

I think it is fair to say that most celebrity deaths pass us all by with perhaps no more than a respectful rest in peace required. However recently there have been some deaths which have had a much greater impact, especially in a world that has a social media forum allowing us to offer a more in depth outpouring.

There have been two recent celebrity deaths that I think have merited extra comment, both for entirely different reasons.

Jimmy Hill was an extraordinary figure in the world of football. Not only was he a player, manager and commentator, one that my generation grew up listening to the views of, but he was also a great football innovator – he is credited for introducing all-seater stadia, the electronic scoreboard and three points for a win. He changed punditry for good but most of all he has left a strong legacy in a sport that often people come and go just as quickly.

Then earlier this week David Bowie passed away after a long battle with cancer. I cannot remember a celebrity dying and dominating national news bulletins solidly for the first 15 minutes. I can understand why some might wonder why this is necessary but I think for once it was entirely fitting. David Bowie changed the face and direction of British music. He was an important and influential figure not just in terms of music and film production but also within society.

He professed and encouraged views on issues such as sexuality that today most would not bat an eyelash at but then were considered difficult to discuss. He normalised different and allowed those perceived as different to feel normal.

Both Bowie and Hill were more than just celebrities. They were pioneers in their respective trades and their legacies remain long after their passing. May they rest in peace.