

Sutton Veny

WILTSHIRE VILLAGE FIRE

FOUR COTTAGES BURNT OUT AT SUTTON VENY



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FAMILIES HOMELESS

A disastrous fire occurred at Sutton Veny, near Warminster, on Saturday afternoon, a block of four cottages being burnt completely out, and three families rendered homeless. Starting in a shed at the back of the end house, it soon spread to the thatched roofs of the cottages. The outbreak, fortunately, was observed in its early stages, and while alarm was carried to the Warminster Fire Brigade, the household goods of the tenants were removed as speedily as possible. In this respect the villagers worked most energetically, and were assisted by the members of the Warminster and Sutton Veny Cricket Clubs, who had met to play a match. Some exciting times were experienced, furniture being thrown out as the flames roared in the roof overhead. So the rescue party rushed from house to house as the fire steadily gained upon them. The road outside was lined with household goods piled up in indiscriminate confusion.

The Fire Brigade answered the call punctually, but were only at about half their usual strength owing to numerous resignations which have recently taken place. The difficulty was to obtain water. A well was broken into, but the result was not satisfactory, and finally a stream running by the side of the road was blocked and the water pumped about 200 yards to the burning cottages. By the time the water was available three of the cottages had been gutted and the fourth was well alight. Other thatched houses were near, and the object of the Brigade was to prevent the fire spreading to them. In this they succeeded, being assisted by the wind, which fortunately blew in a favourable direction. The roofs of the burning cottages fell in with loud reports, and the flames blazed up with renewed energy as the woodwork of the interior fed them.

The Brigade had, however, gained the mastery of the flames, and dense volumes of smoke spread over the village, while the road in the vicinity of the fire was covered with the ashes of burnt thatch. The firemen were busy until half-past 10 o'clock at night, and nothing but the bare walls of the once picturesque cottages remained.

Temporary shelter for the homeless families was provided by two cottages at the other end of the village.

The cause of the outbreak is unknown. Three of the houses, which belonged to Mr J. Barter, were insured. The other was the property of Mr Henry Wickham, of Shaftesbury.

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