

Colwyn Bay CIVIC SOCIETY

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The last journal featured an architect, Mr. Bowen, who practiced in Colwyn Bay in the 1930s and 1940s. Mr. Bowen initially lived with his parents in Woodhill Road; An architect of the next generation, who by coincidence also for a time lived in Woodhill Road and set up his practice here and worked in the 1950s and 1960s, was Brian Hallwood Lingard.

A curious piece of information is that today the man who owns Llys Elen on Whitehall Road, Rhos-on-Sea (pictured in the last journal) and designed by Mr. Bowen, also owns a house in Dolwyddelan,(SHIKARI)(designed by Mr. Lingard.

BRIAN HALLWOOD LINGARD DA(Manc) FRIBA.

Brian Lingard studied architecture in Manchester but had to interrupt his studies to join the Royal Navy during the 2nd World War. His demobilization from the Navy was prioritized because he was able to show that he was able to assist with the drive for new housing made necessary after the destruction of so much property by the Germans. He was sponsored in this endeavour by a friend of his father, Mr. William George. After a few months with Mr. George's firm he went on to achieve his Associateship of the R. I. B. A. and married his fiancée Dorothy both in 1949. Sadly Dorothy died in January 2006 after fifty seven years of devoted marriage as a good companion.

Mr. Lingard then took a job with Anglesey County Council at £480 per annum but discovered, like many other people before him, that working in a bureaucratic environment can be soul destroying. He then set up his own private practice on the Island on the High Street in Llangefni.

In 1955 the Lingard family, Brian, his wife Dorothy and two small sons Chris and Tim (and in the course of time a daughter Rebecca as well) moved to Colwyn Bay. 50 years later Chris is now an environmental Consultant, Tim is an Architectural Historian and Rebecca is a Theatrical Artist and Designer.

Their home, Glenroyd, number 37, on the corner of Woodhill Road and Coed Pella Road, still looks impressive as I am sure it did in the 1950s. It was from this address that Mr. Lingard began to run his business. Eventually he privately moved to Haigh Lea, a large house in its own extensive grounds at the top of Eberston Road West. The same building which

became in later years the regional office of the Midland Bank and was demolished last year and was featured in the February 2005 edition of this Journal.

On the evening of November 5th he and his family would host Bon Fire Night at Haigh Lea; some years, on this evening, they would go to the home of their friends Stan and Peg Fraser, Gwyndy (White House) on Llanelian Road.

He moved his office from Glenroyd to the Odeon Buildings on Conwy Road where now the Swm-y-Mor flats stand and eventually to The Imperial Buildings on Princess Drive and in 1983 the Head Office moved to Llandudno. There were four ladies working on the secretarial side of things in the Odeon days, Frieda Jones, Pat Lowe, Mrs. Holmes and Joan. Mrs. Holmes mainly looked after the filing and Joan tried to keep everything neat and tidy. Fifty years later Frieda and Pat still

recall how much they respected Mr. Lingard. He was one of the first people to pioneer the use of telephone radio from car to office. Remember this was half a century before anyone thought about mobile phones.

The four ladies would be in the office and the call would come through to the office telephone call panel, "Key one to base. Key one to base" and Pat Lowe would jump up and have to press the magic button where upon Mr. Lingard would begin to dictate a letter to her from his car in wilds of Anglesey. His car registration number was Key 1. Hildermill, 43 Cayley Promenade on the corner of Whitehall Road; Tarbet, 146 Llanrwst Road; the Marlborough Drive/Rochester Way estate in Rhos-on-Sea; Kennedy Court, Old Colwyn; The convent of Mercy Chapel and care home on Walshaw Avenue; the development of the Bryn Eurn Farm into homes Haddon



GLENROYD. Mr. Lingard's first home in Colwyn Bay

President: Graham Roberts

Chairman: Brian Pringle

Journal Editor: Graham Roberts

Court next to Fortes Cafe Rhos-on-Sea; Rannoch, number 32 Marine Road, Penrhyn Bay, the Old Colwyn Ambulance Station and the main entrance and flanking walls at St. Davids College, Llanrhos, are all fine examples of this architect's work.

In 1983 Mr. Lingard was awarded the Housing Design Wales and the more prestigious R. I. B. A Regional Award for his design for the conversion of the old Bryn Euryn Farm on Rhos Road into local housing association Homes and flats, which is now called Hanover Court.

