

## AN ORAL HISTORY OF BRENTFORD FOOTBALL CLUB

INTERVIEWEE	Jim Levack
DATE OF BIRTH	1964 born in Perivale, London
PARENTS OCCUPATIONS	Father was a journalist and mother was housewife
INTERVIEW LOCATION	Griffin Park
DATE OF INTERVIEW	8th March 2020
INTERVIEWER	Daniel Mann

Jim lives in Leamington in Warwickshire but makes the 200 mile round trip to watch Brentford. He is a lifelong supporter with a proud family history of supporting Brentford with his grandparents being season ticket holders.

Jim is a journalist by profession and has spent a significant time of his journalistic career reporting on Brentford for the local press and more recently the Press Association in addition to his day job as a reporter in the midlands.

The interview covers two main areas. Firstly, Jim's life as a Brentford supporter and then his role as journalist covering the club.

As a supporter Jim talks about his earliest recollection from the age of 9 when he was taken to the ground by his grandparents and talks about how his matchday routine changed over the years which has included drinking at each of the four pubs over the years. He talks about the support over the good and not so good times and identifies the passion of Brentford supporters as being a key ingredient which contributes so much to the atmosphere at games no matter of the size of the crowd. He also has a number of memories of some of the characters that he has come across both as a supporter and also in his role as a journalist.

To illustrate what life can be like as a Brentford supporter Jim uses the example of his two sons who grew up in the midlands as Brentford fans.

Jim talks about his early days as a journalist covering Brentford games and some of the tensions in ensuring impartiality in his reporting whilst the fan side of him might hold a different view! He talks about the privilege in reporting games and having access to the players and management of the club and how the job is now far more than purely match reporting.

He has particularly interesting comments to make upon the role of the local journalist in making sure that news is reported even when the club might not consider it to be in its best interest. Jim stresses the role of keeping the wider community informed and not acting as a local mouthpiece for the club and the tensions that this can bring, none more so than in the Ron Noades/Dave Webb eras.

With his long experience as a journalist Jim has interesting views on the positives and negatives of the new ways of information sharing whether this be through fanzines or electronic media.

Towards the end of the interview Jim explains why Brentford is such a big part of his life (and less so of his wife's who is a Derby fan!) and his pride in seeing the breadth of the community that attends home games, particularly families and increasing numbers of women.

Jim acknowledges that the move to the new ground will be emotional and challenging but the core value of the club will remain and shine through in this new era.