

File: BMG Dave Tyler.mp3

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Interviewer: Your name, sorry?

Dave Tyler: Dave Tyler.

Interviewer: Dave Tyler, well done Dave, and how old are you?

Dave Tyler: I'm 80 this year.

Interviewer: Eighty? Well done, and you've been a lifelong Borough supporter?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: Good, and do you live in Stevenage?

Dave Tyler: Yes, I'm Stevenage born.

Interviewer: This is long before we had a new town even I suspect.

Dave Tyler: Yes, during the war when we were in the old Spartan league during the war, and I used to go away with them as a boy.

Interviewer: What was the very first game that you saw, what was it Stevenage Town in those days?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: What was the first game you saw, do you remember?

Dave Tyler: I can't remember, I can remember a lot of the old players, like right back was Chang Hawkins as we used to call him, goal keeper was Ken Platt, he came from Hitchin. The other left back was Tiddler Lawrence, he lived in Acroft Road, and it's only the centre half, which was Ian Watson that used to keep his position. Half backs used to change regularly. Lummi Taylor, I was a mate of Lummi Taylor.

Interviewer: What position did he play?

Dave Tyler: On the right wing, he had trials with Chelsea and all that. There was the inside forward, a bloke from Hatfield, I can't think of what his name was, our captain at the time was what we called Jibber Jackson, he was centre forward. Then

Johnson was inside forward, and Bracey from Knebworth on the left wing.

Interviewer: Because that's a good local name isn't it, Bracey?

Dave Tyler: Yes, and as I say that team kept together for a long while, then they went up into the Delphian League.

Interviewer: What season would that have been, do you remember?

Dave Tyler: I can't remember.

Interviewer: During the war or after the war would that be?

Dave Tyler: It was after the war that was, but I can remember our very first FA Cup game down there, it was against Pegasus, and they built a temporary wooden stand behind one goal for people to stand up on.

Interviewer: This would not have been here at Broadhall Way of course would it?

Dave Tyler: No, this is down London Road.

Interviewer: Do you want to describe the ground there in those days?

Dave Tyler: The ground there is where the leisure centre, exactly where that leisure centre stands now you're in the pitch.

Interviewer: Next door to the old London Road.

Dave Tyler: Yes, they've still got a bit of the old London Road that runs up the side of the leisure centre.

Interviewer: What facilities did the ground have in those days, do you remember?

Dave Tyler: Nothing, only-

Interviewer: A changing room?

Dave Tyler: They had a changing room and they had a wooden stand, and this wooden stand, the firm I used to work for, and old Stevenage firm, was the one that pulled that down. All up one side they had like a- they bought it from Letchworth I think it was, like a, what would you say, like the old Anderson shelter stuff it was made of.

Interviewer: I'm looking for your words, that's why I'm not prompting you.

Dave Tyler: I helped to build that.

Interviewer: So how old were you then when you started going to Stevenage Town?

Dave Tyler: I was eight years old.

Interviewer: Eight?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: Now you're 80. There's so much history to encapsulate, and I could spend hours just getting information from you. Just come slowly forward through the years, tell me some of your high points and the low points of supporting the team.

Dave Tyler: It used to be me and another kid that lived down my road, Ken Tapley, we used to go to away games and we used to stand down the white line there. The coach used to come and the players used to fill up, and any seats that were left, we got.

Interviewer: So you travelled with the team?

Dave Tyler: Yes, we used to travel with the team.

Interviewer: So you got to know them all very well did you?

Dave Tyler: We used to pick up this inside forward I couldn't think of, Frank Wingate at Hatfield, and I've been all- when they were in the Metropolitan League I used to run them around, I was the coach driver that took the team. I used to do that so I could get to the match.

Interviewer: Of course in those days was there a supporters coach that used to go to games?

Dave Tyler: No, there was only the- you know-

Interviewer: Just a few die hards that would..?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: So tell us some of the high points that you remember, there must have been a lot.

Dave Tyler: I thought that we were going places when, Sander's factory that used to be in Bedwell Lane, their managing director used to play for Tottenham. So they captured him and he played for us for a long while, Les Taylor, he played left half.

