

THOMAS 'TOMMY' SIMPSON,

Thomas Simpson was born in Keyworth on 13 August 1879 and lived at 47 Selby Lane with his parents Joseph & Jane Simpson, older brother Walter and younger sister Edith.

Tommy made his debut for KCC aged 13 years in 1893 and had obvious talent and by 1895 was making appearances for the Notts Forest club and for the 1897 season was engaged as a professional at Nottingham Commercial CC for one season before he moved up to the Central Lancashire League with Heywood CC with whom he remained until 1906 but still retained his links with Keyworth and was given the opportunity to play for Nottinghamshire CC at Headingley against Yorkshire CC in 1903 and found himself having divided loyalties and played for Lancashire 2nd XI against Surrey 2nd XI that same season on the back of having

taken 90 wickets for Heywood CC at less than 7 runs each in that season. Nottinghamshire CC continued to leave the door open for him and he played for a Notts Professionals XI against a Notts Amateurs XI in a 'trial' match at Trent Bridge, 3 & 4 August 1903 and in County Championship matches twice in 1904 against Gloucestershire CC and Middlesex CC and in 1905 he had further opportunities against the MCC and the Australian tourists but a modest return of only 38 runs from 8 innings at an average of 5.42 and 2 wickets for 85 runs in 5 County matches meant that his career would be as Lancashire Club professional and at one time he was generally considered the best all-rounder 'Pro' playing in Lancashire club cricket. Occasionally he would return to Keyworth and make 'guest' appearances, even as late as 1922.

A left hander who usually batted at 3 or 4 and a left arm medium pace bowler Tommy's professional cricket career in the Central Lancashire League yielded eleven centuries, in excess of 10,000 runs and more than 2,000 wickets. He stayed with Heywood CC until 1906 bringing success with two title winning seasons in 1905 & 1906 before moving on to before being engaged by Rochdale CC until 1913 and then Royton CC and a 1914 title winning season before the Great War intervened and the he was with Castleton Moor CC until 1922 before switching to Crompton CC in 1923 & 1924 before joining Farnworth CC in the Bolton League and finally retiring in 1932 to become the Groundsman back at Rochdale CC.

The Rochdale Observer newspaper wrote two lengthy articles about Tommy's 60 years of cricket when he retired as the groundsman in February 1953, tracing back to the start of his career in Keyworth and quoted Tommy saying that "for the present I will continue living in Royton and visit my native village (Keyworth) now and again.



THOMAS SIMPSON continued

An accomplished sportsman, Tommy made the front page of the Football News published by the Nottingham Evening News on Saturday 10 November 1900 on joining Notts County FC - the photo (above) was an artist's impression which accompanied the newspaper article. He had already played several reserve team matches for County whilst still a Keyworth FC player and working as a framework knitter in the village, he also played with Newark FC. "Modesty is one of his finest characteristics and blushes against gaining fame", a journalist described him.

5ft 9ins tall and a muscular 11st 4lbs in weight, he could play on either wing but preferred the left and after his debut against Burnley FC away on 3 March 1900 found it difficult to claim a regular first team place and eventually transferred to Leicester Fosse FC (Leicester City nowadays) in October 1902 having made only 7 appearances in Football League Division One matches. At Leicester he got regular first team action and notched up 27 appearances and 5 goals with them in the 1902/03 season, earning him a transfer to Everton FC in May 1903 in exchange for an Everton player and a transfer fee of £175, only to find himself again in the role of understudy with limited first team opportunities, making only one first team appearance for the Toffeemen on 16 January 1904 and at the end of the season he transferred to Nelson in September 1904.

Tommy passed away on 19 December 1961 at the Oldham & District General Hospital, he was aged 82 years.

Tommy's father Joseph, usually known as 'Josh' also played both cricket and football for Keyworth and was one of the best wicketkeepers in the history of Keyworth CC, amassing over 107 victims behind the timbers including 51 stumpings.

Tommy's older brother Walter was also an accomplished wicket keeper and made one appearance for Nottinghamshire Colts in 1897 but also had the privilege of playing alongside W G Grace in the London County club team at the Crystal Palace ground in the 1890s.

Thomas Simpson's Keyworth career statistics...

(sadly, we have only a few scorecards from his time with KCC)

	Mat	Inns	NO	HS	Runs	Ave	6's	Ovrs	Mdns	Runs	Wkts	Ave	Ct	St
1 st XI	4	4	0	14	23	5.75		19	8	42	10	4.20	1	