

## **Phil Heaton**

Profile by Dave Wooding

Having taken the brave decision to travel from his home town of Bury every weekend to play for Shepley Cricket Club, Phil Heaton has become synonymous with the club since his arrival just over 14 years ago. Indeed Phil has now skippered the side for the last three seasons, having already had a short stint at the captaincy a few years before.

A hugely popular and important member of the team, the left-handed all-rounder brought with him to Shepley huge experience from his time on the books at Lancashire County Cricket Club, from where he joined the Huddersfield League side.

Phil has also been lucky enough to have spent time on the books at Middlesex County Cricket Club, as a member of the groundstaff. Indeed, he notes that one of his proudest moments in cricket was playing cricket at Lords, "something not a lot of people can say they have done."



During his time at Shepley, Phil has played a significant role in many matches, often contributing a stunning knock with the bat, or tearing the opposition apart with a dazzling spell of left-arm spin. His batting contributions can easily be shown through the centuries Phil has scored at the club, and he managed to make a ton in each of his first 12 seasons. This record disappeared in 2005 when he managed a top knock of just 99! Despite this, Phil is still "very proud of the achievement".

However, no true all-rounder would let his achievements with the bat outweigh his achievements with the ball. So far during his Shepley career, Phil has managed two hat-tricks, the second of which came in the 2006 season against Lascelles Hall as part of a seven-wicket haul. Indeed, his bowling took him strides clear of any opposing bowler in the league, his average of under 12 runs for each of his 67 victims beating second place by almost five runs.

This made him only the third Shepley player ever to take the league bowling prize, now known as the Tom Oldham Trophy. Ever the team player, though, Phil states: "It's nice to win these individual awards but I would happily sacrifice it if it meant the team won a competition." Here it should be noted that the Lancastrian has come close to success with the Marsh Lane outfit, having been part of two Shepley teams which have reached the semi-finals of the Sykes Cup.

It hasn't all been plain sailing for the man from Bury, though. His lowest moment came when the club suffered relegation. However, lifting the second division title the following year gave Phil his first piece of silverware at the club...but hopefully not his last.

2006 was again a good season for Phil, a solid average of nearly 44 with the bat complemented by topping the Shepley bowling tables with 40 wickets at 16.55 runs apiece. Everyone connected with the club will be hoping he can take this form into the new season when it starts in the spring.