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Interviewer: What is your name, and could you spell it for me as well?

Lynn Peters: Lynn Peters.

Interviewer: In what capacity are you here [and connected]?

Lynn Peters: At the moment I'm a steward supervisor, and have been since 1996, but I've been working here [on match days for 0:00:18] almost 30 years.

Interviewer: Gosh. Do you come from Stevenage?

Lynn Peters: I was born in London, moved to [Stevenage] when I was four.

Interviewer: When did you first [get] involved in the club?

Lynn Peters: I started watching them when they first moved back here in 1980 and have been coming ever since.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Lynn Peters: Fourteen.

Interviewer: Did you come with family?

Lynn Peters: I would come with my older brother, and then I started coming on my own about a year later.

Interviewer: Were you into football before that?

Lynn Peters: Yes, I've always been mad about football ever since I was really, really little. My mum blames my dad, because I was only a few months old when England won the World Cup, in 1966, and when we scored the fourth goal my dad jumped up to celebrate, forgot I was on his lap, and I went head first into the floor.

Interviewer: Oh.

Lynn Peters: So my mum blames my dad for dropping me on my head during the World Cup Final. (Laughter)

Interviewer: God, that is a story.

Did you support a London team before?

Lynn Peters: No. Most of my family is Arsenal, so I had Arsenal foisted onto me a little bit, until I was about nine or ten, and I decided, "I'm going to be different", and I picked Liverpool.

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Lynn Peters: Then when Stevenage started up again... I follow Liverpool to this day, but the team that I support, and the team that's in my heart, is Stevenage.

Interviewer: When you were coming on your own how did you go from being a fan to working here?

Lynn Peters: At the time one of my friends from school, her dad, George Clarke, was the chairman, and they had a programme seller not turn up one day and asked if I would be prepared to do it, and it just went on from there.

Interviewer: Oh, really? What was that like? How did that come about, them asking you? Were you here?

Lynn Peters: I was already here. I had come down to watch the game. In those days you didn't get paid or anything for it. You did everything for the love of the club. He said, "We're a

programme seller short. Do you fancy doing it?" I said, "Yes, fine." It just went on from there.

Interviewer: How old were you then?

Lynn Peters: I was 16 then.

Interviewer: Did you have a job, or [were you at 0:02:34] school?

Lynn Peters: I was just finishing off at school. I was in my last year of secondary school. It was around March time. That was in 1982 when I started.

Interviewer: Did you have another job after that and still do things for the club?

Lynn Peters: Obviously I did go into full-time work, but I was still working for the club, on a voluntary basis initially, on match days.

Interviewer: What did that involve, being a programme seller? How [does it 0:03:04]-?

Lynn Peters: Basically just selling the match day programme, trying to encourage people to buy it so that you could sell as many as you could. At that time it was only about 20p a programme, but

every penny helped, so it was just trying to get as many programmes sold as we could.

Interviewer: Do you know what happened to the money? What was the money for from the programmes?

Lynn Peters: Obviously some would be reinvested as part of the printing costs for future games and what have you. They did make a small profit, obviously, on those, and it was all channelled back into the club.

Interviewer: How long did you do that for?

Lynn Peters: It's hard to say, because it's going back a long time. I've done so many things.

Programmes probably for a couple of years. Turnstile operator. I've worked in the tea bar. I've helped build tea bars down here. I worked behind the social club bar.

I've done pretty much everything down here in one form or another, so to actually give definite timeframes for each would be difficult.

Interviewer: What was the turnstile? Was that voluntary as well?

Lynn Peters: That was voluntary as well. You got a burger and a cup of tea, and I got to see the game, obviously, for nothing. Then normally you got a bottle of wine or something at Christmas, a

box of chocolates at Easter, and a bottle of wine at the end of the season to say, "Thanks very much for all your hard work."

Interviewer: For that you have to be here early, I take it, before the game?

Lynn Peters: Yes. I have to be here earlier now than I did then. Generally speaking the turnstiles opened at about two 2:00pm back in the 1980s, when we were in the lower leagues, maybe 1:45pm. So we normally had to be here by about 1:30pm, so that we were ready for when they were ready to open the ground.

Interviewer: Were there other women that worked here then?

Lynn Peters: There were a couple, yes. There were about three of us, I think, yes.

Interviewer: What did you do after that? How did you go from voluntary to working for the club?

Lynn Peters: It purely came about that as we rose up through the different leagues obviously they were aiming to get into the Conference, and go semi-pro and what have you.

I think it was just before the time Victor Green came into the club they decided, "People are giving up their time. They have a right to be remunerated." It was something that the club introduced, and said, "We're going to start paying you."

Interviewer: Oh, I see. Were you a steward then already?

Lynn Peters: I didn't start stewarding until 1996. Between 1982 and 1996 I was doing turnstiles, and programmes, and the precursor to the club shop.

We used to have a little Portakabin over on the far side, before the east terrace was developed, which we had as a club shop, scarves, and basic programmes, and all that sort of thing.

Then I started stewarding in 1996, and it was around that time that they started paying you on a match by match basis.

Interviewer: So stewarding before that was voluntary?

Lynn Peters: They didn't really need any stewards until we were aiming for the Conference, so it was only the very early 1990s that stewarding came in, but at that time it was a different chairman to what we have now.

He decided to use an outside stewarding company, which cost an absolute arm and a leg. It was after doing that for a few years that they decided, "Well, hang on. It might be cheaper if we can employ our own and train them."

Interviewer: So there were no stewards before that, before the outside..?

Lynn Peters: Not really, no.

Interviewer: How did you get into the stewarding?

Lynn Peters: Well, obviously I was known in and around the club, and what have you, and I was just asked, "Do you fancy doing stewarding?"

