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Interviewer: Okay, so could you tell me your name, please?

Fiona Currie: Yes, my name is Fiona Currie.

Interviewer: What's your connection with Stevenage Football Club?

Fiona Currie: Longstanding fan of 20 seasons.

Interviewer: Twenty seasons?

Fiona Currie: Yes.

Interviewer: You, sir?

Tom Brook: I'm Tom Brook. I'm a newbie to this club.
About four years ago...

I haven't, as we say, looked back. I've had all the glory days, and long may it continue.

Interviewer: Also a supporter?

Also, Fiona, let's start with you.

I'd like to know, please:

On a Saturday, when the alarm goes off and it's a match day, talk us through your day from then on.

Fiona Currie: Saturdays, obviously, are reserved for Boro. We don't do anything else, really, in general.

It's up into our Boro wear, and I'm very superstitious about what I wear. I have a certain pair of underwear that has to be worn on that day, and socks.

In the winter, I have to wear the same scarf and it's got my name written on the back. We have similar scarves, but I have to wear mine and my Boro hoodie.

That's pretty much a set uniform for me. I don't deviate from that.

Then, a lot of us meet down the local caf for a breakfast. Then, if it's a home game, we all go off to 'Our Mutual Friend', which is our local pub, where we enjoy a few bevies.

Then, it's trundling into the East Terrace for the game.

A lot of us are standing supporters. We like to sing and create an atmosphere.

Then, it's a bit of banter either in the clubhouse or in the pub.

It's just a lovely social group, coming from the roots of Non-League. The friendships here are bigger than just football for 90 minutes. It is a day of social friendships as well as the football.

Interviewer: The whole day is based around Stevenage?

Fiona Currie: Pretty much, yes, on Saturday.

Tom Brook: Even the evenings.

Fiona Currie: Even the evenings. There are 15 or 20 people, always, whether we're travelling home or away, and lots and lots of ladies as well. The guys are not liking being overrun at the minute.

Tom Brook: The wives suggest what we're doing.

Fiona Currie: No, I know. (Laughter)
That's the Saturday ritual.

Interviewer: What about an away day, then?

Fiona Currie: Away days are very much the same with the clothing. Obviously, you're packing for unknown weather.

Then, we take maybe three or four cars and go, depending on numbers, or we have our famous train trips, which are liquid breakfasts.

The train doors close and the cans of beer are opened. It gets quite rowdy, shall we say, on the trains.

We travel up and down the country on the trains. I just put some photographs in, actually, of some of our excursions.

It's great because you bump into all the other football teams' fans.

We travel, probably, with 20. About 20 of us travel on the train. Lots of different groups of Boro fans do it.

If we're not in the cars, then we'll go off, and it's just a cracking day out, especially when you go up North because they really love their football up there and they know what it's like to be a passionate fan. They're just so welcoming.

For us, it's a good day out. We'll go and have something to eat. We'll go and have a few bevies. We'll watch the game.

I do believe the away games are probably more passionate, because you've made the effort to go. There's no negativity. There's always lots of singing, camaraderie, and a bit of banter with the home fans.

Then, it's home again.

Again, it's a whole-day thing because when we come back, we tend to fall into the pub and enjoy the rest of the evening reflecting on the game.

Tom Brook:

That's when we have our nightcap, isn't it?

Fiona Currie: Yes, it is.

Tom Brook: That's right.

Fiona Currie: Yes, so that's the away days.

Interviewer: If you're going in the cars, then, have you pre-arranged pubs to meet the other fans in?

Tom Brook: Yes.

Fiona Currie: Yes.

Our forum, BoroChat, is a great place to put ideas.

Often, the home fans for where we're going will post which are the away welcoming pubs.

Obviously, now we're in the League, you've got certain pubs you can go to.

We have an idea, and then we just ring each car and head for wherever.

The forum is quite useful in that respect because, obviously, you get a lot of information from there.

Then, the official site will give you all the official details that you need - ticket prices, what stand you're in...

We'll often go onto the forum of the team we're playing. There's always information on there.

