A very good evening to you all,

I forget, in fact I don’t much care, but I suppose this will be my third, fourth or even last annual account of Mildenhall Cricket Club that I have or will commit to paper, but once again you’ve given me the material to expose the true idiocy of our members and respective friends over the last twelve month and at times a little further, anyway it’s been given to me in all its true glory!

A massive number of people have asked whether I will speak about the cricket this year, so to both of them I say, in a way yes, but at the same time no, but if it’s a Wisden account of the season in the two counties past then it’s very much a nope, but my assistant Lou Handy will meet this requirement later on, as I agree it has been a wonderfully successful season, although we may have stretched our relationships slightly with some on the other side of the Suffolk border (shoulder shrug).

However for me this continues to be the only way you’ll find out the interesting stuff while everyone else is playing cricket – its more your tabloid front page as opposed to the back, whether your broad sheet or red top, cut the journalist metaphor rubbish and cut to the chase Taylor, ultimately theres something for everyone!

So what better place to start than just over a year ago, the fine AGM of 2013 …..

**Friday 30th November 2013**

Is there a job that Mike Clarke and Mick Emmett won’t propose me for, or for which members present wouldn’t subsequently vote for me? Interesting that they didn’t wait or even chose to bother to propose me for the role of Secretary when it came up – the job I already do! This was all done in the backdrop of delivering a hilarious speech, not my words, but that of John Squire – known as a tough critique of literature

**Monday 13th January 2014**

Committee meeting, first one of the year. The nets are rubbish – in other news the pope has declared himself of catholic persuasion. The time is surely up for the monument of steel, netting and green carpet from days gone by. It was agreed that their time is over and a priority for funding. The great cricket ball lottery of life is to come to an end. No longer shall the batsman fear a delivery to either the head or toe, both delivered at equal length.

But how should we fund it – this forms what is probably the £13,500 question, or maybe more!

**Monday 10th February**

Committee meeting this evening and much of tonight’s discussion was focused on the sad news that Neil Cross had passed away. He was, as I said in a letter to the family, one of the finest, if not gods very own ambassador for the game, and I’ll argue that no one could surpass his cricketing passion, to say nothing of his thoughts on arranging the most appropriate leg side field, whether he was actually on the field or not is irrelevant

As we reflected on losing another much loved member of our cricketing family, we agreed that he had a major impact in so many ways on the growth of players, and a positive influence that lives on today. He had cricket running through his veins

**Saturday 1st March**

Another fund raising pre-season meal, and for me, like Vettori previously, it was a great start, a tremendous middle and quite literally sick end, and not in a ‘down with the kids’ cool way! What is it with fresh air after three bottles of red wine, and who put a bush outside a front garden of 8 west drive … moving on!

Boarders, bunny and his crew combined to perform miracles during an evening which welcomed the maiden event of MildenHALL of Fame. A means of recognition wonderfully dreamt up by James Taylor that saluted the contribution … in fact its actual criteria was that “they consistently demonstrated exceptional skills, qualities or actions which helped the development of the club and game at the MCC. Their historic significance will not diminish over time regardless of the club's or games evolution"

The inaugural, and most worthy six inductees were Bill Abbs, Boarders, The two Mikes, Squiz, and Rick Handy.

I was honoured to relive the MCC life of Rick Handy; ad lib Lou said, just go with the flow Lou said, ok I said. JT got up and read two sides of A4, Nick then got up before me and with a piece of paper read away, anyway, everything that I quickly tapped into my phone while waiting conveyed what I wanted to say, despite being heckled by Neal Clark, who’d obviously had a glass of Rose. Ultimately I was privileged to present Ken and Jean with a written citation and an exclusive lapel badge that denoted membership into an exclusive club.

A great night

**Monday 3rd March**

Another committee meeting tonight and we had a visiting speaker. Tim Parker from the Suffolk Ground Association, who we invited or he invited himself, I forget, anyway he came to discuss are far greater ground than his own and how he could assist. Initially he spoke of a time when he had been inspired by the two Mikes, and how he was stirred to cut, prepare, mark or fertilise something – no prizes which Mike inspired the latter!

AY has worked his magic, flirting outrageously with the parish and district council members, he raised vast funds for the new nets and artificial wicket. In addition, and having asked members to dig deep, they have responded with unparalleled generosity. Extraordinary stuff!