Because we had more turnstile operators than we actually needed, and things like that, so you would miss out on the odd game here and there and what have you.

Whereas stewarding it was a case of, "We need you every game. We need you every week." I was just asked if I would be interested in doing it and I said yes.

Interviewer: You're now supervisor?

Lynn Peters: Yes.

Interviewer: How did you get to be a supervisor?

Lynn Peters: Purely through experience, length of time that I've been doing the job and what have you.

It's obviously the way that you can cope with situations, the way you can calm situations down. There's no point going in effing and blinding if you've got a group of people effing and blinding. You need to calm the situation.

So it's experience, basically, and the way that I've been viewed on the job that's allowed me to progress.

Interviewer: Can you remember any incidents over the time you've been here, like bad incidents?

Lynn Peters: Plenty. (Laughter) Well, not really bad. Not with regards behaviour. Obviously there are always going to be things.

Stevenage/Woking games are always very interesting as to what could go on.

We were playing them down here on a Tuesday evening, and we had a couple of Woking fans decide they were going to try and get in with the home fans.

I was stood outside. I said, "You aren't coming in. I'm sorry. You're not coming in here because you're a Woking fan, but you're not coming in the ground full stop, because you're drunk." They couldn't hardly stand up.

He said, "You're going to stop me are you?" I said, "Well, if I have to I will." He said, "I will spread you all over the pavement." I said, "Well, bring it on", sort of thing.

He went to throw a punch and just ended up flat on his face, and the police [just said 0:08:20], "Do you want me to get rid of him?" I said, "Yes, get rid of him." I said, "He isn't coming in. He's too drunk."

Nothing really, really bad.

Interviewer: What do you do as a supervisor that's..?

Lynn Peters: I'm over on the east terrace. There are two supervisors over there. We supervise one end each. So it's down-

Interviewer: Do you mean one end from the middle, so left and right?

Lynn Peters: The north and south, yes. We supervise the stewards within the section. Make sure that they're doing the job that they should be doing. Move them around if necessary. Just generally monitor things.

If there is something going on that somebody needs to be spoken to about in the crowd, then generally it's down to the supervisor to go and speak to them and try and sort the situation out. Or calm it down. Or say, "Well, I'm sorry. You really shouldn't be doing that. If you carry on you might be asked to leave the ground." Whatever the case may be.

Interviewer: Have you noticed, or do you feel there's any difference with the fact that you're a female steward to a male steward with the people that you work with, the other stewards? The fact that you're a supervisor and you're female?

Lynn Peters: No.

Interviewer: None whatsoever?

Lynn Peters: Not with the stewards, no. You can see a difference when there are situations going on within the crowd.

If you've got a group of five or six testosterone filled men, that are going at it verbally, hammer and tongs, they just see another male steward walking towards them, they just look and just carry on.

If they turn around and suddenly there are one or two women coming along that are going to deal with the situation, all of a sudden they think, "Well, I'm looking about that big."

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: Not always, but sometimes just by sending a female steward it can nip things in the bud like that, purely because men think, "It's a woman", and back down.

Interviewer: When you first started the stewarding, were you the only woman or were there other women?

Lynn Peters: No, I think there would have been about four or five of us when I first started stewarding. There are more now.

I think women are becoming – not just on the terraces, as supporters – are generally becoming more involved in the game of football.

You tend to see it more in the lower leagues rather than in the Premier League. There are women obviously involved in the Premier League, but on a general match day basis, like

stewarding and things like that, there is more involvement than there was, say, ten years ago even.

Interviewer: Can you see much of the game [Crosstalk 0:10:58]?

Lynn Peters: Fortunately, I get to see a fair chunk of the game. Obviously it depends what's going on around me in my areas, as to what needs dealing with, but I suppose I would probably see on a good day about 20/25 minutes of each half. So I would see about half of the game overall.

Obviously other games I might only see 10/15 minutes. Or the very odd exceptional game I might see 70/75 minutes. It depends on circumstances.

Interviewer: What do you think the biggest changes have been to this club since you started?

Lynn Peters: It's not as family orientated now as it was. Obviously as you move up through the leagues, and become more professional, to a certain degree the club is going to become not so much distanced from their fan base, but there's going to be a bigger gap. In that respect, yes, I think today there's much more of a...

When I first started coming here it was, "I love the club. What can I do to help?"

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: Whereas now the club are more, “Well, if you do this what’s in it for me?” I know it has to be financially based, but I don’t think it’s as much of a family orientated, warm and welcoming club as it was.

Interviewer: When you originally used to come here, what did it look like in comparison to now?

Lynn Peters: Where we are now, on the main stand side of the pitch, there was just a main stand that spanned about 25 yards either side of the halfway line.

Interviewer: Right.

Lynn Peters: It was a small terrace in front and then seats behind. Basically rows of bricks with wooden slats on the top.

Interviewer: Oh, yes.

Lynn Peters: There was a small what we used to call ‘the shed’ over on the eastern side of the ground, which again spanned about 20 yards either side of the halfway line. That was just standing area.

The south end of the ground, where the away end is now, used to be a big grass bank. The kids used to love it, rolling up and down and what have you. (Laughter)

The north end of the ground, believe it or not, although there is a covered stand there, is not a lot different to how it was.

The dressing rooms and the boardroom used to be at that end of the ground in Portakabins. No fancy offices or anything. It was Portakabins and what have you.

There was one set of turnstiles, which are the ones up in the northwest corner now, where you come in for the main stand. That was the only set of turnstiles in the ground.

Where the burger bar is, over on the far side, a little bit further back, used to be the social club.

Interviewer: What was the pitch like? Because I've read things about the pitch.

