

Ringing changes for historic bells

A RING of 17th century bells has been removed from its belfry to undergo a £40,000 overhaul.

The six bells were lowered down Wybunbury tower one-by-one in a delicate, week-long operation.

They will spend the next 16 weeks undergoing a refit at a specialist bell foundry in Loughbrough, financed by a £100,000 National Lottery grant.

The secretary of the Wybunbury Tower Trust, borough councillor Richard Ellwood, said: 'The tower and the bells are what make Wybunbury special. Without them, we would be just like any other village.'

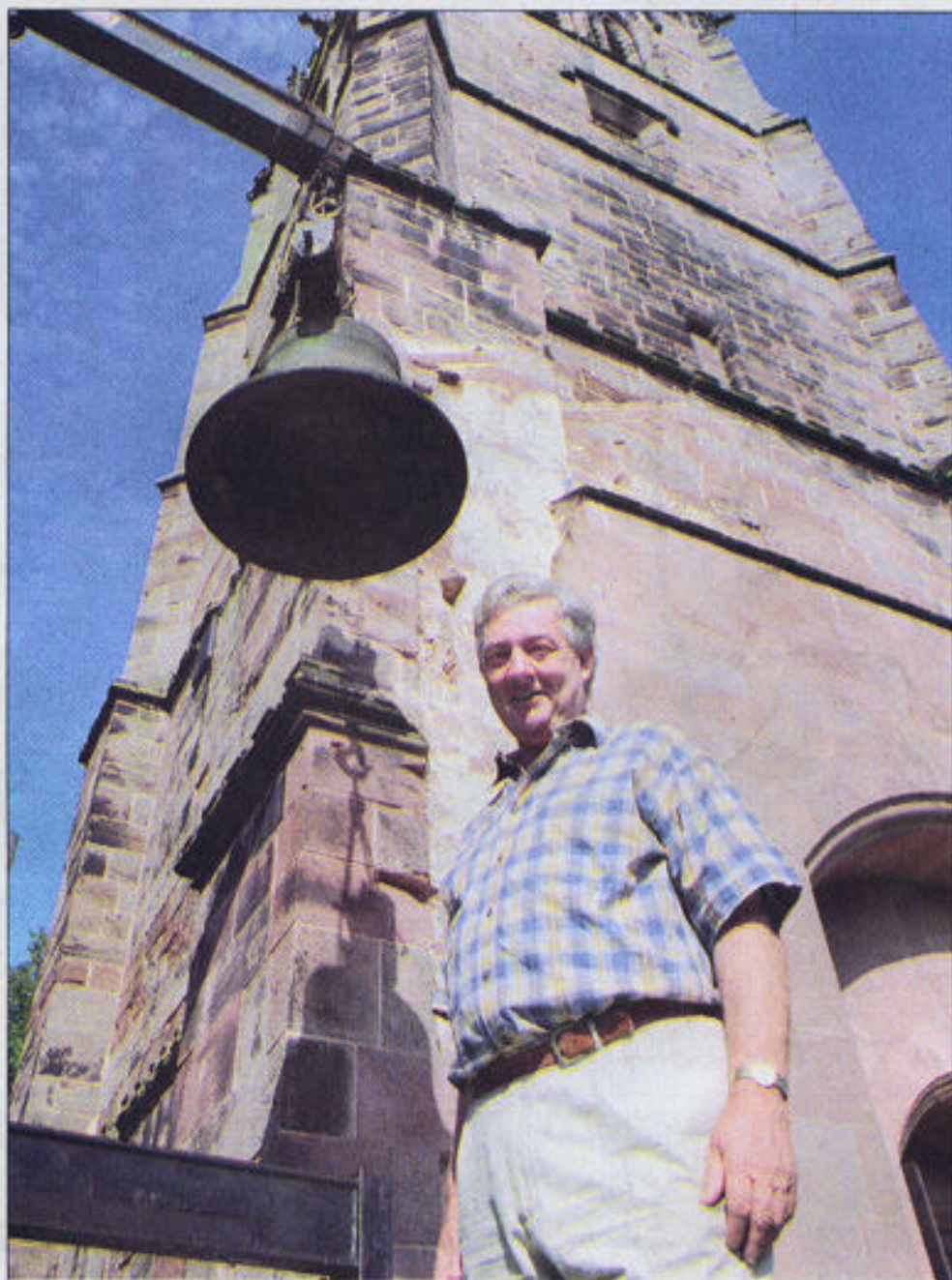
'But the bells were nearing the end of their working life and would have fallen silent within months had it not been for the Lottery money.'

Even with the Lottery handout, villagers had to find £12,000 towards the cost of the repairs. That drained resources from the tower trust funds, leaving no money for day-to-day running costs.

So a new visitor centre is being created within the 15th century tower to generate an income to cover the building's upkeep.

Mr Ellwood urged: 'There can be no let-up in the fundraising effort. Because we got this Lottery funding people tend to think we don't need anymore money, but it is still important to keep up the good work.'

The bells are due to be re-hung shortly before Christmas, the culmination of a 21 year, £300,000 campaign to save the tower.



TOWERING PROJECT: Councillor Richard Ellwood watches the bells being lifted from Wybunbury Tower.

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