

The Estate Office

The Estate Office is now the Mayfair Dress shop in Colwyn Bay at number 37 Conwy Road. It stands between the Stirling Estate Agent's office and the white, Cartref Conwy building, on the corner of Coed Pella Road and Conway Road. If you look high above the dress shop window you will see, engraved into the stone work, just below the copper dome, in bold lettering, the words 'Estate Office'. The building itself has a lovely, neat, classical design to it with its dome and angled pediment.

In 1865 Lady Erskine sold her Pwllcrochan Estate to Sir John Pender, a Manchester and Glasgow merchant, and a promoter of ocean cables. He appointed John Porter as his agent, who in the same year leased the Pwllcrochan building and opened it as an hotel. Ten years later Sir John Pender sold up and Mr Porter bought the hotel building outright. The hotel became one of the principal establishments in the town, attracting a wide variety of visitors and remained the property of the Porter family until 1938, when it was sold to Rydal School. All the other parts of the estate were purchased by a Manchester syndicate, the Colwyn Bay and Pwllcrochan Estate Company. One of the members of the syndicate was the architect, Lawrence Booth, who was soon joined by Mr Thomas Chadwick. These



Mr. John Merry Porter.

two gentlemen then formed a partnership with Mr John Merry Porter, a Colwyn Bay surveyor, the son of John Porter, the owner of the Pwllcrochan Hotel. They opened the Estate Office, now the premises of The Mayfair and from

there ran the affairs of the whole Pwllcrochan estate. At the end of the 19th Century the Pwllcrochan Estate covered a large tract of land spreading in the west as far as the present Cherry Tree Lane (NB Journal September 1998: 'What's In A Name'). From 1912, when one of the partners left, the Colwyn Bay office continued and was known simply as J.M.Porter & Co. In due course Mr J.M.Porter's son, John Lawrence Porter who was also a surveyor like his father, took over the running of the Estate Office and remained there until the business was closed down in the 1973. Three generations of the Porter family, from The Estate Office, 37 Conway Road, had been instrumental in overseeing the development of Colwyn Bay from a rural village to a thriving seaside resort.

In 1891, Mr.J.M.Porter with his partners, Mr Booth and Mr Chadwick, designed a house on Pwllcrochan Avenue; a delightful building with a conical-roofed corner turret and with a terracotta frieze. He and his wife went to live there and he remained there until his death in 1942.

The Estate Office building should be of interest to the Colwyn Bay Civic Society not only because of its local historical associations but also because it is of architectural merit. It is built with Ruabon red brick (NB Journal : September 2001: 'A Coal By-product'); every window is framed with a generous sandstone surround, the top of each one rising to a well-judged angle. The main wooden doors are magnificent and the whole building is obviously maintained to a high standard.



The Estate Office.

The Proud House

This is the nick name given to Shawstone, 48 Wynne Avenue North, Old Colwyn, and no wonder; the house stands proudly and prominently on the corner of Cliff Gardens and Wynne Avenue, peering over the A55 and the promenade, towards the wind farm on the far horizon. As far as a house can, it looks pleased with itself; aloof.

It is a double fronted, detached house, standing in its own ample grounds, built on two floors with Ruabon red brick (NB Journal September 2001). There is an arched front doorway with a balcony on top, and inside the original wood block flooring can still be seen. In the front garden is a massive, luxuriant cedar of Lebanon tree which was planted at the

same time as the house was built. The tree is now at least 200 feet high with graceful outflowing branches, which is a little ironic as one of the original covenants on the house deeds reads: 'Not to plant or permit to grow any shrub, tree or plant of any description in front of the building line higher than six feet.'

At one time the back garden ran all the way along Cliff Gardens down to Wynnstay Road. When it was built the house stood in an exclusive area of 2,590 square yards. In the late 1950s this land was sold and two distinctive looking bungalows were built on the old orchard and tennis court which occupied the land. These bungalows, which had to be angled imaginatively to fit on the land, were designed by Gwilym

Parry Davies and built by Harry Houghton, (NB Journal September 2002). The garden also ran along-side Wynn Avenue North and this part of the garden now has a bungalow sat on it (No.44).

