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Roy Maplebeck – 40 years at Billingham Forum

I started my life in leisure when I was still at school working in the Catering department of the Forum at weekends. At the time, the Centre was managed by Stockton Borough Council even though my pension arrangements were through Durham County Council. I continued to work weekends whilst at school then went onto college for a year. I was offered a fulltime position as a chef on a day release at college given a fulltime contract on the 1st March 1976. My first two years were working Monday – Friday 3.00pm -11.00pm (Didn't see the daylight much) at the time we had a full restaurant and Cafeteria which employed 36 members of staff (catering only). Special memories included the Folklore festival and themed evenings. My rate of pay at the time was 50p an hour and 10p unsociable.

I moved in 1980 into a supervisor's position in catering. I enjoyed the extra responsibility. We had three bars, restaurant and also a snack bar downstairs. At the time a new thing called "vending" was also becoming a popular new fad. We delivered many catering exhibitions and also hosted popular body building competitions. We transferred into a different department in 1989 which meant that the catering department closed leaving a small outlet on the ground floor. The bars were all passed onto to the Theatre and at that point I transferred to Leisure with particular responsibility for the outlet and the vending operations. I also covered some of the Duty Manager hours whilst they were on holiday. I then was asked to be involved in the management of the Ice Rink catering but in the meantime I was absorbing myself in the world of leisure learning more about the environment.

I said goodbye to catering in 2006. By this time SBC had taken over catering whilst Tees Active LTD had taken on the management of the leisure facilities for SBC. I took on the responsibility of managing the staff rotas, reception and administration. In the last few years I have also had the opportunity of working at Head office for Health and fitness and I've recently taken over the management of the performance indicators for the centre.

After all this I've seen wages go up, I've heard different styles of music, dress sense has changed, major exciting refurbishment of the centre, worked with some great people and more importantly I'm on more than 50p an hour. I have loved my time in Leisure and have no regrets. I'll soon be moving on to the wonderful world of retirement.

Roy Maplebeck 2016



40 years recognised – Presentation to Roy by Billingham Forum Manager, Roy Broadbent.