Lynn Peters: The pitch has always been fantastic. Always been a really good playing surface. At one time it was known as the non-league Wembley, in non-league football terms, because the pitch has always been really, really good.

When you consider that there were trenches dug across it, and God knows what else, which all had to be sorted out before we moved back here in 1980, but the pitch has always been...

There's been the odd season where it hasn't been great drainage wise, but it's always been considered a good playing surface.

Interviewer: Do you get to meet any of the players or anything?

Lynn Peters: Not as much now as I used to. Obviously before, years ago, you used to be able to hold a conversation on first name terms and what have you. You do still get to meet players, but there's not the interaction that there was, but again that comes with moving up through the football ranks.

Interviewer: When you first started to come here, in the 1980s, were the players paid? [Do you know if they were paid 0:15:03]?

Lynn Peters: They were. Initially I think it was just on an expenses basis. They got whatever their travelling expenses were and a little bit extra for playing the game sort of thing. Nothing like a proper salary as such.

Most of them had full-time jobs, so they were only training a couple of evenings a week and things like that. So they were reimbursed, but not to any great degree.

Interviewer: Do you know any of the jobs they had?

Lynn Peters: I know at one stage Martin Gittings worked for British Telecom. Years before that he worked at George W King. The only way I know that is because my dad worked with him.

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Lynn Peters: He was an apprentice there when my dad was there. So he worked at George W King and British Telecom.

Dave Venables I think was a teacher. Neil Trebble I think was a teacher.

To put names to jobs, I can't be sure, but we've had painters and decorators, and electricians, and bricklayers, and post office workers, and all sorts.

Interviewer: Do you remember when they started to become fully paid?

Lynn Peters: I can't say [for certain 0:16:09]. It would have been the start of the 1990s, around the time when we started pushing for promotion into the Conference.

So the early 1990s was when I would say the paying really started coming in for the players on a proper basis, because that was around the time we went semi-pro.

The vast majority of them still had full-time jobs, but they started being paid a proper wage for doing what they were doing.

Interviewer: Can you remember your first match coming here?

Lynn Peters: First match was against a Tottenham All-Stars 11. It was the game to officially open the ground after we had moved back. Terry Yorath played. I can't remember. Whoever.

There were quite a few people here. More people turned up than what they thought, and there were a lot of children around my age that were having trouble to see, so they actually let us sit inside the pitch fence at each end of the ground.

That would never, ever happen in a million years now, but we were allowed to do that. That was my first game. I got the bug and that was it. I started coming back.

Interviewer: What was it about that game?

Lynn Peters: I don't know. As a little girl I had been taken to Arsenal games with my dad and my brother, and because I was little I found that quite intimidating, the size of the stadium and all that sort of thing.

Coming here, smaller ground. Yes, more intimate in some ways, but more relaxed as well, because it was smaller. It was a big area, but you didn't feel intimidated by it.

Interviewer: What's one of your most memorable games? Because you must have quite a few.

Lynn Peters: Too many to count.

Interviewer: Have you got a favourite game?

Lynn Peters: Favourite game would be Newcastle 1998. (Laughter) You've probably had so many people say that, so I will [divert 0:18:05]-

Interviewer: No, go for that one. Just tell me that one first.

Lynn Peters: Well, I was working. My son was just turned five.

He wouldn't remember it, but he was twelve days old when he attended his first game here. [It was 0:18:24], "Once you've had the baby bring him down", sort of thing. I had him just before Christmas, so [at the] Boxing Day game I brought him down so everyone could see him.

His first proper game here was the Newcastle game. I was working. His dad was working. This is where me and his dad met.

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Lynn Peters: We're not together now. We've been split up a couple of years.

My brother was coming. He said, "Get Luke a ticket, and I will take him with me." So he was sat in the main stand with my brother.

I was steward. He was in the area that I was stewarding, so I could sort of keep an eye on him as well.

Sky Sports were covering it, and they used to have the Goodyear airship going around.

All of a sudden I can just hear my son, "Uncle Colin. Uncle Colin." He's going, "I'm talking, Luke. Hang on a minute." "But Uncle Colin." "What Luke?" "Look, a spaceship." (Laughter) He had the whole area around him in stitches.

So that and the atmosphere around the ground. The way that the Stevenage and Newcastle fans were interacting, inside

and outside the ground. It was just a really good occasion. A really good day.

Interviewer: Where were you stewarding then? This side?

Lynn Peters: I was stewarding over on this side, on the main stand towards the southern end of the ground.

Interviewer: Children can go over there as well, can't they, on the terrace?

Lynn Peters: Yes. It's just my brother felt, under the circumstances, he had never been to a proper game before, and he was only five, so bum in a seat, safer for him.

Interviewer: Yes. What was the score of that game?

Lynn Peters: It was 1-1. It should have been a 2-1 win to us, as we had a perfectly good goal disallowed before we equalised, but that's history.

Interviewer: What was it like when that happened?

Lynn Peters: I don't know. It was quite intense, in a way. It was like we should have won it, but hey, we drew with Newcastle. It was intense.

Looking back on it now, there was a real feel good factor around Stevenage for probably a couple of months afterwards.

Interviewer: Really?

Lynn Peters: All because of one football game.

Interviewer: I was going to say to you, have you got friends from outside that you've brought into football, or are your friends from the football?

Lynn Peters: No, I've brought friends from outside into football.

Interviewer: You've got them into the football and Stevenage?

Lynn Peters: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you see people outside of work from..? Over the years have you seen people as friends?

Lynn Peters: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: So you've made friends here as well?

Lynn Peters: I've made friends here as well, yes.

Interviewer: Where do you live in Stevenage, if you don't mind?

Lynn Peters: I live on [Hertford 0:21:16] Road.

