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## Hotel 70 Degrees

Last updated: 24 October 2008

One of the best known buildings in Colwyn Bay was the Hotel 70 Degrees, now demolished. **Graham Roberts** of the town's Civic Society told its story, before the bulldozers moved in.



As a young boy one of the delights in returning home from our summer holidays was the sight of the spectacular curve of the bay and sweep of the beach and sea below the headland of Penmaenrhos. To many people it was a great sadness that this lovely view was obscured for ever when in 1972 the hotel was built.

The builder was Gwynedd Caradog Jones from Llysfaen and the architect was Stewart Powell Bowen who was in partnership with Gwilym Parry Davies at the time. Mr Edmund Hall was also associated with the two men.

Mr Bowen was born in Colwyn Bay and before he went to school he could only speak Welsh. He always used to say he was lucky not to be called Val as he was born on February 14. Stewart Powell Bowen was an early and highly respected member of the Civic Society; his name is recalled in the firm he founded, Bowen Dann Knox.

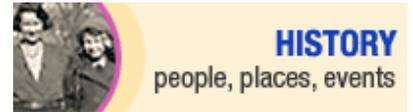
Mr Bowen had expressed a wish that when he died his body was to be buried in a country churchyard; and so it is that he is buried in the churchyard of The Cathedral In The Hills, Christ Church, Bryn-y-Maen. The simple Welsh slate headstone reads: 'Stewart Powell Bowen. Pensaer. 1918-1982.

Mr Jones, the builder, owned the land beside the layby at Penmaenrhos and it was his intention to build a small wayside restaurant, more or less where the hotel is today, and bungalows or houses on the rest of the land, where the hotel bedrooms are.

However Mr Bowen persuaded him that a grand hotel would be better suited to this premier and spectacular position overlooking Colwyn Bay. After all, at the time, this land was beside the main road into Colwyn Bay. Mr Bowen took his plans to Cardiff where he secured grants for the realisation of his idea. He estimated the cost of the building to be in the region of £110,000, an estimate that proved to be highly inaccurate.



The Seventy Degrees Hotel was so named because of the angles used in its construction. It made for an unusual concept, but from the builder's point of view, proved a terrible waste of material. The carpets had to be cut at 70 degrees; even the stairs are constructed



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at 70 degrees so wasting wood after it was cut to this particular design. The whole building is based on a steel frame erected on rock. The rock had to be drilled energetically before the steel stanchions would hold. It was just as difficult to excavate the drains which eventually led down into Tan Lan at the bottom of Tan-y-Wal.

Oddly enough, although the roof looks flat, it was constructed in the shape of a low angled V with the valley running along the centre of the roof, which was covered in three layers of felt and mastic, with a grill in the middle of the roof to collect the water. The water then ran down pipes hidden inside the steel supports inside the hotel. This arrangement has since caused some problems. The whole effect, especially in 1973, especially in Colwyn, was spectacular and the hotel became a popular venue for evening functions for many local societies and clubs.

The name of the hotel was eventually changed from Seventy Degrees to the Colwyn Bay Hotel, but to local people this name conjured up an entirely different bygone building. The Colwyn Bay Hotel which we recall, those of us who have lived here more or less all our lives, stood where Princes Court now stands overlooking the promenade; for us the hotel at Penmaenhead was always the Seventy Degrees Hotel and with good reason.

We romanticise the past; we think we are dealing with history. We are not. We are in fact, mythmakers. We must always be wary not to imbue nostalgia with an importance it does not deserve and if the Seventy Degrees Hotel is demolished, let us not be sorry, for the future holds endless intriguing possibilities."

### **But what was there before the Hotel 70?**

#### your comments

##### **Wendy from Colwyn Bay**

Before we were married about twenty five years ago my now husband took me to the hotel 70 for a meal, as it was the best restaurant at that time for a romantic dinner. I remember that the view was spectacular and the meal expensive! I cannot believe that it is going to be more expensive homes that the locals cannot afford.

