

'I got Diana Ross for your birthday!'

26/ 1/2009

SOUL diva Diana Ross jetted into Manchester for a lucrative private performance.

The star stunned onlookers when she strolled out of the Victoria and Albert Marriot Hotel, at Water Street, on Saturday night.

It is understood she flew over from America in a private jet to perform an intimate show at the Staffordshire home of billionaire John Caudwell, 56, whose partner Claire Johnson was celebrating her 40th birthday.

Arriving with two female assistants and flanked by bodyguards, the singer used the Manchester hotel to rehearse before being chauffeur-driven in a silver Mercedes to Caudwell's Grade I-listed multi-million pound mansion, Broughton House.

A guest at the swanky fancy dress bash said the former front-woman of the Supremes sang old and new hits during a 40-minute show for the 250 guests.

The party-goer said: "John Caudwell is renowned for throwing fabulous parties and this was another one. He does lots of star-studded events for charities but this one was a little more private."

He said they had a dinner which included a main course of lamb and there was 'plenty of champagne flowing'.

The guest added: "The guests were all family and friends. "It had a fancy dress theme of glam and there was a bar at one end and a stage at the other where Diana performed for 40 minutes."

Caudwell, founder of Phones 4U, once paid £50,000 to duet with Brian Adams and last year paid Whitney Houston a reputed £1.7m to perform a one-hour gig at a London charity event.

Stoke-on-Trent born Caudwell began his business career selling soap door-to-door before latching onto the potential of mobile phones in the eighties.

In 2007 he sold his business for £1.46 billion. A cycling fanatic, Caudwell does a sponsored bike ride each year for his charity Caudwell Children, which helps disabled youngsters.

Motown, the record label which made Diana Ross famous, celebrated its 50th anniversary this month.