

Hello!

I'm Millie the Tawny Owl, and I've recently come to live at Lydiard Millicent C.E. Primary School. I'd like to tell you my story.

I'm no stranger to the school. In fact, from my new perch, I can see the very spot where I was born. But I haven't always looked like this. I began life as part of an oak tree, and what a time I've had, watching the busy life of the school over many decades, as well as all the usual wildlife which a mature oak tree encounters. If you read the poem, you'll see what I mean!

One sleepy, foggy day last winter, when all the children were on holiday, I was awakened by a terrible din. I had often heard machinery before – there was plenty of noise a few years back, when the present school was built – but this sound was much louder, and something told me that my cosy life was about to change forever. There had recently been great interest in the tree: men in hard hats looking closely at the trunk, talk of danger... It turns out that one of the many living things which had come to make the tree their home – something called a fungus – had actually been eating away at the wood, and had weakened the base of the trunk. There were fears for the safety of the school building and all those lovely children, so, sadly, it was decided that the only solution was to remove the tree.

It's no easy task to take down such a large tree, but the clever people from Stumpbusters did a quick and tidy job, and they kindly left me behind, with a few of my brothers and sisters from other parts of the tree, so that the children could remember and learn about the oak.

I sat outside on the ground for a while, just watching the world go by, but it was fairly chilly, and lonely, too. Then, after a few weeks, people started to pay me quite a bit of attention, and suddenly I was given a trim and lifted into a car, before making a long journey to a place called Devon, where other people talked about me some more... Really, I did wonder what all the fuss was about!

Eventually, I found myself in the home of a very talented man named Colin, who obviously knew a great deal about wood. He spent a long time working on me, chiselling and polishing, totally changing my appearance. At first, I didn't understand what was happening, but after a while, I realised that I was transforming into one of the very owls which sometimes used to sit among the branches of our tree. It was so exciting!

Now I'm back where I belong. I was invited to a special assembly, where I was welcomed back to the school, and I puffed up my feathers with pride as the children walked past, admiring me. Many people have said how beautiful I am; I feel honoured to be here, once again, surrounded by the bustling activity of such a happy school.

If you're ever lucky enough to visit the school, please do say hello. You'll find me in the entrance foyer, opposite the front door, gazing out over the patch of grass where I once stood, when I was part of an oak tree.