Mon Aug 7 10:12:07 2006

##### **steve amery, heswall, wirral**

I went past here on 17/06/06 and saw how sad the building looked. I had to find out if there were any websites dedicated to it and was amazed to find this and several others on google including interior dereliction photos. Went here as a family with my parents and brothers and sisters. It was fantastic and holds brilliant memories of when we were all living at home. Excellent restaurant, Manuel the waiter, Roy Schneider look-alike wine waiter, Mr and Mrs Sexton the glamorous managers, American porter, display cabinet where my brother spent about an hour looking up a female manequin's dress, space invader tables in top lounge, platters of sandwiches, smart clothes in the restaurant, coloured sugar, never forget it nor the amazing views. Would love to get inside and would love to do a scheme for a refurbishment.

Fri Jun 23 09:45:17 2006

**John Burgess from Colwyn Bay**

As a resident of Colwyn Bay I am constantly astounded by the lack of vision of certain individuals within our community who are more interested in clinging onto remnants of the past without any consideration of the future of the town. While surrounding towns continue to prosper and attract the best shops, leisure, housing and job opportunities our community is being left further and further behind. The 70 Degrees Hotel has served its purpose and run its course. Surely it is now time to put that behind us and create something special on this landmark site that flies the flag for our town. We don't need more hotel! accommodation but we do need a landmark development to put Colwyn Bay back on the map.

Wed May 24 11:11:12 2006

**Dawn Glindon**

I have many treasured memories of this outstanding hotel. My family and I used to travel here on an occasional Sunday from where we lived near Birmingham just to have Sunday Lunch with my Grandad (may he rest in peace). I remember Albert carving the beef, I remember the Bavarian night they held and I remember the rabbits. I loved that place, please don't destroy a wonderful piece of history.

Sun Mar 5 12:04:14 2006

**Ste Dexter from Manchester**

I had a part time job at the Hotel 70 back in 1975, I used to wash dishes in the kitchen. I was 15 years old. I was paid thirty pence an hour, I later left to work at the National Milk Bar in Colwyn Bay for thirty five pence an hour - sad really, but those were the days!

Fri Mar 3 11:13:54 2006

**Barbara Stokes from Bilston**

I had a free weekend at the 70 Degrees in April 1992. I used it for my honeymoon with my husband David and my little boy Daniel who was 4 at the time. I hold memories of the rabbits running by the cliff and the food was great and the staff were very helpful and the rooms were tidy. I hope they don't Demolish the Hotel - it was a very nice place.

Sat Sep 17 15:32:58 2005

**Marilyn Hopkins Manchester**

I used to love to see the rabbits hopping across the grass outside the bedroom windows. The restaurant food was very good and the views from the lounge spectacular! There was also a 70s-style disco dance floor which was glass cubes lit up with multi-coloured lights from underneath. Along with many other stays, we spent a great Christmas and New Year there! What a pity it wasn't bought by someone with the vision (and funds), to renovate it. I'm sure it must have been a successful venture. I would have certainly been a regular customer, (and paid more).

Fri Jul 29 16:27:28 2005

**Bryan Owen, now exiled to Haverfordwest**

I must say that I am saddened by the slow demise of the 70 Degrees. It has been a part of my memories of home since I was a lad. It should have been refurbished when the expressway was being built and touted as a main stopping point with those 'tourist brown signs'. But that is now in the past, and I'm glad to hear that it will be remembered by so many people.

Wed Mar 2 19:04:41 2005

**David Hughes (AKA Rusty) From Colwyn Bay**

I was born in Tan-y-lan, and lived there until I was 16 and left to join the Army, now I am retired and have returned to the Bay to live. I remember the Hotel being built and thinking at such a young age how grand it looked. How naive I must have been, it is a typical 1970s eyesore and I will be glad to see the monstrosity reduced to rubble. The area has the best view of Colwyn Bay and it would be great if it were turned into a viewing platform/relaxation area, for all the people of Colwyn Bay and its surrounding area to enjoy. Big Hi to "Flapper", best regards to you all.  
Mon Feb 14 10:48:43 2005