Interviewer: Oh, right, so it's quite near here?

Lynn Peters: Yes, it's about 15 minutes to walk from here to home.

Interviewer: Are there many people who support Stevenage from around where you live?

Lynn Peters: A fair few, yes. I get to know faces more than names, and what have you, and just walking around you see people that you recognise from here. Even if you go out on a Friday evening you will see people around. You don't know what their name is, but you know their face, and you know it's from here, and vice versa.

Interviewer: Do you think the support from the town is something that's increased or decreased over the time you've..?

Lynn Peters: It's increased, obviously, our average gate season on season would tell you that much, but I don't think...

How can I put it? There's not as much of a family happy-go-lucky feel to it anymore.

There's so many of the 18 to 24 brigade that want to be the big man, and the big I am, and they would rather go out and create a problem than actually come and support the team.

Some people just come here because they can vent their frustrations. We could go out there one day and win 10-0, and play a team off the park, but you will still have people moaning. That comes into it. You used to get the odd one years ago, but you seem to get a lot more of those now.

There are people that sometimes I think, "Why do you bother paying your money to come to watch the game? You're more interested in watching what the stewards are doing, and seeing if they're doing their job, instead of watching what's going on, on the pitch."

"Oh, you tell us to keep off the yellow painted areas over here. Why are they getting away with it in the away end?" I'm thinking, "Watch the football." Obviously I don't know what's going on, what have you. I say, "Well, I can only deal with here. You're my concern. I'm here for your safety."

Interviewer: Do you think the reasons why local people have come have changed?

Lynn Peters: Possibly. When I first started coming for a lot of people it was a case of it was somewhere to go on a Saturday afternoon. It wasn't too expensive. You could take the kids. You could let the kids run around in the ground, and you could watch football and what have you. Whereas now...

Yes, there is a core fan base there that do it because they love the club, and what have you, but there are a lot of people that I would consider hangers-on. That just come along every now and again, just so that they can vent all their frustrations, whether it be to a player, the referee, or whatever the case may be.

Interviewer: You were going to say about a second memorable game or favourite game.

Lynn Peters: Yes, 1986. We got the FA Vase quarter final.

There was a little bit in The Comet a couple of weeks back when Martin Gittings gave his recollection of that day, saying that we went out in the quarter finals to Southport. It wasn't actually Southport. It was Southall in North West London.

Interviewer: Whoops. Did he say that or was it a misprint I wonder?
(Laughter)

Lynn Peters: Well, it actually cropped up three times, but it was Southall.

The reason I remember it is we wanted to get as many people. I think we took about 1,000 people, which for the level we were at was really, really good.

A group of six of us decided we were going to try and get some fans there, and one of them was a railway buff, so we hired a train and took about 200 supporters on a train from Stevenage to Southall.

Then when we got to Southall we had a few police to escort us from the station down to the ground, walking along Southall High Street singing songs at the tops of our voices.

We lost the game. It should never have been played, really. It was like a skating rink, the pitch.

Some of our supporters, not so much the group that we took, were treated in a very nasty way by the Metropolitan Police.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Lynn Peters: They were treated as if they were thugs and hooligans before they even got there, and that just wasn't the case.

Interviewer: Why was that?

Lynn Peters: I don't know. There might have been a little bit of trouble in a couple of the pubs or something, I don't know, but they were very, very heavy-handed. But at that time hooliganism in football was a very, very big thing.

Interviewer: Have you seen any incidents of hooliganism here, or away when you've been to away?

Lynn Peters: I can't honestly say that I have, no. Not what you would class as out and out hooliganism. Yes, there have been chants backwards and forwards between groups of fans and things like that. I can't ever say I've actually seen fist fights, or

smashing a pub up just because they're walking past it, or anything like that.

Interviewer: How do new chants start? I'm intrigued as to how new chants come about. How do they develop? Does somebody just make them up?

Lynn Peters: If you watch a lot of football on television, they adapt them from ones that they hear on television. Some of them are very, very old. Then others, yes, they...

It's not so much chants. They will take a popular song and change the words to it and things like that.

The [Dale Cavese 0:26:51] the last couple of seasons was something that, you know, the old drum going, and the rhythm going. All the supporters really caught onto that, and they really liked it. It can create an absolutely stonking atmosphere, especially of an evening, down here.

Because generally speaking the singing and that just comes from the east terrace. With things like that, and The Final Countdown, you can stand there and you will have all the east terrace, people on the north terrace, and people in the main stand clapping along to it and everything as well.

It's one of those things that has come in, in the last couple of years, that's really got everybody in the ground united behind the team.

Interviewer: Has Stevenage got a song?

Lynn Peters: Not really, no. When we played Newcastle in 1998 we did have Gordon Bennett and [The Boro Boys 0:27:41] loud and proud. I think Andy Green had something to do with the writing of that. (Laughter)

It's really, really cheesy, like most football cup songs are, but even to this day I can still remember the words to it. Silly little things like that.

Not really, no. There are a few that they sing regularly, but there's not one that I would say, "That's our song."

Interviewer: Yes. You hear [it in the] Premiership, don't you? They play a certain song as well. Do they play a certain song here in the..?

Lynn Peters: There is a song in the run-up to the game, like when the teams come out, when Andy reads the teams out before kick-off. Hawaii Five-0 is one of them. Things like that.

There are songs that are played, but nothing that you would say, "Well, that's our song." Yes, there are songs that are played every game, but you wouldn't necessarily associate them with Stevenage.

Interviewer: What did you think about the change of the name?

Lynn Peters: I can sort of see where some people were coming from, saying that borough gives the impression of being a small area of somewhere else. I can sort of understand that to a certain degree.

