



The bell at Sutton Veny School

Sutton Veny

Can You Solve the School Bell riddle ?

Mystery surrounds the history of a village school bell that has undergone a £6,000 restoration programme.

Christine Folker, headteacher of Sutton Veny Primary School near Warminster, is keen to hear from anyone with information about the history of the newly restored bell, which is now being rung to mark the start of the school day. Mrs Folker said: "The bell is extremely important. It is a huge part of the village. It is lovely to have that bell ringing again but it's very difficult to ring. I never realised it would be so hard but you have to really get it swinging to get it ringing."

The bell's restoration project was part funded by the school and by fundraising from the village.

The playground has also been redeveloped over the summer with a new trim trail and willow sculptures of a dragon courtesy of the last batch of Year 6 leavers.

Mrs Folker said: "They are phenomenal. They raised all their own funding for that over six weeks where they made scones and cards, which they sold."

The children raised £500 in order to build the willow sculpture that stands proudly at the front of the school.

Mrs Folker said: "It is the Year 6 legacy where every year the children from Year 6 do something for the school to remember them by."

(This is Wiltshire – Monday 22 October, 2007)

School Bell chimes by itself for the first time since WWII

A Bell in the clock tower at a village school near Warminster has chimed by itself for the first time since the Second World War following a £3,500 restoration.

Pupils past and present gathered at Sutton Veny Primary School at midday on Thursday to hear the first chime of the bell, which has been fitted with an automatic mechanism so it no longer has to be rung manually.

Schoolchildren performed a maypole dance as part of a celebration to mark the relaunch of the clock tower bell, which was dismantled in the 1940s.

David Eyres, 71, of Duck Street, was at the school in 1942 and said he was delighted to hear the bell chime again.

“During the war they stopped bell from striking and I don’t think it has been heard since then,” he said.

“It was a long time ago and I was five years old so I don’t remember it being dismantled, but I have not heard it until Thursday.

“It was good to hear it working because it has been there all of these years without making a sound.”

The bell has been rung manually on occasions in the past, but this week is the first time it has been operated automatically to mark each hour.

A refurbishment of the clock has been going on over the last nine months, while the restoration of the bell took place last month.

Both projects were funded by the parish council and a £400 donation from the Sutton Veny Flower Show Committee.

Parish councillor Pam Coward carried out a house-to-house collection and raised another £423 towards the restoration.

The clock was made in 1873 by London clockmakers Thwaites and Reed, which was established in 1740 and is famed for making turret clocks.

It was restored by the Cumbria Clock Company of Penrith, which has also worked on clocks at Salisbury Cathedral, Hampton Court Palace, and Big Ben.

Brenda Sealy, deputy headteacher, said: “It is lovely. It makes us very proud because it has been a long time since it chimed.

“It is a beautiful building and a beautiful site so it is very special to us to have it chiming again.”



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(This is Wiltshire – Tuesday 5 May, 2009)