

# FRIEND ALLSOP

The name of Friend Allsop is closely linked with the Cumberworth community and, in particular, with its cricket club. Apart from a short spell with Shepley when they were in the Huddersfield Central League, most of his playing days were spent with his village club.



Since 1953 his name has been associated with the Allsop Cup, presented in his memory by Cumberworth United, which is presented to the winners of the Central League 1<sup>st</sup> XI knockout competition.

The citation on the cup states that the intention was, 'To perpetuate the memory of a great sportsman.'

The following reflections on him are summarised from remarks made in a history of Cumberworth, *Camp of the Cumbrians*, written by A. Tarbatt and published in 1980.

Friend's prowess at cricket was evident from an early age because it is reported that, when at Denby Dale Council School, 'Friend made his fifties when other boys were pleased to make their tens.' From his earliest years as a player he was able to play strokes all round the wicket and it was stated that his defence was like a barn door. Pulls and swings to leg came easily to him and the hitting of sixes when the opportunity arose seemed effortless.

He was very much a team player and sympathetic to those with lesser skills.

Sacrificing his wicket to let others have a knock was not unknown when the situation in the game permitted it. The decision of the umpire was never questioned.

The 1933 and 1934 seasons saw heavy run-scoring in all games.

In 1933 he totalled 1,070 runs at an average of 59.40 and he continued his heavy scoring in the following year by making 1,015 runs, this time averaging 67.66 per innings.

While building his own house, it was alleged that the regular collections he earned for his batting feats in particular were of great help to him in settling bills.

In the book by Tarbatt, we also get a fuller picture of Friend Allsop's character and he was far from being a one-dimensional figure only recognised for feats on local cricket fields, significant though those were.

We learn that he was very sensitive to injustice of any kind and often felt despair at how others sometimes conducted themselves. He was 'a keen nature and garden lover' and attended WEA classes and, for a considerable period, he was a member of a local Male Voice Choir. He was also an accomplished billiards player.

In these days of high-profile sportsmen and women who dominate the mass media, it is good to reflect on the lasting impact that a skilled local figure had in his community during his playing days and which he continues to have thanks largely to the cup donated in his memory on his death in 1952 at a relatively young age.