

48 YEARS' TOIL AND STILL GOING STRONG...

Interview with Harry Marsden, Flockton CC Groundsman

When did you become club groundsman? Round about 1985 but I helped for the previous 25 years.



What does it involve on a day-to-day basis? How long have you got...As soon as it becomes dry I will start to prepare the square late Feb/early March depending on the weather, a brush to get rid of worm casts, a gentle topping with the mower, a feed and worm, a spiking and general small seeding if any hasn't taken on the square. Late March, again if not too wet, I will start with rolling and then hopefully a cut. Square up the wickets and mark my nine strips. Then prepare a couple of wickets and a practice strip. Once the season is here: Monday - repair the past weekend's wicket and prepare any junior wickets for use that week; Tuesday - prepare the next week's wicket (cut the previous week), cut and roll; Wednesday - tidy up the square following Tuesday practice and cut the whole square for the weekend; Thursday - cut, roll and mark Saturday's wicket. Cut off the field around the hedges; Friday - cut the whole square again and a quick cut and roll again for the wicket; Saturday - a morning roll and finalise a junior wicket for Sunday after the game. Sunday - watch Fartown; Monday - here we are again...In between the weekly jobs improve the outfield. During the summer,

general maintenance, feed and apply any weedkiller etc. At the end of the season, cut, scarify fertilise, add seed and loam – a two/three day job.

How many people help you? Mostly me on the square - but I do get help with the perimeter edge grass cutting. Two or three people help at the end of the year.

What duties do you have as groundsman in the winter? Just general maintenance to the ground, maybe a light cut November (a topping) and ensure fence around square is still intact PLUS I have the bonus of marking and looking after the football pitch as well.

How has equipment changed during your career as groundsman? Numerous improvements to mowers, although we don't run to these like some clubs. The power roller – MAGIC! You don't have to push it on your own, and the very helpful scarifier. The disappearance of the goat!

What are your earliest memories of local cricket? While scoring for the 1st team in 1954 at Horbury Bridge. I had to field because someone was hurt. Horbury Bridge wanted 6 to win and I was fielding out on the square-leg boundary when the last man hit the ball high up in the air (or so it seemed to a nine-year-old) and I caught it and was mobbed - yes. Two weeks later, Flockton won the league and Frank Stathers, who was the captain, gave me the cap he got for winning the title. Memories never to be taken away.

In your opinion, what is special and unique about your club? To me we are the one and only, and always will be.

What do you like most about your ground? Like many others, it's homely and it's ours.

What does the future hold for your club? Cricket forever, I hope.

What is your club famous for when it comes to the cricket teas you put on? Any culinary specialities? Friendly tea ladies, a good tea at a good price, nothing really speciality-wise.

Favourite away ground you like visiting? Personally, I used to score runs at Cartworth, and in addition there is always a welcome there.

What has changed most about local cricket during your lifetime? Without a doubt, the introduction of junior cricket, which is very good. I only hope that young players don't get fed up with the game in their early 20s, as they appear to do in local football, where there is now a demise in the senior game.