I personally feel that it was wrong to do that, because in a way it's a snub to Stevenage Borough Council. If they hadn't helped us in the formative years to get back into this ground, and do what they did to get this ground able to be opened again, we wouldn't be anywhere near where we are today.

Personally I would prefer to have kept it, but that's not a decision that I can make. The vast majority of supporters would say the same. They would have preferred to have kept it. I think it was just the certain preconception that some people have that it didn't sound very professional.

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: It cost the club an awful lot of money to change everything, rebranding and everything, as well. That money could have been spent on another player, or developing the north end of the ground, whatever.

Interviewer: I notice the seats still say it as well, don't they?

Lynn Peters: Yes. They're not getting rid of it completely. It says 'Stevenage FC, Home of the Borough'.

Interviewer: Oh, I see. So they're going to use it as like a nickname?

Lynn Peters: They still keep the borough in with the club, but it's not part of the official title [any more 0:30:11].

Interviewer: You can see some of the big clubs don't have those parts to their name anymore either, do they? [Crosstalk].

Lynn Peters: Some of them don't, but some of them do.

Interviewer: Some of them still do.

Lynn Peters: Middlesbrough, for argument sake. They're still known as [Boro 0:30:29].

Interviewer: Yes, and Manchester United. They're not just Manchester, are they?

Lynn Peters: No, it's United or City.

Interviewer: I suppose they couldn't change it, but...

Lynn Peters: Well, no, but it's one of those...

I can understand to a degree why, but if it had been my choice I would have left it how it was.

Interviewer: Can you think of any games that were awful games, that you just went home and thought, "Oh"?

Lynn Peters: There is one game that was really, really awful, and for not very nice reasons. I don't know how many people remember it.

Every now and again, not just here but football grounds all around the country, a player will go down injured, and if they stay down a bit too long you get the crowd start chanting, "Let him die. Let him die."

Interviewer: Nice.

Lynn Peters: That just sends chills down my spine, because if you've been coming to the club as long as I have I actually witnessed that on the pitch.

Interviewer: Oh, gosh.

Lynn Peters: We were playing against a team called Vauxhall Motors in the 1980s. I can remember the player's name, but I'm not going to say it, for obvious reasons.

There was a clash of heads between him and one of our players. They both received treatment for a couple of minutes. Both got up, seemed to be okay. Then about five/ten minutes later the guy who played for the opposition collapsed by the dugouts.

They managed to revive him twice on the pitch, revived him again in the ambulance on the way to hospital, but unfortunately he was pronounced dead at hospital. The game was abandoned at half-time, for obvious reasons.

That's why whenever I hear that chant, whether it be here or on television, it just sends shivers down my spine, because unless you've actually witnessed it you leave here with the most empty, horrible feeling that you can ever experience.

Interviewer: Yes. That's awful.

You've seen some injuries as well, I bet. Have you seen some injuries?

Lynn Peters: Nothing really, really horrendous. There have been some nasty challenges, and people taken off with broken legs and what have you, but nothing that I can turn around and say, "Oh, it turned my stomach", or anything like that.

Interviewer: Why do you stay at the club?

Lynn Peters: Because it's in my heart. (Laughter)

The affection, I suppose, was when Paul Fairclough arrived at the club, actually. I had been involved with the club a few years by then. It was our first away league game, at East Thurrock of all places. In those days we didn't have enough supporters to fill a coach, so they used to travel on the coach with the players.

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Lynn Peters: Travelling down there you would have all the players up the back, with their little card school and what have you. At the end of the game obviously the supporters that had travelled with them had to wait for the players, before they could get on the coach and go home.

This was 1990, so the Taylor Report hadn't come out at that stage, so you could still drink at football grounds and things like that. The East Thurrock Social Club had a few picnic benches outside, and we were just sat outside having a few drinks waiting for the players.

Paul Fairclough came up and spoke to every single supporter that was sat outside. "What's your name? How long have you been coming? What do you do? Do you help the club?"

I think that's where the respect, and the affinity, and the affection between the supporters and Paul Fairclough really, really started. Because he was a family man, we were a family club, and he openly encouraged it and what have you.

I had already got married by that time. I had my wedding reception down here and things like that. I think it was that time where it really started getting in the heart.

If they turned around to me and said, "We don't need you to work here anymore", I would say, "That's fine. I will still be here every week." I would still be here every game. It's one of those. It's life, for me, in a way, match days. "Oh, Stevenage [today 0:34:41]."

Interviewer: What did you do with your kids? Did you bring them?

Lynn Peters: Well, I've only got the one.

Interviewer: Oh, you've got one?

Lynn Peters: Yes. He will be nineteen in December, but he started working down here just over two years ago selling programmes. When he turned eighteen, last year, he started stewarding.

Interviewer: Oh, wow.

Lynn Peters: Yes. So we're keeping it in the family. (Laughter)

Interviewer: So your husband or [partner0:35:05]-

Lynn Peters: Soon to be ex-husband.

Interviewer: Okay. He was working here. Was he a steward?

Lynn Peters: Yes. He still is.

Interviewer: Oh, he still is here as well?

Lynn Peters: He's a supervisor as well.

Interviewer: Oh, right, okay. So it was a real sort of..?
What would you do with your son when you were both working?

Lynn Peters: Once he got to eight or nine we could bring him with us. We could go off and do whatever, turnstiles or whatever, and would keep an eye on him. Up until then my mum used to have him.

Interviewer: After that did you bring him with you all the time?

Lynn Peters: Yes, pretty much.

Interviewer: He got into it?

Lynn Peters: Yes.

Interviewer: So is he a fan? [Was he a fan before 0:35:45]?

Lynn Peters: He's a fan as well, yes.

Interviewer: What's that like, having your son working with you? Are you his boss?

