 @, @ 300 capacity Govan Stand .

The new Ibrox had a capacity of 44 @, @ 000 and was opened with an Old Firm game played on 19 September 1981 . By this time , however , the development cost had risen to £ 10 million , which depleted the club financially . This resulted in a difficult period in the history of Rangers , as the average attendance fell to 17 @, @ 500 in the 1981 ? 82 season , including a crowd of only 4 @, @ 500 for a game against St Mirren . The redeveloped stadium was partly blamed for this , as some fans felt that the new ground lacked atmosphere due to the spaces between the stands . This was during a period of low attendances in Scottish football in general . Despite the relatively low attendance at Ibrox , Rangers had the highest average home attendances in the Premier Division in both 1983 ? 84 and 1984 ? 85 .

This all changed when a new regime , chaired by David Holmes , took control of Rangers in 1986 . Graeme Souness was appointed player ? manager , while several English stars , including Terry Butcher and Chris Woods , were signed . Season ticket sales rose from 7 @, @ 000 in 1986 to over 30 @, @ 000 in the 1990s , while commercial income increased from £ 239 @, @ 000 in 1986 to over £ 2 million in 1989 . The introduction of computerised ticketing , zonal public address systems and closed @-@ circuit television for monitoring turnstile areas meant that Ibrox was at the forefront of stadium management . Rangers also adopted the American technique of analysing the types of fans in each area of the stadium and adjusted their food stalls accordingly . Greater success on the pitch meant that Ibrox demonstrated that seated stadiums would be welcomed by most fans , if designed and fitted well .

David Murray acquired control of Rangers in November 1988 . Argyle House , a £ 4 million extension behind the Govan Stand , was opened in 1990 . This added executive boxes , office space and hospitality suites . A further series of developments was started in the early 1990s to increase capacity to over 50 @, @ 000 . Murray commissioned architect Gareth Hutchison to find a way of adding a third tier to the Main Stand . This was a highly complex process , as the Main Stand facade had become a listed building and Murray wanted the existing structure to remain open during construction . The contractors removed the original roof and added a temporary cover while the work carried on above . The Club Deck , which cost approximately £ 20 million , was opened with a league match against Dundee United in December 1991 . The redevelopment of the Main Stand was partially financed by a Football Trust grant of £ 2 million and a debenture issue that raised £ 8 @. @ 5 million . Ordinary fans bought debentures for between £ 1 @, @ 000 and £ 1 @, @ 650 each , which guaranteed the right to buy season tickets for at least 30 years , along with some other minor benefits .

Four columns were built through the existing Main Stand to support the Club Deck , which resulted in approximately 1 @, @ 000 seats having a restricted view . After opening the Club Deck , Ibrox had a capacity of 44 @, @ 500 . When a new playing surface was installed in 1992 , Rangers were able

to add a further 1 @, @ 300 seats to the front of three stands by lowering the pitch slightly . The only standing area of the ground , the enclosure of the Main Stand , was seated in 1994 to comply with the Taylor Report and UEFA regulations . The multi @-@ coloured seats were replaced in 1995 with uniform blue seats . A further 1 @, @ 200 seats was added in this process by reconfiguring passageways , giving a total capacity of 47 @, @ 998 .

The two spaces between the Govan , Copland and Broomloan Stands were filled in with seats and Jumbotron screens . The ground was officially renamed Ibrox Stadium after renovations were completed in 1997 , when Ibrox had a capacity of just over 50 @, @ 000 . Three rows of seating were added to the front of the Govan Stand upper tier in 2006 , linked to a new ' Bar 72 ' area , increasing the capacity to its present figure of 50 @, @ 947 . The Main Stand was renamed the Bill Struth Main Stand in September 2006 , to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his death . The Jumbotron screens were replaced in 2011 .

Rangers became insolvent in February 2012 and was unable to reach a company voluntary arrangement with its creditors , principally HM Revenue and Customs . Ibrox Stadium , along with the business and other assets of Rangers , was sold in June 2012 to a new company run by Charles Green . The new company obtained the SFA membership of the old Rangers FC company and gained entry to the Scottish Football League Third Division .

