

Scarborough Sea Wall Heritage Trail – Scarborough Memory

Fishermen and Footballers - John Francis Blades

Mr Blades' grandfather was George Blades who played for Scarborough Football Club in the early part of the 19th Century. Records indicate that a F. Blades played for Scarborough in 1906. Might this have been a relative? George Blades was also very prominent from 1907, playing in almost every game for Scarborough and often the season's top scorer or thereabouts. This continued until the start of WWI. He scored a hat-trick in the final of the 1909-10 Hospital Cup played for locally. After the start of WWI there is no mention of him.

John believed that his grandfather George Blades had been in the winning side in a cup final in 1923. In 1921, a new club, the Scarborough Penguins were formed and a player called Blades, played for that team when they beat Whitby in the final of the Hospital Cup in 1922. Was this John's grandfather and the same George Blades at the end of his footballing career or was he from a new generation of the Blades family?

John's father, Jack (Bludgie) Blades was from the fishing community and he was a member of the team who played in the Fishermen v. Firemen charity football match in 1965 wearing a Manchester United kit. John Francis was himself a keen football player in his young days. He was a goalkeeper nicknamed 'the cat' because of his ability to pounce on the ball. At 5 foot 7 inches he was three or four inches too short to be a serious contender for a place in the team.

John remembers accompanying his father to collect his wages as a fisherman. They would all gather beneath the clock on the west pier where the wages were handed out.