

BARKING TYE COMMUNITY CHOIR

The choir has been in existence now for a whole year, our very first rehearsal being on April 5th last year.

Originally formed as Ringshall and Barking WI's choir, it has now expanded to include non-WI members. The 26 singers come not only from Barking and Ringshall but also from Willisham, Battisford, Gt Bricett and Darsham, hence our name – Barking Tye Community Choir. We thought it was important to include 'Tye' in the name, as we did not want to be confused with that place in Essex!

At the moment we only have women's voices but I am ever hopeful that some men will be persuaded to join our ranks at some point in the future.

Our first public appearance was at the village 1940s evening, where we sang a selection of wartime songs. The audience was encouraged to join in and almost raised the roof with a rendition of 'There'll always be an England'. Proof indeed, if any were needed, that there are plenty of singers in Barking who have not yet joined the choir!

Christmas was an exceptionally busy time for us - we were invited to sing at carol services in Battisford, Barking, Barking Chapel and Ringshall. We also performed at the highly successful Victorian Christmas Evening in the village hall, the WI Christmas party and the Chestnut Club's Christmas lunch.

During Holy Week we joined with the combined churches choir of Willisham, Flowton, Offton and Somersham to sing at a reflective service and on Saturday 19th May we will be taking part in a concert for Christian Aid in Stowmarket Parish Church.

Perhaps the most exciting event, though, is yet to come. On Sunday 8th July we are going to the Royal Albert Hall to join with about two thousand other singers from all over the country and further afield to rehearse and give a performance of Carl Jenkins's 'The Armed Man'. The composer himself will be there and he has also composed a special piece for the occasion, which we are learning, called 'Gods of Olympus'. We are most grateful to Barking Community Council for helping us towards the cost of this venture.

As the choir's conductor, I am delighted at the progress we have made in such a short time, considering that for many of the participants, this is the first time they have ever sung in a choir.

New members are always welcome – there are no auditions!

Sandra Reynolds

