

# SERVANT OF CLUB AND LEAGUE

Interview with Adrian Whittaker by Matt Ottey

Adrian's career in local cricket has been long and most definitely commendable, spanning a range of positions held with different teams and organisations.

He was born and raised in Clayton West, a village next door to Scissett, and like most young cricket enthusiasts he obtained his first position in the game as a scorer at 10 years of age for Clayton West Cricket Club.



His rise from scorer to player was rapid and exciting, getting himself into the 2<sup>nd</sup> eleven at the age of just 14. However, the promotion from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> team was even quicker, playing his first match at 16.

This was the start of a promising career in local cricket, and most definitely the start of a prosperous one at Clayton West, where he went on to win 13 league championships in total between 1967 and 1996, with six of them under his captaincy.

Yet Adrian's career at Clayton West wasn't always so successful, with him appearing in six Allsop Cup finals but winning only the once.

In the late 1980s he joined the Huddersfield Central League management board, and he became vice-president of the league in the early 1990s. His extensive knowledge of the sport at a local level and clear love of cricket in general has made him a successful member of the league management board over the years.

Adrian took over as president of the Central League 14 years ago and stood down from the position at the AGM in November 2007.

His decision originated in Clayton West's decision to move into the Drakes Huddersfield League, as he felt it inappropriate to play for a club that were in a different league.

“Having played at Nortonthorpe on a number of occasions, I knew they were struggling both on and off the field. They had very little funds and only one team,” he said. Clearly, Adrian thought he could help turn Nortonthorpe into the club it once was, and went about setting the wheels in motion.

“I approached Roy England, Roger and Brian and said I would come on board to start a 2<sup>nd</sup> XI, write to businesses for ball sponsorship, sponsor the fixture card and be the groundsman.” To this day the second eleven are stronger than ever, the ball sponsors are in place, he still sponsors the fixture card and, as Roy England puts it; “Since he’s come in to help us out he’s done a fantastic job with the ground.”

In 2002 he started an under-13’s 8-a-side junior team which ran for three years before having to disband. He explained: “Unfortunately, once the players moved up to under-15s we needed 11 players, and due to the size of the village, school trips and the kids’ holidays we were always missing three or four each week.”

Although Adrian doesn’t play anymore, true to his word, he has carried on with his other roles, which now include acting as league representative.

In 2007 he was made a life member of the league and at the Huddersfield Central League annual dinner in March 2008 he was deservedly awarded the league’s Stallard Trophy for his services to cricket.

He says: “I hope the club can move forward and I see my role mainly as groundsman - to provide a pleasant, tidy ground on which players and spectators can enjoy their Saturdays and Sundays.”