

CUMBERWORTH CC

HOME SWEET HOME



Look out for the cuckoo-like character who jumps out of his box at Cumberworth Lane. Every time a run is scored, or a wicket is taken, or an over is finished, a little lad opens the hatch at the top of the pavilion and pops his head out. Yes, he's the scoreboard operator, and on Saturday afternoons his job is a pretty busy one.



Cumberworth United C.C. play in the Huddersfield Central League, and have also taken part in the National Village Championship.

On a summer's day, Cumberworth comes across as the ultimate in quiet and idyllic village venues.



It is the immediate environs that help to foster this impression. There are farmers' fields all around, with a variety of animals on display; around and about there are tan-coloured houses and cottages; and the occasional tractor passes by on the road behind the bowler's arm.

It actually has the feel of a French landscape - the colours, the smells, the views. If it wasn't for the summer sport being played out by 22 men in all-white, you might just think you were in Provence.



The various slopes and gradients give the Cumberworth Lane ground a slightly rustic feel, but the new pavilion demonstrates that the Club is aware of twenty-first century realities.

It went up in 1996 thanks to a grant from the Lottery Sports Fund and is fully modernised, with a ramp for disabled access, a superbly kitted-out kitchen, and a pair of spacious changing rooms either side of the food-preparation area. (Prior to 1996, the 'tent' had been sited in a variety of different positions on the perimeter of the ground).



Refreshments are a key aspect of any Saturday afternoon at Cumberworth Lane: the volunteer helpers set to work on sandwich-making early on in the afternoon, the kitchen area is decked out in 'Yorkshire Tea' memorabilia (posters, towels etc.), and the price list tells us that a full tea costs £2.30 and a cup of tea just 30p. Framed photos of the 1923 and 1957 sides indicate that Cumberworth have a proud and illustrious heritage.



Close to the pavilion there is room for children to play and for sun-seeking spectators to unpack their deckchairs, unfurl their rugs and gossip about goings-on in the village.

In the middle of summer, parts of the outfield are parched. The playing area as a whole has the feel of a 'bowl'. It is enclosed, slightly uneven, and rises up to the roadside.



Around the perimeter there is a little gully-style drain, a number of benches, and dozens of little white plastic markers that denote the boundary.

There are no sightscreens - just a wall and a fence that have been whitened. Occasionally, a dog wanders onto the playing area, and then goes off to play ball with the children on the boundary's edge.



It seems that the main problem at Cumberworth is parking. Cumberworth Lane is fairly narrow, and once a few spectators have parked their vehicles on this road, close to the ground, it becomes a difficult lane to navigate. Buses, fire engines and farm vehicles are all confronted by this unique Saturday-afternoon challenge.



Parked cars are also in the line of fire. Any batsman who strikes a straight six from the bottom end is liable to endanger them. It is not a big ground, so the boundaries are very reachable. No wonder a pavilion notice says: 'Cars parked at owners' risk'. Even local joggers have to beware.

