

Raymond Hawkyard – ‘Mr Bradley & Colnebridge’

By Sam Christie

Bradley and Colnebridge CC legend Raymond Hawkyard has revealed that he wishes to step down as chairman and make way for somebody younger with fresh ideas.

Hawkyard, 73, has enjoyed 42 years as chairman and groundsman at the club, but feels it is the right time to pave the way for a new chairman to take over. ‘I want to hand over the chairmanship but still carry on as groundsman. I would like somebody to take over who is younger than me.’

From the outset, Hawkyard’s passion and enthusiasm for Bradley and Colnebridge Cricket Club is clear for all too see. He loves the game of cricket and his local team. This is portrayed in the manner, and longevity, of his period as chairman and groundsman. ‘I see my job as groundsman as a hobby rather than a job. When you retire you have to do something and I thoroughly enjoy my role as the club’s groundsman.’



It certainly hasn’t been plain sailing for Raymond and there have been many obstacles in his way in order to maintain the club’s status, not least moving grounds to Warrenside in the mid-1990s. During this period Hawkyard played a

huge role in keeping the club afloat including writing letters to negotiate a fee with Holliday Chemical Holdings to help fund the move to Warrenside.

It is Raymond's 'major fear' that if he was to resign as chairman tomorrow that nobody would take over the reigns and keep the club running. 'At the moment nobody wants to take over - for some reason they don't want the responsibility,' said the stalwart.

Bradley and Colnebridge's league representative and sponsorship secretary Steve Ashwell believes that Raymond's been chairman for 'so long that nobody has really thought about it. He's done a tremendous amount for the club but as he said there should be somebody younger to come in and keep the club going forward.'

Despite Hawkyard's fear that nobody will take over the reigns, there have been several names linked to the post including current acting secretary and treasurer David Moorhouse. However, Moorhouse has quashed rumours that he is set to take over from Hawkyard. 'Raymond asked me to take over as chairman but I refused because of the time consumption that it involves,' explained Moorhouse.

Raymond is encouraging anybody interested in taking over to come forward and insists the role of chairman isn't as demanding as people may believe. Hawkyard explains: 'It's not a great deal of work, considering it's the whole year. The role would require you to organise indoor nets and the AGM during the winter. A few months before the season starts the chairman has to register to compete in the league and cup competitions. Then during the season the match statistics have to be sent off to the league.'

The Bradley and Colnebridge veteran believes the club's problems of the 1990s are firmly behind them and the club can move forward and enjoy a bright future with a new chairman at the helm. 'Now the ground situation is resolved, the

club's worst days are in the past and now we can look to the future,' said Hawkyard.

Raymond was born in Huddersfield on 20 July 1933 and was raised within five minutes walk of the new Warrenside ground. He was a keen cricketer even in his teenage years and played for local club Deighton YMC in the evening league. He moved to Honley in 1957 and joined the local cricket team prior to moving to Bradley in 1959. However, he still continued playing for Honley until 1962. Raymond explains the difficulties of travelling long distances during this time: 'There weren't so many cars in those days so I had to get a bus from Bradley to the town centre, then walk across town to get another bus to Honley. It took roughly 45 minutes each way.'

Then in 1962 Raymond's brother Derek, who was playing for Bradley and Colnebridge, persuaded him to switch clubs. This decision was soon to be rewarded as Raymond captained the first team in 1964, 1965, and 1966, leading them to the Division 2 and Championship titles in successive seasons. Also in 1964 Hawkyard took over as chairman and groundsman and noticed a significant difference in the structure of the two clubs. 'The set-up at Honley was completely different to Bradley and Colnebridge. There was a really good committee at Honley where everybody chipped in with ideas and helped out with the ground. The track at Bradley wasn't made and needed a lot of work.'

Raymond hasn't just been a servant to his cricket club but to his profession as well. He joined ICI after undertaking two years national service and stayed with the chemical company for a staggering 32 years before retiring in 1988. Three years earlier, Hawkyard finished playing cricket as he felt it was time to move aside, allowing a chance for the younger players to come through. 'I decided to pack it in because I wanted to give the youngsters a chance to play. Besides many of them were extremely good players.'

In 1997 Raymond Hawkyard's loyalty and dedication to Bradley and Colnebridge Cricket Club was deservedly rewarded when he received the Fred Stallard Trophy for his services to the club from the Huddersfield Central Cricket League. This award is no less than the local cricket legend deserves and speaking to people that know the man himself they all recognise what he has done for the club. Without him the club would probably have folded many years ago.