

An Oral History of Brentford FC

Interviewee: David Lane
Date of Birth: 1967
Place Born: Walton on Thames, Surrey
Parents Occupation:
Dad: Newspaper printer
Mum: Secretary in the House of Commons
Interview Location: Griffin Park Boardroom
Interviewer: Daniel Mann

David Lane is a historian, publisher and most significantly for him, David became a Brentford FC football fan who has been the editor of the Beesotted fanzine since 1990.

David describes becoming a Brentford fan thanks to his school friend, Nigel Bates, a huge Brentford supporter who invited David to watch Brentford play Swansea at Griffin Park after the Promotion to Division 3 in 1978, an experience he describes as being “everything a 9 year old boy wanted.” He distinctly remembers being stood in the New Road terrace wearing his replica kit, admiring the Royal Oak End stand and states that the atmosphere around the stadium was incredible. He didn’t miss another home game in that season and certainly hasn’t missed many since. He had fallen in love at first sight.

From going as a young boy with his father to then bringing his own child to games, David’s match day experience has changed tremendously over the last few years. He also believes that football has changed as a sport for the better in many ways; it’s less violent, there is less racism, and the views within the stadium are better. What he does miss however, are the days of the Royal Oak stand and the sense of size associated with the club at the time. With that said, he does feel the club is returning to these roots, with it’s surge in recent years. He feels Brentford is a healthy club that is a reflection of the diversity within the local community.

David has a long history with the club, starting the fanzine in 1990, which has evolved from physical copies to digital. This has only enhanced his experience with the club, allowing him to be involved with Brentford FC by giving the fans a voice through running campaigns, posting articles and even protests. He was heavily involved with BIAS and the David Webb protests, a time he describes as not being great, but one where he realised they were making a difference. Being the editor of Besotted has been helpful and a hindrance in equal measure, but he wouldn’t change it for the world and has always tried to mobilise fans on a whole in a positive way.

One of David’s proudest moments came from the Walk to Hartlepool, where David and four others raised over £25,000 by walking from Griffin Park to Hartlepool and jokes that his ankles are still suffering now. The night before the match, Martin Allen and the players treated the team of walkers to a dinner before they finished their journey. Additionally, seeing Brentford gain promotion against Preston FC is one of David’s highlights because of the sense of confidence that came with it. To him and many others, Brentford would go back to the second tier for the third time in the club’s history and that there they would thrive.

Moving away from Griffin Park is something David feels will be ‘traumatic’, noting that a lot of people have grown up around it and have memories associated with the stadium. Describing what he’ll miss most about Griffin Park, he notes that “Griffin Park under the floodlights is magical” and that the atmosphere and build up of night games is something he will miss when the club moves stadium.

Being a Brentford supporter has been character forming for David, and he ends by saying that loyalty and friendships are two qualities he has implemented into his life that capture being a Brentford FC fan.