

PETE SIXSMITH REMEMBERS

THE CLOCK STAND PADDOCK

I stood here from 1970 until the old ground went in 1997 and I loved every minute of it.

Well, maybe not every minute. Not the dismal cup defeats to Orient, Birmingham City and Stockport County or league humiliations to the likes of Southend United, Barnsley and Swindon Town. They were bad days wherever you stood or sat at Roker.

But the good nights – the cup wins over Manchester City and Luton Town, the promotion clinchers against West Ham United and Bolton Wanderers, seemed to look better from the pitch level of the CSP.



I moved there from the Fulwell End after relegation in 1970. New start, new part of the ground and a group of us from Sunderland College of Education took our places there. Over the years, the group changed as people left to go shopping with their newly acquired families but the group was refreshed by new faces and by others who we came to know.

It wasn't the best view in Roker – the back of the pre- safety Roker End gave you that – but you felt that you were close to the players, or at least those who played down the flanks. I was on nodding terms with Dick Malone, Joe Bolton, Barry Dunn and Roy Greenwood at various times.

What you got was a great feel for the game and its supporters. There were characters who stood around us and who became good friends. Jeremy Robson, with his acid wit that once reduced Tony Morley to tears. Mick and Gerard Wood and their quiet and polite dad, Ken, who passed away recently at the ripe old age of 92. Ray who wore a necklace made of nails and who came and went as he worked on the rigs and who, like Jeremy, could sum up a situation with one caustic sentence. He once threatened a guy who persisted in telling us the scores from other games every ten minutes with the insertion of his radio up one of his orifices. Radio man was reportedly seen in the Roker End after that.



Benno goes in the book

Every one would have had their own favourite bit of Roker. Every one would probably say that theirs was the best. For me, the Clock Stand Paddock was where my heart lay and I remember it as fondly as young people now will remember their favourite bits of the Stadium of Light.

And I was stood ten yards from where David Speedie ended up the night that Gary Bennett nearly pulled his head off.

You didn't get that in the Fulwell End.....

Watch the incident Benno/Speedie love in on You Tube by clicking on this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pO8ISM6j3s>