



GALLERY OF
CRICKETERS

No. 13

Albert Bottomley

In 1944 "Bill" Dennis was professional for Kirkburton and when he joined the Forces Albert was persuaded to deputise for him in a Sykes Cup game. The only way it was possible to do so was by turning professional. He duly signed as "pro," assisted Kirkburton, and returned to his club. He was personally content to have done a good turn to the Kirkburton club, but it transpired that the Kirkburton officials had taken a liking to this quiet, thoughtful and excellent cricketer, and he took over the vacant position for the remainder of the season. He was never interested in any financial return from the game of cricket. To him it was a joy and a privilege to play, and though he continued to play for Kirkburton during the next two seasons it was purely as an amateur.

Again he returned home to give his entire time to his club. He disappointed many by his retirement from actual play to take over the duties of umpire. When asked for his reason he merely remarked: "We couldn't get an umpire, so I thought it best to do the job myself." What a typical Albert Bottomley action!

He is a vice-president of the Association League and a member of the emergency committee; a vice-president of Rastrick New Road and the "odd job man" in many ways. Although he bemoans the fact that practice is not taken seriously enough by present-day youngsters, he had nothing but praise for the lads of his club, who showed a voluntary spirit so lacking in many clubs. They do the ground work and have been using a four-bladed cutter, but thanks to a special effort they will shortly have a brand new motor-cutter to ease the backache which has been their lot for a long, long time.

I had a cheery goodnight and left him to continue his coaching. I found my way out of the ground and paused on the "grandstand" to view the ground once again.

"You call yourself a cricket enthusiast," I said to myself. "You don't know the first thing about it. How long is it since you helped to cut a field with a hand cutter? How long is it since you rolled so that others could play, or erected the nets, heaved out the boundary, stretched the lads' belts to extend a pavilion, looked for lost balls or marked out a wicket?"

I looked at the tiny "middle" which looked like 20 oaks in the desert and I turned away proposing, seconding and unanimously passing a vote of thanks to the Albert Bottomley of the village clubs who toil not for a harvest of thanks but for a game they love.

CRYC

FINDING the entrance of the Rastrick New Road Cricket Club provides some difficulty to the uninitiated. The main road constitutes a magnificent grandstand of such dimension that it appears foolhardy to secure entrance unless some business is on hand.

Last week, on a really lovely summer evening, I visited this pleasant spot anticipating that Albert Bottomley would be on the ground. And there he was—busily coaching, advising and correcting the faults of the "young 'uns" under his care.

As we watched the lads practise on a matted concrete wicket, laid by members themselves, I obtained from a somewhat reluctant Albert the story of his association with the Rastrick New Road Club and his services to the game of cricket.

There was no organised cricket when he attended school at Rastrick; therefore, "New Road" became his first club. He first became a member in 1917 and quickly showed the promise which has marked the cricket careers of a host of players who began with the village club.

In 1925, the first year Beighouse joined the Bradford League, he transferred his affection to the town club, but before the season ended he was back with his first love, and he continued to play and work for Rastrick New Road with all the enthusiasm he possessed.