

The Round School

Early documentation states that in Chester-le-Street there existed during the 18th century a school positioned close to the parish church in what had been the Oast house for the Deanery.

This was known as the round school, because of its shape. In 1812 it was in use and the master was one, Birch Kirby who was also publican of the King's Head. He was succeeded in 1832 by Thomas Wilkinson who brought Latin and Greek to the curriculum.

Very little remains of the structure although its shape can be seen in a wall to the north of the church and bordering the north-west corner of the present churchyard where the grave stones have been placed against the wall. Here the brick built wall is curved slightly and borders some housing. The Round School closed in 1860.

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There have been a number of schools in the town, some of which have disappeared. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries a boy's school was in operation close to the church on the land currently occupied by the Parish Centre. The girl's school which was built later in the town, was located in the south car park of Tesco's supermarket. Another school was located at the back of the Bethel chapel in Low Chare during the 19th century.