This writer can well recall the derelict farm of the 1950's; the smelly pig-styes lined the inside wall running up Craig Wen; the hay was kept in a large-beamed barn on the left after walking through under the baronial archway. We children used to swing from the beams and land softly on the heaped hay.

Mr. Lingard transformed the site of a forgotten agricultural age into a appealing and quirky oases of calm. The archway

and who had subsequently retired to Rhos-on-Sea. In 1983 he was 81 years old, but still on the ball, eager, intelligent and feisty. He eventually died in 1996 aged 94. He and his friends must have been a distraction Mr. Lingard could have done without, but after a special general meeting of the Colwyn Bay Council at which he made a detailed presentation, the council unanimously gave their support to Mr. Lingard's proposals. As you will see if you go to Hanover Court, there were no grounds for any disquiet about the plans, Mr. Ridgeway was wrong and Mr. Lingard has been truly vindicated in the rightness of his design.

In the end the design is perfect and blends in well with the surrounding properties to such an extent that people who visit Hanover Court for the first time are always happily surprised by the enchanting and peaceful atmosphere of Mr. Lingard's commission.

On a sunny day in Dallas, Texas, on 22nd November, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald



Hanover Court, Rhos Road

remains but as you pass under it, now, you find yourself in a different world, almost Italianate in its collonaded small gardens, small unexpected doorways leading to friendly sized flats on the gentle slope of a hill. It is a delightful design.

Mr. Lingard had some trouble finalising his design because of some unnecessary concerns expressed by the local residents of Brompton Park across the road. They were unhappy about some aspects of the drawings and about the fact that the flats were for what is euphamistically called social housing. The residents were led by Thomas Awstin Ridgeway and backed up by the local councillor, Ray Formstone. They objected mainly that a subsidized elderly-persons residential complex was inappropriate in the vicinity of their private homes. Mr. Ridgeway was a retired civil engineer who had worked for local authorities in the North East of England

shot dead the 35th president of the United States of America, John F. Kennedy. On Llanellian Road, Old Colwyn, stands a local authority housing development designed by Mr. Lingard which commemorates the life and name of this president. Kennedy Court was officially opened on 23rd June 1966 by the Hon. Willis C. Armstrong, Minister for Economic Affairs at the Embassy of the United States of America. Mrs. Vera Naylor was the Mayor at the time and an old and valued friend of this society, Geoffrey Edwards, was the Town Clerk. The idea behind Kennedy Court was the same as that behind Hanover Court, to create pleasant sheltered housing for elderly people. The difference of course was that Kennedy Court was a completely new build while Hanover Court was a conversion, and this difference is patently self-evident. With Hanover Court Mr.



The court-yard of Hanover Court



Hanover Court, Rhos-on-Sea

Lingard was able to design a different world or environment in microcosm whereas Kennedy Court had to be designed within a local authority budget and had to conform more rigidly to the existing local environment.

The development takes up the whole of the land encompassed by the apex of the land enclosed by Llanellian Road and St. Catherine's Drive. A large property called



Kennedy Court

Colwyn House used to occupy the site but by the 1950's it had become a rabbit warren of a habitation. Lots of people were living there in various degrees of squalor. The original entrance and driveway to Colwyn House led off St. Catherine's Drive where the demolished Bethel Chapel was situated on the corner of St. Catherine's Drive and Abergele Road. Indeed the present gateway to the

old chapel is about where the old gateway to Colwyn House stood from which the drive meandered through the trees to the house where now stands Kennedy Court.

The land on which Mr. Lingard's creation stands slopes down from Llanelian Road to St. Catherine's Drive so that as one walks up St. Catherine's Drive Kennedy Court stands aloft like a modern version of the medieval castles of old. The structure has a ground floor and a first floor and a delightful grassy courtyard around which cluster the flats. Mr. Lingard has managed to design the whole project so that the residents can enjoy a cosy, well ordered existence in pleasant surroundings.

Forty years ago Mr. & Mrs. Lingard and representatives of the builders Percy Bradley of Rhyl, were present at the opening to hear the Mayor tell the assembled crowd that the Council and Tenants were grateful to Mr. Lingard for the care taken in designing Kennedy Court. There had been, she said, most imaginative use of the site and most careful attention to modern design and detail. The Hon. Willis C. Armstrong in replying to the Mayor's greeting had said that the late President's home was beside the sea and he enjoyed the sea, the sun and the sky. Colwyn Bay, he said, had the motto, "Lechyd, Harddwch, Heddwch"

(Health, beauty and Tranquility) on its coat of arms, and he was sure the three things were greatly cherished by Mr. Kennedy and would have struck a responsive cord in him. At the conclusion of the opening ceremony the Mayor presented the Hon. Armstrong with a piece of wedgewood China and a book called 'Wales in Colour'.