Interviewer: Roughly when would this have been, '50s, '60's?

Dave Tyler: In the '40s going in to the '50s.

Interviewer: So back in the early days of your support?

Dave Tyler: Yes. It's one of those things, you can't remember because we'd done nothing, only survive if you know what I mean. We hadn't made a name for ourselves like with a cup, as long as we beat Hitchin, that was-

Interviewer: The local rivalries existed back then. Yes.

Dave Tyler: Yes, and Knebworth, Knebworth had a good team, and I can remember we were playing them in Herts Charity Cup I think it was, we went in at half time losing 6 - 0. We came out of the second half and won 7 - 6.

Interviewer: You are joking?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: Have you got the programmes still?

Dave Tyler: I've got loads of programmes that I gave to, I can't think of his name, he's doing- Lloyd.

Interviewer: Oh Lloyd Briscoe?

Dave Tyler: Yes, Lloyd Briscoe.

Interviewer: So long as he's got that.

Dave Tyler: He's got-

Interviewer: A huge archive.

Dave Tyler: A case full, and he's looking through them.

Interviewer: So, coming on to more modern times, the club eventually of course moved here to Broadhall Way, what are your memories of that move of grounds with the different facilities and so on?

Dave Tyler: It was good when we were in the old, what was it called, when all the old professionals suddenly started coming down here? We had some good players then, Freeman, he played for Watford, he was in goal. I can remember we had one, Walker, we used to call Annie Walker, my god he used to score the goals. Used to play for the Spurs on the right wing, he was a bank messenger... I can't think of his name, you know him and the right wing Paddy Powell, they used to be-

Interviewer: There's a name I've heard of, yes.

Dave Tyler: They used to be in a window cleaning business together.

Interviewer: Right, because all the players in those days presumably had ordinary day jobs and they were playing as amateurs I expect were they?

Dave Tyler: Oh yes, Hitchin used to take all the best players, and we only got them when they were surplus to Hitchin's requirements. There was a bloke who used to play right half, played for Hitchin all his playing life, but in the end, went by the name of Willie Westwood, we got him on his last playing days.

Interviewer: Right. So in those days we were, would you say we were one of the lesser teams on the area and there were bigger teams nearer?

Dave Tyler: Yes, the bigger team was only Hitchin, it was all North Herts sort of football.

Interviewer: Then coming on, as I say, the club came to the Broadhall Way stadium, and then it went through a period of decline didn't it? This was before my time, but tell me about your memories of that.

Dave Tyler: John Duff, the local villain, he took over as chairman, and he ruined it he did, because when he couldn't get his own way- he was a local contractor, and he came on and dug the pitch up with his machines he got, so nobody else could play on it.

Interviewer: Yes, and then the club went in to complete decline, was that still Stevenage Town or was that Stevenage Athletic by then?

Dave Tyler: No, I think Athletic came when we sort of reformed again after this business with the pitch was put back. The bloke that got it in the end was a bloody- what do you call it, built houses and sold them? He had a firm.

Interviewer: Property developer type of person?

Dave Tyler: Yes, and he came in, he thought he was going to come in and- because he did that to Brentwood, Brentwood and Worley, he did the same thing.

Interviewer: What you thought he'd come in here and build houses or something?

Dave Tyler: What was it, Burstow and Eves, he came here and he was going to do the same here, close it down and you know- but this here bit of ground was designated by the corporation as football.

Interviewer: For recreational purposes.

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: So, we wind on again, we started at the bottom, did you go to see the Athletic play in King Georges fields in the old days?

Dave Tyler: Yes, because I lived at the top.

Interviewer: What was that like?

Dave Tyler: I lived at the top, all there was was a bit of rope round the pitch.

Interviewer: Did you have to pay to watch?

Dave Tyler: That was when, what's it's father an-

Interviewer: Jim Briscoe?

Dave Tyler: No, he came along later, what is his name who plays the records in here?

Interviewer: Steve Watkins? Steve Watkins plays the music.

