



**PRAISE BE:** The Rector of Nantwich Canon Richard Price pictured outside St Mary's. 8082K10

# Revamped parish church to star in Songs of Praise

THE 600-year-old Nantwich Parish Church is to be featured in the long running BBC Television programme *Songs of Praise* next month.

The Church, often referred to as the Cathedral of South Cheshire, will be packed to its 600 capacity as the show goes out on June 14.

St Mary's was first featured in the programme in 1975, the final year of Canon Eric Southwell's long association with the church, and again in 1982 during the colourful and at times unorthodox ministry of the Rev Jim Richardson.

The Curate at St Mary's, the Rev Mark Wolverson said this week: 'Everyone is delighted that the BBC are coming again. They approached us and asked us if they could feature the church again and of course we agreed.'

There will be rehearsals at the church on June 2 and 3 before the actual broad-

cast goes out.

Although the magnificent building will obviously be in the spotlight, Marc stressed that the service would feature all denominations in the town - Central Methodist Church, St Anne's RC Church and the Market Street Baptist and United Reformed Church.

He said the programme would also feature the Nantwich Choral Society.

The church is back to its impressive best after the completion of a massive £385,000 scheme to restore part of the tower which had become dangerously decayed over the years.

■ The arrival of the BBC crew will be good news for Nantwich man Kenneth Haley who has written to the BBC several times in recent years suggesting they feature the town. He said: 'I actually asked them if Central Methodist Church could be the focal point of their transmission.'



**ON AIR:** Rod Siebert discloses the bunker's secrets to *Songs of Praise* presenter Pam Rhodes. 3687X3

# Secret bunker to echo with Songs of Praise

THE Secret Nuclear Bunker on the outskirts of Nantwich will be featured on television next week - on *Songs of Praise*!

Since the bunker, at Hack Green, was opened to the public a few weeks ago it has attracted thousands of visitors from the UK and abroad.

Now its Cold War secrets are to be revealed to millions of viewers, both in the *Songs of Praise* programme, and on a BBC 2 special on June 16 called *One Foot In The Past*.

The *Songs of Praise* show will mainly feature the 600 years old parish church of St Mary's - often referred to as the Cathedral of South Cheshire.

But a spokeswoman for the show said: 'When we visit places we try to show some of the other places of interest which may attract visitors.

We don't come across a lot of places which have secret nuclear bunkers!'

Rod Siebert who runs the bunker said: 'Since we opened we have had visitors from just about everywhere. But we are delighted the television people have taken an interest. We have enjoyed taking the crews round showing them all things which were guarded secrets for so many years.'

The bunker, formerly an RAF radar station, became a secret regional government headquarters in the 1980s. Had nuclear war broken out with the Soviets, 130 military and civil top brass would have taken refuge to rule the North West of the country.

The *Songs of Praise* team are filming at Nantwich Parish Church tonight, and the recording will go out on June 14.

# Full of praise

CHURCH goes from Nantwich have been singing the praises of BBC TV's *Songs of Praise* programme.

After an evening's rehearsal plus three hours of filming those who took part in the programme at St Mary's, to be broadcast this coming Sunday, June 14, said it had been a great experience with a wonderful atmosphere.

Rev Isobel Wells found it to have been a genuinely spiritual experience of Christian worship, which was encouraged by conductor Gordon Stewart.

Excellent interior views of the medieval church architecture are expected plus the colour co-ordinated flower arrangements produced by St Mary's own talented team. The programme will feature St Mary's organist, Andrew Mildinhal, the junior members of the church choir and a 'core' choir which included singers from all denominations of churches across the Nantwich deanery, plus Nantwich Choral Society members and the Tudor Consort.

Rev Canon JR Price, rector of Nantwich, was impressed by the commitment, motivation and inspiration of the BBC team.

● The expected 7 to 8 million viewers of the programme will also see inside the recently opened Nuclear Bunker at Hack Green.