



1937: A copy of a colour portrait of Ted Gaskell shortly after arriving at Brentford

the ball in front of me Stanley you just whip it over rather than trying to run round me. Then we shall both be happy. If you start any of that fancy business I promise I will chase you all over the pitch kicking you!" They both laughed and carried on chatting.

**I take it you joined the Forces when the hostilities started?**

Yes I was stationed down at Aldershot and trained to be an Army Physical Training Instructor. Harry Curtis told me that it was inevitable that I would be called up so I may as well line myself up with a regiment and a role that I would enjoy. So he had a word with Maurice Edleston, an amateur England international playing for Brentford, who by that stage had got a job in the Army too. Edleston was trying to gather men from all sports together; football, cricket, boxing, the lot, so I went along too and ended up staying there for the whole war.

Frank Swift, the great Manchester City goalkeeper was in there too, we were great friends, as well as stars like Dennis Compton, Bill Shankly and Matt Busby, whose bunk was opposite mine. Matt Busby and myself were both Catholics and we used to go to church together on Sundays. In fact Busby played a game for Brentford during the War.

I managed to play a few games for Brentford before I went down to Aldershot full-time though, in the newly formed Regional League and Subsidiary Competition. But after I went into barracks I was told that Saturdays would be a busy time for me and I couldn't carry on turning out for The Bees.

Consequently my next game for Brentford wasn't until almost the end of the War. A lot of goalies guested for the club in that time, including Johnny Jackson and Wrexham's Welsh international, George Poland.

**You were fortunate enough to have played with some of the greatest names in Brentford's history, who were the best in your mind?**

It's difficult to say really, there were just so many good players at the club during that era, I'm not sure it's right to pick individuals out as being better than the others after all this time. But if you forced me to pick out the greatest player while I was at Brentford I would say Jim Towers. He really set the place alight, ask any fan who has been going for a number of years and they'll tell you what a fantastic football player Jim was, and what a nice man too.

There was another player who was emerging at the club when I was leaving who I thought was truly special, Peter Gelson. He was a cracking centre-half, in a class of his own at Brentford. With the right grooming Gelson could have played for England I think. As a young lad I could see his potential and I used to urge Malcolm McDonald, who'd progressed to manager by that stage, to give him a run in the reserves. But for some reason McDonald and Jackie Goodwin, who was coaching the young lads, thought it would be more beneficial for the club to have the best possible youth side.