Then, it's shared around.

Yes, it's fine.

Interviewer: In the last two seasons, have you noticed a bigger change in the away rituals or the home rituals?

Fiona Currie: Last season, when we promotion to League Two, it was, for me, long overdue.

Having been denied promotion all those years back, we had to suck it up in the Conference for quite a few years, really. You got bored of going to the same grounds.

A lot of the standards are not great, but it's part of Non-League football, I guess.

It was just wonderful to be going to some new grounds. Some we'd been to before, but it was like bonus season. That was how I put it.

It was like, "Whatever happens, we're going to enjoy ourselves. It's the first year ever in the League."

We did.

It, for me, didn't have any of the pressures of trying to climb out of the Conference. It was just sheer enjoyment.

I think that was right through the whole of the supporters until towards the end of the season when we started to get a sniff of the play-off place. Then, of course, you had the same sort of, "What if? What if?"

That was just a fabulous end, but it was totally, for me, unexpected.

We'd started to do well and we had a fabulous run from December, but, in December, we were 18th. You didn't even look at the play-offs. You just didn't want to go back down.

The team found their feet and moved forward so dramatically.

For me, it was always just about enjoying it. Even if we lost, it was, "It's nice. We're in League Two. It's good."

Actually being on 'The Football League Show' was nice as well because it was just a little bit more recognition and surprising all these teams.

There is obviously - what we've noticed - a big League mentality. With a lot of League fans, when you read comments from them and what have you, they're so dismissive of Stevenage because we're Non-League in origin.

I'm very proud of the fact that we're Non-League and I love when we go and turn them over, because we're here on merit, not through anything else.

Going up to Manchester was incredible.

Tom Brook: Oh, that was a fantastic day. That was a day and a half, that match.

Fiona Currie: I really didn't believe that we would beat Torquay. We'd never beaten Torquay in all our encounters before that game. Never.

I did feel that, maybe, that would be enough an incentive, but, on the day, you just don't know.

To win at Old Trafford was amazing.

This year, as much as we wanted to just enjoy this season because we didn't think we'd stay long, the team is showing us they can hold their own.

Now, we're having these mixed emotions of getting frustrated when we throw away points, like with the Yeovil game: 0-0. We should have had three points.

Whereas, last year, was just, "Enjoy it and go with it," this year, I just wanted to enjoy it, but now I see that, actually, we are mixing it up with the big boys and we're doing alright.

Tom Brook: I just want to be able to compete, and be up there with the big boys and say, "Here we are. We're going to make the best of it we can." Then, perhaps, next season, we can push on.

Fiona Currie: We won't go down without a fight.

Tom Brook: No, we won't go down.

Fiona Currie: I don't think we'll go down at all, but we won't go down without a fight if we do.

That's one thing this team has got - a lot of guts.

Interviewer: Is every game like a cup game at the moment, then?

Fiona Currie: No.

I refuse to say that because that makes us the little boys, and we're here on merit.

They see it as our cup final. A lot of teams have often said that to us.

A lot of these teams, we've played in cup games. Brentford turned us over last year in the Johnstone's Paint Trophy, I think it was, and we beat them on Tuesday at their place.

They were quite offended, some of their fans, that little Stevenage had turned them over, but that's life.

Tom Brook: I think we've got to look at each game and just play what's in front of us. That's all we can ask.

Fiona Currie: There are a few big ones, though, aren't there?

Tom Brook: Of course.

Fiona Currie: Yes, then you get that 'cup-finally' type feel of cup games, but, really, it's more for our enjoyment rather than the fact that, "Oh, that's Charlton."

There was a fabulous environment and atmosphere, wasn't there?

Tom Brook: Yes.

Fiona Currie: We still beat them.

People were like, “How did that happen?” but that’s what we do best. The Manager gets them up for these big games, and they do their job.

That’s what I love about Stevenage. You know you’re going to get a fight when you play us, and I don’t mean a fisticuffs one either.

Interviewer: There are some football supporters who have given up supporting Football League teams and gone to support their local Non-League side because of the difference in the atmosphere.

