

FROM MERSEYSIDE TO THE COLNE VALLEY

Q&A: EX-PLAYER JOHN FORREST BY IAN HODGSON

IH: As a player did you bat/bowl?

JF: Well, when I came over from Liverpool I was an early-order batsman. I started off in Broad Oak's 2nd XI batting at number six, seven or eight as we had a fairly strong team at the time. Then after a couple years I managed to force myself in as an opener up until about four or five years ago when I went down to number five or six, giving the younger lads a go.

IH: What year did you join Broad Oak CC?

JF: I joined the club in 1991 when we moved to the area. My wife was originally from Huddersfield but we met over in Southport and it was a decision as to whether we went to live in Perth, Australia (below), or went back to live in Huddersfield - and unfortunately Huddersfield won to my disappointment! The first club I went to look at was Slaithwaite, as the wife knew a few of the lads who played there. However, I ended up playing for Broad Oak after speaking to my brother-in-law's brother. He played for Broad Oak himself, plus my wife has always been a supporter since she was seven or eight years old.



IH: So did you play cricket in Southport before you moved to Huddersfield?

JF: I played in the Southport District League, which was a really high standard.

IH: For Broad Oak was it just the second team you played for or the first eleven as well?

JF: I mainly played in the second team. I eventually ended up taking over the captaincy in 1994/1995 and in my first year I won the Paddock Shield, which I'm very proud of. I've been to a couple of semi-finals since.

IH: What would you say have been the highlights of your career?

JF: Well, there has been quite a few. Obviously, the Paddock Shield win in my first year as captain. Also opening the batting for the first team and facing a West Indian fast bowler where unfortunately I was out first ball! The rest of the lads, in conjunction with my wife, took great delight in making me a member of the Primary Club! One great highlight was as captain of a very young side beating a very strong Scholes side eight or nine years ago with all their superstars playing. I managed to get a ton that day as we defended 180 quite easily and with young William Metcalfe and Gareth Taylor we spun the Scholes team out. Another thing that's great is to see the young lads come through, like Charlie Roebuck, Jack Hargreaves, Ollie Taylor, Ben Burnett, and hopefully my nephew.

IH: Have there been any lows?

JF: The lows are when you don't get any runs on Saturday! In 1991 we got relegated which was a low and unfortunately I had to be captain that year as there was no-one else left to do it. However, we bounced back straight away by gaining promotion although since then we have gone down again but came back up two years ago.

IH: So do you still play now or are you retired?

JF: I've signed up for Armitage Bridge at the moment because there are a lot of young and better players here and I would rather see them play. I also play golf on a Saturday morning so I do that and then watch Broad Oak in the afternoon.

IH: Are you still involved with the club now?

JF: I'm just a social member now, but I used to be on the committee and my wife used to be secretary.

IH: Finally, how do you see the future of Broad Oak CC?

JF: Well, hopefully with the couple of good signings that we have made in Graeme Hurlbatt as captain and Ben DeAraugo from Australia we have a very promising future. If they can integrate well with our young players then we have a great chance of getting promoted and then, in years to come, holding our own in the top flight.