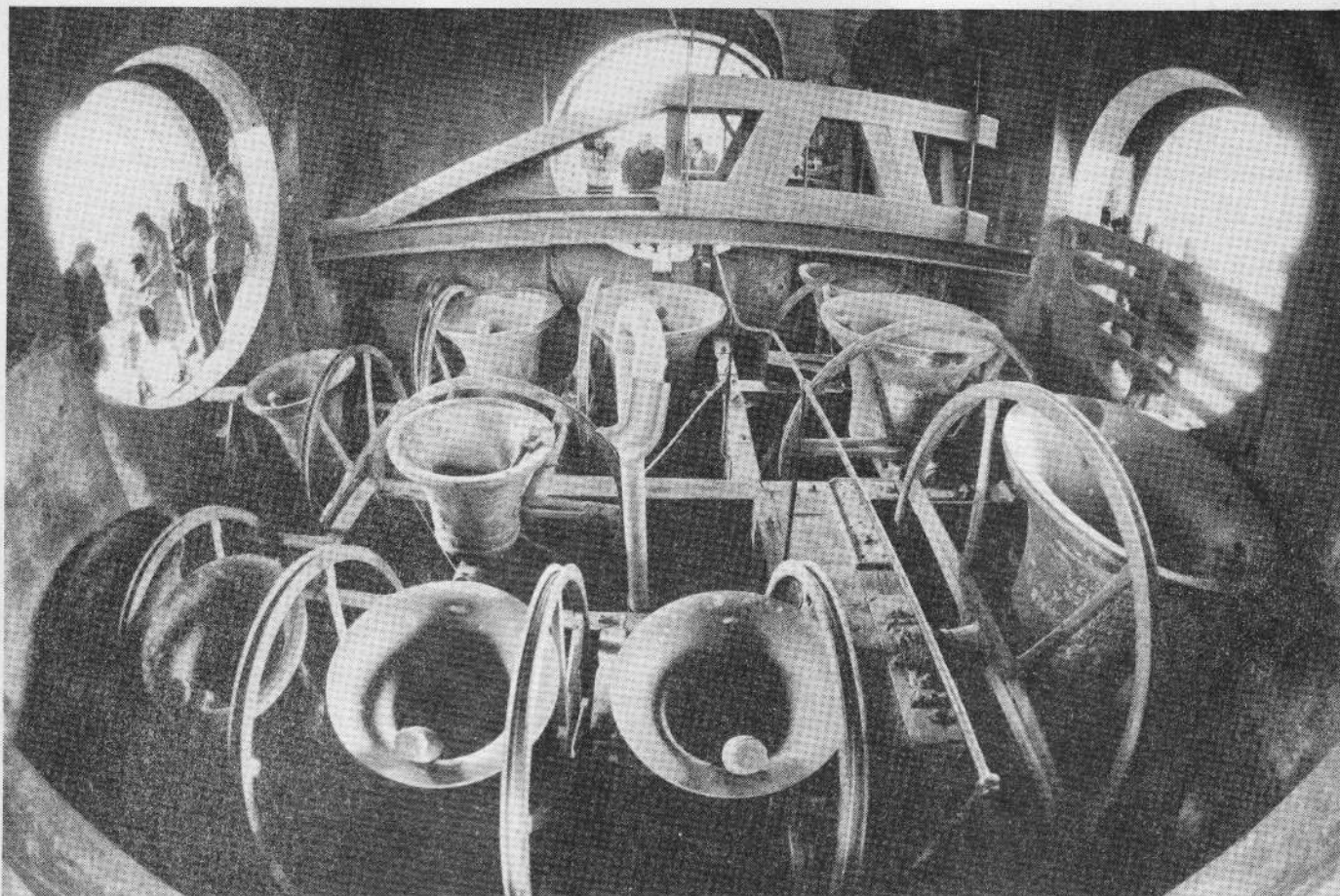


The Ringing World

June 8, 1984

The weekly journal for church bell ringers

no. 3815 45p weekly



Possibly the first photograph showing the complete ring in the raised position.
(photo courtesy Times Newspapers)

Waiting to release their twelve-voiced power

The bells of St. Paul's brood silently in Wren's belfry, waiting to release their twelve-voiced power. These bells, the heaviest peal in the world to hang in a wooden frame, will be the scene of the National 12-Bell Striking Competition on 30th June and the day will be a good opportunity to hear what a heavy 12 of the pre-Simpson tuning era sound like for the bells have never left the tower since their installation in 1878. The single bell hanging above the 12 is the service bell cast by Philip Wightman in 1700 and affectionately known to the scroof as "the old banger".

Tom Pocock, a reporter for *The Evening Standard* recently wrote of his experience when visiting a College Youths' practice night at St. Paul's:

"One ringer produced a key to open a door beneath the north-west tower and we began to pound up a narrow spiral staircase into the

secretive world of the bells. In this tower hang some 14 tons of metal; in the other, hang the clock bells, including the 17 tons of Great Paul.

In the ringing chamber beneath the bells the ringers stand in a circle at their ropes. It is quiet before the storm of sound breaks out above them and they speak little; there is almost a feeling of reverence. For the bells, which send their peals tumbling over countryside and rooftops in the most heart-touching of English sounds, can also be angry gods.

Before the ringing, Mark Regan led me up even narrower stone stairs into the belfry itself. From here we could look outwards at the glitter of London, over which the peals would cascade. Looking inward, there, just below us, gaped the 12 open mouths of the bells about to ring.

Then they rang and all was immersed in sound. In the half-light of the moon and the light of London, the bells leaped and swung to the unseen pull of the ropes as if with life of

their own, tossing their mouths to fling the peals into the night. They sounded thus a century ago and would again a century hence: an awareness of mortality was in the bells.

Once they were muffled by thick stone walls and we stood on the stairs. Mark Regan turned to remark: 'It's rather an emotional experience, isn't it?'"

B.E.M. for Wetherby ringer

One of the county's longest serving members was honoured by the award of the B.E.M. which was presented to Mr. Harry Mason by Sir William Bulmer, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for the County of West Yorkshire, at a ceremony in Wetherby on 11th May 1984.

As part of the celebrations, the ringers (of which Harry was previously Captain) rang on 12th May in his honour a quarter peal.

Wetherby, W. Yorks. 12 May, 1260 Grandsire Triples: Janet Carter 1, Catherine Stordy 2, Pauline Holland 3, G Smith 4, B Moorhouse 5, A Carter 6, D Holland (C) 7, R Moxon 8.

At the age of 86 Harry is still going strong and does a fine day's work from his home at the lodge where the band were entertained after ringing - a happy occasion enjoyed by all.

H.D.H.

CONTENTS: 488 Letters · 489 When the Abbey bells ring · 490-492 News from the AGMs · 493 Bishop Hacket, Richard Keene and Lichfield (concluded) · 495 Peals