

## An Oral History of Brentford FC

Interviewee: Brian Godfrey  
Year born: 1947  
Place born: Acton Green, London W4  
Parents' Occupations: Father - machine operator / spring maker  
Mother – sewing machinist (donkey jackets)

Brian's father brought him to Brentford FC from the age of about 5, (his grandfather was a Brentford supporter too). He remembers being given the choice of going shopping with his mum or going to the football with his dad. He admits he knew little about football then as on leaving a match after a one-all draw he asked his dad if there was to be replay. No his dad replied as it was a league not a cup match. The young Brian did not understand this.

Father and son would walk to Chiswick High Street and then catch the bus to Griffin Park, Brian proudly wearing his red and white striped bobble hat and scarf, both knitted by his mother, (there were no replica shirts then).

Brian remembers standing, (the Braemar Rd Stand had the only seating at this time), up against the pitch side fencing at the Ealing Rd end, cheering on his team and waving his wooden rattle. There was no chanting or singing then, (this spread throughout football stadia from the larger clubs after the introduction of televised football in the 60s). Fans were predominantly male although Brian fondly remembers 2 elderly ladies, (sister he believes), who were kind to the youngsters.

Brian's father worked nights a lot and he remembers persuading his mum to let him go to an evening match, (it was against Bristol City), on his own when he was 9 or 10 and although this was considered "safe" his elder sister did meet him at the bus stop on the way home which he does not believe was a coincidence. To Brian, evening matches are special "as a kid it was magical and it still is today to go from the dark outside into a blaze of light".

Griffin Park's capacity has reduced considerably since seated stands have replaced the terraces. Capacity is now 12,500, the largest recorded attendance is 39,000. Brian believes football match attendance is a more social experience now. Although there are a lot more women supporters there are still relatively few black and Asian fans despite the local area having a large Asian population.

Asked about the phrase - it's Brentford, innit? – Brian explains it has not been unusual for Brentford "to get into a brilliant position and then drift away"; e.g. in one really good season Brentford had scored 94 goals with one match remaining. The fans desperately wanted the team to score 100 goals, an admirable milestone. The final match was against Wrexham and by half time Brentford was leading 4 – 0. At full time the score was 4 – 3.

Moving from Griffin Park is "necessary" but will be very sad but he is looking forward to better toilets and catering facilities.

A few years ago, following his wife's death, his daughter bought him a season ticket and he has become good friends with his elderly season ticket neighbour who tells of the days when he and his mate helped paint the Griffin Park railings and set up "the shed" which was the precursor to club shop. Brian also attend away matches, with his sister on the supporters' club bus, affectionately known as the "bingo bus" due to the age of the passengers.

Brian is a lifelong supporter of the club: "Brentford FC means everything to me. I can't imagine life without it. Brentford is the 2<sup>nd</sup> longest thing in my life after my sister".