

## **AN ORAL HISTORY OF BRENTFORD FOOTBALL CLUB**

INTERVIEWEE:	Huw Powell
DATE OF BIRTH	1955, Holt (Wales)
INTERVIEW LOCATION	Griffin Park, Brentford
DATE OF INTERVIEW	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2020
INTERVIEWER:	Jatin Guntupalli
SUMMARISER:	Celia Holman

Huw Powell covered Brentford matches for a local newspaper for many years, starting in the early 80s. The coverage was important to local people - it was six pages at the back of the newspaper. He subsequently went on to become a professional sports photographer.

In this interview, Huw recalls match days and also behind-the-scenes aspects of the workings of the club.

Huw served a three-year apprenticeship at a local newspaper to become a press photographer, and was first sent to Brentford during his apprenticeship. He arrived with a "tiny lens". He was "intimidated" by all the noise and the professional photographers from the national newspapers.

A typical match-day assignment: there were lots of local newspapers' photographers, and it was the "best day of the week". It was one of the few times of the week that he could practice with "proper life", and concentrate on taking pictures, especially action shots.

Sitting on the touchline, he would get to know the players quite well. He would also cover training. At the beginning of the season, he would take 'stock shots' of every player and the team as whole. He enjoyed an "intimate" relationship with the management and players, and he recalls several examples of this close working atmosphere.

At times, the crowds were so small that they would be "rattling around like peas" in the stadium. By the end of the season, the pitch would be like mud. He acknowledges it's more exciting with the bigger crowds, but in the early days of his coverage it was "raw" and exciting in a different way. It was "rough" and ready, but always friendly. He had no direct experience of racism, even in the "hard days".

Night games: the light from the floodlights was so bad ("legendary amongst the photographers") that you had to wait for the players to enter the bright spots and try and capture a photograph.

He recalls various incidents that he photographed - to include accidents/incidents on the pitch, the training ground, the fire at the Braemar Road stand, players doing events in the local community, interactions with the managers over the years.

Move to the new 'Griffin Park': the club has "resisted speculation" for 30 years over allowing development on its current ground. There is no "sense of entitlement" over the club's move to a bigger ground.