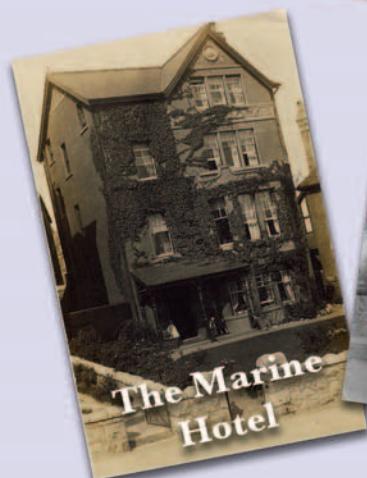
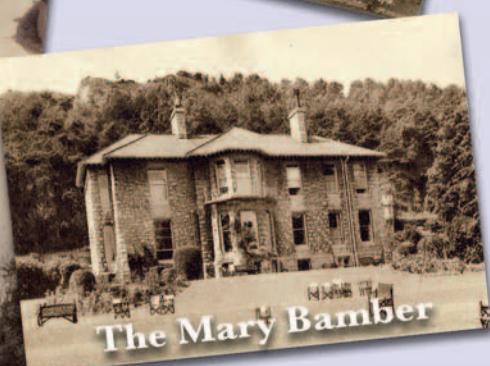
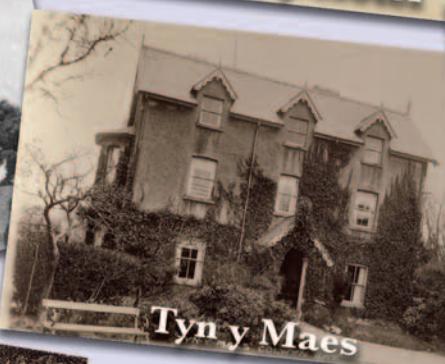
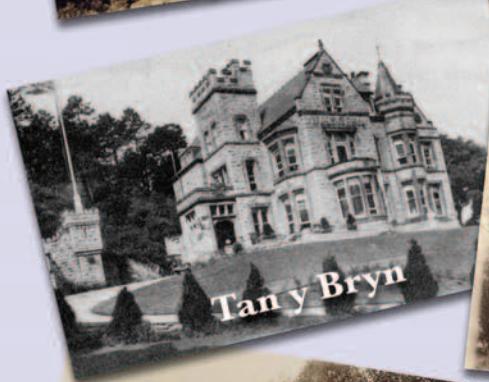
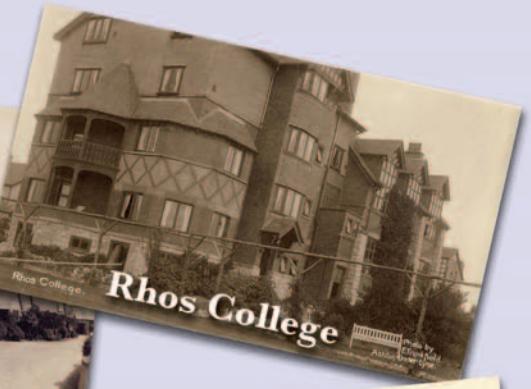
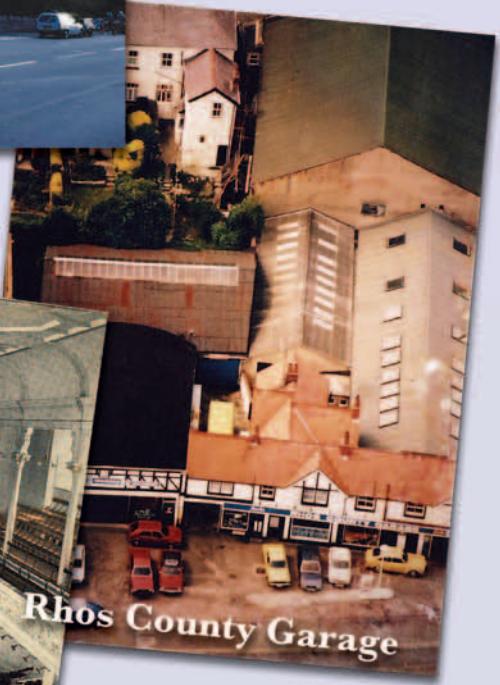
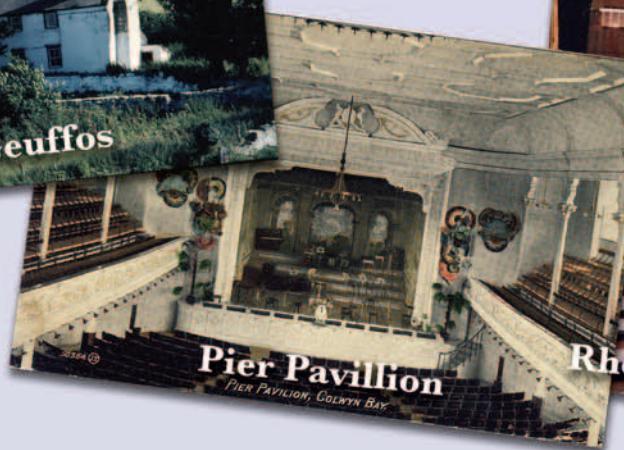
