

WORKING HARD

Rodney Heyhoe by Zak Data

All cricket fans want to be close to the action. One man who gets very close to the action is the groundsman. Rodney Heyhoe, groundsman at Lightcliffe Cricket Club, recently won the JCT600 Bradford League's Sir Leonard Hutton Trophy for services to the league.



With its beautiful setting and striking red and white pavilion, Lightcliffe's is surely one of the most scenic grounds in the league. Lightcliffe's ground has a range of other features: the state-of-the-art covers, the super sightscreens, and the Canterbury-esque tree that hangs over the boundary edge to the left of the pavilion.

Heyhoe's 55-year-old love affair with Lightcliffe started because he could see the ground from his farmhouse window, which was just across the valley. Heyhoe still very much enjoys his job and is reluctant to retire just yet. Nonetheless, speaking to him he would be more than happy to hand over the duties to a young and promising groundsman.

Heyhoe stressed that he would like a chance to take the motor home out and spend more time with the grandkids. He is also a keen fan of cycling and would like the opportunity to perhaps spend more time brushing up his cycling proficiency.

Surprisingly, Heyhoe is not a huge cricket fan. "I'm not from a cricketing family myself," said Heyhoe, who has lived in Drighlington for the past 38 years. He first played for the under-18s when he was 11, and his first senior game came at Queensbury at the age of 14.

"I was primarily a batter and had a top score of 105 against Great Horton, and I was also man of the match in the 1979 Priestley Shield final at Brighouse, which was also against Great Horton."

Heyhoe is chairman of the Yorkshire Cricket Board's Groundsmen's Association and secretary and treasurer of the West Yorkshire branch of the Institute of Groundsmanship. Heyhoe also values the importance of academia. He obtained a chemistry degree from the University of Bradford, which he is very proud of.

The praise has flooded in to Lightcliffe Cricket Club with regards to the immaculate maintenance of the pitch. League officials were so impressed with the ground,

surrounds and hospitality that they suggested the club enter a competition for the best-kept ground in England. These compliments are a credit to everyone involved with Lightcliffe Cricket Club and especially Rod who puts in hours of work making sure everything is in immaculate condition.