

Foreword

I've always thought that there's a fine line between blind loyalty and insanity when it comes to football fans and in particular those who travel to follow their teams away from home.

One trophy in forty years of loyal support and thousands of miles travelled doesn't seem like a fair return for all the effort and expense that Sunderland fans have put in over those years, but that would be missing the point.

There's a great pride in following your team the length and breadth of the country. An away win is celebrated in style, with great joy and enthusiasm and even the worst defeats are treated as a badge of honour and often with a fair bit of gallows humour.

It has been my great fortune to play for Sunderland in front of these people and to experience the incredible passion they generate is something you never forget.

One of my earliest games for SAFC was away to Hull City, at the old Boothferry Park, in the seventies. As I ran out all I could see was Red and White. Sunderland fans filled three sides of the ground and the noise was deafening. It was simply unbelievable.

But that wasn't a one off. I've lost count of the number of times that we've gone away and taken over a ground, both vocally and in numbers and if there's a better way following than Sunderland's I've yet to see it.

Having read and enjoyed Sobs' first book, *Keep The Faith*, I was looking forward to his follow up and I'm glad to report that *Ganterbury Tales* is a celebration of our unique support and the many daft stories and happenings that occur on a typical SAFC awayday.

Gary Rowell

