

George Thornton

George Thornton played for Honley Wesleyans and Meltham but spent four decades at Honley.



I WANTED to write about a cricket enthusiast, a man who loved the game, who gloried in its many branches and who did not allow inclement weather to damp his enthusiasm—and goodness knows present climatic conditions are enough to dampen the spirit of the most ardent enthusiast. What better subject could be found than the Honley stalwart, George F. Thornton?

I have read of George Thornton's severance with the Honley club. What utter nonsense! He could no more sever his connection with Honley than fly to the moon. He loves every blade of grass on the Honley field; he treasures countless recollections and innumerable acquaintances; and no doctor's prescription could compare with the tonic the sight of the Honley ground gives him.

Have you ever met him on the ground? No matter what business may have taken you, it's

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ten to one you are invited on an inspection parade. Setting off at a pace which belies his three-score years and ten, Mr. Thornton will carry you along until you marvel at his enthusiasm.

If George Thornton has severed his connection with Honley, then I am prepared to admit I know nothing of the game, the players or the enthusiasts and patrons of local cricket.

George Thornton attended the Honley National School, a fact of which he is justifiably proud. He played as a youth with the Honley Wesleyans and won renown as a fast right-arm bowler.

Some time ago I was giving a cricket talk in the Wesleyan School, and hanging on the wall was a photograph of a championship side of yesteryear. Inspecting the photograph I recognised "G.F.," and, asking an old man near by if he remembered him in his prime, was somewhat startled by the reply. "Remember him?" he said. "He wor that fast that if tha'd tooth-wark tha' didn't need a dentist, he'd knock thi' head off."

From Honley Wesleyans he joined the Honley club, and his association has lasted over forty years. He did play a couple of seasons with Meltham, but returned and for eighteen years has been president of the club.

Five times during his career he did the hat-trick. The feats were performed in the days when a firm of hatters gave away a hat as a reward. On one occasion he gave the token to an old Honley veteran who on presenting his credential was deemed to be the oldest fast bowler to lay claim to a prize.

It's good to write of a cricket enthusiast, and if George Thornton possesses a bias for the Honley club, I see little harm in that. Long may George Thornton and the Honley club continue association. May the recent difference of opinion soon be forgotten, for if cricketers cannot heal a breach, who in the world can?

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