The land was bought on 25th May 1926 for £1,036 by John Owen Roberts from Lt.Col.Robert William Herbert Watkin Williams Wynn, hence the name given to the road, 'Wynn Avenue'. John Owen Roberts was a fishmonger and game dealer who had lived on Abergele Road, Old Colwyn in a house he named Billingsgate House as an association with his occupation and when he built Shawstone he promised Lt.Colonel Wynn that he would never burn bricks, tiles or clay on the land.

Pineapples and Pine cones

Lambeth Bridge in London, crossing the Thames close to the Houses of Parliament, with its lovely art deco detailing is notable for the pairs of obelisks at either end of the bridge which are surmounted by stone pineapples. It is said that the pineapples were placed there as a tribute to the Lambeth resident, John Tradescant, who is said to have grown the first pineapples in Britain. Some people however say that they are in fact stone pine cones which have been symbols of hospitality since at least

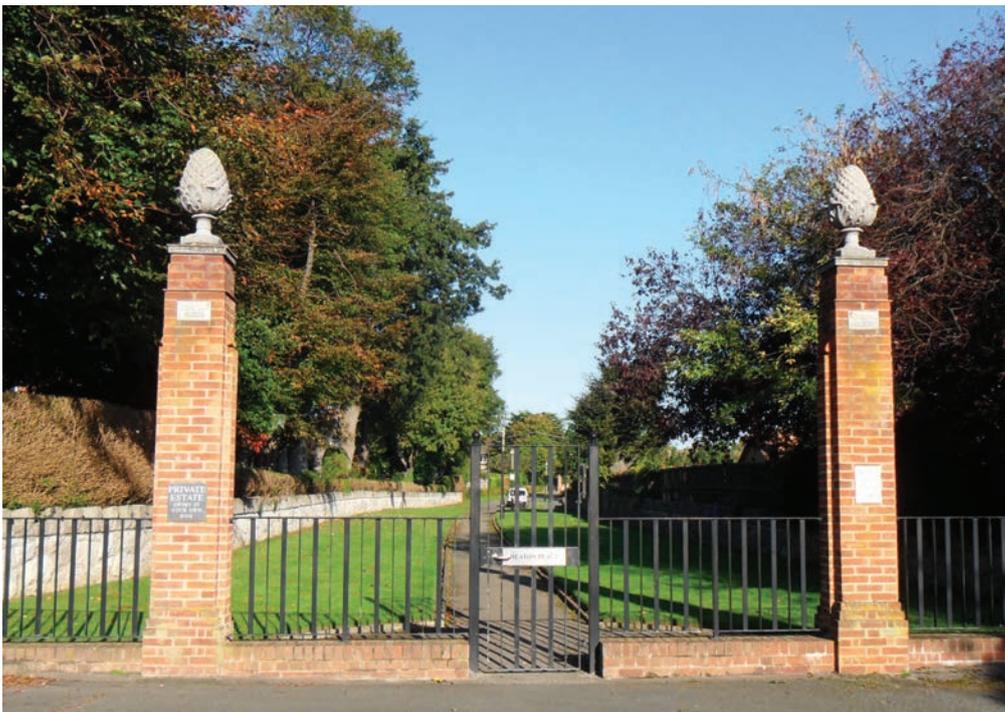
Roman times. The pine cones were often mistaken for pineapples, partly because pine cones were once called 'pine apples', and when the fruit first arrived in Britain looking vaguely similar to pine cones, the name was adopted.

Pineapples are a tropical fruit and in the 18th century, in this country, if you were able to grow your own pineapples in your hot houses on your estate, you were considered to be really someone of importance. To be able to grown one and have it as a feature in the middle of your

dining table for all your guests to behold was considered the pinnacle of refinement. The elegant tapering shape of a pineapple also lends itself, as a figurative object depicted in stone, as a traditional way to finish off a pillar on a stone pier or pediment flanking an entrance gateway such as that on to a bridge in Lambeth or a gateway in Colwyn Bay.