Do you miss anything about Non-League football or has it all been beneficial?

Tom Brook: Yes.

When I first came here four years ago, I liked it. It was something like a community club.

Now, I live in Waltham Abbey, and to come up here and see people in the clubhouse afterwards, and even the players coming in, having a few drinks and talking to the fans, I thought, “Yes, this is nice.”

Now, as we’ve progressed, that’s not happened.

There is still an affiliation with the players, but it’s not on the level that it used to be.

Unfortunately, I think this is the way it will progress as we progress up the League, and it will diminish in the end anyway.

Fiona Currie: From the fans' point of view with the Non-League scene, we're in a catchment area of a lot of...

If you think of how many years we were Non-League, we've only been a League club for two years, and, when you're Non-League, you don't draw any fans away from some of the bigger clubs, necessarily, because they've had their allegiances for years.

Stevenage, obviously, being a new town, has had overspill from everywhere and everyone has already get their allegiances.

You could ask pretty much any Boro fan. In their youth, they probably supported another team, unless they were 'born and bred' Stevenage.

I came from London. I was a Spurs fan. I wouldn't go there now if you paid me.

This is what it's about.

As we've gone up the leagues, our crowds have increased slightly, but there are too many teams around us, so I do miss the Non-League days sometimes because you had that close-knit community with the Club.

We still have fan forums with the Chairman and the Manager, and the fans can go in and find out what's going on, so they're lovely and I like the fact that he does that.

They do a fabulous open day at the beginning of the season. They set up activities for the kids to interact with.

Tom Brook: I hope that never goes.

Fiona Currie: Yes.

I think they recognise that these are things they can do for the Club, but once the season is on, it's just too serious now because they've got a League place which has taken them so many years to get to. They can't risk interfering with it.

I don't argue with that.

I know the SA do a visit to the Hospital at Christmas.

All these things come from our club as fans, and that is what's important.

Everyone says, "Oh, you're Non-League."

I'm quite proud to say that we've come from Non-League because that's what we got our basis for.

Do I want to go back?

No. (Laughter)

Interviewer: You still feel part of the Club, despite that?

Fiona Currie: Oh, yes, definitely.

Tom Brook: I do.

Fiona Currie: I think you just have to adjust your thinking to understand that the Club has to move forward in a professional manner that suits the needs of the league they're in.

That's fine.

I think, at the level we're at, it's quite nice still. There's still that interaction.

Heaven forbid what would happen if we'd go up any more. The thought of that is horrendous anyway.

For now, it's nice.

The pre-season is when you tend to get most of the contact, isn't it?

Tom Brook: I think the difficulty will come when players slowly drift off over the next few years and new players come in.

They have no concept of coming up from Non-League, so this is where I feel that we could lose a lot of the Non-League.

Fiona Currie: I think you're right.

Peter Taylor, when he came, didn't really interact with the fans or anything like that, and a lot of fans were quite annoyed about this.

Actually, when you look at his background, he's come from a professional background in football where they just don't do that in the league.

Whereas, for us, Paul Fairclough, Graham Westley, Mark Stimson or any of those always had time for the fans. Because we were Non-League, there weren't any of the other things that needed doing.

They've always done that, and most of these players that have come up were still with us in the Conference and so they know about the interactions, the importance of it, and how the fans support them.

Once these players move on and we get in professional league players, they might not have that same attitude because they might not have ever had it.

This is where I like our Non-League history because this is what attracts the kids.

They will give up five minutes to talk to that little person or to do an activity with them at the open day.

Things like that are really, really important.

That's a tricky one, but that will happen.

Tom Brook: Yes, I just hope it continues. That's important, I think.

Fiona Currie: Yes, I think it's really, really important.

Interviewer: In terms of the crowd sizes, then, has there been a disappointment that the crowds haven't increased to the level that you might have expected for a League One side?

Tom Brook: I think there is a level of disappointment, but what you've got to understand is that, as Fiona was saying, because of all the major clubs that are close around, obviously, their allegiance, because they're an older generation like ours, is with these clubs, which they've supported as kids.