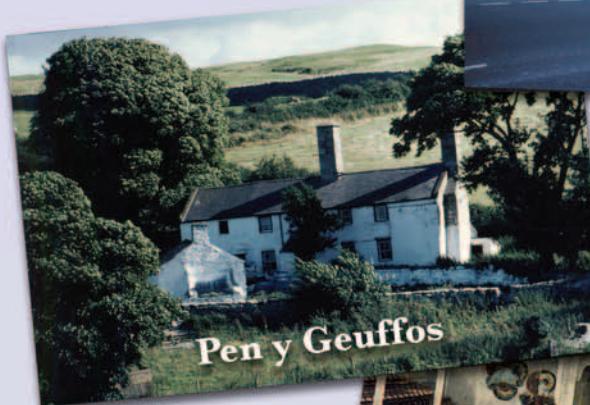
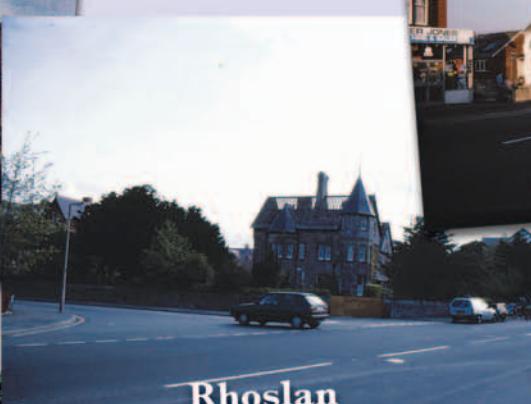
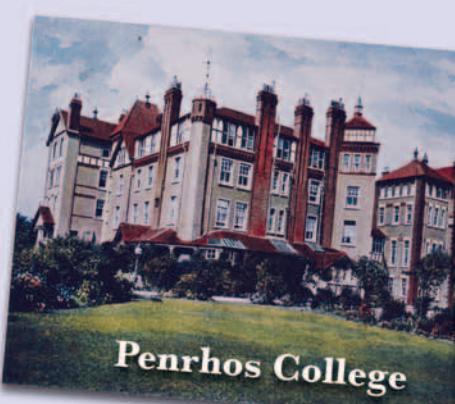
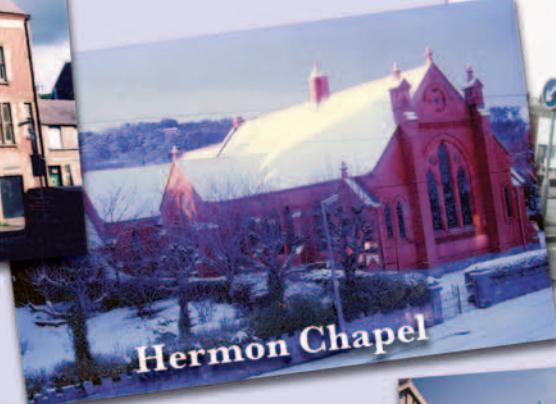
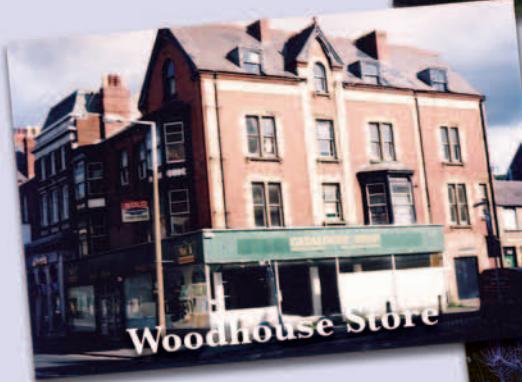
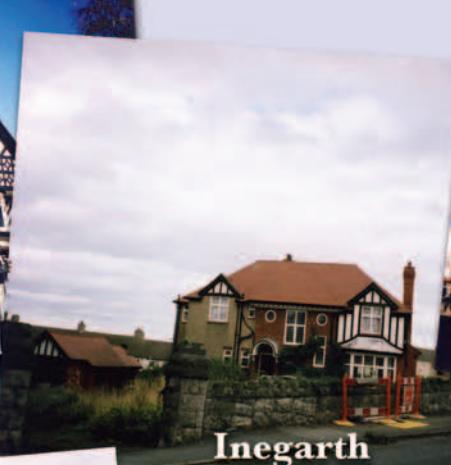