**Catrin Dempsey, Redditch**

I have some fond memories of the Colwyn Bay Hotel (70 degrees). The fact they would never have rabbit on the menu as they used to have a rabbit warren on the cliff. We used to watch them from our bedroom window. The meals used to be excellent with the resident Albert carving the roast beef with pride.  
Tue Feb 8 13:31:48 2005

**M Brazendale, Middlewich, Cheshire.**

We stayed there following our wedding and prior to flying to the Maldives for our honey moon in 1987. We also revisited on our tenth wedding anniversary. Fond memories and excellent views from the restaurant - a shame this hotel has been let go.  
Sat Oct 30 23:20:51 2004

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## Before the 70 degrees

Last updated: 02 May 2007

**Alun Foulkes from Colwyn Bay** remembers the old quarrymen's cottages which were there before the Hotel 70.

"Before the hotel was built, there were three quarrymen's stone cottages and my grandfather, Owen Foulkes, lived in one of them. There was also the foreman's house, Mr Emrys Williams, and the quarry manager, Ellis Thomas's house.

Those cottages were pulled down in the mid 1950s when the Penmonrhos Quarry owners, Kneshaw Lupton, decided to extend the quarry. They were going to go over the railway tunnel, and extend the quarry over to the other side. But in the end they decided this would be too dangerous because the tunnel might collapse. So they pulled down the cottages for nothing.

They moved us all to Llanddulas, but the quarry closed in 1960.

So they built the new houses and the Hotel 70 degrees there instead. The hotel was built on a metal frame, right into the rock. Apparently, it's called the Hotel 70 degrees because everything in there is at a 70 degree angle - the walls, the floors, the stairs, everything.

If you walk down below the Hotel 70, you'll find a vent from the railway tunnel for the old steam trains."

**Pictures of the hotel as demolition men move in.**



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**Carole Pixton**

Just found the comments and noticed the reference to Ocean View. Thought I'd drop you a quick note to say that 'we' are the current occupants of this property which had been a shop for many years. We've completely gutted the house and I can assure you it looks 'lovely'!! Let me know if you would like some pictures of it 'as is'

Mon Sep 17 11:44:12 2007

**Angela Roberts from London**

I have very fond memories of when I lived at 11 Glyndwr Rd Llysfaen. I remember the Faulks family and many other friends I made whilst living there. Nothing beats the hills & Countryside surrounding Llysfaen. I would love to see pictures of the village especially the Marian.

Tue Dec 5 14:12:56 2006

**Brian Williams - Llundain**

Mae Alun Foulkes yn dod ag atgofion melys yn ol wrth grybwyll enwau trigolion y tai a gafwyd eu dymchwel wrth ehangu'r chwarel. Fel plentyn, tan y flwyddyn 1958, yr oeddwn yn byw yn y ty gyda'r enw "Ocean View", ac adeg hynny, yr oedd bron pawb yn yr ardal yn siarad Cymraeg.

[Alun Foulkes brings back sweet memories when he names some of the occupants of houses demolished during quarry expansion. As a child, until 1958, I lived at Ocean View, and at that time nearly everyone in the area spoke Welsh]  
Tue May 2 10:47:00 2006

**Gwyn Roberts, Birmingham**

The village of Llysfaen is very old. The first church was built there in the 8th century. I have lived the last 40 years in Birmingham during which time many changes have taken place in Llysfaen whilst many old things remain. Mr DJ Williams owned Cartref smallholding approx. 200 yards North East of the church, and in his field some 100 yds due north of the church is/was a well, known as St Cynfran's Well, dating back possibly before the church. On the far side of the village (on the Isallt Rd) heading toward Llanddulas, there is a rock on the left and just past Isallt Farm is a pillar of rock close to the rock face and I'm told that approx 1500 yrs ago, local ceremonies were held around this pillar, hence the name of Llys Faen or Council of the Stone. Let's see some pictures of it please, it would bring back many fond memories for me.