On 16 July 2014 the club paid a lasting tribute to Sandy Jardine by renaming the Govan Stand in his honour .

= = Structure and facilities = =

The Ibrox pitch is surrounded by four covered all @-@ seater stands , officially known as the Bill Struth Main (south) , Broomloan Road (west) , Sandy Jardine (north) and Copland Road (east) Stands . Each stand has two tiers , with the exception of the Bill Struth Main Stand , which has had three tiers since the Club Deck was added in 1991 . The two corner areas , known as the West and East areas of the Sandy Jardine Stand , have one tier of seating below a JumboTron screen .

The Bill Struth Main Stand , formerly known as the Main Stand , faces onto Edmiston Drive (A8 road) . The red @-@ brick facade , designed by Archibald Leitch , is a Category B listed building . Simon Inglis , writing in 1996 , described it as an " imposing red @-@ brick facade , with its mock neo @-@ classical arched , square and pedimented windows , exudes prestige and power . " On each end wall the club crest is depicted in a blue and gold mosaic . Stairtowers leading to the Club Deck (third tier) stand at each end of the Main Stand . These towers are also framed in red @-@ brick , but deliberately contrast with the main body of the stand . The two stairtowers also support a 146 @-@ metre (479 ft) long and 540 @-@ tonne (530 @-@ long @-@ ton ; 600 @-@ short @-@ ton) truss , which claimed to be the longest and heaviest clear span girder in the world .

Through the main doors of the Main Stand is a wood @-@ panelled hallway . A staircase leads to the boardroom and trophy room . Inglis compared Ibrox to Highbury , in that it combined corporate power with a sense of tradition and solidity . It was originally constructed as a 10 @, @ 000 @-@ seat stand above a standing enclosure . It was redeveloped in the early 1990s with the addition of the Club Deck and seating in the enclosure . It is now a three @-@ tier all @-@ seated structure , accommodating approximately 21 @, @ 000 spectators . The front wall of the middle tier is one of the last surviving examples of the Leitch style of criss @-@ cross detailing . The middle tier is split into front and rear sections , while the enclosure is split into east and west sections , either side of the retractable tunnel cover .

Opposite the Bill Struth Main Stand is the Sandy Jardine Stand formerly known as the Govan Stand . It is a two @-@ tier stand , similar in style to the two end stands , which was completed in 1981 . To the rear of the Govan Stand is the Argyle House extension , completed in 1990 , which provides executive boxes , hospitality areas and office space . The Bar 72 area was added to the rear section of the Govan Stand in 2006 . The Copland Road Stand , at the east end of the stadium , was completed in 1979 and now accommodates just over 8 @, @ 000 fans . It is traditionally the ' Rangers end ' of the ground and the team normally chooses to attack that end in the second half of matches . The western Broomloan Road Stand , which was completed in 1980 , is identical to the

opposite end . Although constructed as separate structures , the three stands have been linked since the mid @-@ 1990s , when two additional areas of seating were added to the corner areas . All of the stands are designed using the ' goalpost ' structure , in which a large portal frame supports perpendicular beams on which roof cladding is secured . A Rangers Megastore is located in the corner between the Copland Road and Govan Stands .

Away fans are normally accommodated in the corner of the ground between the Broomloan and Govan Stands . For bigger games , such as the Old Firm derbies , the whole of the Broomloan Stand can be used by the away support . Ibrox is seen as being an intimidating ground for visiting supporters . Rangers banned Celtic fans in 1994 from attending games at Ibrox , citing the damage caused to the Broomloan Stand by the visitors in previous derbies . The ban was lifted after one game , as the Scottish Football League passed a resolution preventing clubs from taking that action . Before the corners were filled in , away fans were accommodated in the lower tier of the Broomloan Stand . Rangers had to take action in 1996 to prevent their fans in the upper deck from throwing items at visitors .

