

STEP TOWARDS CREATING CULTURAL CENTRE

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Having in mind the increasing encouragement of cultural pursuits in Guildford, particularly music, the "Surrey Advertiser" sought the views of Alderman Lawrence Powell, chairman of the Library, Museum, and Arts Committee.

Alderman Powell readily consented to comment upon a number of points submitted to him by our representative, and his reply may be summarised as follows:—

"I don't think I am giving away a secret in saying that when, later this month, the outline plan for Guildford is made public it will be found to be built on two general principles, one of which is that the central area of the town should be developed as a cultural centre for a surrounding district.

"A cultural centre must provide a good library service, a theatre where good dramatic productions can be regularly enjoyed, a gallery for the fine arts and crafts, a museum of local history, and, quite as important as any of these, regular opportunities for hearing good music well performed. There are other ingredients, of course, but these are the chief. To implement this cultural policy, the Library, Museum and Arts Committee of the Council was formed.

"To develop and co-ordinate the musical side, Mr. Crossley Clitheroe was appointed 15 months ago as musical director, with the twofold task of framing a properly graduated scheme under which the citizens of Guildford, from childhood onwards, should be able to hear and learn to appreciate good music—he had already unique opportunities of access to the schools of the borough, which the new education authority has allowed to continue; and of organising under municipal auspices concerts which should in addition attract to them people from a surrounding area which Guildford might reasonably expect to serve. To promote these ends, in addition to a good deal of work in the schools, the Guildford Teachers' Choir was formed, the Municipal Philharmonic Orchestra (which includes a small number of their best local amateur players) built up, and a regular series of concerts, orchestral, chamber, and choral, held. Contact was established with a large number of choral bodies and church choirs in and around the town, and the festival choir, inaugurated through the bringing together of many of these for special purposes. This choir made its debut in Mendelssohn's 'Hymn of Praise' in February. In the difficult task of arranging for co-operation be-

tween many different organisations, Mr. Clitheroe has had a great success.

THE MUSIC FESTIVAL

"The Musical Festival, which opens on July 12th, carries a stage further the Corporation's policy. It is hoped that it will become an annual event which will be looked forward to and patronised by people all over West Surrey and beyond the county boundary. An annual festival is, of course, no new thing, even in towns smaller than Guildford. Instances among our neighbours are the Leith Hill Festival, held at Dorking, and centred round the person of Dr. Vaughan Williams, and the Petersfield Festival. But a festival sponsored by the Corporation of a town of Guildford's size is, so far as I know, a new thing, and in this respect we claim to be pioneers.

"For this first year Mr. Clitheroe has arranged a programme to suit all serious tastes. In the opening and closing concerts, which are fully orchestral, some very well-known and popular classics will be played; at the final concert the Festival Choir will join the orchestra in Parry's 'Blest Pair of Sirens.' On Sunday afternoon, July 14th, the Guildford Teachers' Choir, with orchestra, will sing the first part of Bach's 'Mass in B minor,' in the opinion of the majority of musicians probably the greatest work ever written. It will be heard in conditions more like those of Bach's day than usual—in the Cathedral Church, with a limited number of performers. A repeat performance (by special request) of the opera 'Dido and Æneas,' by Purcell, greatest of English composers, will be given by the Girls' County Grammar School, and will give the public an opportunity of seeing and hearing what was, by common consent, a superlative presentation of a work not often done; and the New English String Quartet will give an evening of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven at the Borough Hall (now the Repertory Theatre).

LOOKING FORWARD

"Such a programme cannot fail to attract. I hope Guildford people will give it their support and rally round Mr. Clitheroe, who has worked untiringly as manager, chorus-master, and conductor of this, his first, venture of the kind. It obviously looks to the time when we have in the town a properly equipped concert hall such as, but for the war, would by now have been built. I hope that under the new scheme of building it will have high priority. With this and other buildings which go to make a cultural centre, and to which we may now reasonably look forward, Guildford should be as pleasant a town as any in which to spend a week of Summer Festival."