

# KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

## Kith and Kin at Nortonthorpe CC by Matt Ottey

Cricket is a family tradition.

On several occasions I recall stumbling across photos, newspaper articles, local businesses and/or plaques and memorials dotted around Scissett that constantly identify the same names. Nortonthorpe Cricket Club has a rich history in terms of family ties, and to this day the father/son relationship still exists within the club.



And the family ties don't stop there, with wives, girlfriends, daughters and mothers all pitching in to help off the field also. Roy England said: "My family have been cricketing for a fair while! I played for Clayton West and Skelmanthorpe as well as Nortonthorpe, of course, and now my son Paul is captain of the firsts there. I'm umpiring for them as well as other jobs, and Margaret's doing the teas and helping out behind the bar. So I'd say we're all fairly involved!"

Roy was a good player during his days at Nortonthorpe, and evidently so is his son Paul, who has now kept the captaincy for several seasons. Another of Nortonthorpe's umpires is Norman Mosley, who played in the same successful side as Roy in the 60s and 70s, and whose son also played at Nortonthorpe.

Matt Hayes played with Paul England at Cawthorne and in Nortonthorpe's first team for three years before moving down to the seconds this year to captain the side. He describes how he got into the game: "I started like most kids do by scoring, and my uncle played for them so he encouraged me to go up and help them out. I didn't actually start playing until I was 17."

In the coming season, Matt will be taking over the captaincy from Roger Littlewood, who has his own bit of family history in the game. "My father and my uncle both played semi-professionally after the war for Yorkshire Colts," he explains. "It was my dad who encouraged me to play." During Roger's brief spell away from Nortonthorpe, he played for a side that clearly had some serious family connections, "I spent a few years at Cumberworth, where we had almost a team of Littlewoods, and I was the only one who wasn't related!"

During my walk through the village, I noticed the plaques commemorating the soldiers who lost their lives in the war, and again the same names were there. Margaret England remembers back to when Roy was playing: "Roy was one of the younger players, if not the youngest in that team. You see, when the men went off to war some of them didn't come back. A lot of the men in the village played cricket, it was the sport to play. Even I was brought up with it."

And then of course there's the story of the Bentleys. Noel and Ernest Bentley were brothers who umpired for Nortonthorpe during the 1961 Allsop Cup-winning campaign. Not only that, their nephew Dennis played in the side.

This goes to show how cricket is more than a game in these parts, it's a family tradition.