Lynn Peters: No. We're kept away. He works in a different section. We try to do it as much as we can, because there are other families here that have got mum, dad, and son working here and what have you.

Interviewer: Really?

Lynn Peters: So to stop any conflict of interest, or if anything happened, instead of your, "Oh, God, I hope Luke is alright", instead of concentrating on what you're doing. It wouldn't bother me anyway.

Interviewer: How many stewards have you got working here?

Lynn Peters: What, all together?

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: We can have as many as 50 here on a match day.

Interviewer: How many are you in charge of at any given time?

Lynn Peters: About 15.

Interviewer: How many supervisors are there? There's about four on a day?

Lynn Peters: There's one supervisor in the north end of the ground. There are two supervisors on each of the other three sides.

Interviewer: Right.

Lynn Peters: So you've got seven supervisors, and then you've got your deputy safety officer and your safety officer, plus you've got more stewards.

Interviewer: What's a deputy safety officer and [safety officer 0:37:10]? Are they..?

Lynn Peters: Safety officer in effect takes charge of the ground on match days, and his deputy is pretty much his right hand man sort of thing.

Interviewer: That's the chain of command above you, is it?

Lynn Peters: Yes. The Yeovil game, our last home game, our deputy safety officer wasn't here, he was on holiday, and Lee, the chief steward, he wasn't here either. He would normally cover the deputy safety officer, but neither of them were here, so I was deputy safety officer.

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Lynn Peters: It's all to do with chain of command and responsibility.

Interviewer: Have you stewarded all different areas?

Lynn Peters: Yes.

Interviewer: What's your favourite? Have you got a favourite?

Lynn Peters: Where I am now.

Interviewer: Over there?

Lynn Peters: Yes.

Interviewer: Don't like away?

Lynn Peters: Don't mind it, but you get to know your supporters over there. You get to know who you need to keep your eye on and things like that. And 99% of the atmosphere comes from over there. Even if you're not getting a chance to watch too much of the game, because the atmosphere is all around you, you still feel

like you're fully involved in what's going on. Not just off the pitch but on the pitch as well.

Interviewer: Have you had any favourite players over the..?

Lynn Peters: Over the years I've had a fair few. Going back from when I can first remember coming here, my first ever favourite player I would say would be Danny Dance. He used to play on the wing. Could be quite antagonistic, on and off the pitch, but he was probably the best player that pulled on a shirt at that time.

Through the years Martin Gittings, Dave Venables, Tony Lynch, Barry Hayles, Efe Sodje, Steve Berry. The list is endless.

A few years back a friend of mine and I decided to sit down and write down a list of every Borough player that we could think of.

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Lynn Peters: We started off with goalkeepers, and then defenders, and midfielders, and strikers. We got up to 400 and something and we were still going, so we stopped. There are so many.

I could probably go and pick one for every season that I've ever seen, but the two that probably really stick out would be Efe Sodje and Barry Hayles.

Interviewer: What was so special about them?

Lynn Peters: Barry Hayles was spotted by one of the scouts playing Spartan League football in London for Willesden Hawkeye, on a park pitch. Plucked from complete and utter obscurity.

As soon as you saw him you just knew. There was something about him that he was going to end up going a long way in football, and that's how it turned out.

He left here to go to Bristol Rovers. About £250,000 I think we got for him. Then he ended up signing for Fulham, for £2m, and we got a slice of that. He played international football.

Efe Sodje has played international football for Nigeria.

There have been a few players that have come through the doors that have made international appearances. We were non-league. We were in the Conference at the time. Playing for Stevenage and playing international football. It was like a real big putting us on the map sort of thing.

Interviewer: What's it like watching a player that's good? Like you said, you just knew he was good.

Lynn Peters: I don't know. It's strange. At times you know he's had a bad game, but you think, "No, he was fine. He did alright."

Certain players that give their heart and soul on the pitch, that give 110% no matter what, you will still give them the benefit of the doubt, because you know that there's some...

George Boyd is another one, quite relatively speaking. He always gave 110%. Alright, he didn't always have a great game, but you always forgive him that, because you knew that

there was that little something about him that would end up paying back in dividends. Which in one way or another it has.

Interviewer: What do you think that football has to offer women who would say that it's a man's game?

Lynn Peters: It's something that I feel that a woman shouldn't really pass judgment on until they have actually experienced it. If they go to a game and say, "It's not for me", fair enough, but they shouldn't think it's a man's game unless they've actually gone to see it.

Especially with the growth of women's football and everything as a whole now. Over the last 10 years the women's competitive side of women's football has come on in leaps and bounds, and I think that's brought a bigger profile to football for women, and that's caused more women to come along and support.

I was talking to someone a few years back. "Oh, you would never get me going to Stevenage. I would never go down there." She's here near enough every week now. She came once and she was hooked.

Interviewer: Do you think that it's giving off that impression? A lot of the things that have been in the press, about female refs and stuff, they give off the impression that they don't want women to go there?

Lynn Peters: Years ago, yes. Not so much now I don't think. I think now, especially women of my age and younger, mid-40s and

younger, they seem to be more inclined to give it a try, shall we say.

When I was a kid it was a case of go and play with your mates and push a doll's pram around or go and play with them and play football. I would go and play football. That was me. That's what I liked.

You see a lot more of it now, and because there are more girls' teams around, and they will allow girls to play football in school. Whereas when I was at school you could play football in primary school, but once you got to secondary school that was it, finished, kaput. Whereas that's not the case now.

It's becoming more integrated in every dimension. Not just watching it, but it being taught, and coached, and things like that.

Interviewer: Have you ever thought, "Oh, God, I don't want those fans to come from that town", or, "Oh, I'm not going to go to that away match"?

Lynn Peters: Yes.