The two sets of stone pillars standing beside the entrance to Heaton Place, the one from Eberston Road West and the other from Norton Road, are both

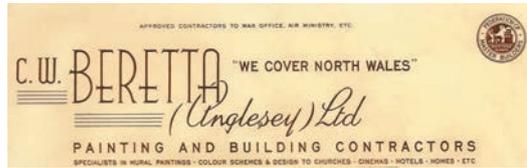
topped off with stone pineapples or as some would argue, pine cones. As you look and admire them you understand perfectly their ideal shape for the architectural job that they have been given. They were designed for these pillars by Sydney Colwyn Foulkes . He must have thought they were an ideal adornment because he used them to great effect on his own home, Moryn, on the top promenade in Rhos-on-Sea (NB: March 2001 Journal). On two shorter entrance pillars on the Heaton Place estate Mr Colwyn Foulkes used what look like two stone pawns from a chess set. Another pineapple can be seen from Pwllcrochan Avenue which runs at the back of Mr Colwyn Foulkes' last home, Cotswold , (NB Journal April 2004: Cotswold and Houses For The Children), on the top of a pillar at the back entrance to the property.



Pineapples and Pine cones at Heaton Place.

Clement Beretta 1910-2005

Mr Beretta lived most of his life in Rhosneiger on Anglesey, but also left his mark on Colwyn Bay. He was a builder and an artist. Many years ago he built a house



for his wife and painted murals on every available surface. They moved in but Mr Beretta had run out of walls, so he built her another house next door. In all they moved sixteen times; she refused to move to the seventeenth. He was a well-known man in North Wales and was affectionately called 'Smiler' because of his sunny, optimistic nature and wide open smile.

Just before the 2nd World War a youthful Mr Beretta, who was half Italian, had been introduced to the painter Rex Whistler, who had been commissioned by the 6th Marquess of Anglesey to paint murals in his dining room at Plas Newydd. When Whistler, who was one of the most eminent and skilled artists of his generation, saw Mr Beretta's work, he recruited him to paint the large perfectly

flat ceiling of approximately one thousand square feet to give it an illusion of a deeply recessed Italian coffered ceiling; a trompe l'oeil ceiling, (NB: March 2011 Journal: The Rydal Penrhos Memorial Hall Ceiling), and a series of fluted pilasters. Like Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel in Rome, Mr Beretta had to paint the ceiling while lying on his back high up on padded backrest made by the house carpenter at Plas Newydd. It took him six months and so far no one has been able to tell where Mr Beretta's work ends and Whistler's begins.

He designed a suitably evocative mural to hang behind the bar in the RAF Club in Bangor, and one to represent the freedom enjoyed by those who owned a car, to adorn the wall of the Volvo car sale showroom at Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwl antysilloogogorch.

In 1953 he designed an exact replica of the Queen's State Coach, believed to be the only one of its kind in the country, which was used to carry Father Christmas and the Chamber of Trade Queen from the station to the grotto in the Rhosneiger Town Hall.



Clement Beretta at Plas Newydd.

For a while, in the 1950s and 60s, he renovated and decorated several buildings in North Wales which he converted into cinemas. He invited the wonderful Welsh actor, Hugh Griffith, who had been born at Marianglas on Anglesey, to officially open his cinema in Bethesda. Hugh Griffith went on to star as Sheik Llderim in Ben Hur and most memorably, as Squire Western in Tom Jones in 1963.



Clement Beretta (left) and the Welsh actor Hugh Griffiths (right).



1953: An exact replica of the State Coach, the only one in Briton, built by Smiler.

In September 1964 Llandrillo Technical College opened its doors for the first time. Following considerable local debate the name of the College had been agreed upon so as to reflect its location. Nine months later on 23rd June 1965 HRH Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, arrived by helicopter to officially open the College. The place is still known affectionately by us locals, who have seen the College grow out of all proportion to its original design, as The Tech. The county architects of Denbighshire designed the buildings of the College and commissioned Mr Clement Beretta to design a crest for the College which was subsequently incorporated into the front door. Sadly the work has now been erased to make way for the redesigned frontage.



Mount Stewart Hotel.

