

# Festival of Arts

## BOOSTS CHURCH APPEAL

THE Festival of Arts which is open all this week in the tranquil setting of Nantwich's 14th-century Parish Church took on an international flavour within the first few hours.

For a party of visiting Americans and some Australian visitors were among the hundreds who expressed delight at the range and quality of the exhibits.

Organiser Mr. Harry Schofield and his band of helpers were congratulated by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Peter Birchall, at a preview.

The exhibition, open from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. until this Saturday, is in aid of the £150,000 church restoration appeal.

The paintings, many by local artists, include a wide variety of subjects and techniques.

### Ceramics

Artists taking part include Mrs. Edith Buxton, of Madeley Heath, Mr. Fred Castle, of Madeley Heath, Mrs. Frances Catterall, Shavington, Mrs. Grace Corbett, Shavington, Mr. Peter Green, Crewe, Mr. J. Haydn Jones, Nantwich, Mr. James Longueville, Malpas, Mr. Walter Roberts, Wistaston, Mr. Harry Schofield, Nantwich, Mr. Roy Walker, Nantwich, Mr. Patrick D. Whalley, Ravensmoor, Mr. George Thompson, Chester.

Other exhibits include silver jewellery by Mrs. Charlotte Boxall, of



Chichester — better known in Nantwich as Charlotte Blacklay — pottery figures by Mrs. Margery Jones, and Mrs. F. G. Kirkham, both of Nantwich, delicate needlework by Mrs. Trudy Taylor of Nantwich, soft toys by Mrs. Ruth Walker, of Nantwich, wall ceramics by E. Bowen Williams, of Wistaston, the famous corn dollies made by Raymond Rush, of Siddington, hand weaving by Julian Symondson of Woore, pewter ware by Penny Dunn, of Nottingham, and stonecraft by Nantwich mason Ian Rogers.

In the St. George Chapel there is a display of artwork by pupils of Malbank School and in the Bromley Chapel Ruskin County High School, Crewe, have a metalwork display.

Tapestry and embroidery by St. Mary's Sewing Group are also on view and the settings are enhanced by floral displays arranged by

women members of the Church.

Costly vestments on view include the new cope designed for the Rector of Nantwich and the cope and mitre worn by Lord Fisher when he was Archbishop of Canterbury at the 1953 Coronation. The striking Trinity High Altar frontal from Gloucester Cathedral is an impressive example of modern religious design.

Music is also an outstanding feature of the festival. A large audience on Saturday enjoyed a concert of classical guitar music by John Arran and on Tuesday the Wedgwood Operatic Society sang selections from the "Yeoman of the Guard" and "Gypsy Baron".

Tonight (Thursday) there is an evening of music by Nantwich Choral Society and organ solos by Mr. Harold Kirkham, Master of the Music at the Church.

● Picture: A visitor admires one of the exhibits.

# CHURCH EXHIBITION WILL AID APPEAL

MUSIC, paintings and many other forms of artistic expression will be featured in a week-long Festival of Arts which opens this Saturday at Nantwich Parish Church.

The Festival is in aid of the church restoration appeal and its organiser Mr. Harry Schofield, of Wellington Road, Nantwich, told the Chronicle: "This promises to be one of the most exciting exhibitions ever presented in the beautiful church. There will be more than 60 paintings in oils, water colours and gouache as well as black and white drawings, by some of the best artists in South Cheshire."

Examples of craftsmanship on view will include silverware, pewter, pebble jewellery, pottery, ceramic sculptures, marble sculptures, soft toys and dolls, flower collage, embroidery and needlework.

There is also to be a display of historic church vestments, among them the cope and mitre worn by Archbishop Fisher when he crowned the Queen in Westminster Abbey in 1953.

The opening musical event is an evening of guitar music this Saturday by a young local man, John Arran, who is among the leading British guitar virtuosos.

John, who hails from Cox Bank, Audlem, was the first student to gain a diploma for guitar at the Royal Manchester College of Music. Now a visiting lecturer of guitar at the University of Lancaster, he has broadcast on radio and television and has toured all over Britain. He is giving his services for the concert.

On Tuesday, the Wedgwood Operatic Society will give a concert of selections from "Yeoman of the Guard" and "Gypsy Baron" and on Thursday Nantwich Choral Society present a concert, under their conductor Michael Bridger, with organ solos by the church's Master of the Music, Mr. Harold Kirkham.



MR. JOHN ARRAN

ST. MARY'S Church, Nantwich, is the setting for the Festival of Arts to be held between April 21 and 28, but the interest created by the event has spread beyond the south of the county.

Highlights of the programme include a concert by the locally and nationally acclaimed classical guitarist John Arran, on Saturday, April 21; a visit by the Wedgwood Operatic Society, with excerpts from the Gilbert and Sullivan favourite, "The Yeomen of the Guard," and Johann Strauss's operetta, "The Gipsy Baron," and programme of a sacred and secular works given by the Nantwich Choral Society, conducted by Michael Bridger, with organ solos by H. G. Kirkham, on Thursday, April 26. All concerts start at 7.30 p.m. An integral part of the Festival is an exhibition of paintings and a wide range of craft works in the church.



# 'Vespers' was good choice for society

AT their recent concert in Nantwich Parish Church, Nantwich and District Choral Society sang Vespers of the Blessed Virgin, by Claudio Monteverdi. Monteverdi was one of the great pioneers in music and composed this massive work in 1610. In the Vespers he made effective use of all the resplendent resources of the day.

He quotes the timeless Plainsong which the Church has cherished through the centuries; the Chorus, true to the Baroque tradition, revels in the most exuberant polyphony; and orchestra, organ and harpsichord lend their colourful support.

We are told that the composer always had highly-skilled singers and instrumentalists at his disposal, so he made no concessions to his performers.

The Nantwich singers are to be congratulated upon the choice of work and its performance. The choir, though suffering at moment from a paucity of tenors, was just big enough to put over the parts for double-chorus.

Michael Bridger, their conductor, had trained his choir to sing with a quiet ecstasy which so befits much of the music. He was very restrained in calling for full climaxes, but when he did such moments were beautifully timed and fully effective.

The solo parts are very demanding. It is fortunate for the Society that so many accomplished soloists are to be found within its ranks.

On this occasion visiting soloists augmented the 'concertino' group. This ensemble, evidently well-rehearsed and revelling in its work, contributed greatly to a successful performance.

Despite a few minor mishaps the orchestra played well. The instruments included a recorder group and cornetti.

The concert opened with a Canzona by Giovanni Gabriele.

Nantwich and District Choral Society is now really contributing to the cultural enrichment of S.W. Cheshire. If present standards are maintained, and enterprising programmes presented, the Society will undoubtedly enhance its present reputation and, eventually, become known to a wider public. — H.G.K.