Fri Jun 3 11:12:37 2005

## Farewell to Hotel 70 Degrees

Last updated: 25 June 2007



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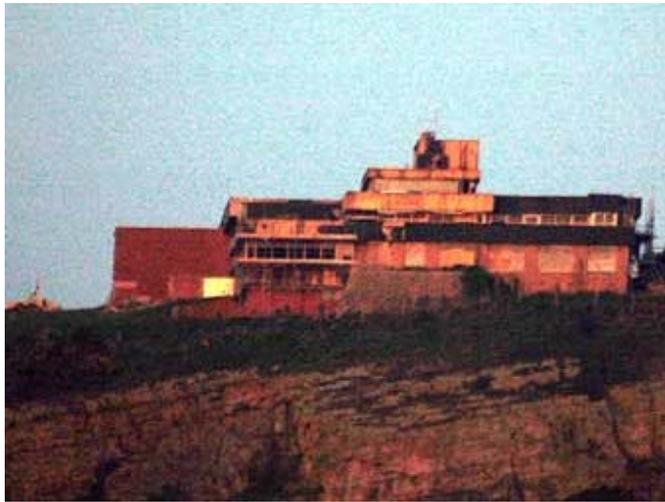
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Aled Williams from Colwyn Bay took these pictures of the Hotel 70 Degrees as workmen prepared to demolish it in May 2007.

**Gazza captures the interior before demolition. Hotel 70 Degrees history.**

### your comments

#### stefan kingdon colwyn bay

how nice it is to see so many people talking about the hotel, even after it has gone. after working there for over 6 years in the restaurant it holds many memories for me too. it was a very special place and for me and many will be a special part of my life for a long time. its a shame that more could not be done to save it as it did bring many people in to the town, the main down fall though i have to say is not the hotel itself but the lack of things for the people to do when they actually arrived in the town itself.

Mon Feb 16 09:40:41 2009

#### Joy from London

I worked there as a silver service waitress whilst at college and enjoyed every minute. The food was excellent, staff brilliant and view amazing. Save the Pier!

Tue Jul 15 10:15:29 2008

#### Alan Mitchell from Dyserth

Nobody so far has mentioned what a wonderful view was to be had from the lounge. Many a happy afternoon was spent there. After a delicious meal in the restaurant, my wife and I used to repair to the lounge with our books and were served very delightfully with coffee and home made petits fours. There is nowhere quite like that to go to now.

Fri Jun 22 10:37:24 2007



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##### Tai Hanesyddol

O blastai crand i ffermydd gwledig, camwch dros drothwy rhai o dai mwyaf hanesyddol yr ardal

**Michael Owen from Manchester**

My family has connections in Penmaenrhos, and when I saw the hotel for the first time I was horrified that such a monster could spoil the headland. High prices and indifferent service made the hotel unpopular, and a tourist trap. Now it's gone, all I want to say is hurrah! If the headland must be built upon, then housing is a better use. But why does Colwyn Bay always spoil its most scenic places? Perhaps next the powers that be will build high rise flats in Eirias Park, or a rubbish incinerator on Cayley Promenade?  
Tue May 29 09:27:58 2007

**best not say ... Deeside**

Had our wedding night here after marrying the first time in 1973. Lovely room with a view. Surely this could have been better managed, but two divorces down the line, who am I to say?  
Fri May 18 09:08:06 2007

**LINDA DALTRY, PRESTATYN**

what a shame this old hotel is giving way to progress. my family, friends and i have very fond memories of our 25th wedding anniversary spent there. we all had great food and great entertainment. i shall miss seeing it at the top of the hill when travelling along that stretch of the a55.  
Thu May 17 10:41:06 2007

**Yvonne from Deeside**

I used to pass this hotel on a regular basis and my mum used to work for the office that held the blue prints for this hotel. It is sad that it has gone, but it was sadder how badly that it fell into disrepair. I hope that something tasteful is replacing it :-)  
Thu May 17 10:40:10 2007

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Aled Williams from Colwyn Bay took these pictures of the Hotel 70 Degrees as workmen prepared to demolish it in May 2007.

**Gazza captures the interior before demolition. Hotel 70 Degrees history.**



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## A final glimpse inside the Hotel 70 Degrees

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Gazza from Staffordshire sent us these photos which he took inside the Hotel 70 Degrees, Colwyn Bay, in April 2007, a few weeks before it was finally demolished.

