

Some days live long in the memory and M Salut, **Colin Randall** remembers this derby day with glee and a choice encounter at the Grand National.

Anyone can miss a penalty and even the best players do.

But the one Alan Shearer failed to score against Sunderland back on November 18 2000 will linger long in the memories of all who were present at St James' Park that day.

We were ahead, two well-worked goals from Don Hutchison and Niall Quinn turning the game after a limp start and a David Speed goal had put the Mags ahead. Then Quinn fouled Robert Lee to give away an 82nd minute penalty. No one, least of all Peter Reid, expected Shearer to miss. It wasn't the best he'd taken from the 12-yard spot but the shot was still good enough to make a decent save essential. Thomas Sorensen produced that save and for the second season running, we won 2-1 at SJP.



*Don't mention the score!
I mentioned it once but
I think I got away with it.*



From Tommy's Facebook page during a long post-SAFC charity bike marathon in the USA

My American pal Jim, also Randall by surname, was with me. A big, big man, then teaching at a USAF air base school in East Anglia, he'd marvelled at the military-style police operation to get Sunderland fans into the ground without trouble. He'd struggled with access to the away "end" halfway to Mars, first to get through the narrow turnstile (stewards had to open a side gate), then to climb several flights of stairs.

But he loved the experience almost as much as I and couldn't wait to tell his class full of US servicemen's kids all about it on the Monday. Jim's partner, Virginia, also an American teacher, found

football less gripping and had been shopping in town with my wife. We met at Fenwick's afterwards.

"Gee it was fun," Big Jim told Virginia. "England's hot shot had a free hit on goal from 10 feet and the stopper blocked it." Those words sounded great enough on an American's lips to excuse the terminology and mistaken detail. And we all retreated to Swaledale for a wonderful evening in Reeth and walk next day in Muker before the trek home.

There's a delicious postscript. A few months later my friend Guy Illingworth was at Aintree for the Grand National. He'd somehow been invited into an executive box and Shearer happened to be in the one next door.

Shearer's group included other members of the then Newcastle United squad. Guy got talking to him. "I put on my most innocent tone of voice and asked, 'What was it like for you when Tommy saved your penalty?' He turned without a word of reply and walked away." Walked away, Guy mischievously recalls, in a bit of a huff.