

A LIFETIME AT NORTONTHORPE

Profile of Norman Mosley by Matt Ottey

Nortonthorpe is a club like no other - the dedication of its members is second to none. At local clubs it's essential that members not only take an interest on the field but off it too; it's not an ideal situation but it's the reality of keeping these clubs running. At Nortonthorpe there are any number of names that come to mind such as the Bentley brothers, Noel and Ernest, club umpires in the 1960s, and their nephew Dennis who also played in the side. Also Frank Exley who captained the 60s side that won just about everything there was on offer, and was also the club's 'temporary' groundsman for 32 years.



Roger Littlewood is a former player, the current secretary and 'face' of all things Nortonthorpe. Adrian Whittaker is former president of the Huddersfield Central League and Nortonthorpe's current groundsman. However, the spotlight is going to turn here on Norman Mosley and his extensive association with the club.

At the age of 15 Norman started playing cricket, taking a fancy to the batting side of the game immediately. Astonishingly, though, this was not the only relationship to be forged at the time. While plying his trade throughout the younger-age groups, his batting partner was a lad called Kenneth Armitage, the same lad who would open the batting with Norman throughout Nortonthorpe's 'Golden Years'. "Me and Kenneth opened the batting together for over 20 years," says Norman. "We were together while we were playing as kids, then we moved into the seconds at Nortonthorpe together before both making our way into the firsts. There was an understanding, we didn't get a lot of run out's!"

During their time together in the Nortonthorpe first team they clinched five league titles, winning three of them in back-to-back seasons, and three Allsop Cup final victories.

Still, as Norman prepared to hang up his pads he was unexpectedly being sized up for an umpiring role by fellow player Rowland Hardy. In a cunning plan involving constant ear-bashing and copious amounts of alcohol, Hardy set his plans in motion, as Norman explains: "Me and a few of the other players were in the pub one night, we hadn't been in there for very long when Rowland came over

and asked me to umpire a game for him the next day. I told him in not so many words to bugger off, but throughout the night he kept asking me to do it, buying me drinks and the like. So eventually, when I'd had enough to drink, I gave in and told him I'd do it, apparently."

And so with one drink too many started a lengthy umpiring career. Yet it wasn't always as easy as it is now for Norman. Recalling his early days as an umpire, he says: "For the first season or so I was a bit shaky, worrying about decisions, about keeping discipline and missing things, but eventually you learn to just call what you see. I remember one match during my first season when the players were appealing for everything. I was umpiring with a fella who had been about a bit, so the next time they appealed he called me over, offered me a mint and said 'Don't turn around, they'll think we're talking about 'em, scare 'em to death'. And it worked!"

Norman is still umpiring with Nortonthorpe and during the cricket season regularly tours the country watching his favourite sport. "I go as far north as Chester-le-Street (Durham) and as far south as Grace Road (Leicestershire)."

Nortonthorpe are lucky to have such committed and dedicated clubmen. Let's just hope there's more like Norman, Roger Littlewood, Adrian Whittaker and co in the next generation of cricketers to come out of Nortonthorpe.