= = Future developments = =

Since the redevelopments to Celtic Park and Hampden Park were completed in the late 1990s , Ibrox has had the smallest capacity of the three major stadiums in Glasgow . Rangers have since explored options to increase capacity . After opening the Bar 72 area in 2006 , chief executive Martin Bain said that the scheme could be replicated in the Copland Stand . A report in the Daily Record in April 2007 claimed that Rangers were planning to increase capacity to 57 @,@ 000 , principally by removing the JumboTron screens and lowering the pitch to accommodate more seating . These plans were said to be dependent for finance upon improved performance by the team . In January 2008 , Rangers announced that they were investigating three options to further develop Ibrox . One of the proposals would have resulted in a capacity of 70 @,@ 000 , by replacing three of the stands with a bowl @-@ type structure . These plans were shelved by October 2008 , however , due to the late @-@ 2000s financial crisis .

Alongside changes to the stadium itself , Rangers have also sought to develop land around Ibrox . In partnership with the Las Vegas Sands corporation , the club received outline planning permission from Glasgow City Council for the development of land adjoining Ibrox as the home of a super casino . The casino was planned to be accompanied by a Rangers @-@ themed leisure complex . Britain 's Casino Advisory Panel reviewed bids from eight short @-@ listed cities , including Glasgow , and in 2007 awarded the first licence to Manchester . There is no immediate prospect of the Ibrox proposal being resurrected , as Gordon Brown dropped the plans for super casinos soon after becoming Prime Minister . Rangers were given approval by Glasgow City Council in October 2008 to purchase land around Ibrox and redevelop the area with hotel and retail outlets . This scheme stalled , however , as regulations constrained what could be built in the area .

= = Other uses = =

= = = Football = = =

Ibrox has been a home venue for the Scotland national football team 18 times , the third most of any ground . The first Ibrox Park (1887 ? 99) hosted three internationals , giving an overall Ibrox total of 21 . The ground most recently hosted a Scotland game in October 2014 , when Hampden Park was unavailable due to its temporary conversion to hold athletics in the 2014 Commonwealth Games . Ibrox hosted several internationals during the 1990s , particularly when Hampden was being redeveloped . Hampden was redeveloped in two phases . Ibrox hosted four Scotland games in the first phase , starting with a 1994 World Cup qualifier against Portugal in October 1992 . It was not a happy interlude for Scotland fans , however , as the team failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1970 . Although the attendances at Ibrox were higher than at Hampden , some

fans resented the fact that they were helping the finances of Rangers . Fans also complained that the ticket prices were too high . During the second period of redevelopment , however , Scotland won an important 1998 World Cup qualifier against Sweden at Ibrox .

During these periods of redevelopment to Hampden , Ibrox also hosted the 1997 Scottish Cup Final and the 1994 and 1997 Scottish League Cup Finals . Ibrox was on the approved UEFA list to host major European finals in the 1990s , but it lost out in a bid to host the 1996 UEFA Cup Winners ' Cup Final because a convention threatened a shortage of hotel rooms in Glasgow . Ibrox continues to hold the top UEFA rating , but the Scottish Football Association put forward the redeveloped Hampden for European finals in the 2000s .

== Non @-@ football ==

King George V visited Ibrox Park in 1917 , to thank Rangers for its efforts in the First World War . His son , King George VI , opened the 1938 Empire Exhibition with a speech at Ibrox . This was used as source material by Colin Firth for his performance in The King 's Speech movie . Ibrox has been used for concerts , including performances by Simple Minds (1986 x2) , Frank Sinatra (1990) , Rod Stewart (1995) , Elton John and Billy Joel (1998) .

In June 1980 , Ibrox hosted a world championship boxing match between Jim Watt and Howard Davis . Ibrox hosted the rugby sevens event at the 2014 Commonwealth Games , won by South Africa . There was a total attendance of 171 @,@ 000 for the four sessions of play , which set a new record for a rugby sevens tournament .

The stadium has also hosted the 1983 Centenary Celebrations of The Boys ' Brigade .

== Transport ==

The main railway stations in Glasgow , Central and Queen Street , are both approximately two miles from Ibrox . The Ibrox and Cessnock stations on the Glasgow Subway both serve Ibrox . It is also served by First Glasgow buses on Paisley Road West . Ibrox sits near to the M8 motorway , with junction 23 being the closest exit , but the roads around Ibrox become congested on matchdays .