In other news it was announced that the scorer and umpires are to be connected by a form of CB radio – an inspirational idea, and ensures that MCC stands out amongst the rest. John really is taking us towards the electronic age; but the committee is wondering whether it should swat up on its CB handle talk for the year ahead

Should we as such get our ears on breaker-breaker, eye ball ten four ten four rubber duck, Kojak with a Kodak and get your Meat Wagon ready – that’s an ambulance in case James Holmes is listening

**Saturday 31st March**

It was time to stir up the ground from its winter slumber and I was caught by the fire side, destroying the overgrown vegitation with Joseph Turner, and we talked exclusively about his acting career. I suggested that he look into extras work in TV and film. The benefits of which I reminded him were that you don’t even have to have any talent to do it. Thanks Tailsy he replied. I accepted there and then it might not have come out as I had intended, I know what I meant, in that it would be at least simple work and he’d be able to do it …. Even that doesn’t sound right, tell you what – leave it

**Monday 7th April**

For cricketing reasons Al ‘Dexter’ Younger has decided to leave the club, it was both sad and most inconvenient. Frustratingly he was to collect the cricket balls and paperwork from Ipswich and then pick up Kobus from Heathrow, all rather inconvenient

**Friday 11th April**

Bar duty tonight, and I left late into the evening. The condensation had settled on my car and I noted that on one of my windows someone had drawn a large phallic symbol (cock and balls to the lesser educated), and I soon limited my list to two prime suspects, who when scrutinised both had the time, the means, the inclination and the motivation – in my mind it was either Killer or Mandy Turner!

**Saturday 19th April**

First game of the season and we were away to Woodbridge but due to their ground share arrangements with Ipswich I happened upon Tony Catley, who was visiting with Exning, who in their own right were playing Ipswich.

This is silly he noted, first game of the season, why not for travel reasons have Woodbridge v Ipswich and Mildenhall v Exning … You’re right Tony, I said, and we moaned about fixture arrangements. It was only on the way home I realised it wouldn’t have worked – we’re not in the same division!! It’s annoying as I would have loved to have pulled him up at the time – damn it

Anyway we lost to Woodbridge by one run, gutting when you think we were 80/9, showing great spirit but not the brain to chase 130

Saw old man Ian Starling, who always takes an interest in all things Mildenhall and he specifically asked about T. He has gone to play for Blackheath I told him. Do you think he’ll play in their first team, his logic surely that the England development squad comes before a Kent Saturday side!!!!!!!

**Saturday 26th April**

I do love the Sid Rutterford stand AND some of it members, but they do sometimes, as collective, cool themselves to me. A cynical clap and applause as we reached 50 was not helpful, nor appreciated, admittedly we were six down at the time and I was batting at the time, but what adds to the despair is that one the offending members, was my father!

**Thursday 1st May**

BCC News have aired a story about a cricket club that has banned sixes due to the threat of legal action by a neighbour – they have thus put in a ten day transfer request for Vettori, no one else that’s it!

**Friday 9th May**

Day before Mistley away, and the forecast was for heavy rain the following day, so the possibility of play tomorrow was unrealistic, so I hit the booze and the sofa all evening.

**Saturday 10th May**

Mother Nature and the weather forecasters can quite frankly go swivel

Tea time at Mistley; and a long discussion ensued, and important one at that; the pros and cons, and the non-masculine undertones of quiche, the women’s choice if you like on the cricketing or indeed any teatime table. As such it was explained to those who remained rightly captivated by such a discussion that your basic standard or luxury quiche was your poor man’s pizza – Webby looked both confused and surprised and stated surely not a poor man’s pizza, as in his experience eggs and tomatoes were expensive, and so was cheese …. Not literally Webby it was explained, not literally. And what supervened was a lesson in English idioms – that when something or someone is compared to something or someone else, but is not as good is defined as a poor man's version

Every day is indeed a school day!

**Saturday 17th May**

Scandal has rocked the cricketing world this week; former New Zealand international Louie Vincent has claimed that he fixed matches in return for cash and women – and with this in mind Neal Clarke was asked this morning whether he would do the same. Never, no, not me, never, couldn’t do it … my competitive spirit would kick in. Taking his age in account he was asked, ah but what about if it was Olivier Newton John – in her prime. Ah, well, when I say never, maybe not never … how shallow!

That afternoon we thrashed Little Bardfield but the afternoon was made by a story made by the opposition on the 2nd square. A rather angered, middle aged Braintree player, fuelled possibly by his recent dismissal, took it out on three of his much younger playing colleagues, who understandably were sitting on the hill watching our game. ..

‘Oi, boys, you should be watching OUR game, you can see nothing from there, and with the mobile net in the way, nothing, how can you possibly see anything??’ We saw you get out Geoff’ was the quick response – I was proud of them

**Monday 18th May**

Nick Allen was fully behind the purchase of a new wicket marker frame. His insistence is fuelled by the risk of injury, sustained no less through, and I quote ‘the nipping of the fingers’ on the current frame. Don’t think we’ll be losing Nick to the Special Forces anytime soon.

