

Ernest Creighton

With 918 wickets, Ernest Creighton has taken over 200 more wickets for Todmorden than any other bowler, amateur or professional.

He was first signed as professional by Todmorden in 1888 and bowled slow left-arm. His ability to turn the ball, vary his flight and pace and adapt it to the conditions without loss of accuracy was often devastating against club batsmen of the time. Often, he opted to bowl with lots of flight, and on one occasion it was reported that 'he bowled so slowly the ball seemed to take almost a week to reach the other end'.

He was admired for his 'steady moral character and unobtrusiveness', performing his duties, which included coaching and bowling to members, impeccably. The club was so impressed that they took the unprecedented step of giving him the pick of the matches for his benefit in 1889, enabling him to pocket a prodigious £48 from the gate receipts (worth approximately £2800 today) from the home match against Rochdale.

He played briefly for Yorkshire in 1888, experience which helped him to develop his change of pace. His commitment to Todmorden was evident when a county match at The Oval finished early and Ernest raced from London to Bacup, unexpectedly taking his place in the Todmorden team.

After taking 564 wickets in four seasons, including a club record 169 in the challenge matches of 1890, Creighton left Todmorden to join Bradford in 1892. He returned to take a further 125 wickets, helping Todmorden to second place in the Central Lancashire League in 1894 before assisting Rochdale to the Central Lancashire League title in 1895.

After a season at Ramsbottom he returned to Todmorden for a final stint in 1900 and 1901, taking a further 204 wickets for the club which was now in the Lancashire League.

Creighton formed lasting friendships in the town. The cricket club was represented at his wedding in Doncaster in November 1896, and the organist was from Todmorden Church.

Ernest died in Leeds in 1931.