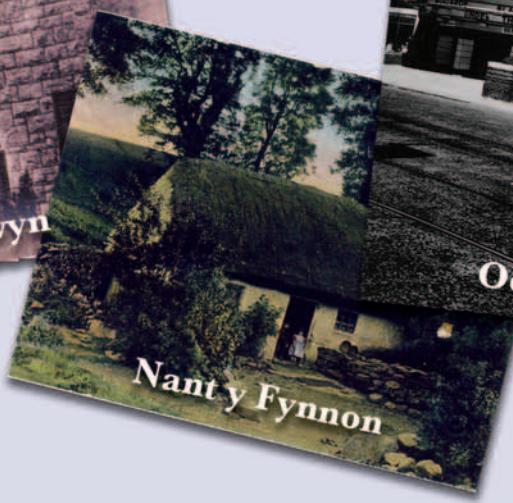
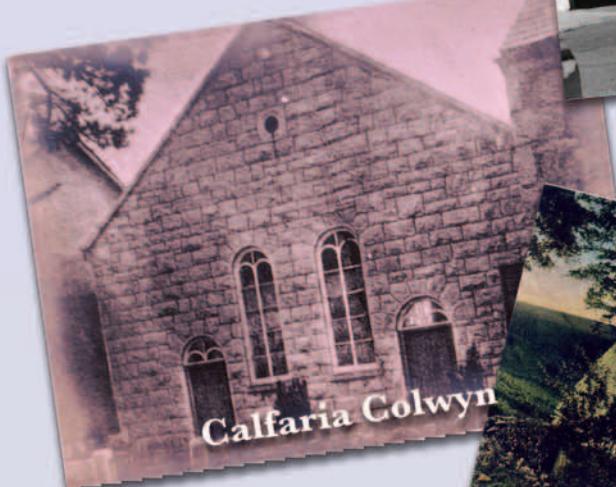
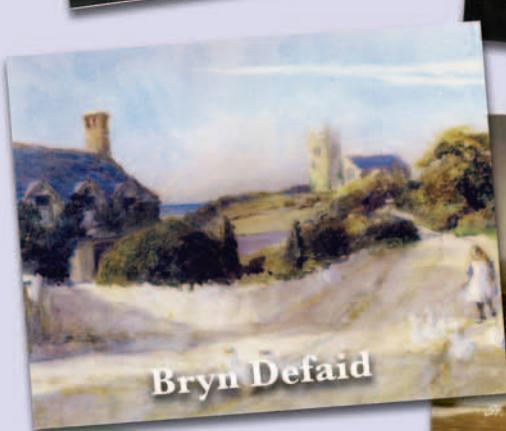
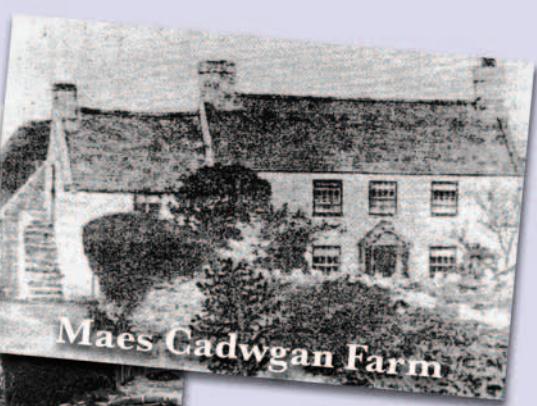
# Colwyn Bay CIVIC SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2008

## GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN









# SAMUEL GRIFFITH PRITCHARD

(Builder 1888 - 1971)



Samuel Pritchards Home on Coed Coch Road

In the 1930s Mr. Seed, the architect of Coed Coch Road designed three houses for Mr. Pritchard. Mr. Pritchard had bought the land on the corner of Station Road and Wynne Avenue in Old Colwyn (on your left as you come down Wynne Avenue and turn left into Station Road). Up until this time all the houses in Wynne Avenue had been detached, but Mr. Seed and Mr. Pritchard decided that there was room for two semi-detached and one detached house on the land; the semis were built on Wynne Avenue and the detached house (Bryn Cemlyn) on Station Road. At the time this caused consternation amongst some of the local builders because semi-detached homes were seen as inferior properties for this prestigious area. How times have changed!

Mr. Pritchard was born in the tiny village of Brynrefail at the western end of Llyn Padarn, with Llanberis at the eastern end. In about 1912, because he could find no work in North Wales he went to Canada. He roamed all over the place carrying out work wherever he found employment. He crossed the Prairies and saw all the major cities, which in his time were no more than Wild West developments. Many years later he would tell his children all about the many times he had crossed the Atlantic and about his travels, mentioning such romantic names as Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Saskatchewan, which they found wonderful of course. He enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps in Canada as an airframe fitter, and then when the hostilities ended he decided to return to Colwyn Bay.

worried thereafter that the rumbling of the trams as they passed the building would shake the roof to such an extent that it would come tumbling down. So far all seems to be all right.

Mr. Pritchard also built the three shops on Princes Road, Old Colwyn with the adjoining Treleaven Jones Bakery at the rear. Sidney Colwyn Foulkes designed these. They are slightly out of line with the other properties bordering the same road, but to satisfy the local planning officer, the roof of the building was allowed to float out from the structure below to meet the line of the building along side. There is about this building on Princes Road the hint of Art Deco. The Art Deco style is distinguished for its preference for clean, simplified forms. Art Deco, which took its name from the "Exposition des Arts Decoratifs" in Paris in 1925, was perhaps the last universal idiom in design and architecture before we entered the post-modern age. Now we don't seem to have styles, just revivals of styles. But Art Deco was a genuine global phenomenon, recognisable at a glance in buildings and bric-a-brac from Tokyo to Mexico City. Mr. Colwyn Foulkes, as an up-to-date architect, would have known all this and as we can see in Princes Road incorporated it into his building design. However he and Mr. Pritchard would be sad to see the way in which the building has been allowed to deteriorate.

For himself, Mr Pritchard built what is now Number 73, Coed Coch Road, just passed the Fairy Glen, on what was an unadopted and unmade road. Indeed it was in this



Colwyn Foulkes designed shops (Centre) on Princes Road



*The Pritchard / Seed houses*

house that his son, Gwilym, was born; a man later destined to be a solicitor in Old Colwyn, (Guest Pritchard & Co). The house next door, a bungalow, was built by a New Zealander in the New Zealand style and originally had a veranda running all the way round the building.

Mr. Pritchard also built on Heenan Road and Endsleigh Road and East and West Roads (now known as Clifton Road.), others in Coed Coch Road and a bungalow in Berthes Road for Mr. Hilliam, a New Zealander, who was a milkman in Old Colwyn at the time. He also built the Pavilion in Min-y-Don Park, another building now sadly much neglected. He built his own workshop on Coed Coch Road, which is still in existence and later became the premises of Mr. Stanley, a diminutive, slight bloke who was the Old Colwyn undertaker. The firm of Malcolm Wilford now owns it. All the sand he needed he bought from the sand pit on Laundry Hill (Groes Road) where there was a weighbridge, a piece of land now transformed into the playing field of Bod Alaw, the Welsh School.

Just before the outbreak of the Second World War he was appointed by the Ministry of Works as their Clerk of Works to supervise the erection of Telephone Exchanges throughout North Wales; Conwy Deganwy, Chirk and Ruabon. He always felt that his best Telephone Exchange was the one he supervised the

building of in Porthmadoc. He spent countless hours preparing guide notes for the stonemasons to explain in detail his views as to how the bonding of the locally hewn stone should be placed and finished. This particular building attracted great admiration from knowledgeable professionals, and still stands proudly today as a classical structure of its period, as one enters Porthmadoc from Tremadoc.

His last position with the Ministry of Works was as their representative in the building of the (then) new Government

Offices at Gabalfa, Cardiff. In the 1960s Mr. Pritchard transferred to the Welsh Hospital Board and was their Chief Clerk of Works in Respect of Capital expenditure works in North Wales.