In contrast Ben Tippet had sliced off the tip of his thumb in a domestic incident, and had visited health care professionals, but was insistent that he played on. However I reminded him of a recent saying found on the back of Yorkshire Ambulances – if there’s now’t wrong with thee, get t’bus

Needham Market, and how to win ugly - and that’s nothing to do with the opposition playing in trouser tucked into their socks

**Friday 23rd May**

I was fascinated today as listened to Mick Emmet explain to Nick Allen the 'Cost-Benefit Analysis' model, a process by which business decisions are analysed. The benefits of a given situation or business-related action are summed and then the costs associated with taking that action are subtracted.

This was, I presumed of huge benefit to the Nick, the Managing Director for Volvo Construction Equipment Division, and presumably the most invaluable advice, filling a gap in Nick’s functional skills

**Friday 6th June**

The net and wicket re-surfacing is finished, and as Lou states that whilst it was a team effort - from benefactors of which there were 26 separate personal donations, to work party members and committee members but Andy Youngs has undertaken all the site visits, collated quotes and crucially made the calls which gained us Parish Council and Forest Heath Council grants, so he has been a major player in this project, thanks Andy! Well done
 **Saturday 7th June**

Unavailable today but any star status I self-perceived was dashed, the 2’s won without me – I am not the pivotal player I thought I was

**Saturday 14th June**

Selected for the 3rds due to phantom doubts of future availability, or as Chippy, the motivational guru, life coach and mentor to those under a dark depressioned cloud put it, dropped! You couldn’t teach that level of innate compassion!

The 2nds lost without me, YES, get in there! Maybe I am pivotal …

**Saturday 21st June**

Witham away

I was proud to play on the same pitch as our new Sri Lankan player, Kieren Tillakaratne Davis, who when attempting the Dilshan scoop, got it ever so slightly wrong – anyone who saw it would confess to watching the ball float six foot in the air and land with great ease in the wicket keepers gloves, unlike the actual Dilshan scope that takes one bounce before crossing the rope

For Matt Allen and Chris Lewis it was a watershed moment, having travelled to the game without reputation, they travelled home with the unlikeliest of criminal

For it was Neil Clark, the man who had asked the questions in a club quiz the previous week who now had to answer them under caution the next! My only hope was that his contestants had given greater thought to their responses than he had when asked to estimate his speed, to the heavily tattooed traffic cop along the A14, otherwise it would have been a pretty poor evening!

It is great to see a face from the past. Pete Allen from Witham, who stated that he always loved coming to Mildenhall because we played the right way in great surroundings. When you question whether it matters at the time, and that you play tough but fair, it was times like these that reaffirmed it

**Saturday 28th June**

Elmstead Market and a cricketing first – I’ve seen players walk and I’ve seen them not walk, I’ve even seen players like Lou walk when they weren’t out, because it was good enough for him, but I’ve never seen anyone get bowled and for the batsman to remain at his crease. It was a shocking game of cricket, culminating in the opposition ironically **walking** off

Richard Ford came to watch and having seen me playing for the 3rds asked me when it was I would be coming to Worlington ….. We need a treasurer Tailsy!! Nice

However the final straw today was having Taha telling me how to bat, and showing me how to play straight! There are limits to my patience

**Saturday 12th July**

Harwich away and what a spread; sausages and mash, wedges, bacon sarnies, but oh my days the showers were something from the dark-age! I chose to wait until I got home before ridding myself of the seaside sweat and tears, but JT and Clark went for it, on the premise I could only conclude that if their fielding was anything to go by they wouldn’t have caught anything anyway; whether it be hepatitis, Ebola or indeed a cricket ball! We lost, and for Jt the 23rd time of asking … MAYBE, just maybe JT it’s you!

**Saturday 2nd August**

What else are drink breaks for I ask you accept discovering you need a 30 yard circle measured out? Oh I know, drinks! A great baptism for Captain Shep

**Friday 8th August**

Bar night tonight so I needed the keys, contacting Stewy he advised me that he was in bed with vertigo, ooooooo kinky, but having eradicated the idea that vertigo was Mandy’s bedroom name, I thought it both helpful but ultimately very clever to suggest that as he was suffering with vertigo it might be prudent to get down from the top bunk

I could tell the Stewart found my comment very funny by his texted response – ‘you can collect the keys from the house’. What a guy!

**Saturday 9th August**

Nacton at home but for me it was tea duty with Katie! BLT’s, pizza, sausage sarnies, ice cream and cakes, the latter kindly supplied by mother Taylor

Chippy was mauling his way through the cake and at the same time greeted my mother who was propping up the bar, I say propping, more standing.