After the 2nd World War, and after the civil servants of the Ministry of Food had returned to Guildford, most of the hotels in Rhos-on-Sea and Colwyn Bay in which the civil servants had worked, were left in a tatty and dishevelled state. The Mount Stewart Hotel on the corner of Whitehall Road and the 'top' promenade in Rhos-on-Sea had housed the Wheat Commission among other food divisions and by 1946 was in a pretty dilapidated state of repair. The owners of the hotel employed Mr Beretta to totally transform the dining room with wood panelling to a design formulated by him. Happily I remember this work, but it has now all gone and been replaced by a more modern simple colour scheme; the room, as embellished by Smiler, would not have been out of place in any 'stately home' and the National Trust would no doubt have been falling over themselves to preserve it.

Many years ago now, when the brewery were revitalising and refurbishing the Mountain View pub in Mochdre, they asked Mr Beretta whether he would paint some murals which could decorate the lounge area of the pub. This he happily agreed to do and people came from

far and near to look at his handiwork. But this also has now been erased and is a stark reminder of the melancholy, ethereal, amble of time, which sometimes leaves us with only our memories of good people and their temporary influence on our lives. Smiler, Mr Beretta, enriched the lives of those around him and the interiors of the buildings he touched.

People's perceptions of what is good and attractive are often shaped by the standards and mores and fashions of the time. Mr Beretta was creating his murals, paintings, and engravings forty years ago. His work was fashionable at the time it was created; it was also beautiful, colourful and created with careful and imaginative craftsmanship. He was a 'one of', an original thinker. Every age has gained more from its free thinkers than from its adherents to convention and the great sadness at the loss of so much of Mr Beretta's work is that we have lost the evidence of what can be quirky, bright and amusing. What he produced would have raised a smile, would have provoked our interest. Today, the interiors of too many buildings are conventionally bland; a style which I suspect was alien to Clement Beretta's nature.

What's In A Name

In the 1930s, number 36 Allanson Road in Rhos-on-Sea, was designed and built for two spinster ladies, Miss Heywood and Miss Jones. It is a lovely detached, white painted house with a border to the front, full of luxuriant white roses. It has two bedrooms, one each for the ladies, and a small bedroom at the back of the house for the maid. The ladies named the house, Runa, and eighty years later the name is still there plain for all to see on the sturdy stone gate posts. Runa is in fact a small town in the Torres Vedras region, north of Lisbon, in Portugal. Miss Heywood and Miss Jones were quite obviously wealthy people and prior to the 2nd World War enjoyed holidaying in sunny Portugal. Unfortunately, the particular reason why they chose Runa for their holidays has now been lost in the mists of time.



Runa

Todi

Todi is a half semi detached bungalow, half semi detached house, on the west side of Dinerth road (No.131) facing Bryn Euryn. It was called Todi, which is a mountain and a village in Italy, by one of the house's earliest owners, Alan Roberts, because he had climbed the mountain before the 2nd World War. In the early 1930s, before Todi had been built, Mr Hughes lived across the road in Ayrshire Cottage and discovered that a relative of his, Mr.T.Alan Hughes was proposing to build houses along the other side of the road. He had a word with Alan

(the builder) and persuaded him to build a semi-detached bungalow opposite his home to preserve his view across the fields to Penrhyn Bay and Penrhyn Side. Indeed the row of houses that back onto Bryn Euryn, of which Ayrshire cottage is one, were known, in the 1930s, as Penrhyn View. As a nod to the family tie Alan agreed to build the bungalows. However just as the builders arrived at the roof stage of the construction the Council regulators got wind of the family arrangement and insisted that Mr T.Alan Hughes had to build

full houses along this strip of Dinerth Road. The architect and builder then had to adapt their original design into the homes you see today, and that is why they look like semi-detached bungalows topped out with a chunky central turret.