Dave Tyler: Well, they were the ones responsible for getting Stevenage going again, they were all on the- it was run by a committee, that's how it got back going again. They went in to the old Metropolitan League and that's when I used to drive them around to the different games, just to get to see them.

Interviewer: Right. Then we started- a certain Mr Fairclough came on the scene didn't he?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: By then weren't the club back at Broadhall Way?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: So how had that come about, do you remember?

Dave Tyler: No, he was just a manager, what we thought. My memory, I can't think of things lately.

Interviewer: You're doing very well to my mind.

Dave Tyler: Different names of different footballers that we've had here, and they were all old ex professionals that had just dropped

out of the game, I suppose came here for beer money. We've had some good ones, I can't think of that right winger that we had with Paddy Powell, I bumped into him when we played in a cup game with Dorchester. He was living in Bournemouth at the time, I stood talking to him, his boy was manager of Dorchester at the time. We were chatting and going through, his boy, I can remember when he used to be about that high, playing out in the field behind where I used to live. He went all the way up to be a professional as well. Terrible isn't it when you can't think of names?

Interviewer: No don't worry, I'm years younger than you and I can't remember names all the time. What do you think about the last few years, I mean we finally, in 1996, what were your feelings when we were denied promotion out of the Conference? Remember 1996 when we won the Conference but didn't get promoted, what were your feelings then?

Dave Tyler: I was going to say, we'd been away to all these different grounds, and to see- we went to where the horse racing is.

Interviewer: Doncaster?

Dave Tyler: No, begins with C.

Interviewer: Cheltenham.

Dave Tyler: Cheltenham, we went to Cheltenham and we nearly got thrown out of the ground because we complained that there was two porta cabins for about 3,000 people, two porta cabins. We complained, and we thought, we got facilities made like the toilets under the stand here, and they still wouldn't let us in. We've been to some right crappy grounds. In Conference, I'd been with John everywhere, every game.

Interviewer: You're talking here about John Ryder are you?

Dave Tyler: No, John Carol.

Interviewer: John Carol, sorry.

Dave Tyler: I've been to about every Conference ground there is.

Interviewer: Some that are no more I expect.

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: Now, did you ever think honestly that you would be here at the Lamex, renamed stadium of course, watching this team in the football league?

Dave Tyler: No I never thought we'd ever get that high, never even thought we'd get-

Interviewer: Did you manage to get to Kidderminster the day that Stevenage won promotion?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: What were your feelings and reactions that day?

Dave Tyler: Everywhere we used to go we used to be the best, so we could see it coming.

Interviewer: Yes, but the sudden reality, the realisation that that day the team had clinched football league status at last, how did you feel? Did you cry? I did.

Dave Tyler: No, I couldn't afford to cry.

Interviewer: What do you think about the last couple of seasons then since we've been in the football league?

Dave Tyler: Well, I used to go up to that fans forum, and I didn't want Wesley back after what he did before, but he's proved us wrong hasn't he, to have got us where we are? It's like this bloke we've got now, I don't think he's got much football, he doesn't know much, it's all right in America, but he hasn't got any [crosstalk 0:21:38] here.

Interviewer: So are you saying the jury's out still?

Dave Tyler: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, what do you think you would like to see us achieve this season? Solidarity in League One or yet another playoff and maybe, who knows, promotion yet again to the Championship?

Dave Tyler: These playoffs are good because it makes us money doesn't it?

Interviewer: Indeed, but that's not the only reason is it?

Dave Tyler: It doesn't matter if we don't win does it? As long as we get the playoff.

Interviewer: So thinking back to 72 years ago when you started supporting Stevenage Football, have there been more ups than downs? Are you enjoying it more than ever now? What were the really good times that you remember most?

Dave Tyler: The ones where we used to play Monday night in the [Seven 0:22:44] League wasn't it, all those games were the best. We used to get all the old ex professionals, I can remember a Welsh club, what was..?

Interviewer: Merthyr Tydfil.

Dave Tyler: Merthyr Tydfil, they came down here and the coach driver had to play centre forward because they were one bloke short.

Interviewer: Lovely. So many happy memories I think?

Dave Tyler: Yes, tons.

END AUDIO

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