



Blackmore Vale Magazine

Rotary – It's going further than lunch

If, like me, you've always imagined Rotarians are grey men in suits presenting giant cheques you might be in for a surprise. I turned up at the Fleur de Lys in Bleke Street Shaftesbury as the guest of Tony Morgan, founder of Wessex Electricals, for dinner with The Rotary Club of Shaftesbury to find out more. Five seconds in, I realised I was in for an entertaining evening. To start with, I was introduced to people who were near my own age and I wasn't the only woman in the room - in fact Shaftesbury Rotarians were one of the first clubs to welcome women when they were first included in 1987 and are keen to see more. Members unveiled a great cross-section of Shaftesbury society from farmers to doctors.

Ten minutes in and I found myself chatting to the man who had taught my husband to drive. The focus of the evening, following a lively dinner, was to present a certificate for Corporate Membership to Alan Mulholland, director of Stalbridge Linen Services. Corporate membership is a new development for the club and the town's major employees are being approached by the Rotary to sign up. Guest speaker on the evening was Andy Hills, managing director of Pork Farms (previously Dorset Foods) who is also joining the club. It's a mutually beneficial arrangement which rejuvenates the club with new members who in turn get the opportunity to network and enjoy friendship with other business people while giving something back to the community. But what about the big cheques? Well Rotary, I soon discovered, is all about friendship and working towards peace and goodwill in the world.

Rotary International's global polio eradication scheme started in 1985 when there were still 350,000 news cases a year.

Business partner Bill Gates added \$355 million to the \$650 raised by Rotary and the task of killing off the debilitating disease is 99.9% complete. Rotary works every year with local schools and businesses to send shoe boxes filled with Christmas presents to children in Eastern Europe and Africa and runs the Shelter Box scheme which issues emergency packages to disaster areas.

More locally, Shaftesbury Rotarians are involved in Kid's Out - which takes disabled children from Yewstock School to Longleat for the day. They also organise Gold Hill Fair, the largest free entertainment event in the area which also gives other charities a chance to raise money for their own good causes. Rotary supports many young people, allowing them to gain confidence in public speaking and interview techniques or organising music, and cooking competitions for school children. To find out more, speak to a Rotarian - you'll recognise them from the pin worn on their lapel, or search online for rotary international.

Fiona Dart



Outgoing president David Wynn-Mackenzie presents a certificate for Corporate Membership to Alan Mulholland, director of Stalbridge Linen Services.