

**Paul Watson**  
**Committed to Commitment**  
**By Russell Eggar**

Paul 'Watto' Watson is one of most committed and versatile members of Mytholmroyd Cricket Club. Not only has he taken up the role of club secretary but he has also given up his spare time to concentrate on the club's two junior sides. A building contractor by trade, he runs a century-old family business, and a lot of credit has to go to Paul for the work he has done to get the club to where it stands today. Paul's company was in fact involved in constructing the new pavilion at Ewood Holmes and 'Watto' himself has continued to be an important figurehead at the club.



He is a man who oozes experience and knowledge of the game and is focused on what he aims to achieve at, and for, the club. Prior to his involvement at Mytholmroyd, he played cricket at Luddendenfoot, establishing himself as one of the team's expert bowlers. But it wasn't until he joined Mytholmroyd in 1986 that he really started to enjoy his cricket. "It was quite a good club and a good set of lads up there in Luddendenfoot but I moved on and Mytholmroyd has been my life ever since in terms of cricket." Paul openly admits that in his younger years he didn't play cricket, and if he did it was occasionally. "I didn't start playing cricket until I was 27...it's never too late!" He was inspired to join the club by Jon Pinder, an old friend who played for the club all his life, and although not blessed with youth he saw the potential that was lying dormant in the Mytholmroyd soil.

When Paul joined Mytholmroyd, the club was in a very poor state. The clubhouse was an old battery hen hut, they were struggling to field two sides, and although they had a very experienced and capable squad, they had no junior teams or any facilities to attract young cricketers. Along with a group of people committed to Mytholmroyd, he set up a committee that aimed to rebuild the club, with the aim of creating a junior section for youngsters in the town who were keen to play cricket.

Alongside stalwart club members such as Derek Wheelwright and Dennis Blanche, 'Watto' began to establish new and exciting initiatives, one of which was the creation of a junior section at the club in 1995. They also established a relationship with Calder High School, which is the main secondary school in the area for the age group they were looking at. By announcing the existence of a junior section at the club, they had a sudden influx of young players. It was clear that the school could not provide the children with top-class cricket. "The school just didn't have the facilities or the will to teach the kids cricket...which was very disappointing...so we encouraged them to come down and play at Mytholmroyd," says Paul. He continues to manage the junior section today and his contribution, along with that of Gary Boocock, has proved to be priceless in the development of the club.

As a cricketer, Paul is an established bowler and has just missed out on the league's bowling prize on two occasions, once by only a whisker. He is also a humble man, always making himself available for selection. He remains an enthusiastic member of the club, and if it wasn't for a horrendous foot injury (suffered not so long ago), he would still undoubtedly be bowling his accurate and steady right-arm overs. Paul says that he has enjoyed his veteran years more than any other period: "These last few years under the captaincy of Jon Russell have been fantastic and the highlight of my career was in fact my final one in 2005."

Nowadays he is comfortable in his role at the club and constantly uplifted by the wealth of talent that his club is currently creating. Although he is no longer playing, Paul is now club secretary, a qualified junior coach, and determined to create a successful youth set-up at Mytholmroyd.