Gazza is a member of the 28 Days Later web community (see link right) brought together by a passion for those areas/buildings/structures of the urban landscape that tend to be overlooked by the general public.

"We visit, document and report interesting places from around the country (and sometimes the world) so that the memory of the subject is never lost or forgotten. Hence why these photos were taken," said Gazza. "I just wanted to share these particular shots with an obviously interested audience."

### The history of the hotel.

#### your comments

##### Mr I Paul Gill

Thanks for taking these pictures. I stayed there in the late 70's with my parents (who loved the hotel) and thought I would like to have a bit of nostalgia and stay there again. Certainly got quite a shock to find it had been demolished.  
Wed Aug 13 11:24:20 2008

##### Gazza, staffs

The pictures that I selected for this feature were not intended to show the architecture of the building, although I took many that were. They were simply to show those people who stayed inside and visited the hotel in the past, what it was like just before the end. If think our friends who have previously posted misunderstood the purpose of these particular shots.

Tue Jul 3 16:07:30 2007



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**Martin Barlow, Cefn**

The building was interesting and different from an architectural point of view and that architecture was successful also in that it was a place which felt pleasant to be in. But the pics don't convey the particularity of the place in any way so there is no sense of loss about them - really they could be anywhere.

Fri Jun 29 14:55:09 2007

**Giovanni from planet earth**

Gazza has been quite perceptive, in my view, as to the suitability of the 70 degrees sitting perfectly on its clifftop site. It was a memorable experience looking out from the bar area, on the sweeping Bay beneath. Unfortunately, a suitable sympathetic owner has been denied the opportunity of restoring this gem into the area's foremost tourist accommodation. I believe the state of the interior may have more to do with the local constabulary using the hotel in its war games, than the usual riff-raff! The skyline as viewed from the A55, I'll bet ,will look much the worse with whatever numerous structures replace same. If you want a taste of what may appear, look no further than the property recently built within the hotel's grounds, (visible over car park walls). What a wonderful site for a hospice or retirement home.

Fri Jun 29 09:33:27 2007

**Alan Anglesey**

I fail to see the value of these pictures. They show nothing of architectural or historic merit. What they do show however is the mindless vandalism that seems rife in our society today. I doubt that there will be much passion lost on this building and hopefully what takes its place will be of rather more lasting value to this area of Wales.

Thu Jun 28 09:39:12 2007

**Mrs Sparkle, Blackpool**

Very sad to see an interior of a hotel which once brought guests wonderful holiday times.

Thu Jun 28 09:31:57 2007

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max 15°C  
min 8°C



**Monday**  
max 10°C  
min 7°C

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##### Tai Hanesyddol

O blastai crand i ffermydd gwledig, camwch dros drothwy rhai o dai mwyaf hanesyddol yr ardal

## A final glimpse inside the Hotel 70 Degrees

Last updated: 25 June 2007



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Gazza from Staffordshire sent us these photos which he took inside the Hotel 70 Degrees, Colwyn Bay, in April 2007, a few weeks before it was finally demolished.

Gazza is a member of the 28 Days Later web community (see link right) brought together by a passion for those areas/buildings/structures of the urban landscape that tend to be overlooked by the general public.

"We visit, document and report interesting places from around the country (and sometimes the world) so that the memory of the subject is never lost or forgotten. Hence why these photos were taken," said Gazza. "I just wanted to share these particular shots with an obviously interested audience."

### The history of the hotel.

#### your comments

##### Mr I Paul Gill

Thanks for taking these pictures. I stayed there in the late 70's with my parents (who loved the hotel) and thought I would like to have a bit of nostalgia and stay there again. Certainly got quite a shock to find it had been demolished.  
Wed Aug 13 11:24:20 2008

##### Gazza, staffs

The pictures that I selected for this feature were not intended to show the architecture of the building, although I took many that were. They were simply to show those people who stayed inside and visited the hotel in the past, what it was like just before the end. If think our friends who have previously posted misunderstood the purpose of these particular shots.

Tue Jul 3 16:07:30 2007



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