

Fartown Ground.

I have just read your article on your weekly bulletin about the barren days at Fartown, it isn't quite correct; some of the stand had been opened before 1989.

I first joined the club in 1983 in John Bailey's days. After the Bradford fire disaster & because the stand was an all wood construction. KMC Building control & licensing services instructed that the stand had to be shut until work was carried out in order to bring it up to safety standards.

Most of the work was done by myself, so I do know the changing rooms had to be rewired and a half hour fire check to the ceiling had to be done. Afterwards we could then use the stand above the changing rooms for season ticket holders only.

The referee's room & junior changing rooms were then rewired by myself. Another half hour fire check, that is two layers of plaster board and skimmed with plaster, was added.

The entrance to the centre door and to the pitch was only very narrow, so it had to be widened for an emergency exit. Extra emergency exits onto the pitch also had to be made from the stand. We could then open above the changing rooms and the centre of the stand, for Directors, press & vice presidents, but not for spectators coming through the turnstiles, it was standing room only for them.

The whole void area under the stand had to be cleared out of years of rubbish [cigarette packets, sweet papers etc] that had dropped between the wood terracing, or seating, in the stand. A skip was filled.

Roof repairs and extra steps also had to be made. All this voluntary work was done by myself & sometimes my father, John Hillam, before he resigned from the board, and John Bailey [in between running his party venue in the pavilion]. It took months to do this work.

Most spectators didn't know this because you couldn't see that anything had been done from the terrace side as it was under the stand.

KMC came and inspected and permission was given to open those two areas of the stand. So some of the stand was open in Bailey's day, up to the 1988 - 89 season.

Just after the takeover of the club, storm damage meant we had to shut the main stand for a short period of time.

A lot of spectators had deserted the club and went to watch Halifax.

When in 1989 Jim Collins, Neil Shuttleworth, & Mick Murphy took over the club, most of the work was completed to fully open the main stand. In addition, the rest of the ground was tidied up - most of this work was also done by myself, Jim Collins' men, and Mick Murphy, mostly to the satisfaction of KMC.

At this point I became the Ground Safety Officer.

Later more work was required by the council which the club couldn't afford, so the outcome was, they said, that we would have to shut the ground and move to Leeds Road & share with Huddersfield Town until a new stadium was built.

In 1989 I was awarded by the RFL the Supporter of The Year for my dedication & loyalty to the game of Rugby League.

A short time later I was made an Associate Director of the club for the same reasons. Several weeks ago the Rugby League Ground Safety Officers Association awarded me a life membership for my contribution.

Keith Burhouse.