Inevitably it is not as capricious as Hanover Court or able to include the same many layered distinctive architectural differences, but it serves its purpose well, its residents are delighted to live there and forty years after the Hon. C. Willis Armstrong officially opened the homes they still catch the eye and enhance the built environment.

In the 1950s The Mount Stewart Hotel in Rhos-on-Sea was one of the leading hotels in North Wales. during the 2nd World War the building has been requisitioned by the Ministry of Food, but after the War the proprietors has restored the hotel to its former glory and the business thrived. Across the road from the hotel on the corner of Whitehall Road and the Cayley Promenade the hotel owned a large plot of land which was arranged as a formal pleasant garden for the specific use of hotel guests. It was in fact also one of the most desirable sites for a new house in Colwyn Bay. An old local resident told me

some years ago that he recalled a circus performing on this site.

In 1957 the land was bought by Mr. & Mrs. Pocklington, a master miller from Staffordshire, and they were introduced to Mr. Lingard by the builders, Roberts



Hildermill was built on the lawn on the left

Brothers. Mr. Pocklington used to own (I am reliably informed by a local garage proprietor) a Vandem Plas 3 litre Princes car which unfortunately he used to drive around with the choke pulled full out the entire time. The car suffered greatly.

The site is impressive, raised well above the road level and supported along the road frontage all the way round the corner by massive stone walling. On the very corner monumental steps descend elegantly from the old garden to the pavement.

Mr. Lingard designed a single storey house and used good quality materials leaving rock at the back of the home for a square courtyard garden. He used rustic green

Welsh slate for the roof and stone for most of the walls to blend with the existing walls of the original garden. The steps from the garden to the pavement were retained in their original form. Fifty years later the house still looks impressive

and embellishes a significant site overlooking the promenade. Unfortunately the present owner has allowed the hedges to grow in and unruly fashion to such an extent that to a degree, they mask the property.

Mr. & Mrs. Pocklington called their home Hildermill and it has retained this name, prominently displayed on the

original plate, to this day. As Mr. Pocklington was a miller by profession there was some connection between this name and his former business in Staffordshire.

William Horton J. P. was born on 22nd February 1854; in 1885, aged 31, he married his wife Edith Mary and went to live in his magnificent home, Bryn Dinarth, at the end of what is now called Horton Drive in Rhos-on-Sea. On 28th April 1935 he and his wife celebrated their golden wedding anniversary and he died aged 90 years on 25th January 1944. Bryn Dinarth has now been demolished, no doubt a demolition that would have saddened Mr. Horton for he effectively



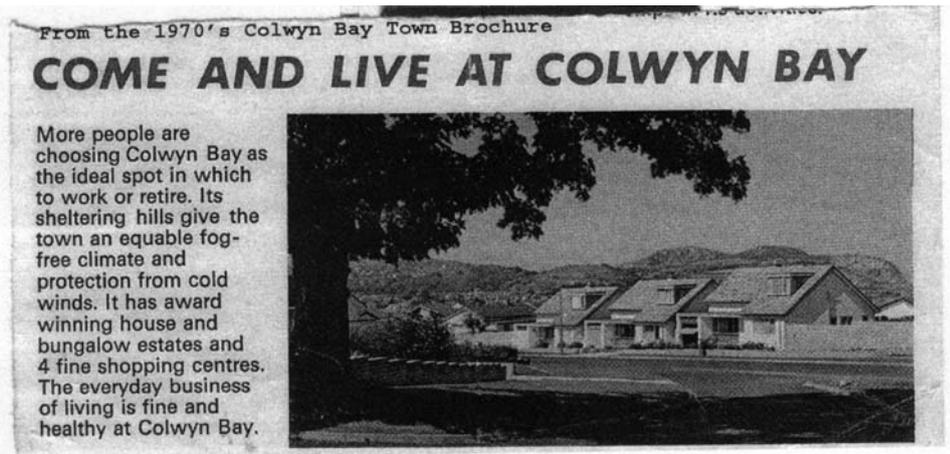
The Pocklington home



Victor Wilde's house on the left, Marlborough Drive development middle distance.

owned most of what we now call Rhos-on-Sea. He was a good man who for instance gave land to the Congregational Movement to allow them to build Rhos-on-Sea Congregational Church on Colwyn Avenue.

