

## Jeff Clarke.

In 1975 Man City came sniffing after and duly snaffled, Dave Watson. In return came 21 year old Jeff Clarke. I was living away from the North East but I remember my brother in law Ed telling me he was a canny player and it wasn't a bad swap so I was looking forward to seeing him as I hitched up for a match one Saturday.

Somewhere around South Yorkshire a couple stopped and offered me a lift. The conversation went something like this (after forty years you'll have to make allowances):

*Where are you going?*

*Sunderland. I'm going to the match. I'm a Sunderland supporter.*

*That's handy, that's where we're going. Our son plays for them. Jeff Clarke. Would you like a sandwich?*

After getting to the ground Mr & Mrs Clarke tried to get me a ticket for the game. They couldn't, so I made my way into the Fulwell End. When I got to our usual spec Ed was nowhere to be seen, until I spotted him and our mate sitting in the main stand. Why they'd gone there I've no idea but if I could catch them I'd get a lift home.

Not a chance - how can anyone in the Fulwell End catch the eye of someone in the main stand during a game? I tried getting round there on the final whistle but it was no good, and I got home about two hours after he did. Still, not a bad day out.

Jeff Clarke helped us win promotion and went on to play over two hundred games for Sunderland. After a long career as a player he qualified as a physio and stayed in the game. A good player, and by all accounts a decent bloke. And what lovely parents.

Jeff Clarke photo found at <http://footballinprint.com/jeff-clarke-sunderland/#respond>.

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