

JONATHAN AGNEW



At this time every year I head to London for one of the highlights of the season – a seriously good lunch attended by 400 of cricket’s unsung heroes. These are the volunteers nominated by clubs and coun-

ty boards up and down the country, who are invited to Lord’s for the Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards (OSCAs). Only a handful actually win an award, but for each and every one it is a special day at the home of cricket as we get the chance to say thank you for their hours of hard work and dedication that keep club cricket going.

Chris Moore was a winner this year. He arrives at his club, Streetly CC in Staffordshire, at six o’clock in the morning to prepare the pitch and then works behind the bar until late at night – unpaid, of course. Jack Greenwood is 82 years old and he walks a mile to Denholme CC in Yorkshire every Monday

morning to empty all the bins. Pre season he paints the 22 wooden benches, the external buildings, the changing rooms and the tea room – and he has raised more than £30,000 for the club through various fundraising activities.

On Monday Prince William hosted the first football match at Buckingham Palace for 150 FA volunteers. He urged them not to break any windows, but reinforced the fact that sport simply could not

exist without the unseen army who devote their lives working tirelessly in the background – and that includes the parents – so that the lucky ones can take to the field.

The OSCA lunch is attended by England cricketers past and present and this year the actor Jim Carter, who plays Carson the butler in *Downton Abbey*, spoke of the challenges and pleasures of running a cricket club. Jim is chair-

man of Hampstead CC, which puts out men’s and women’s teams every weekend. Clearly it is a family effort because his wife, actress Imelda Staunton, bakes the cakes for the all important tea intervals (I can vouch for her lemon drizzle cake).

While we admire the big names in sport who create the headlines every day, it is also vital to remember those who make it all happen – so here is an early nudge for the Unsung Hero Award in the BBC’s Sports Personality of the Year. You can make your nomination for 2013 now via the BBC sport website, bbc.co.uk/sport.

***‘Sport
could not
exist
without
volunteers’***

jonathanagnew.com
[@Aggerscricket](https://twitter.com/Aggerscricket)