



Sir Charles Groves: The man of the moment on Saturday.

A Continental flavour to birthday tributes

SIR Charles Groves, principal conductor of the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra, was showered with gifts and tribute on Saturday in celebration of his 75th birthday.

At a reception after the performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, the Philharmonic choir, orchestra and Freiburger Bachchor paid homage to his musical achievements.

Mrs. Rita Horton, chairman of the Philharmonic choir, completed a presentation that had begun before the concert when the GPO friends association gave Sir Charles a set of Dartington glasses. The choir's gift was a crate of wine.

Mayor of Guildford Mr. Bernard Parke presented him with a shield with the Guildford borough coat of arms.

"The borough is very much aware of how lucky it is to have such talent in Guildford," he said.

Mr. Parke also gave a warm welcome to the Freiburg singers who flew in for the concert to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the twinning of Guildford with Freiburg.

Herr Prof. Hans-Michael Beuerle, conductor of the choir, gave Sir Charles a bottle of wine.

Hugh Bean, associate leader of the philharmonic orchestra, presented him with the Royal Horticultural Society Gardening Encyclopaedia and plant vouchers on behalf of the orchestra.

"Conductors come of age at 70," he said. "we are really proud not only to make music with you, sir, but to call you a friend."

"The humanity which Sir Charles displays in his work is not only confined to music. He is also interested in gardening. We thought that shrubs have somethings in common with orchestral players — they need nurturing and occasionally holding in check."

Herr Prof. Beuerle said the *Missa Solemnis*, with Beethoven's mottos "from the heart to the heart," and "request for interior and exterior peace," was most appropriate for their joint concert.

Sir Charles was overwhelmed. "It is a bit like Christmas," he said.