

## AN ORAL HISTORY OF BRENTFORD FOOTBALL CLUB

INTERVIEWEE	James McGeoghan
DATE OF BIRTH	1984 Feltham London
PARENTS OCCUPATIONS	Father was a lorry driver.
INTERVIEW LOCATION	Griffin Park
DATE OF INTERVIEW	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
INTERVIEWER	Ioana Constantinescu

James is a lifelong Brentford fan and this is a passionate, entertaining and sometimes emotional interview on what life is like as a committed supporter. The interview is peppered with anecdotes which paint a vivid picture of life supporting Brentford.

He talks about how he came to support Brentford against the wishes of his family who are largely QPR fans (Brentford's main rival) and how this has heightened with both teams playing in the same division. He illustrates the tensions with a couple of tales of Brentford/QPR games that he has attended with his brother.

James has early memories of going to games with the husband of his mum's best friends and talks about where he first stood and the match atmosphere. He goes on to talk about early days going to matches on his own and the various pre match rituals that have developed over time e.g. parking in the same place, stand in the same spot etc and stories of characters he has experienced at the ground.

The ritual of attending games over the years has changed. Initially it was all about the game itself but James now explains how his friendship group has grown significantly over the years and how the fortnightly catch-up has now become a cornerstone of his social life. He describes some of the characters in the group and how they enrich the matchday experience.

James also reflects on how, during his time as a supporter, the attitude of fans of other clubs has changed, for the better. He has a wealth of amusing stories arising from experiences going to away games and how cider has played an important part in those experiences, not least of which was an eventful trip to Swindon!

He has interesting views on the Brentford supporters community and the various initiatives like the Griffin Park Grapevine which gave access to behind the scenes at the club and which was quite different from the more formal club channels which previously were the only source of information about the club. He also discusses how the diversity of the supporters has changed and in particular the number of women who now attend games.

Finally, James talks about the mixed emotions he will have about moving to the new ground. He vividly explains the emotion of being able to stand at football matches which he has done all of his life and the difficulty adapting to an all seater stadium.