

SAVED BY THE BELL: HISTORIC BERMONDSEY SCHOOL SEE THEIR BELL RETURNED AT LONG LAST

18 MARCH 2022

- The bell for Galleywall School, which is funded by Heritage of London Trust through sponsors Delancey, will be brought to London from its Loughborough foundry and rung today for the first time since before WWI
- Heritage of London Trust's Proud Places programme has been creating workshops for the children who will celebrate the first ring with activities, refreshments and tours
- Bell foundries are becoming increasingly rare with London's last foundry closing last year in Whitechapel after 450 years

Today, Heritage of London Trust has returned a historic bell to Galleywall School in Bermondsey. The bell will today be returned to its setting and shall ring for the first time in over 80 years.

The project involved having the bell re-cast at the John Taylor & Co bell foundry in Loughborough. The foundry made the bell by pouring molten 'bell metal' - an alloy of tin and copper - into large casts and the inscription along the bell reads: "Beacons of the future! Capsules with hundreds of bright little seeds in each, out of which will spring the wiser, better England of the future." Arthur Conan Doyle. The back of the bell reads: "With thanks to Heritage of London Trust and Delancey".

Bell foundries in the UK have slowly dwindled in number, with the last in London closing in 2021 in Whitechapel after nearly 450 years of bell making. To mark the return of the bell, the Heritage of London Trust has been teaching the children the history of the local area and traditions of bells as well as providing workshops as part of its Proud Places programme. The first ringing of the bell was accompanied by performances, refreshments and tours. The bell will be rung at the start of each school day as well as for commemoration events

Galleywall School in South Bermondsey was built in 1876, along with the nearby railway lines, and is almost the only tangible evidence of the area's Victorian past. When first opened, the school was surrounded by food manufacturers, noxious heavy industry, busy railway yards and high density back-to-back terraced housing. There were three public houses, a Methodist church, stables and shops. The area was heavily bombarded during WWII and the area transformed, although the school was relatively undamaged.



For further information,
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The school was refurbished in 2016 as a new school - Galleywall Primary School City of London Academy - and is now oversubscribed.

Dr Nicola Stacey, Director, Heritage of London Trust, said:

“This has been a great project to celebrate Bermondsey’s Victorian heritage. We hope that new generations of school children will enjoy the bell over the next 100 years.”

Ms Sarah Parbhu, Headteacher, Galleywall School, said:

“We are so pleased to finally have a bell back in its rightful place, at the very top of our school! It has been a brilliant opportunity to look back at the history of Galleywall with our children and look to its future as we start new traditions!”

Jamie Ritblat, Founder & Chairman, Delancey, said:

“We are thrilled that our continued partnership with Heritage of London Trust has delivered the restoration and return of this historic bell to Galleywall School in Bermondsey. This project has seen young people immersed in the history of the bell through the Proud Places programme and we look forward to hearing it ring out again!”

Notes to editors

- Proud Places is a London-wide education programme run by Heritage of London Trust (HOLT) which delivers creative workshops, skills training and heritage visits to young people aged 7-18. The programme aims to develop young people’s pride and curiosity about where they live, supporting particularly those from under-privileged backgrounds.
- Heritage of London Trust (HOLT) is an independent charity that helps restore historic buildings and monuments. It gives grants and supports projects across all 33 London boroughs.
- Delancey is an independently owned real estate investment and development advisor with a strong track record built over 25 years

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