

Interviewee: Dan Patch

YOB: 1995

Born: Hillingdon

Parents: Father - quantity surveyor, mother - payroll manager

Date of interview: 9.3.2020

Location of interview: Griffin Park

Interviewer: Ioana Constantinescu

Summary: Celia Holman

Only in his mid 20s, Dan has nevertheless been coming to Brentford for over 20 years. Both his grandfather and father supported Brentford and he eventually got "worn down" and became a Brentford supporter, too.

His grandfather lived opposite the turnstiles at the Braemar Road end, and was banned at some point of other from each one of the pubs at the four corners of the ground.

His earliest memory is of attending an FA cup match against Blackpool which Brentford won with a player scoring a hat trick. His father insisted that he attend games to bring Brentford luck, but "my lucky charm [soon] wore off"...

He remembers the small crowds (2-6k), the loud chants and the "very friendly atmosphere". He would go to the pub with his father and brother after a match, and see players walking around the surrounding streets - it was "really quite special" as he would see them sometimes stop and chat to fans.

Now it's a lot busier - and queuing (food, toilet) now takes up a lot of half time.

Before Brentford's current success, his friends would question his support: "They're rubbish, why are you going?" At school, he was very aware of the football rivalries that "split the school almost" - it was "always ingrained" from an early age about the rivalry with QPR and Fulham.

Dan speaks of Peter Gillam, the club announcer known as "Mr Brentford", who symbolises "the Brentford way" and has "commentated my entire football supporting life". Peter Gillam won't say QPR's name, referring to them as "the team from Shepherd's Bush". Gillam's match-day contributions "brings the atmosphere up a notch".

Chants: Brentford used to be taunted by QPR with the chant "You're just a bus stop in Hounslow". Brentford fans turned this around and used it against QPR fans when beating them!

Evening games: "something really different" as you can see the stadium lights from a distance. "Everything gets stepped up" with "everyone playing their hardest."

Dan has had no direct experience of any match-day violence - there might be something "bubbling under" in parts of the Ealing Road stand but to his knowledge "nothing's ever happened."

Homophobia - using the word 'gay' as an insult is less and less common as people are more "switched on". He has seen people being confronted about using offensive language both during matches and in the surrounding streets.

Women - sees more attending, perhaps because what football in general has done to become more inclusive.

Racial mix of fans - more Asian supporters. Football doesn't "belong to straight, white men" anymore, and it's "changing very positively".

Terraces - Dan feels they will "lose a little something" with the new all-seater stadium, as the terraces are "part of making it all happen". He realises the move is a "huge jump" that "needs to be done" but he still has "mixed emotions".

Brentford is "his little club" that he has stuck with through thick and thin. Griffin Park is also where he spent a lot of time with his father and grandfather. Attending the first match after his grandfather had died was "devastating" with the empty seat beside them. The family thought that "seeing the club would help us grieve" but it was still very difficult.

It "feels very special" to have had this personal, multi-generational relationship with Brentford.