Mr. Pritchard died on Christmas Day 1971 aged 83 years and when we look around Old Colwyn today we see, without realising it, his handiwork. A man who toiled away at his given task, without great rewards, but with pride in his job and an ethic of hard work. It is to such men that we owe a salute of gratitude and an obligation to remember them.



*Porthmadoc Telephone Exchange*

# OUR ROLE ?

Should we try to preserve all buildings at any cost? Are all the buildings in Colwyn Bay worth preserving? Are there any particular types of buildings, which we should be attempting to maintain or indeed to resist their being built in the first place?

In June in *The Spectator*, Theodore Dalrymple wrote: "Those who care nothing for the past care nothing for the future, for what is our future if not our successors' past? This explains why architects now build in the self-fulfilling expectation that their work will be pulled down in 30 years or fewer, and why they feel they must impose themselves on the townscape while they can. And destruction is favoured over construction because it is permanent."

The destruction of the old St. Enoch's Hotel and its replacement with new flats (The Waterfront) is, on the face of it, a good thing. That area now looks a lot better and has been rejuvenated; but have the flats been built to last as long as did the St. Enoch's Hotel? The Penrhos School Chapel and Hall have been built and destroyed all in my mother's lifetime; the Garstang Office and warehouse (on Colwyn Avenue in Rhos-on-Sea) have been built and demolished in her son's lifetime! Change is often good and inevitable but we must be ever vigilant that the craze for demolition is not used as an excuse for the sweeping away of the inherited fabric of our town. Civilisation is made up of our collective memory, passed on, passed down.

As a local society we are a small part of the web of interest and cohesion, which attempts to make Colwyn Bay a decent place in which to live. In attempting to make the built environment habitable and aesthetic we hope in the long run to make all the people who live here to feel part of a cultural identity that will give us all a sense of rootedness and belonging in this vast, endlessly shifting flux of a country. A community ought to enfold us and make us feel that we are part of something that is recognisable. We have our childhood memories of our childhood towns and villages, but there is no harm in change, there is no disgrace in trying to make things better. As a community we must

use our buildings or they will die. Our nonconformist chapels (Engedi, Hermon, Nazareth, Bethesda) are closed and either derelict or demolished. These places used to be the beating heart of our town not only for religious purposes but also for social and cultural activity. People who are dismayed by the loss of local amenities should remember that it is also true about these historic assets: use them or lose them.

In March of this year there was a headline in the Pioneer "Bay Town Council in Housing Plan Plea" which led an article about the endeavours of our concerned and ever watchful Town Councillors to put a block on all multiple occupancy applications in Colwyn Bay. The councillors agreed in principle to oppose all applications for flats, apartments and multiple occupancy accommodation. As a Society this is also a worry of our own and we would welcome a more understanding and architecturally more thoughtful approach to the needs of the local community when deciding what buildings should be pulled down and what should then be erected on the vacant land

I believe that we are probably against uniformity, against the crushing of what is individual in the interests of profit. We abhor the centralised hatred of difference and variety. We must guard against complacency; we must not love everything simply because it is old, even if it is rubbish. We ought not to dispute the value of everything that is new, even if it is desperately needed. We must try not to campaign against stuff, from incinerators to new housing estates, but never for it, whether it is new schools or green wind farms.

Once upon a time The Council had a Unitary Plan, which subsequently the Welsh Assembly changed into a Local Development Plan; but in fact in Conwy there is no Plan in place, although of course they proffer advice and make planning decisions. However in 2007 the conditions on multiple occupancy of properties was relaxed by the Borough Council making it ever more difficult for Colwyn Bay to maintain the infrastructure of our hometown. A small example are the bins for Princess Court flats (on the

old site of Colwyn Bay Hotel). There is no provision of space for the number of bins which need to be emptied once a fortnight; this is wonderful for the rats but not for the people who live around Marine Road. One can only speculate as to why the local authorities should act in this shortsighted manner; is it because they are looking to raise more revenue from more flats? We would thus support the Bay of Colwyn Town Council in its view that a strict control on the standard of flats should be maintained.

At the moment there is no real Conservation Plan in place with the Council. The Conwy County Borough Council is now in a 'consultation timetable' with the Welsh Office. By November 2010 there should hopefully be a properly structured Local Development Plan in place. Between January and March 2010 there will be a public examination of The Plan. So we wait and see.

