

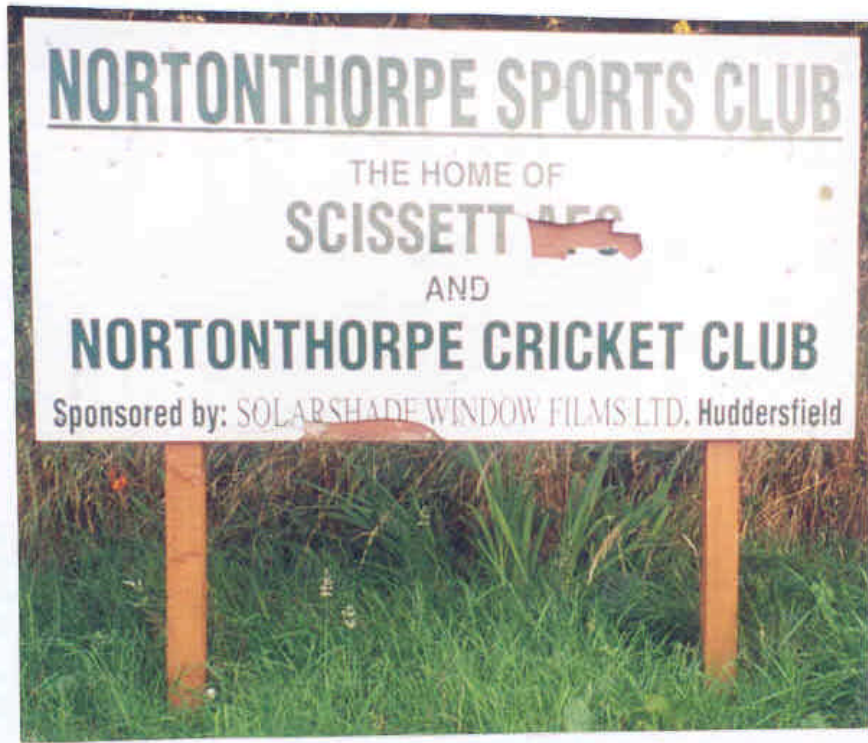
NORTONTHORPE CC

HOME SWEET HOME



The wicket here is pretty good, and we've got Adrian Whittaker, our groundsman - and League chairman - to thank for that. The pavilion bar is an excellent facility, and we've got a lot to look forward to. Our only real problem at the moment is mice - they ate away at our old minute books in the pavilion and now we've only got a few records left!

[Club secretary, Roger Littlewood]



Nortonthorpe's ground is only a short walk away from Clayton West's. But it is located on higher ground, amid old and new housing on the fringes of Scissett in the far south-eastern corner of Kirklees. Like Emley's ground, Springfield Avenue has a history of 'double usage'.



Today it is the home not only of Nortonthorpe C.C., who play in the Huddersfield Central League, but also of Scissett A.F.C.. This arrangement has been in place since the 1960s, and there is some crossover between the two sports in terms of personnel.



The football pitch lies adjacent to the cricket field, and even in the summer months the arena is well used, with soccer training going on in the evenings.

Apart from its versatility, Springfield Avenue's most distinctive feature is its height. It is situated high above Barnsley Road and Wakefield Road and the views out over Skelmanthorpe and Emley are superb. Nearby, cows wallow aimlessly in hillside fields and there is also the trickle of the River Dearne.

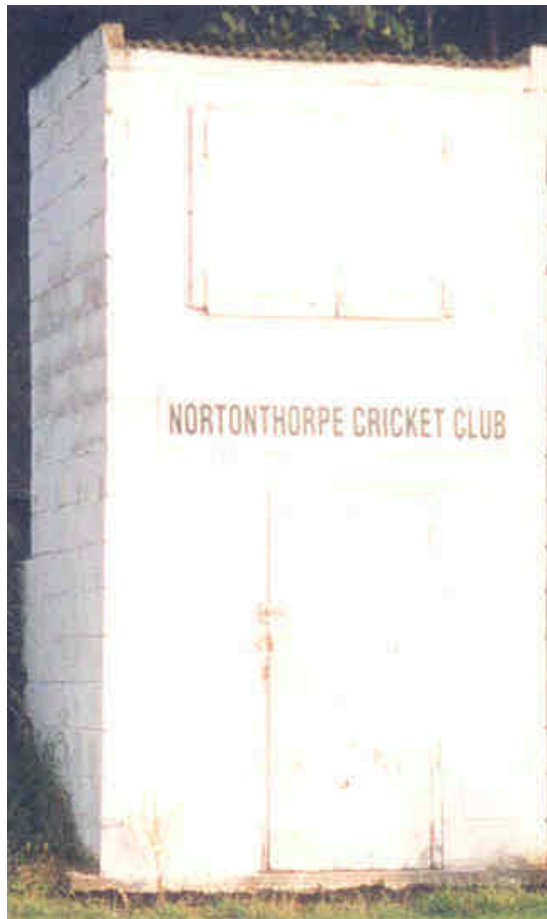


In the vicinity there are mills, a couple of small factories, a pair of pubs, and some steep-sloping roads and avenues. Scissett Post Office is just round the corner, as is Scissett Middle School and the village church (St. Augustine's).



On the main road is Nortonthorpe Industrial Park and close by the premises of a rather distinguished-looking furniture-maker. In the mid-distance is a distinctive church steeple and another emerald-green area of woodland.

As you make your way up to the arena from Springfield Avenue, you encounter a dense set of trees - hiding the field somewhat - and a car park. You are also struck by the amount of signs and notices, welcoming you to a dual-sport venue and warning you about dog-related dangers.



There are more public notices fixed to the front of the pavilion: 'THIS BUILDING IS ALARMED AND LINKED TO WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE' and 'NORTONTHORPE CRICKET CLUB: TODAY'S MATCH BALL KINDLY SPONSORED BY RON SMITHSON BOOKMAKERS'.



It is unclear whether Mr. Smithson takes wagers on Central League cricket fixtures, but you never know. There is also a big advert for Solarshade, the Club's main sponsor.

The pavilion building incorporates changing rooms, bar and lounge, and facilities for making and serving tea. Outside there is an array of seating: stools, benches and chairs - some green, some white - plus a couple of large dustbins, a roller and a double white-coloured garage.



Around the perimeter of the cricket field, there are also two other buildings: a garden-shed that doubles as the scorers' box and a tall white scoreboard.

Following their move to Springfield Avenue, the Club had to engage in some necessary excavation work, and also had to level the playing surface so it was suitable for local league cricket.



The original pavilion at Springfield Avenue was erected in the 1950s. It was replaced in the following decade by the building that stands today. In the 1980s it was altered and extended.



Littlewood explains the appeal of Springfield Avenue as a cricketing venue: 'It's a natural amphitheatre, high up, and surrounded by a lovely embankment - we call it the grandstand. You can sit up there and watch the cricket; it's a great spot and a great view. There are also trees and grazing land nearby, a really nice place to play cricket and to take kids for a picnic and a runabout. Originally, the wicket was pitched north-south, but we swapped it around and it now runs east-west. It's a nice ground to play at.'