

## AN ORAL HISTORY OF BRENTFORD FOOTBALL CLUB

Interviewee: Eshan Puri

Year of Birth: 1997

Born: Hammersmith

Parents: Dad is TV producer Mother is teacher

Date of interview: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Location of interview: Griffin Pub

Interviewer: Matthew Rosenberg

The interview with Eshan is interesting in that it offers a slightly different perspective from many supporters as he is a relatively young supporter from an Asian heritage. He explains that in common with many boys at school he followed the premier league but this all changed when his father took him to Griffin Park when he was 9. He talks of his memories of that time and the feeling that he was the only Asian fan in the ground. He stresses that although he was not aware of any other Asian fans (as the crowd was not as diverse and much smaller than the current crowds) he never experienced any discomfort from other supporters.

He talks about how he and his father have sat in various parts of the ground but they now sit in some of the worst seats with a less than perfect view through choice and look upon it as their part of the ground.

Eshan talks about the match day experience and how that has changed as Brentford have become more successful and crowds have grown. He makes some interesting observations with regard to the composition of the crowd feeling that it has become more middle-class over time and as a consequence although larger in numbers is not so atmospheric as his early days at the ground.

Eshan talks extensively about the club's community engagement programme which he has been involved in both as a recipient and volunteer for a significant period of time and which for him, sets Brentford apart from so many other clubs. He also discusses the community programme in terms of the diverse local community and how it has had a positive impact on diversity.

Talking about his time supporting Brentford Eshan highlights hearing the chant of Push up Brentford after which this project is named as well as recalling various songs relating to previous managers.

This interview took place after the Covid 19 lockdown and so Eshan is able to offer his views on the impact of the virus on him and his family in terms of supporting Brentford.

Finally, Eshan talks about the move to the new ground which he considers bitter sweet in that it will be a massive wrench to move from Griffin Park but at the same time to have a season ticket for the first time and for it to be in the new stadium will be exciting.