Hello Ruth, wonderful cake, Chip said

Thank you Chip, she responded, continuing, and how are you, what about the girls, how’s Emma?

Yeah, you reckon you would make me one of these cakes?

Transparent priorities for all to see!!

The opposition thought Katie was fit! No wonder they were 112 all out …. Think about it – JOKE by the way!

**Saturday 16th August**

Braintree away – and I’m there as an MCC ambassador or in layman’s terms, the scorer

Saw a good friend to the club, of many days gone by. Keith Merral and he recalled fond memories of joining us on nights out in the past, when playing for Halstead. Indeed, he recalled almost instantly of a time when he had joined us and how Lou had frog marched us to some poncy Italian coffee/bar in Cambridge, when all he wanted was a beer

After twenty odd years Chris Reeve and I thought it was time that Keith knew the truth. It was because of Lou’s yearning for the Italian waitress. Reeve also remembered the evening, possibly because he was removed by the owners for catching to many drinks and dropping far more f’bombs (that’s swear words for the non-lingo sect in the house)! The message for me was that not everything changes …

**Saturday 6th September**

One day, two division titles, a number of very special bottles of wine from Kingdon’s reserve and probably many more sore heads from a night out in Newmarket.

Club taxi driver AY’s car broke down and it was good for his respective fare payers to stick around and give him company and support in the early hours. I say all, as it was Jordan Francis who made a tactical phone call and found his own kind of support, female support, for company and probably a whole lot more; as AY waited for the AA with Bunny

**Monday 8th September**

Committee meeting; Mick has resigned – the straw that broke the camel’s back? He can no longer cope with the menace of the cellar dropping one degree for five minutes on a Saturday afternoon as Chipchase puts his fluffy egged baps in preserve. Undoubtedly it was a heavy burden to bare

**Saturday 27th September**

New look to the Presidents v Chairman’s. Mick Saunders managed a hat trick – he ran out two of his colleagues, and then himself.

Nick Allen worryingly congratulated Martin Kingdon on his son Ewan’s impressive chest and incredible torso … there was an uncomfortable silence as we began looking around us for discussion changers

Man of the Match – two bottles of Prosecco, one for Taha, who was tee total due to religious reasons, the other AY, who was tee total for no sound reasons whatsoever as far as I’m aware. Either rethink the prizes or the winners. Maybe they like quiche!

Eddie has been away on the Norfolk broads, and yet he had scratches on his back, low hanging shrubbery is my guess

**Saturday 4th October**

Ground to bed day. In 1990 it took a coach load of volunteers two days but today the main work was completed in just six hours, hats off to technology

Having cleaned up around the score hut, Killer was to later state that he hoped that we hadn’t killed his blackberry bush. That’s an awkward one to answer Mike I replied. Why? He enquired. Well the small forest of fruit baring bushes of which you speak are currently in the corner ……. on fire

**Monday 6th October**

End of the season and still members, or non-members have yet to pay their subs. This is not a new thing we dreamt up this year. Ridiculous

**Thursday 16th October**

The whole, ‘sorry I’m in Dublin with work, regards Lou’, is getting boring and tiresome. Alright Lou, I get it, we all get it, YOU’RE IN DUBLIN. I don’t care anymore. Make up a new destination, even if you aint going to be specifically there, just do it for originality.

**Saturday 25th October**

Dinner Awards night. IT TOOK ME YEARS TO BE ASKED TO DO A SPEECH! The average I expect being around ten years surely, oh but no – along came Andrew ‘if your face fits, I know Peter Finnis’ Zajac, who just walked in, year one and gave a toast to the wellbeing of the club. Toast? I’ve had butter ON hot toast last longer, and as funny!

Not amused. That said it was a wonderful evening once again. And all were worthy winners, and thank goodness for the website for reminding me of who they all were

So there you have it; the year gone by, I’ve probably missed loads, got a few facts wrong, misrepresented some of you, the dates are perhaps wrong in places and I defiantly know I intentionally left out a quite X-rated but hilarious discussion had amongst a number of us during the end of season party and ultimately I apologise if I’ve upset any of you. But whatever your gripe it was written with prejudice, a clear agenda and with absolute bias, but I hope you enjoyed it!

To that end may I, as always be the first to wish you a merry Christmas and a great 2015, a year that promises to be a very different challenge and we, you and all of us will have to step up to the plate. But if this year is anything to go by then we have nothing to worry about!

So as I exit stage right, wait for applause, but not to the point of stopping and leave you wanting more, please enjoy the rest of your night

Thanks … over to you Lou