Interviewer: Which one? Who was that?

Lynn Peters: The fans coming here?

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: Luton. (Laughter) Purely because the last season we played them we were both going for promotion, and somebody, I'm not too entirely sure who, in their infinite wisdom decided to give Luton half of the east terrace.

They put railings up, and God knows what else, but it was a nightmare, an absolute nightmare.

That was the only reason I didn't want them to come. Because I knew the problems it was going to create for me and my colleagues. It was going to be-

Interviewer: Have you had problems with them before?

Lynn Peters: The rivalry between here and Luton is quite intense. They're very much, "We're the football league side, and you're always non-league", sort of thing.

When they got relegated to the Conference, yes they were a little bit hard done by, with the points deductions they received and what have you, but they just had, "Well, we're going straight back up."

It's not that easy. A lot of teams have found that out. It's not easy to come out of the football league and go straight back up. I think there are only two teams that have done it, Carlisle and Colchester. All the rest have taken at least two seasons to do it.

It was just their mentality, and I knew what their fans could be like. Not all of them, obviously, you can't tar them all with the same brush, but there is a group of fans that are really nasty.

When I look back, we win the Conference title. Luton are in the play-offs. They're playing York at home in the play-off semi-

final, and they lost. Luton fans were pelting the York City players. The York City players had to take refuge at the back of a stand and things like that.

There is a real element of Luton that was really, really nasty and horrible.

Our stewards over there, when they had the Luton fans, we got pelted with lighters, and coins, and God knows what else. It was horrible.

Hopefully it will never, ever happen again. Not just them, any other team, because it's just not a good idea, because the fans are just too close together.

Interviewer: Have you been to any away matches where you thought, "I don't want to go there", apart from Luton?

Lynn Peters: No, I can't say that...

I don't get to as many away games now as I used to. Some of them are, "Oh, you're only interested in what money you can get out of Stevenage." "Well, no, actually, sunshine. I was coming to watch Stevenage before you were even thought about, let alone born." "Well, you don't go to any away games." "Maybe I don't get to many now, but I used to. I used to go to places you probably haven't even heard of."

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: No, I've quite enjoyed all of them. I can't honestly say I've ever... Other than Luton, I don't think there was one that I

would say, for clashes with fans or whatever. I would go back to every single one again.

Interviewer: Do Luton have many female supporters?

Lynn Peters: I haven't really noticed to be honest with you. A few.

Interviewer: I just wondered if it was predominantly men.

Lynn Peters: I couldn't answer that question. I don't know.

Interviewer: One of those things. (Laughter)

Somebody else mentioned to me about working here that they would do it for free. Would you do it for free?

Lynn Peters: Yes. I did it for free for a long, long time before I started getting paid. If they turned around to me and said, "Sorry, we can't afford to pay you anymore", I would say, "Right, fine. Give me a burger and a cup of tea and I will be fine." [Crosstalk 0:47:29].

Interviewer: Do you do anything else socially outside of football? Do you have any other hobbies? Or is football your thing?

Lynn Peters: Well, I enjoy watching all sports. Football and cricket predominantly, but I will watch... My mum calls me a sportaholic. I will watch anything. Golf, baseball, American football. I will watch most things. I enjoy watching a lot of sport, either live or on TV.

I like socialising, obviously. I like taking my dog out for long walks. I enjoy watching documentaries on most subjects, but especially the Second World War.

Interviewer: Oh, right.

Lynn Peters: I've got a real interest in it.

Interviewer: Cool.

What was I going to say? It escapes me now. Oh, yes. You said about Liverpool. You follow Liverpool. Do you think you can follow a big team and a local team, or you've got to be one or the other?

Lynn Peters: No, I think if you've been supporting a football league side from the day you were born, well then you're always going to be that one team.

Having come from the obscurity that we have, from playing on a roped-off park pitch in King George's playing fields, in the Wallspan Southern Combination, in 1976, to League One football in 2011/2012. It was a non-league club. That's what I started watching was a non-league club. That's what got in here was a non-league club.

I still followed Liverpool, and I still follow Liverpool now, but if in the FA Cup this year Stevenage were drawn against Liverpool there would only be one team that I wanted to win, and that would be Stevenage.

Interviewer: What was it like for you when they went up into the..?

Lynn Peters: All my dreams coming true.

Interviewer: Was it?

Lynn Peters: Especially after what happened in 1995/1996.

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: It was having fought the way that we did to win the title, and to have it taken away was horrible.

Interviewer: What was the atmosphere like after that happened?

Lynn Peters: It was injustice. "Let's do it." We all hoped within a year or two the record would be set straight.

Because by the time the following season started this ground was ready for league football, but the criteria at the time was

different. You had to have it ready by the Christmas of the season that you wanted to win the title to get promoted.

Which was a big ask, investing £2m/£3m/£4m, for a non-league side, to redevelop their ground in the hope that they're going to win to get promoted.

Especially seeing as around that time a lot of the teams that were in the top two or three at Christmas would end up near the bottom at the end of the season. It was a big ask.

It was horrible. Great when title, and yes, gut-wrenching when they said, "No, you're not coming up." But then it was, "Right, we've been wronged. Let's make it right." We just didn't want it to take quite as long as it did.

Interviewer: How do you think the people in the town responded to that? Do you think there was more support for the club? Or indifference?

Lynn Peters: I think there was a lot of indifference to be honest. "They're always going to be a non-league side. Why worry about it anyway? They're never going to go further than the Conference, if they ever get there." It was, "Oh, you've won it, but you're never going to win it again." There was a lot of indifference.

At the same time, there were a fair few that felt, "No, they've been wronged", and they started to come to support us, that hadn't previously.