Thirty three years after Mr. Horton's birth, Victor C. Wilde J. P. was born. Mr. Wilde became a Freeman of the Borough of Colwyn Bay and lived at Odstone on Marine Drive next to Rhos-on-Sea Golf Course. It was from this site Odstone that Prince Madoc is supposed to have set sail for America and discovered that continent well before Christopher Columbus bagged the distinction for himself. Mr. Wilde died in 1966 aged 79 years, but it was he who took over from Mr. Horton as the owner of much of the land of Rhos-on-Sea. On his grave stone are inscribed the words, "A very good generous man". The sentiment is correct. He gave the land opposite Rhos Point where the paddling pool and lawn are situated, for the benefit of the local community; he sold land to the local authority very cheaply so that they could build bungalow's for pensioners along Elwy road and what is now called Victor Wilde Drive. He also owned the land, which he looked across at from the back of his home, that curved around Llandrillo-yn-Rhos Parish Church from Church Road to Llandudno Road.



In 1960 Mr. Wilde decided to release this land for development and asked Mr. Tony Gorst to build the houses. There was only one stipulation that he made and that was that Mr. Lingard should be the architect. Thus it was that he designed all the house along Caterbury Lane, Winchester Close, Rochester Way, Malvern Rise. The estate is successful in that it looks appealing, it is well maintained and the homes fit perfectly the needs of the occupants. Mr. Gorst employed many tradesman on this project who would become successful builders in their own right in future years; one such was a young Stephen Davies who helped roof many properties and would eventually set up the building firm of R. S. Davies & Co.

A young joiner Mr. Allan Roberts now a grandfather and partially retired, worked on this project and can still remember how much he earned. He received £4 for laying the floor joists and £24 for a whole roof; £18 for a whole floor and £12 for the door frames and the first fitting for an entire house; £20 for the skirtings and architraves for a house and £24 for hanging all the doors inside and out with an extra £8 for the garage doors. Thus he was paid a total of £110 for all the carpentry work on each residence. "Oh yes", he said, as an after thought, "and we got £2 for cutting joggles on the windows so the bricky could fix them properly!" Like Mr. Davies, this carpenter also went on to found his own business and work successfully for his entire career here in Colwyn Bay.



Marlborough Drive

Surveys show that bungalow's are the form of accommodation most desired by about 25 per cent of the population, rising to 35 per cent in Wales. However they account for only about two per cent of the housing stock, and, forty six years after Mr. Lingard first put his ideas for these bungalow's down on paper, the mass of buildings stand out for their tidy, bright appearance; their predominately white colouring is arresting; once inside the homes the amount of light is a god send; and they are practically useful for folk of a retiring age. The occupants all

seem to have maintained their homes in the manner that is sympathetic to Mr. Lingard's original style and use of materials. The homes have not been spoilt with too many extensions and attic conversions.

Indeed in the 1970s on the front cover of the Colwyn Bay Promotional Guide there was a photograph taken looking along Marlborough Drive from the grassy island beside the cul-de-sac towards Llandudno Road. It was obviously felt that the houses on view were an inducement to entice people to come and live in this area. The three houses shown in the picture, numbers 19, 21 and 23, were built on the spot where Gorsts had their site office and area for storing building materials. At one stage there was an idea that this site would be used for the erection of

of his time. A new home is seen, by people who live near it, as a bad thing, with the result that, too often, it is, - being mean, ugly and adding a new burden to a local infrastructure without bringing a compensatory social, aesthetic or financial benefit. Mr. Lingard was not that sort of architect; it is chiefly in housing that the old problem of the 'Two Nations' is growing worse. The solution discovered by Mr. Lingard on Mr. Victor Wilde's land was to provide more of what people actually want, the suburban ideal of a garden and a garage, in a way that gives more revenue to the local authorities in which this takes place and in which better infrastructure is created as a reward for new building.

