

Who remembers Conny Castle?

Conny Castle appears to have been something of a local tourist attraction in Moorside, many years ago. From an article in the Oldham Evening Chronicle dated 1979 - telling the story of Conny Castle in response to a readers request - it was a Temperance Hotel, now on the site of 5 Whitehall, on Whitehall Lane, off Turf Pit Lane.

This part of the house had a castellated roof in addition to a large sign bearing the hotel's name and the fact that it was a Temperance Hotel. The article tells of regular visitors from Sunday Schools in the Oldham area to the Hotel, who would walk up Turf Pit Lane, after getting off the tram terminus in Moorside. The attractions of the hotel appear to have included a nicely appointed garden at the rear of the hotel where families could perhaps enjoy a cup of tea and cake, whilst the children played on the swings and roundabouts provided there. In addition the hotel apparently had a menagerie where you could see monkeys and what we now know as budgerigars in addition perhaps, to other species of non-native birds.

The present owners of the building, have unearthed many coins at the rear of the building, dating back to the early part of the 20th Century, in addition to pieces of crockery and earthworks providing evidence of the building's history. The Oldham Evening News also has a colour photograph of the Hotel, in all it's glory, showing contemporary visitors at the front of the Hotel. There is unfortunately no indication of when the hotel operated. Can you help?

Having stumbled across this little gem of information about the history of Moorside, I would very much like to gain further details about the area, for the church's website - which stops detailing the history of the area in 1972 - local schools and any other interested parties. If you feel you can contribute to helping build a picture of Moorside's past, I'd like to arrange a regular get together, perhaps at 7:30 on Sundays - venue to be agreed.

All potential contributors are welcome. Please let me know if you can help either on Sundays - I'll be in the main hall after the church Service - or by calling me on 0161 626 6808. The suggested day/time is not written in stone if you feel another time would be more suitable.

Whitehall, on Whitehall Lane, comprises what is now be three houses in a block built of local stone and of completely different character to that of the adjoining houses.

Main building believed to be built around 1860 with No 5 added 30 years later. No other nearby houses at the time. Present owners recollect hearing that among the people who have previously owned the buildings were the family who owned all the land from Besom Hill to Counthill. They could not remember the family name, but for whatever reason, the name Sykes sprang to mind. All this land was subsequently sold, excepting the buildings and grounds of 'Whitehall'.