Mr.Sam and Mrs Winnie Cheshire were the first owners of Link-Lea, (No.133) the home adjoining Todi, which they bought for £330. Mrs Cheshire was a very fine dress maker and as was customary in those days she decided to make her own curtains for her new home. However she discovered that the house was destined to have large angled windows for the front lounge and bedroom and she remonstrated that it would be difficult to make curtains for such a design especially as in those days the curtain rails were made of metal and would not easily bend. The Cheshires knew Mr.Hughes well and he agreed to install convential bow windows instead; the windows that are on display today. Typical of a builder however, he was determined that his angled windows would not go to waste and he installed them on the houses further up the road. Each of the semis (Nos.131-157) up along the road from Todi and Link Lea are of a different design one from another. Numbers 139 and 141 originally had a flat roof and were designed in the Art Deco



Todi

fashion where the window design still gives the game away; they feature in the March Journal of 1996. Numbers 147 and 149 were designed and built for Constance Clements and her sister Carrie. Internally there was a connecting door and there was one large back garden which stretched across the back of both properties. Eventually Carrie allowed her sister Helen to move into her home and when both Carrie and Helen died the fourth sister, Mildy, came home from New Zealand and took up residence in their

house, while Constance continued to live alone next door. Numbers 151 and 153 look almost Dutch in appearance while numbers 155 and 157 retain a whiff of late 1940s suburban London and the semi-detached pair, numbers 143 and 145, have a very distinctive rustic feel with the wooden barge board cladding to the wall above the bedroom windows.

Sam Cheshire was a member of the well known Colwyn Bay firm of grocers, bakers and 'provision dealers' who ran their

business from Clock Stores, 55 Abergele Road. They were proud of one of their advertising slogans: "Cheshire's Celebrated Cheshire Cheese'. Link Lea has always been owned by a member of the Cheshire family; Sam's son, Peter, still lives there. Peter is a keen gardener and in summer the house is a riot of colour from the amazing variety of flowers in the tubs along the walls of the home. When the bus stops at the bus stop outside the house the driver invariably shouts out, "Alight here for the Cheshire Gardens"!

The Pews

In September last year the biggest shopping mall in Europe opened at Westfield Stratford City. The Mayor of Newham said that it would "transform lives". Ira G. Zepp, the author of a study of 'the shopping mall as ceremonial centre', reckons the mall layout mimics the sacred spaces of the great cathedrals, while, like the sanctuary of a church, the residual sacredness of the mall explains why we are less likely to be robbed there than in the street; and of course the piped music we hear inside the mall has churchy overtones. But unlike a church, inside the shopping mall there are no pews.

In the churches John Douglas (NB Journal June 2010) designed, St. Paul's and St. David's in Colwyn Bay, St. John's in Old Colwyn and Christ Church, Bryn-y-Maen, all had pews except St. Paul's. The pews have now gone from St. David's Church but they still remain in St. John's and Christ Church. The interior of St. Paul's Church with the serried rows of well upholstered

chairs looks magnificent. Yet the uncomfortable pews in St. John's Church and Christ Church (and St. Catherine's Church on Abergele Road, Old Colwyn) add dignity to what in the end is a place of sanctuary and contemplation. A characteristic of John Douglas' architecture was the care he took with the detail of the woodwork in his designs and this is a prominent feature of the interior of Christ Church, Bryn-y-Maen, especially noticeable on the pews, as well as the hymn board, alms box and umbrella stand. Pews are still a feature of St. Andrew's Church (NB Journal June 2010) on the corner of Kings Road and Lansdowne Road and yet perhaps the space would be improved by the introduction of comfortable individual seats. The regimented boxed pews in the United Reformed Church (formerly known as the Union Church) on the corner of Abergele Road and Sea View Road have been ripped out, the interior now looks a sorry mess

and the whole dilapidated building is now for sale. There were never any pews in the United Reformed Church (formerly the Congregational Church) on the corner of Colwyn Avenue and Abbey Road in Rhos-on-Sea, (NB Journal October 1995). It was designed was influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, with chairs for the congregation. The brand new Capel y Rhos on Llanerch Road East, the interior of which is bright, colourful and inviting, was never designed with pews in mind. In St. John's Methodist Church, now 123 years old, (on the corner of Conway Road and Pwllcrochan Avenue) the congregation still sit in pews. The same applies to the reddest building imaginable, brick, roofing tiles, terra-cotta tracery and all, the Nant-y-Glyn Methodist Church on the corner of Abergele Road and Nant-y-Glyn Avenue. Perhaps however the interior of Old Colwyn Methodist Church (on the corner of Cadwgan Road and Wynne Avenue: NB Journal March 2003), would be enhanced by throwing out the pews and replacing them with cheerful looking chairs. Many Methodist Churches are as large as they are because when they were designed, the architect was entitled to a grant to match the number of pews that were accommodated in the structure; the greater the number of pews, the larger the grant. The change in fashion from pews to chairs, which is simply a recognition of the times in which we live, where folk expect comfort instead of austerity, colour as opposed to drabness and a desire not to be taken for granted by the church authorities, is best illustrated between the brown stained pews of Hermon Chapel (now demolished) and the bright comfortable chairs in the Chapel which rose phoenix like on the same site, Capel y Rhos (NB Journal November 2009). Congregations have always been



