

Another trip down Memory Lane.

Following on from my last article about Conny Castle, I felt the following extract from e-mails received from a Derrick McGarry, who now lives in Canada may be of appeal to those who have any knowledge of, or interest in the history of Moorside. For those who don't already know, I - Geoff Arrowsmith - run the church's website and was asked by Derrick for a copy of the photograph in the bell tower of his late uncle, Mr Ivan Kay.

Ivan Kay, was a bell-ringer at our church for over 50 years and conducted the Coronation Peal in 1953, when the Queen was crowned as Head of the Commonwealth. The peal lasted for 3 hours and 8 minutes and is commemorated by a large wooden plaque in the bell tower. There are a further 5 plaques in the bell tower on which Mr Kay's name appears, dating from 1932 up to 1984, when a peal was rung in his memory. One of the plaques dated 21/12/1968, commemorates his 50 years service as a bell ringer.

On the table at the back of Church are copies of the photograph of the Coronation bell-ringers and also of the photograph Derrick mentions of Grafton Street, showing our church and the original St. Thomas' school, albeit indistinctly, in the background. The date of the photograph is unknown. Please feel free to take a copy, or let me know if you'd like one, should they all disappear quickly.

Derrick is aged 75 years now, and if there is anyone you know who might remember him, I'm know he'd love to learn about any of his contemporaries who may have such an excellent memory. My telephone number is 0161 626 6808.

“ My time at St Thomas's school was from the beginning of the school year in September, 1938 at the age of 6 to June or July, 1939, and from September 1939 to the end of the school year in 1940.

As for your more senior church members of the congregation who may remember me, my father died when I was a few months old, and my mother died when I was five. My surname at the time was Alcock. I was adopted by my favourite aunt and uncle, and my surname was changed to McGarry. I can't remember if I my last name was already McGarry when I was at St Thomas's, or whether it was still Alcock.

The only school friends' names I remember are Maurice Wood, Betty Hurst, David Mayall, and the minister's son, Dennis Calderley.

David Mayall, sadly, was killed by a lorry on Ripponden Road and may be buried in a small grave in St Thomas's cemetery, although I vaguely remember hearing grown-ups saying he had not been christened and could not be buried in consecrated ground....

In the subsequent war years, 1940-1944, I attended Westwood Elementary School on Middleton Road and later attended what was then Oldham Municipal High School, on Greengate Street.

OMHS became East Oldham High School and, about a decade after I left, was renamed Greenhill Grammar School. I've never been quite sure whether I am an old boy of Greenhill or Counthill, because many of my teachers (we called them "masters") at EOHS moved to the then-new school at Counthill, around 1961.

I hear Counthill may be demolished because of its age. Now, that news made me feel *really* ancient! During the time I lived at Moorside, I can remember my cousin Dennis (Uncle Ivan's

son) and I playing on the abandoned foundations of Counthill. Building was stopped, no doubt, because of the war.

Late last year, I discovered Greenhill Grammar School has an active website for former students, with discussion pages and photo archives. I found the photo of Grafton Street I sent to you on a recently-posted item on one of the site's pages, and it is that photo that triggered my inquiry about the bell ringers.

Again, my gratitude and thanks for the pictures. ”

Derrick McGarry

Derrick subsequently made a very generous contribution to the church of £100.00.