By this time the architectural practice had grown considerably. As well as the office

End Books in West End, Colwyn Bay), Felicity Duffy, Janet Cashmere, Linda Owen and Sheila Dean, while Norman Emmett looked after the accounts. They designed the Royal Welsh Showground Pavilion at Buith Wells, the W. D. A. office block and the longest continuous terrace of housing in Europe in Newtown, as well as factory units in Welshpool and Montgomery. Mr. Lingard was present at the investiture of the Prince of Wales in July 1969. Some months before he had been commissioned to design the colour scheme for all the properties which lined the route taken by the prince from the grounds of Ferodo Ltd. to the Water Gate of Caernarvon Castle.

Mr. Lingard has written an excellent book called 'Special Houses For Special People' which has been published by The Memoir Club (and can be purchased from them at Stanhope Old Hall, Stanhope, Werdale, County Durham). In this book he writes: "A church cannot strictly be regarded as being in the special houses for special people category but it is nevertheless a special house for a Special Being. As that superior form of house it can therefore qualify for inclusion in this book". He then goes on to explain his designs for the Catholic Church in Menai Bridge and Rhosneigr. Mr. Lingard went on to complete further commissions for church work throughout North Wales.



Winchester Close

maisonettes, hence the numbering for the present homes, 19, 21 and 23 which are opposite Number 30 which causes people delivering to 19, 21 and 23 some confusion!

Britain's first Bungalow, from the Hindi "Bangala", meaning Bengal-style, was built in the 1860s in Norwood, South London, by a colonel on his return from India. There are of course environmental objections to low-density housing like an estate of bungalows. A lot of people do want to live in bungalows like the ones on Marlborough Drive but the reality is that it is not possible. If all we built were bungalows there would be none of our green and pleasant land left. An environmentalist would say that bungalows are a waste of space. Thank goodness that Mr. Wilde, Mr. Gorst and Mr. Lingard did not think along those lines.

In many ways Mr. Lingard was well ahead

here in Colwyn, Mr. Lingard opened offices in Llangefni, Bangor, Newtown, London. Working with him was an excellent team of people. There was George Hedges (who now lives in Spain), Sid Clarke (who now has an architectural Design Company practicing in Llandudno), Jim Greenwood, Ian Swallow, Don Platt (now living in Rhos-on-Sea), David Rigby (now the conservation Architect with Conwy County Borough Council), Dick Pritchard, Ivan Gwynne, David Williams (now in practice in Princess Drive designing golf courses), David Owen, Iwan Griffith (now sadly dead and remembered with great fondness), Simon Tarmaster (whose colleagues would pull his leg because they said he was the original tea boy!), the model maker Vasilis Volitis, Richard Woolley, Peter Styles (the landscape architect) and private secretaries, Sue Kellard (now Kershaw who runs West

It was after his move to Colwyn Bay however that he designed what can only be described as a little gem of a Catholic Chapel. The Chapel was included in his overall design for the construction of a care home adjacent to the convent of Mercy on Walshaw Avenue. The construction work began in 1968; in 1969 The Sisters of Mercy bought Plas-Awellon (Dwelling Place) on the corner of Walshaw Avenue and Lansdown Road. This was the former home of a local highly respected doctor, Dr. Dennis Wharton. The Sisters thus owned all the land from Lansdown Road up Walshaw Avenue as far as the Rydal Tennis Courts and allowed them to ask Mr. Lingard to design the main entrance to the Care Home leading on to Lansdown Road through the old garden of Plas Awellon.

All the work was complete by 1970 with the expert help of the quantity surveyor, Harry Roberts and the builders Peter



Convent of Mercy Chapel

Griffith & Son led by Eric Griffith. The home and chapel were opened on 13th May 1970.

The Chapel is an 8 sided building with the richly coloured windows running almost entirely from floor to ceiling at the four angles surrounding the alter area. The alter is a good solid, impressive piece of slate from Blaenau Ffestiniog. Indeed it was so heavy that it had to be lowered into the Chapel through the roof.

The Chapel is tucked away behind the Convent and one gains entry through the Convent. Mr. Lingard describes his Church designs as a home for a Special Being. That is correct but such places of devotion become special homes for devotional folk who find, in beautiful buildings like his Convent of Mercy Chapel, a special atmosphere of calm and serenity where they can feel close to their God.

The Clerk of Works for Peter Griffiths was Tom Ellis Davies who became a well respected Mayor of Colwyn Bay.