As the local Civic Society and The Town Council and the County Borough Council, we should all be wary of the Government's desire for ever more central control over planning decisions. It has been said on the Prime Minister's behalf that he wants to move from the big centralist state to more local involvement, yet the Government is proposing to set up a vast new centralist unelected quango called the Independent Planning Commission to oversee major projects. The situation is that local influence over planning has been traduced by the Government and that development in Great Britain is now to a large extent influenced by a mix of naked commercial greed and Stalinist central control.

Planning, conservation, environmental vigilance make up a possibly explosive mine-field through which we must tread with care. J.G.Farrell in his wonderful book *The Siege of Krishnapur*, wrote, "We look on past ages with condescension, as a mere preparation for us, but what if we're only an afterglow of them?" All we can expect is change but we must not forget those good people who have gone before us who also wanted only what was best for Colwyn Bay.

# THE CUL-DE-SAC

Some months ago a new Government planning document, imaginatively entitled Manual For Streets, condemned the Cul-de-sac. The reason given was that areas with culs-de-sac "lack any kind of coherent urban structure." So presumably 'urban' means 'good'. The document claims that culs-de-sac "make orientation difficult, create leftover and ill-defined spaces, have too many blank walls and facades and are inconvenient for pedestrians, cyclists and buses." Knots Landing, the glamorous and dangerous Californian cul-de-sac, featured shocking shoulder-pads, double lives and daily intrigue. More than one resident met a murderous end at the carefully manicured hands of another. Life down under in Ramsay Street, the home of Neighbours, was sunnier and sweeter with the matronly Helen Daniels and Bouncer the dog. Over here we were landed with Brookside; dismal, dull and depressing. Colwyn Bay seems staid in comparison and probably a good thing too.

When this Editor was growing up in Rhos-on-Sea there were only a few culs-de-sac; Mauldeth Road, Woodlands Avenue and Craig Wen off Rhos Road, Pine Grove and

Gordon Avenue, off Penrhyn Avenue; Princess Avenue used to be a cul-de-sac until it was opened up across the fields to Tan-y-Bryn Road. Since the building spree of the last thirty years many more have been created. The whole of the new estate built on the old Penrhos College grounds is in fact one extended cul-de-sac. If you are building on the land surrounding old large houses, a cul-de-sac is inevitable. Plas Eithin and Pine Court off Llanrwst Road, Llys Argoed of Kings Road, Bryn Teg Drive off Tan-y-Bryn Road, Cedar park, a cul-de-sac off an old cul-de-sac, Copthorn Road; Berwyn and Clwyd Courts on Mr. Horton's old land which also includes the memory of him in Horton Drive off Tan-y-Bryn Road; Iola Drive and Heather Close off Queens Road, Old Colwyn, Ffordd Tirionfa and Plas Gwilym off Llysfaen Road, Queens Avenue and St.John's Close off Station Road, Old Colwyn and so on and so on.

What ever an anonymous government report may suggest, hopefully we here in Colwyn Bay will not give up on the cul-de-sac. After all there is no through traffic, they are quieter and more private. It is not easy to create new streets and

culs-de-sac are the perfect way to overcome the problem. They are, and will remain, an inevitability

It is thought that Britain's first cul-de-sac was Bishop's Grove in Hampstead Garden Suburb just off an enclave nicknamed Millionaires' Row. We have no Millionaires' Row in Colwyn Bay but never the less until recently the cul-de-sac was one of the few things that most people liked and nobody wanted to change. Two new culs-de-sac have been built recently. One where Hermon Chapel once stood off Llannerch Road East and one where Miss Westcott used to have her rickety shed and allotments behind St.George's Church in Rhos-on-Sea. It is good that we have these hidden corners dotted around the area. A cul-de-sac gives a place character. After all Britain's ultimate cul-de-sac masquerades in the name of 'Street'. If the authors of Manual For Streets looked out of their windows they might be able to see it, - Downing Street.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

George Henry Alman died on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1951 aged 72 years. He had arrived in Colwyn Bay in about 1905 just before the 1<sup>st</sup> World War and went to work for Daniel Allen & Sons, the top notch store on Station Road. He was a

cabinetmaker and stayed with Daniel Allen's for the next thirty years retiring just before the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. He had come here from Crewe and so called his new home at 46 Erskine Road, CREWE VILLA. His son, Stanley James Alman, who died on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2006 aged 85 years, lived all

his life in Crewe Villa remaining a bachelor to the end of his days. The name is still on the house acting as an association to days long ago, before there were trams in Colwyn Bay and just after the founding of the Parish of Colwyn Bay.