Pews are still a feature of St. Andrew's Church.

ambivalent about pews. Their utility, aesthetics and liturgical value are hotly debated by church councils and amenity bodies up and down the land. Some people rhapsodise over their antiquarian features while others think they are instruments of torture invented by the Victorians to keep the lower orders awake during sermons. I know I certainly thought that, as I sat with my school friends at the back of St.John's Methodist Church in the 1960s!

In fact from a historical point of view pews and benches are relative newcomers. Only after the Reformation did fixed seating in churches become widespread, but it was the 18th and early 19th century box pew that attracted the anger of the Tractarian reformers, especially the Ecclesiological Society. It was the Victorians that introduced the pew with such relish. It is estimated that there are nearly four million 'sittings' in Church of England and Wales churches, most of Victorian origin. Professor Robert Gill maintains that the churches of England and Wales are heavily 'over-pewed' and have been since the late 19th century.

When the pews were installed in our churches the congregation attended because they knew it was their obligation to do so; it was expected of them, it was a way of life. In 2011 it is no longer assumed that you must go to church; it is not expected of you. Today church leaders must attempt to fill the churches by persuading people that a belief in Christianity is a sensible and helpful way of life. One way of doing this is by making the places of worship more inviting; so out with pews and in with the colourful chairs. The futuristically designed Hawarden Road Baptist Church, on the corner of Princes Drive and Hawarden Road, is full of comfy chairs in a rectangular space and is full of worshippers. There are no pews in Rhos-on-Sea Methodist Church (on the corner of Rhos Road and St.George's Road) and there never were and the church is all the better for their absence.

Our Welsh Chapels, Horeb (Rhiw Road), Salem, Tabernacle, Hebron, Bethesda, Ebenezer, (all on Abergele Road) retain their pews, which someone in 1857 described as "the gorgeous pews". Once upon a time they were packed with

worshippers. But for how much longer will these seating arrangements last in today's world. What drove people in the early 20th Century to fight to remove pews was their opposition to the social divisiveness which a combination of "appropriated" and free seating created. They were not concerned to reduce the overall amount of seating only to open up the church to all, irrespective of class or status. Today the movement for change and re-ordering is largely driven by the desire to open up the church interior to more flexible ways of worship and greater community use. This idea can be seen in practice in St.Paul's Church (NB Journal March 1993) in which concerts and school gatherings are held and St.David's Church which has been adapted for those in the community who need extra help. Yet it cannot be denied that the antiquity of Llandrillo-yn-Rhos Parish Church (NB Journal November 1992) and the splendour of St.George's Church, Rhos-on-Sea (NB Journal November 1990) are enhanced by the pews, and the interior of both churches would be sullied by the introduction of individual seats.

A Future Not Dependent On The Past

The former Borough of Colwyn Bay Town Clerk, Geoffrey Edwards, wrote in 1984, "The sale of Victoria Pier in 1968 from the Council to a private company was variously regarded as a mistake, a sign of failure, or a belated acknowledgement of a deep change in holiday needs.....with fewer hotels and the advent of mobile holidays, it was time for a change."

Mahatma Gandhi said: 'The future depends on what we do in the present'; but it seems sometimes that we take an inordinate amount of time in making the journey. It was twenty years ago in our November 1992 Journal, at the end of an article on the Pier, that the question was asked, "Have we reached the point at which the Pier and its pavilion should be demolished?" And in twenty years, what has happened? Nothing.

