

Mogul marks 50 years of watching team



Producer – Steve Jenkins

The man who discovered Britney Spears celebrates his 50 years of supporting the Saddlers today – and to mark the occasion he has written about his memories in the club's programme.

Bloxwich-born Steve Jenkins, a close friend of former Pop Idol judge Peter Waterman, was just eight when he attended his first game at Walsall Football Club's former Fellows Park stadium on September 22, 1962.

He attended with his father Alan and grandfather Harry Jenkins, and the game saw the Saddlers notch up a 1-0 victory over Rotherham United, the only goal coming from George Meek.

"The my biggest memory was seeing the pitch for the first time," he says. "It was September, so the pitch was in the best shape possible before a

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full season of football, and it was breathtaking."

Steve, now 58, went to Joseph Leckie School in Walsall, and began his music career as a DJ on the club scene around the West Midlands.

As well as producing Britney Spears' hit Baby One More Time after being blown away by her audition, he has also worked with international stars such as Kylie Minogue, David Bowie and Billy Ocean.

He says the match against Rotherham was the start of between 1,500 and 2,000 games he has attended over the last half century, watching the Saddlers home and away. He has even arranged

business meetings in the US around flights back to home, to ensure he does not miss any games.

His weekly trips to see the Saddlers aroused the curiosity of music mogul Pete Waterman, who soon joined him in becoming a fan of the club.

"These days I live in London, so it is 120 miles there, and 120 miles back, and the journey's back always seem a lot longer when we have not done very well," he says.

But he writes in today's programme: "I do not regret one minute of the travelling, the joy and the disappointment of all those years. "Our football club has kept me connected to Walsall, to my family and the memory of my dad, mum and grandparents, and I believe they would have been proud of my loyalty to the club."