

MONEY AND MOLES!

Profile of Groundsman Simon Lewis by Chris Knowles

Simon Lewis joined Emley Clarence when he was 16 years old having been part of the junior set-up at local rivals Kirkburton CC.

Originally a bowler, Simon exchanged ball for bat some time ago and is currently used as a relief bowler if necessary. The 30-year-old became a 2nd XI player at the age of 17 and quickly showed the promise which earned him a promotion to the 1st XI soon after.



The hallowed turf

Simon was an integral part of the 1st XI team that won both the Central League title and the Allsop Cup in 2000 and he tells me, 'That was one of my finest achievements. I was opening bat for that season and it was a great success to do the double, especially when you're involved in the team.' He continues, 'Another great moment for me was hitting my maiden century in 2003 for the 1st team.'

Having returned to the 2nd XI in the last couple of years due to commitments at work, Simon enjoyed huge success with the team last season, picking up the Player of the Year award for his efforts.

The award is voted by fellow 2nd team players and consequently it is enormous recognition from the team and Simon explains, 'It was a tight run thing because no-one really stood out. Everyone contributed last season and

I'd say all the players won us a game individually at some point. We all thought it could have been a close one last year, though.'

Be it playing or otherwise, Mr Lewis rarely finds himself off the field of play as he is currently one of the club's groundsmen, having succeeded Cliff Smith, who had previously held the post for eight years.

Simon explains, 'I'd say I've been groundsman for three seasons now, with the exception of six months. I had various work commitments and so I found it hard at one stage to find the necessary time. I just like the idea of it. I work with Ken Taylor, a 1st XI player, and between us we share the duties throughout the season.'

In the close season, most of their work consists of keeping a check on the field, a general clean-up of the ground, and also sending machinery away for servicing. Conversely, when play resumes in the summer, it becomes a hectic day-to-day job which requires attention, hard work and commitment. 'Sometimes we could be there for half an hour, other times it's four or five hours.'

Although this time around, Simon is not part of the committee as he once was, he says, 'I chose not to be because of the amount of time the role of groundsman takes up on its own.' Nevertheless, the Emley batsman must relish the pressures and responsibilities which have been put upon him as he was, up until recently, club treasurer, and holding his various roles simultaneously.

It did have its advantages though, as he tells me, 'It was very demanding but you didn't have to go to anyone else regarding money for the ground – because I was the treasurer!'

And on his present role, Simon admits 'It's a full-time job: cutting, maintaining, or just trying to get rid of something! We had moles this winter and we had some trouble getting rid of them up until recently. I think they're gone now! Let's hope.'