

SEVEN OVERS AND A CIGARETTE LIGHTER!

Profile of Grahame Dickens by Chris Knowles

Grahame Dickens started playing for Emley Clarence in 1965, and with the exception of a junior spell at Almondbury and a scattering of matches in the evening league, Grahame has never really turned out for any other club. This helped form the foundations of a cricketing career which scaled four decades and involved him in many key roles at the South Kirklees club.



Born in Rawthorpe, Grahame rarely showed an interest in any other sport. Having stopped playing football at an early age, he became strongly suited to cricket and found himself getting involved with Emley in the mid-60s through a family-in-law connection.

The majority of his playing career was spent as a 2nd XI player, but he did manage a handful of games in the 1st team in his early years. Furthermore, Grahame explains he was something of a utility cricketer, 'I did a bit of everything! Predominantly I was a batsman, batting anywhere in the order just to get a game, but I had a spell as a bowler and one time I even kept wicket.'

Off the field of play, Grahame was just as prolific, lending a hand to the groundman before eventually becoming league representative and naturally finding a place on the Emley committee. He tells me, 'I was on the committee virtually from day one. I think I was on the committee because I was the [league] representative but it was something that I always enjoyed.'

In terms of his career highs, Grahame says, 'I suppose winning the Tinker Cup with the 2nd XI in 1973 was one of them. It's always the case that when you win something like that you'll always regard it as one of your high points.' He continues, 'One of my proudest moments, and one which will live long in the memory, was the opening of the new pavilion; that must have been about 30 years ago now.'

He also recalls the dark days – literally: 'I always remember that, at a time when we had no electricity in the old clubhouse, we held committee meetings by the light from the secretary's cigarette lighter! Nobody ever thought to bring a torch and the poor guy had to take the minutes by a lighter!'

Having been involved with Emley for over 40 years, Grahame says, 'I played with some fantastic cricketers and some real characters. The ones that stand out the most are Keith Wood [relative of former England batsman, Matthew], Rodney Chadwick and Stuart Chapman, and we had some good times at Emley.'

Grahame retired from the game in 1998 and remembers his last match vividly. 'We only played seven overs and we got rained off, which was disappointing.' Since suffering a stroke in 1999, the former Emley man has ceased his involvement with the club at committee level and now lives in Hoylandswaine.