

## **Profile of Harry Andrew**

**By Jon O'Shea**

Having been at the club for over 40 years, club president Harry Andrew knows more than a thing or two about the many highs enjoyed and lows endured by Northowram Hedge Top throughout the decades. Now, at the age of 77, Harry continues to be heavily involved in Hedge Top's day-to-day running and plays an integral role in upholding the club's safely-guarded ethos of fair play and promoting youth cricket.

His long career began with local side Bradshaw at the tender age of 16, and as a youngster he enjoyed some success despite suffering from polio since childhood. Starting out as a medium-pace bowler with Bradshaw's under-18s, he once took 7 wickets for 2 runs against Halifax YMCA, and later returned the phenomenal figures of 9 for 16 versus Ovenden.



Harry's departure from Bradshaw Lane in 1959, at the age of 30, was prompted by a relocation to Bradford with new wife Madeleine, herself a keen cricket fan. Faced with the choice of where to continue his prospering career, in his later guise as a hard-hitting right-handed batsman and wicketkeeper, Harry opted for the club based at Hedge Top Lane. The determining factor behind his decision? Because he had made his first 50 for Bradshaw at the ground and so considered it to be a "fine batting wicket."

However, it certainly wasn't plain sailing in his first season in Northowram - there were strong rumours circulating that the club was on the verge of folding. The side had been struggling in the second division of the Halifax League and funds were dangerously low. Fortunately, the arrival of players such as Harry and another club stalwart, the late left-arm quick Alan Kellett, provided a sharp uplift in fortunes for the team. Perhaps most significantly, this injection of new blood enabled the club to buy the Hedge Top Lane premises, which they had previously leased from the Coley Trust, for the then considerable fee of £600. This meant that the club could now make plans for the extension of their meagre facilities.

On the playing side, Harry, a fiercely competitive component of Northowram's middle order, then went on to captain a fast-improving first XI to second division glory in 1962. This success was steadily built upon, and by the mid-1960s Northowram had become well established in the top flight. In 1965 they reached the final of the Halifax Parish Cup where Harry was part of the eleven which overcame favourites Triangle thanks to Kellett's resourceful bowling and skipper Alan Butterworth's excellent unbeaten 31. They then went on to

become Halifax League Division One champions the following year, in spectacular style – going unbeaten throughout the entire season.

Having contributed many crucial runs during this golden period for Hedge Top, Harry continued to weigh in with support on the administrative side. Initially, he was appointed as club secretary under the tutelage of *de facto* club president Walter Howden, but quickly progressed to become treasurer – a post he held for some 30 years. Then, in 1998, Harry became the club's president.



During his time at the helm, Harry has overseen unprecedented development of the club's infrastructure. The construction of a new brick pavilion was later extended to include showering, toilet and finally, bar facilities – a much needed boon to the financial and social aspects of the club. In his role, which he also still holds today, as head groundsman, Harry was a vital cog in the team that painstakingly relaid five playing wickets and added five new practice strips in the early 1990s, and has since introduced a purpose-built scoring unit and some impressive sliding sightscreens.

Every Monday morning (not to mention several other unscheduled trips in the week) Harry makes the short trip down to Hedge Top Lane as part of a dedicated troupe of senior club members who see to it that the ground gets the considered attention it requires to remain one of the Halifax League's most pleasant venues. He continues to foster a range of plans for the future prosperity of the club and has no intention of moderating his contribution, though he still remains as keen as ever to bring coming generations through. A Hedge Top man to the core, Harry Andrew personifies the values that have seen his club arrive where it is today.