In 1961 there was an excellent piece of vacant land on Llanrwst Road, Upper Colwyn Bay. It was a little further along the road towards Bryn-y-Maen after Cherry Tree Lane and Copthorn Road and was opposite the Golf Course. In those days this area of Colwyn Bay was considered very much apart from the rest of the town; it was considered countryside. Mr. Arthur Poppleton and his son Edgar decided to buy the land with the idea of building two homes on it. They paid £400 for the land. They went to see Mr. Lingard at his home Glenroyd and instructed him to prepare plans for two semi detached houses in which they would live. Mr. Poppleton and his son ran

a very successful ventilation and heating company in Colwyn Bay; a business that is still in existence and thriving today. The land (which is now number 146 Llanrwst Road) was fairly narrow, but very long. To fit the two residences, including their attendant garages, on the spot, the two living rooms stretched the full length of the building from the front garden to the back garden. The Poppletons arranged to organise the building work themselves and so paid Mr. Lingard simply for his plans. Mr Lingard charged the princely



The Poppleton House

sum of £120! The thermoplastic or vinyl-asbestos tiles still remain under the carpets; the Hardrow concrete tiles are still on the roof; all the doors were by Hills, a rare extravagance, and remain in their pristine state to this day; while the last original domestic water boiler was replaced only last year having served the family well for 44 years! The pair of homes were built for a total of £7000. Arthur died in 1987 but Edgar, and his

wife Barbara, still live there having now converted the two homes into one dwelling and as Edgar readily points out, Mr. Lingard's design was well ahead of its time.

Mr. Lingard was a great believer, in certain circumstances, of what he describes as "studied anonymity". He designed an extension to the housing stock of Tremadoc where he put this belief into practice. There is indeed sometimes a need for a degree of anonymity in design and while the Poppleton House is not in anyway missable it blends in well with the other and more conventional houses on either side. Mr. Lingard carries off the trick of design in the Poppleton commission of designing a house in a once remote and more conventional part of Colwyn Bay by not slavishly copying the style and design of the adjoining properties, while allowing the homes to snuggle gently into the slope of the welsh hinterland.

It is good that Colwyn Bay should have been served by first rate architects like Brian Lingard who have left their stamp of excellence on our town. So many people today seem to be disconnected from their past. As the old ways of life vanish into forgetfulness, our houses have become our most valuable assets but often the least understood. The streets where we live are both the expressions of our ambitions and our epitaphs. Look again at Mr. Lingard's work here in Colwyn Bay and you realise that, although still very

much alive, he has erected himself an impressive memorial which helps us to remain in touch with our homeland. He was in many ways a renaissance man of his time, fascinated by the possibilities offered by new technology, materials and engineering - whose talents knew no boundaries. We are surrounded by continuing history and Mr. Lingard's work in Colwyn Bay is part of that legacy.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT 'WILLIE JOHN'



Rev. Thomas David Parry, Priscilla Parry and John Alun Parry Jones

As an addendum to the article on William John Bowen in the September 2006 Journal. The couple pictured beside Mr. Bowen's parents in the picture on the front cover are the Rev. Thomas David Parry and his wife Priscilla. Priscilla (known as Sil in the family) was Mrs. Mary Ellen Bowen's sister (Willie John's aunt). The Rev. Parry, as is the fate of clergymen, had travelled extensively from parish to parish. Ysbyty Ifan, Rhos Tryfan, and Nantlle amongst them. They had no children of their own, but Priscilla's sister, Miriam, had died in child-birth leaving her son John Alun to be brought up alone by his father, Griffith Solomon Jones. For what ever reason, Mr. Jones found the task too difficult and so Rev. Parry and his wife took over the responsibility for the boy's upbringing; he prospered and became an accountant in Ruthin, was for ever known as John Alun Parry Jones and died in 1991.

Priscilla was one of ten children and while she and her husband were living in Rhos Tryfan, in about 1933, they had a visit from Howell, aged

10 years old, one of her nephews. Howell was from Cwm Penmachno and while with his aunt he went for a walk alone through Rhos Tryfan village and passed the Snooker Hall. Fascinated by the activity, warmth and conviviality within the hall he raised himself up on his tip-toes and peered through the window. The Rev. Parry was a highly respected member of the Rhos Tryfan community and someone who had seen Howell looking through the snooker hall window reported the fact to him. The next day Howell was told by the clergyman to pack his bags and return home to Cwm Penmachno. Mind you, he had already in 1927, been given detention in the Cwm Penmachno Primary School "for talking in class"!