In January this year the demolition took place of the

450-year-old pier at Yarmouth. It was at this pier that Nelson disembarked after the Battle of the Nile and now, understandably in our present world, the town council cannot find the £350,000 required to restore it.

We must not be frightened by the ever quickening rate of change to our world. When I was young in the late 1940s and 1950s there were no computers, no mobile 'phones, no dish washers, no washing machines, no double glazing, very



Colwyn Bay Pier: A world now gone forever.

few cars on the roads. Now, sixty years later, Facebook has up to 750million users; that is more than 12 times the population of Britain, and young people fly all over the world without a second thought. As the hymn reminds us, "Change and decay in all around I see". We must not refuse to contemplate how things have changed.

All of us must live as much as possible in the present. We must embrace innovative and well planned change rather than dwell on the past as represented by Colwyn Bay Pier. We ought to look to the future while honouring the past; as we live our lives we must not fall into the trap of believing that what was enjoyable for our grandparents and what brought amusement for our parents should necessarily be of help to us. Let's face it; the value of the Pier no longer belongs to cost or beauty, but only to memory. The universal values of life, loyalty, honesty, kindly companionship, a joyous spirit, an optimistic and open view of life, and happy memories, will remain for ever and so they should.

No builder or architect working today, changing the face of Colwyn Bay, would expect their work, necessarily, to have a relevance to the way the people of this town will live in 2111. The world changes and so do we. We have got to believe that there is a rosy future for our relatively small town, which has all the problems associated with many other such places, which have had their commercial hearts ripped out by out of town trading estates.

In the immediate future the pier is destined to become more and more derelict. The Chartered Accountants, Royce Peeling Green, very understandably want to get rid of it. Steve Hunt, the former owner, would like it back. The Council, in a dilemma about the necessity of spending local people's money, could well do without the problem. The pier pressure group, Shore Start, are scrabbling around trying to attract funding for the pier's renovation. Do any of the people in any of these groups ever truly ask themselves whether, one hundred and ten years after its construction, in a world where Colwyn Bay is no longer a holiday resort, if the Pier is now relevant to the future of our town. Indeed is our town ever considered at all when people discuss



Colwyn Bay Pier 1933.

the Pier? The cost of its renovation is horrendous, its present appearance is an embarrassment, its possible part in the future of Colwyn Bay is probably an irrelevance.

To keep a few piers, at resorts such as Blackpool and Brighton and Southport, as examples of a genre of quirky architecture and of an era when the British people flocked to the seaside from the industrial cities for their annual holidays, is understandable and desirable. However there is no reason why Colwyn Bay should be part of such an historical exercise and be saddled with the expense and upkeep of a pier which is well passed its sell by date and has been allowed to deteriorate into an uncertain predicament.

The renovation of Theatre Colwyn is a wonderful example of the type of project on which money can be well spent. On a building catering to a universal, lasting interest; plays, variety shows and films, smack in the middle of the town. Let us attempt to revive the fortunes of Colwyn Bay on realistic and commercial grounds not on the nostalgic pipe dreams of a lost cause.

It is not a contradiction in terms to be a traditionalist and worry about the future of piers, while at the same time not to be

hostile to experiment, to encourage creativity and believe that change can be for the better. Far from believing that the destruction of the Colwyn Bay Pier is an act of vandalism which would rob our town of a useful asset, it could honestly be argued that doing away with it will allow us to let go of a once valuable landmark which now has no part in our town's future, and, by its very existence, is constantly dragging us back to happy days that have gone for ever. Nostalgia is a tricky business. On the one hand you do not want to be seen wallowing in it lest you are regarded as out of touch with the modern world. On the other hand there is a warm glow about fond remembrances shared with our friends as we talk about the place we all come from, the past.

It is given to few of us to know the future, but we owe it to our children to build structures that we consider to be best suited to the town's future; it is difficult to understand the past and for us to appreciate that when the Pier was built it was one of the buildings which contributed to the success of the community from 1900 to about 1980.

Seventy four per cent of the Civic Society in a postal, secret vote, decided that sadly, but realistically, the time has come to close the chapter on the Pier and let it go.