So a certain amount of indifference, yes, but it's been put right at the end of the day. It's taken a lot longer than we hoped, but it's still been put right.

Interviewer: Have you noticed more supporters since they've gone up [and then been 0:51:38] promoted again?

Lynn Peters: Yes. Our gates have gone up. Not every week, but Sheffield Wednesday, for argument sake, was just under 5,000. Charlton. Sheffield United next week will be another big one. Our average overall is up, but I would still like to see it go up a bit more.

Interviewer: Do you think it's a really big thing to have a lot of supporters?

Lynn Peters: Not a lot. You've got to have a really good base there, a core that you know pretty much are going to turn up week in week out, that you can budget around so to speak. Then whatever you get over that is a bonus. You've got to have a real...

The situation that we're in now, you would like to think that there are probably about 2,500 that no matter how they're playing, sun, rain, sleet, snow, whatever, will be here for a home game.

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: Whereas, say, two years ago there might have been 1,700/1,800. It is increasing year on year.

Interviewer: Do you think it has an impact on the players, the support?

Lynn Peters: It can do, yes. It really can be like a twelfth man. I don't know why, but the atmosphere always seems to be better here on an evening game for some reason.

Interviewer: Oh, really? That's surprising.

Lynn Peters: Especially when you get to this time of year, with the nights closing in, so the floodlights are on and all that sort of thing.

The atmosphere down here for the Sheffield Wednesday game was making the hairs on the back of my neck stand up and what have you. It was just absolutely amazing.

It was the same for Portsmouth in the Carling Cup last season when we played them down here. Again, it was an evening game.

Portsmouth have got their own little band, led by Pompey John, (Laughter) and they were absolutely amazed. We had literally just got into the football league, and we've got this amazing little drummer band sort of thing in the middle, and the way that we sung and chanted and everything. They couldn't believe it.

It was unbelievable to see a newly promoted side, with the following that we had, generating the atmosphere that we did. It can be really, really amazing.

Interviewer: It can be intimidating for the other side, can't it?

Lynn Peters: It can be, yes, but at the same time it can cause the opposition to rise up to the challenge.

What I find really good is when they're in full song over there, and loving every minute of it, and you get a decent away lot that are going to give you the banter backwards and forwards. That just ramps it up even more.

It can be. Even the players have said. Especially on evenings.

Sometimes you think, "Oh, the crowd has gone quiet", and what have you, and they say, "Oh, the players need you to lift them", but at the same time they need to see something on the pitch that is going to get them... It works both ways.

In full cry it can be a really, really intimidating place. It is quite tight knit, but it can lift the players.

Interviewer: You've been here the whole time, but Westley has been twice manager?

Lynn Peters: Yes.

Interviewer: Because somebody mentioned about it was different.

Lynn Peters: Well, I will be one of the first to hold my hands up, that when he was reappointed I thought, "Oh, no, not Westley."

Interviewer: Was he not good?

Lynn Peters: Don't get me wrong. When he came in the first time we were two or three from bottom, facing relegation from the Conference, playing not great. There was no spirit and what have you. He came in, and we survived. You've got to thank him for that.

The way that we played wasn't very nice to watch, but he came in halfway through the season. His job was to keep us up. Didn't care how he did it. "Just keep us up." And that's what he did.

Got us to the play-off final in 2005. Again, at times we played nice football, but it was very, "We're going to stop them scoring and nick a goal." It wasn't very easy on the eye. So when he was reappointed I was thinking, "Okay, give him the benefit. See what happens."

When he came in I think Phil Wallace told him, "I want us to play in a certain way. I don't want the boring, negative, what we had. I want us to play football."

At times it's been they really have come out and played. The FA Trophy final against Kidderminster, 2-0 down at half-time, and you're thinking, "Oh, my God." Second half they came out and they played some amazing football, and they ended up winning the game 3-2.

Interviewer: Yes.

Lynn Peters: Kidderminster had a chance right at the death to equalise and take it to extra time. I wouldn't have minded. We were 2-0 down at half-time. "Go to extra time. I don't care." As it turned out, we won it.

Yes, different this time around. He has got this very workman, "Everybody has got to work hard." Which is fair enough. High fitness levels. We do play better football now than we did the first time he was here. As I say, give him his due, he's changed my opinion.

Interviewer: Do you think he's changed his attitude to the game?

Lynn Peters: Yes. As I say, when he came in I thought, "No, I don't know. I will see what happens." As I say, fair dos to the guy, he's come in and he's done a stonking job over the last couple of years."

Interviewer: Good. (Laughter)

Anything else you would like to tell me? Any burning desires to tell me some memory that I haven't asked you about?

Lynn Peters: Not really, no. There are so many. And 99% of them are really, really good memories. Not just what's gone on on the pitch, but the nights we've had in the social club, and first team dinners we used to have, and things like that. There are so many it's really hard to pick.

I've said about Paul Fairclough's first game, the Newcastle game here, obviously, and the Vase quarter final in 1986, which stick out in my mind for different reasons, but no, I don't think so.

Interviewer: Were the staff closer to the players and the supporters closer to the players before?

Lynn Peters: Yes.

Interviewer: Now it's more distant? [Crosstalk 0:58:13].

Lynn Peters: Yes. The players do still interact, don't get me wrong, but it was almost as if in the 1980s and early 1990s the players, the supporters, we were all the team. And the match day staff. We were all part of the team. Whereas now you've got the team, as in the players, and you've got the supporters. It's not as if you're all big one anymore.

Interviewer: Do you think that's a shame?

Lynn Peters: In some respects, yes, but also if you want to progress through the leagues you've got to be professional, so you've got to have that professional distance at the same time. It would be nice, but I know and understand why it doesn't happen as much as it used to.

END AUDIO

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