

# HEART AND SOUL

## Profile of Roy & Margaret England by Matt Ottey

During the time I've spent at Nortonthorpe Cricket Club, one thing above all else has constantly amazed and impressed me, and that is the commitment of the people who run the club.

I met with Roy England and his wife Margaret, who during their time at the club have undertaken just about every job there is, from tea lady and scorer (Margaret that is, although I'm sure Roy would make a brilliant tea lady!) to player, umpire and barman.

How lucky Nortonthorpe have been to have people involved at the club who refused to let it die when struggling for players and who have given up their time and spent their money in order to keep the club alive and kicking (or in this case, swinging), and Roy and Margaret certainly fall into that category.



**NORTONTHORPE C.C. 1963**  
**STANDING:** E. Monkman, N. Mosley, R. England, B. Glover, Dennis Bentley, M. Taylor, J. Battye  
**SEATED:** F. Exley, S. Holden, R. Hardy (Capt.), K. Armitage, T. Kitson

**Roy is third from the left on the back row**

We met at Scissett Working Men's Club and I arrived slightly early as I didn't want to keep them waiting. As I walked into the bar a lovely young lady came to serve me, I told her that I was looking for Roy England and her eyes narrowed as she looked upon me with suspicion. I wasn't overly surprised as I must have stuck out like a sore thumb as I was a good 20 years younger than everyone else in the club and had a Midlands accent.

However, on Roy and Margaret's arrival it became evident that the bar lady was in fact their daughter, allaying any fears I had of being lynched by the locals! About 20 minutes later I find out that their son Paul captains the first team and plays football for Scissett as well!

Once the drinks had been bought and coats taken off, we sat down to chat about what it is exactly that they do at Nortonthorpe.

Roy England is currently the chairman of the club, as well as umpire and bar manager (along with Margaret). He's actually been involved at the club since his teens, playing his cricket at Clayton West and Skelmanthorpe as well as Nortonthorpe. Equally impressive is Margaret's dedication to the game: "I've been going with him since I was 15, making the teas. I went up once and I've been going ever since." This remarkable level of devotion has been maintained by both Roy and Margaret for almost 50 years.

Even during Roy's playing days his dedication to the team was never in question, no doubt much to the annoyance of Margaret: "He came back off our holidays so he could play in the final!" Roy adds: "We'd been relegated the previous season and were pushing for promotion so I played, then went back. Funnily enough, we were up at David Brown's and I was dropped first ball, then I went on to get 50-odd after that. It'd have been a long way for one ball!"

However, Margaret has done her fair share of sacrificing: "It's all volunteer work so sometimes it isn't easy; for the last five years I've been doing the firsts' and seconds' teas, so it's every Saturday."

Yet they both clearly take a huge amount of satisfaction in what they have helped achieve at the club. Roy says: "I was happy to put something back into the game - I quite enjoy going out umpiring with Norman every week." With Margaret offering a differing perspective: "We've pulled it through, haven't we? 'Cos we've had the barbeques, horse racing nights etc. It took a good two years to get it back right."

What Roy and Margaret have achieved at Nortonthorpe, along with a group of equally enthusiastic volunteers, is staggering. Margaret elaborates: "We came back when they were going through a sticky patch; there were about six of us who, after being involved with the club, came back to try and pull it round, which we have done to a certain degree."

I'm relatively sure that after 50 years of service to the club, Roy and Margaret are overdue a lengthy holiday (as long as Roy doesn't have to come back to umpire!).