

Alan Hodgkinson: Just a Groundsman!

Profile by Russell Eggar

“If they get pleasure out of what I do, then I’m happy”. As the groundsman at Mytholmroyd Cricket Club, Alan Hodgkinson is a man who clearly sees the importance of his role in the club’s recent success on his proudly maintained ground.

Fitting every physical stereotype of a groundsman, wearing green Wellington boots and a bright red raincoat, I greet Alan as he inspects the newly grown square at Moderna Way. After a brief welcome he ushers me inside the brand new pavilion to discuss his role as groundsman.

An experienced groundsman in the area, Alan has looked after cricket grounds for around 15 years at both Todmorden and Walsden cricket clubs prior to his work at Mytholmroyd, but having worked at the club for three years, Alan is quick to assert his praise for the people at the club and the work they do to ensure success.

At 62 years of age, it is obvious that Alan’s vast knowledge is both crucial and well received. He is a man who believes in individuality, citing that “no two cricket grounds are the same”. Bearing that in mind, it is obvious that Alan is a man who likes to keep himself to himself and is comfortable in the company of his cricket ground. Alan has never really openly involved himself in club functions but is evidently proud of the achievements of MCC over the past three years, not least the praise that the club and the ground received for holding the Crossley Shield final last season which Mytholmroyd fittingly won.

Alan is involved in the club to do what he can - not for glory or trophies - and even though recent successes give him enjoyment, at times he says he feels like hiding away - but he is also quick to mention that his role is far from complete.

Although he does not see himself carrying on as groundsman for years to come, Alan feels that he benefits from the exercise and fresh air involved in the job, and that as long as the club benefits from his work he is happy and is more than willing to remain as part of the club whether it be as a spectator or as an advisor to those who carry on his outstanding work. His long-term aim is to ensure that there are other people as committed as he is to keeping the ground maintained to the highest standard to ensure the continued success and happiness of those who play there - even if it is difficult to keep cricketers constantly happy!

As a groundsman, Alan knows what is required of him, he knows what is good, what is bad, and what is indifferent and he also knows the importance of cricket to local communities, getting children involved and keeping community spirit alive.

Alan is a dedicated groundsman whose knowledge of, and commitment to, cricket grounds is unsurpassed and although he has never played cricket he has always had an interest in it and continues to become more interested. His love lies with the grounds, not the game (he also mentions his passion for golf), and he is comfortable in his own company. He is kept happy by the serenity and beautiful surroundings of a quaint cricket ground on a sunny day in Yorkshire.