

**Name: Melvin Barry Collins**  
**Born: County Durham**  
**Year of Birth: 1944**  
**Parents Occupation:**  
**Mum: Cleaner, dinner lady**  
**Dad: Former Coal Miner, moved to work at Firestone Tyre Factory in Brentford**

Melvin Collins is a Brentford fan who has been supporting the club since 1953 and is also a member of Brentford FC's Blind Supporter's Scheme, which was created in the 1951/52 season.

Melvin fell in love with the club immediately during his first match, attending Brentford's loss at home to Aston Villa on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1953. As Melvin is blind, his father's colleague, George King, one of the founders of the blind scheme, invited Melvin along. He distinctly remembers the match day atmosphere of the early days, bells ringing around the audience, raffles taking place and big rosettes. He used to enjoy where he sat in Stand X because during matches such as FA Cup competitions, where Brentford would play amateur teams, it used to be packed full with thousands of fans.

Like many fans, Melvin's match day routine has changed throughout his life. During boarding school, Melvin would only be able to attend matches when the holidays arrived. Up until school ended, he would be listening to John Webster on the Sports Report radio programme, where he jokingly said he would be able to judge the result of Brentford's game by the tone of John Webster's voice.

Melvin has been around through the club's toughest periods, such as the attempted QPR takeover in 1967, where he stated, "I cried, I sobbed, I didn't quite know how to play my part." That is until he realised he could buy shares in the club, reflecting the importance the club meant to him.

In regards to leaving Griffin Park, Melvin says he already has his two sons on alert, "they will have to drag me through the gates when it's time to go." Griffin Park is something Melvin considers to not only be a 'home from home', but he also notes its uniqueness in having four pubs around each corner and the shape of the ground itself as examples. Being a Brentford fan has given Melvin a strong sense of camaraderie, he enjoys the ability to be a part of something with other like-minded supporters, to share the ups and downs and to mingle with others. He feels very fortunate being a Brentford fan, as it was the second club to have a blind scheme.

You can gain a strong sense of what the club means to Melvin in the way he discusses the move, "I will be exceedingly upset, because the blind scheme has been my footballing life, Brentford outside of bringing up a family of two boys and my working life, and the other things away from football- football to me has been a dream, Griffin Park has been my second home."