

GARGOYLES CELEBRATE BEST SEASON EVER IN FINE STYLE

Stately surroundings, a full house, a superb three course meal and scintillating entertainment, made Alstonefield Cricket Club's Annual Awards Dinner a night to remember. The 2014 season was the best yet for the Gargoyles. The standard of cricket, the strength of the fixture list, with more and more clubs wanting to share the Alstonefield cricket experience and the commitment of all the club's members to building a successful club, made it a special season and the celebrations did it justice.

After the meal, the members were captivated by a beguiling mix of stunning photography and poignant sound tracks, in a 20 minute review of the 2014 season, to remind the audience of the highs and lows of cricketing life. The scene setting culminated in Tony Spybey's moving narration of If with Apologies, a poem defining what it takes to be a Gargoyle, which left everyone grasping for their napkins.

The club was privileged to have Honorary Life Member Peter Leason, Chief Statistician and Scorer Chris Hornblower and Head Groundsman Ian Redfern as guests for the evening. The awards presentation commenced with recognition and thanks for all the contributions to the club's health made by the community. In particular, to the Parish Council for their commitment to the maintenance of the playing field; to Ian Redfern for his expertise in preparing the ground; to the village hall committee for the superb cricket tea facilities; to Tara, Janet and Sally for their legendary teas; to Mike and Dot Griffin for the use of their marquee for our changing rooms and to Emily and her team at the George for their post-match hospitality.

In his review of the 2014 season, club captain Simon Smith challenged the members to recall its defining moments through a series of visual aids. This test of mental recall proved challenging to an audience with an average age of 52, but with help from the younger generation, everyone was transported back to last summer's glorious sunshine, the awards presentation began.

The leading batsman award went to Ian McKay, with a club record average of 73.5. Andy Bray with an average of 54.1 was runner-up. Simon Smith was kept busy, firstly stepping up to receive the leading bowler award with an average runs per wicket of just 13.4, to the astonishment of all present, ahead of Will Siddons, with an average of 16.4 and then the captain received the leading catcher award with 7 catches. Still not finished, he

reluctantly accepted the Duck award for his two 0s, twice as many as his nearest rival.

Alan Hayes was rapturously applauded for his Champagne Moment award, a match winning feat of preposterous skill and courage against Ashbourne and John Clarke was awarded the Lame Duck award for his loyalty and dedication in surviving for 21 overs against Sutton on the Hill in a losing cause.

The biggest cheer of the night was reserved for the most important award; the Clubman of the Year, which was awarded to Tony Guest for his consistent contribution to the club, both on and off the field.

A wonderful evening for the club and the people who make it, was rounded off with the presentation of a medieval artwork to the host, Shotton of Swainsley.

With the 2015 season less than one month away, there was no doubting each and every Gargoyle's appetite for more fun filled cricketing exploits.

Award Winners below....

