

Memories of Triangle CC – with grateful thanks to Pete Ashcroft

I was delighted to find your Calderdale cricket history site. I navigated straight to the Triangle CC pages and I am pleased to be able to provide some additional information.

Quite early on in the section 'Later years' you have a headline 'Name the Year!' above a 1950's team photo - this is in fact 1963 Pictured in the centre front is my father Norman Ashcroft (hence my joy at finding your site). The trophy is that awarded to second division champions in the Halifax league.



At the start of that season Norman (aged 40) left Sowerby Bridge CC and joined Triangle, with him came three other good players from Sowerby Bridge; Terry Madden, Johnny Patrick and Rodney Warhurst. Norman, Terry Madden and Johnny Patrick are seen in many of the Triangle team photographs of the era. Rodney Warhurst does not feature and I'm not sure why this is, though my mum recalls that he was one of the quartet. I am aware that he died whilst still young though. I note that Illingworth CC were this year's winners of the Rodney Warhurst Cup in the Sunday League. I would be grateful if you could enlighten me if you have any information regarding this.

Thus strengthened Triangle were catapulted from bottom (or there about) of division 2 the previous year to champions in 1963. In the following year, again with Norman at the helm, they topped division 1. They were division 1 champions again in 1965. These were glory years for Triangle culminating in success for both first and second X1 in 1968 as you record. By this time Terry Madden was captain. The Parish Cup evaded Norman however as Triangle were beaten in the final in 1965 and 1968 – I think also on another year in between these but I'm not certain.

Norman died in 2002 having suffered with very poor health for many years.

A couple of years after he died my mother came across some 'memoirs' which he had written one winter in the early 90's whilst housebound due to ill health.

In these memoirs he mentions in passing that he was playing cricket for Triangle as early as 1938 when he would have been sixteen. The extract below refers to a time earlier than this, in which he recalls his childhood memories of life in Triangle:

"Saturday afternoons we spent watching our heroes down on the cricket field at Grassy Bottom. There was always an agonizing decision to make of whether to have a bottle of "Vimto" or one of Wilkinson's (the local butchers) pies. The pies were lovely, tall and crusty and full of meat and jelly. Uncle Harry would sometimes buy me a pie and then I would be able to have both.

At that time the Halifax Cricket League consisted of ten teams; Triangle, Sowerby St. Peters, Copley, Mytholmroyd, Siddal, Norwood Green, Turner and Wainwright's, Greetland, Stainland, and Clifton. There was a great deal of interest in those days and a large proportion of the village would be watching the match. Whitsuntide brought the local derby matches with Sowerby on the Saturday and Monday. One day the Sowerby team and villagers would descend on Triangle and the other day Trianglers would climb up Sowerby Lane (Butterworth Lane) or Stile Fields and through the kissing gate to Sowerby. These matches, known as "spite and malice" were always very keenly contested. Eli Hellowell was captain of Triangle and Tim Helliwell was the Sowerby leader. Little did I think in those days that Tim Helliwell, towards the end of an illustrious career, would play in a team in which I was captain: that was for Sowerby Bridge in the Yorkshire Council in the 1950s"

Both Eli Hellowell and Tim Helliwell are mentioned in your history pages; Eli is mentioned in the 'In the news' – updated history article on page 7 of the Triangle Early Years section (this would probably date the newspaper article sometime in the early 30's), and Tim is featured in a Sowerby team photograph of 1933 on page 14 of that club's Early Years history section.

So Norman's association with Triangle began in the late 1920's when as a boy he watched his heroes play. His cricketing career began at least as early as 1938. Sometime after the end of the Second World War he went to play for Sowerby Bridge in the Yorkshire Council league. He is seen in your Triangle Club Pictures section in a photograph from 1947 as well as the '63 '64 '65 and '68 pictures. He can also be seen in the Sowerby Bridge Club Pictures section in 1957 and 1959.