

Surprise for guest at Manchester dinner

SI Manchester had a surprise in store for one of the guests at the club's 90th charter dinner.

Martin Smedley, from Act4Africa had been invited along to propose the toast to Soroptimist International. As CEO of the charity, he had worked closely with the club in its bid to have the HEAL Malawi project adopted as the international project at the SIGBI conference in Glasgow.

The bid wasn't successful but it is well known that Soroptimists do not give up in the face of a setback.

At the end of the evening President Sue Underwood had a surprise in store for Martin and the other staff members of Act4Africa, when she announced the launch of the club's 90th project.

After the club's disappointment in Glasgow, members will be working with Act4Africa to deliver a HEAL Malawi project to change the lives of women and girls living in extreme poverty in the Mchinji district. The project was 'launched' in true style with a bottle of champagne and a cheque for £5000 to get it started.

SI Manchester was chartered in 1926 and the club's 90 years of service in Manchester was marked in the beautiful setting of The Monastery in Gorton. The evening was a great celebration of Soroptimism and a chance to meet old friends and make new ones, and to welcome friends and families.



SI Manchester President Sue Underwood launches the project for the club's 90th birthday with champagne and a cheque for Act4Africa CEO Martin Smedley.
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The President welcomed members from 16 other clubs, including the Presidents of four of our daughter clubs, Ashton-under-Lyne, Blackburn, Bolton and Stockport.

Federation President Margaret Emsley kindly gave the response to the Toast to Soroptimist International proposed by Martin Smedley.

Sandy Taylor, President of SI South Lancashire, and Margaret Hammond, President of SI North West England and the Isle of Man were also present—we have daughter clubs in both regions.

The Lord Mayor of Manchester,

Councillor Paul Murphy and the Lady Mayoress, Mrs Anita Murphy, were our honoured guests, and the High Sheriff of Greater Manchester, Sharman Birtles, attended in her capacity as a Soroptimist, as she is a member of SI Ashton-under-Lyne.

We were entertained and enlightened by our guest speaker, Ann Garvie, Immediate Past President of Soroptimist international.

We were also pleased to welcome President Yemisi Openeye and members of our mother club, SI Greater London, and Presidents Sue and Yemisi together cut the celebration cake.

Eight members of SI Crosby made a detour on their way to Glasgow Conference to visit the Scottish HQ of the charity Mary's Meals, taking with them cheques totalling a whopping £4000.

The money had been raised from a number of fundraising events including a sell-out variety concert, The Best of Girl Talk, which featured a group of women who perform (to a very high standard) just for the fun of it.

The ticket price of £12.20 reflected the cost to Mary's Meals of feeding a child in countries such as Malawi, Uganda or Ecuador for a year.

Proceeds from a coffee morning at the home of Crosby club member Clare Baxter added to the funds which were also boosted by donations totalling £500 from SI Crosby's three Scandinavian friendship link clubs.

The cheques were presented to Mary Meals staff and volunteers by Crosby member Terry Francis, who was president when support for the club programme began, and by the club's current president Margaret Cole

Margaret was delighted to be able to inform the charity's team that the UK government would

match-fund the donation, which meant its total worth was £8000.

The cash donation was in addition to 100 backpacks sent to the charity in November. The packs containing clothing, school stationery and toiletries had been filled by Soroptimists and by staff at St Paul's Eye Unit at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital and pupils from a local school – St Benedict's.

While at the Glasgow HQ the SI Crosby members took the opportunity to tour the facility and learn more about the work undertaken around the world by the charity.



Crosby Soroptimists with their president, Margaret Cole (fourth from left) and Terry Francis (fourth from right) handing over a cheque to staff at the Mary's Meals HQ in Glasgow.

The role of women in Islam and the teachings of the Koran regarding the status of women were among the topics discussed by Zia Chaudhry MBE when he spoke to members of SI Crosby.

Born in Burnley, Zia, pictured, has lived in Liverpool since a young age and is now a barrister in the city. As a Muslim, he is a regular speaker and broadcaster on Islam and is committed to improving interfaith relations through reaching non Muslim communities to gain a better

understanding of Islam and separating the hype from the fact.

He describes himself as "frustrated by Muslim ineptitude but inspired by Muslim potential."

He brought along to the meeting his book, Just Your Average Muslim, which is a call for mutual understanding based upon the personal life of one particular British Muslim. Originally intended to be a guide for the author's children it covers a variety of issues, ranging from growing up as a Muslim in Britain, to exploring themes that



SOUTHPORT



Murder was afoot on January 22 as SI Southport members and friends met in their clubroom for a Murder Mystery Evening. Members were challenged to be Columbos or Clouseaus and

solve the murder from a Police perspective. Retired Detective Superintendent Mick Gradwell from Lancashire Police led participants through the case. The evening raised £240

for President Heather's charity, the Don McMath Emergency Relief Fund. The Don McMath school in the Gambia provides free education and SI Southport sponsors four girls every year.



President Heather Shulver of SI Southport has been knitting baby cardigans and hats for premature babies at Ormskirk Special Care Baby Unit. Other members are now going to take this up. The photograph shows President Heather with President Elect Carmel Preston presenting the baby clothes to the unit.



Members of SI Southport held a very successful Christmas Coffee morning on Saturday, 5 December when £1,050 was raised



SI Southport on 18 December 2015 packed a total of 35 wash bags for the homeless and another 50 for Sefton Women's and Children's Aid

More pictures from SI Manchester's 90th Charter Dinner