The Rev. Parry's brother-in-law, Rhys Powell Bowen (father of William John Pictured in the Journal) died aged 62 on 26th July 1942 and was buried in Bron-y-Nant Cemetery. His wanderings having ceased and considering the Bowens to be his true family, the Rev. Parry wanted eventually to be buried here in Colwyn Bay and close to his family, so he bought the plot next to Mr Bowen's grave.

He died thirteen years later on 13th June, 1955 at Tan-y-Bryn, Nantlle and was, as he wished, buried next to Rhys Bowen. Mrs. Bowen (Sil's sister) died on Christmas Eve 1958 and was buried with her husband. She was followed in death less than three months later on 19th March, 1959 by her sister Sil (Willie John's aunt) who was staying in Clwyd Street,

Ruthin with her adopted son, John Alun (her sister, Miriam's boy), and was buried in her husband's grave. There, the bodies of the four of them lie, the parents of the innovative and artistic architect, Williams John Bowen and his aunt and uncle; side by side for eternity as the Rev. Thomas David Parry had wished. Passing time plays tricks on us all and not far away from their graves in the same cemetery lies the body of Howell (the young lad who was sent home for looking through the snooker hall window). He died aged 62, thirty years after his aunt's strict, narrow minded husband.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

John Davies was a builder from Penmaenhead working in the early 1900s. He was born in a house now demolished on the Llanelian Road, just down from the Vicarage. All his life he was known as 'John

Davies the Clwt' after the name of his old home.

He eventually set up a builder's yard and office in the grounds of the old Penmaen farm off Craig Road above what is now Roger Hughes' quarry. He built the house called Bod Arfon on Craig Road and the two semi-detached homes 88 & 90 Llysfaen Road standing proudly on the bluff above Llysfaen Road on the corner just before Penmaen Primary School. They have a 'mansard' roof and are called The Eryri (Eagles Nest) and Summer Hill. Mr. Davies would always date his work and if you look today you will see A.D. 1920 inscribed

on the front of these houses.

Many years ago in the 1960s, Mr. Davies' grandson, Gareth, also a builder with an excellent reputation, was driving passed these houses with Alf, one of his genial hardworking men. Gareth said, "look, my grandfather built those houses." Alf looked at them and saw the date, thought about it for a moment and said, "Oh, was his name Albert Davies?" "No", said Gareth, "the A.D. stands for Anno Domini. "I've never 'eard of 'im, who the bloody 'ell is he?" said Alf.

Our fore-fathers worked hard; a lot harder than we do today. In the 1930s John Davies and his son would walk from Penmaenhead to Coed Coch Farm near Betws-yn-Rhos where there was a large pit in the ground. A tree trunk would be rolled across the pit and Mr. Davies would stand at the top of the pit holding one end of a long saw while his son would be at the bottom of the pit beneath the tree trunk holding the other end; father and son would push the saw up and down until the trunk was in small logs and then walk all the way back to Penmaenhead.



The Eryri and Summer Hill

CHRISTMAS 1923

At Christmas time, 1923, Mr. & Mrs. Ben Bishop of 2 First Avenue, Rhos-on-Sea sent to their friends a small (2 1/2" x 3") card embossed on the front with a large velvet B. Inside are the words:

- For the Past -
Remembrance:
- For the Present -
Good Wishes:
- For the Future -
Bright Hopes.

At the top of the page in smaller lettering the words read:- "Hope shall brighten days to come, and memory gild the past." It was a card sent in a world now utterly vanished, and yet that distant country, and the values and duty which sustained it, can still teach us how to act today in 2007. Thomas Pennant the 18th century Welsh squire (or at least the anglicised squire in Wales) all those years ago wrote about entering Conwy: "A more ragged town is scarcely to be seen, within; or a more beautiful one without". I wonder, would he have written thus about Colwyn Bay were he to wander down Station Road today?

As a Civic Society, optimism should be our watchword, for negativity only feeds on itself. We must contribute to the local debate as to how best to improve our town and what Flagship Projects we would suggest as helping to this end. Perhaps our ideas could encompass the moving of Colwyn Bay Railway station, the demolition of selective buildings, a new traffic system, decent new buildings, residential properties above the shops. Do you have any thoughts to contribute to this debate? We do not want a cloned town indistinguishable from any other town of comparable size; perhaps we should encourage niche shopping and help by shopping in our home town.

