

Profile of Newton Holmes

By David Febrero

Local cricket teams are notorious for the loyal and passionate supporters. Frequently, their love and knowledge of local cricket is unparalleled. Every side has one, and Shelf CC are no different.

Newton Holmes, an ex-captain and batsmen for Shelf during the fifties and early sixties, holds this mantle. During his playing career, which he remembers perfectly, Newton was part of a famous Waddilove Cup final team. "We lost in the final," he remembers. "But we had a great team back then with great camaraderie in the dressing room. We finished second in the league and reached several cup semi-finals but never won a trophy".



Newton played in a period of semi-revolution during the 1950s, which saw the reconstruction of the current pavilion. Although his first-team career was littered with disappointing losses, Newton celebrated trophy triumphs in the 2nd team, captaining the side to league and cup success.

While his playing career ended decades ago, Newton remains part of the Calderdale cricket scene as an umpire at local venues. "I used to wake up Monday morning aching from playing at the weekend, but that's what I missed," he said. "One of my friends said they were looking for umpires and I thought that because I'm an ex-player and know the rules I'd have a go".

Ironically, the Shelf legend umpires for the club's fierce rivals Jer Lane. "It's funny, but obviously you can't umpire your team because there might be bias," he admits. However, he has recently officiated in the Halifax League and given Shelf an insight into the league's standard ahead of the club's first year back in the competition. "It's definitely a more organised league, better grounds, playing surfaces and players really".

Although umpiring has offered Newton an avenue back into local cricket, the former captain has also coached junior cricket, ironically again at Jer Lane. "I did think about continuing coaching," he confessed. "I looked after the junior team at Jer Lane for about eight years, and it's great to see some of the players I was coaching playing in the first team. But it needed the time I couldn't really give it".

Umpiring now consumes most of Newton's summer weekends. But he still keeps a link with the club he captained and represented more than 50 years ago. "Shelf have a good team, especially Andy (Dimbleby) and Dean (Smith), and I still watch them play as often as I can," he said.