

Tranquillity at Lightcliffe

By Mark Whitcombe

I like the scene before me. It is red. In the middle of green. The fields are lush and full of vibrant life. The wind rushes through them, rippling towards the tranquillity at Lightcliffe Cricket Club. The view before me could be mistaken for a picture. An ageless painting depicting a glorious sight; a wonderful cricket ground in summer. Like so many of these rich relics bathed in serenity, the ground is hidden away, enclosed by the country air. I find myself immersed in a daydream. I want to stay here. I want to play here. The setting is so perfect. Everything is so clean. So together. So right.

And the people are kind and vivacious. An old man will sit there and smile as I walk past, camera in hand, hoping to capture the magic created in this idyllic arena.



And then of course there is that tower. That structure standing high as you enter the ground. I marvel at its existence. I wonder what mysteries it holds. One can only imagine the history of this club. That red pavilion where a clock is placed, recording time. The scorer's box standing alone, watching patiently. The presence of huts storing the tools for the groundsmen.

Then there is that little shed next to the old pavilion. On it there is sign saying 'UMPIRES' - one can only imagine its purpose in life. It seems that nobody is forgotten. Content that there is a place of solitude for the officials, we can glide across the ground and be proud. It breathes life. Lightcliffe personifies the unique character of cricketing culture. An inimitability that captures the imagination. Every club is different. Every club has something special to offer.

Lightcliffe offers tranquillity. It is set in another world. One where you must travel up a lane enclosed between two fields. This is a countryside worth seeing. You cannot ignore the trees that cluster around, green and high, shaking in the wind, radiant in the sun. Nor can you ignore the great church close by, foundations old and flag flying high. It looms over the scene before us, watching it, knowing the ground is a brother of history.

Lastly I cannot but help notice the view. I stand there camera in hand and imagine what it would be like to fly. The foreground is dominated by a myriad of fields, but as you look up you see a viaduct and yet more fields peppered with the life of green trees. And in the distance a church spire appears. Then you see the sky and turn to look back at the ground. It is a place you will not forget. It is a place that offers security and peace.

It is the place known for the colour of red immersed in the greenery of rural cricketing life.