

## Groundsman Dave Rawnsley

By David Febrero

Shelf CC are arguably the most fortunate cricket team in the Calderdale area. The team has a groundsman attending to the wicket in addition to Dave Rawnsley, a first-team batter who also focuses on general maintenance of the ground and the pavilion. "It's all voluntary work," Dave said. "Luckily I work shifts so during the week I am able to attend to both the field and the pavilion".

Dave, who began his career in the Bradford League, dedicates the majority of his time to looking after the cricket pavilion, which he has almost single-handedly renovated in time for the new season. "We've moved to the Halifax League," he explained, "and there are certain things they expect, it's a bit more organised really. So Brian Crabtree and myself have painted the pavilion, obviously, but we have also built a new scorehut and benches because the league demands seating is in place at every ground".



Clearly, local cricket clubs struggle for money and rely on the help of ex-players, current players and others in order to remain in existence. Hence, the work of Dave Rawnsley and others at similar cricket clubs should not be underestimated. "We are very short of money so we converted two old workmen's huts into a team room, shower room and dressing room," he added.

But what are the incentives for players in the later stages of their careers to use their free time in this way? "Simple," Dave explains, "it's all about the kids. When I started playing as a junior I knew someone cut the grass, prepared the wicket and allowed me to play. I have had so many years of enjoyment playing the game that I feel I am putting something back into it now".

The former Great Horton and Cullingworth cricketer moved to Shelf in 2001 after winning the Waddilove Cup in a young Cullingworth side. "I fancied a change," the fireman said. "Five or six ago I remember Shelf was a bit of an over-grown jungle, run down, they basically turned up on a Saturday and played cricket. They didn't do anything to encourage people to watch or join them and I came along from another club and used it as a blank canvas. Instead of going to the gym I come here and work hard; however, I appreciate the rest of the lads are working and aren't free like me".

Despite consistent instances of vandalism in the area, Dave has refused to let his good work be tarnished by mindless thugs. "There is vandalism but we have the police patrolling the ground sometimes. Fortunately they have never damaged the wicket but we won't let them get on top of us – whatever they do we will just sort it out".

Dave has played for a number of clubs in the Halifax area, including the West Yorkshire Fire service, where he was secretary for five years. He has won a number of awards for batting and bowling and has gained league and cup successes at several different clubs.

However, there is one moment that remains unforgettable in his cricketing career. "I was playing for Cullingworth and I was smoking a roll-up cigarette while waiting to bat," he grins. "I must have dropped it between my pads and trousers because when I got up there was loads of smoke pouring up my pad. My leg was burning and someone shouted out 'Call the fire-brigade!' - only for someone else to shout 'Don't worry, he is a fireman!' At least it would make for a powerful anti-smoking advert!"