Now, we've got the new generation of kids, where the Club is going into the schools and they're introducing themselves, which then encourages the kids to come.

It could be another 5 or 10 years before these kids then think, "Stevenage is our club."

Then, it will build from there, but we've just got to be patient. We'll be allowed to move on, and, hopefully, it will slowly build up.

That's got to be with a lot of help from the Club within the community.

"Get the name known."

Fiona Currie: I look at our crowds and they are up on the Conference days without a doubt, but I think, "They've had back-to-back promotions. What more do they need to do to get these people in Stevenage and surrounding areas in?"

For me, a team that has had that level of success, been to Wembley, been to Old Trafford, and has won titles, I'm just like, "What do we need to do to actually have the players play in front of half-decent crowd, apart from drawing a big name in the FA Cup or something?"

The Club deserves a lot more support, I think.

They'll always have us. There's no issue there. There are 2,000 or 3,000 people, probably, very like-minded like us, but they could potentially have another 2,000 or 3,000 as well.

It's 'allegiances' and it's 'cost'. We're in hard times now.

It's 'cost'.

I just don't think the brand of Stevenage is known enough yet, but it's getting there and it will come.

The kids are just Stevenage. My daughter has been coming to Boro since she was two. She was a mascot when she was five.

I've brought my girls up, Stevenage, and that's who they support. This is the same with all the kids coming through now. Our fanbase: there are a lot of kids there, and you have to keep looking after them and encouraging them because they are the future.

Interviewer: You've been involved with the Club now for 20 years?

Fiona Currie: Yes, 20 seasons.

Interviewer: The link between the administration of the town and the Club: how strong do you think that is?

Fiona Currie: It's difficult to tell, really.

To be fair, the Council, as I understand it, obviously own the ground, but they have been quite proactive and they're quite supportive.

Obviously, there's no money coming as no-one has got any money at the minute, but I know that they do as much as they can.

Maybe that's naïve, but that's how I see it.

When I look at other teams like Barnet and Luton, their councils really have not given them any scope to move grounds, upgrade or whatever.

Our club is given that chance to improve. Hopefully, the North Terrace is going to be done soon. The planning permission has gone in.

They will support it as much as they can.

When the Club was in financial difficulties before Phil Wallace came on board, Phil negotiated with the Council for a rent that was sustainable so he could get the Club back on its feet.

For me, I think they do what they can within the constraints.

I know there has been friction and what have you, and it's very political. It depends on what you want from the Club.

For me, it's the Council land, so you have to look after the whole of the area.

Not everyone comes to football, so why would they spend all their money here for maybe 2,000 fans when the area holds more?

I understand that side of it.

Equally, I understand that if this club is doing well, looks good and what have you, they're going to get tourism or business in the town, so it works both ways.

I do think there's probably a quite healthy relationship there.

Interviewer: There have been a number of successes recently. There have been Wembley successes and there's been the Old Trafford success that you mentioned earlier on.

I think we'll come back and talk about those specific games in a moment or two.

How did the town celebrate those victories?

Were there open-top bus parades or anything like that?

Tom Brook: The 'Boro Banger' comes to mind. (Laughter)

Fiona Currie: After Wembley, they had the bus parade around the town, didn't they?

Tom Brook: Yes.

Fiona Currie: There are some pictures, I know, floating around.

That was nice, and the players, obviously, all had the cup and what have you. They interacted as well.

Our goalie used to run one of the pubs, so there were big celebrations going on down there.

On the way home from Wembley, it was a little bit loud and boisterous. It was fantastic.

It's just something that will never go away.

Interviewer: Which one are you talking about?

Fiona Currie: I don't know.

You've got a choice, haven't you?

The Wembley game: the 2007 one, for me, stands out. It was just an amazing day.

Tom Brook: That was the first time we'd been to Wembley.

Fiona Currie: Yes.

That was the new Wembley as well, so it was special for more than just Stevenage, obviously.

To win there was just incredible.

We lost the last Conference Trophy final, but we've won twice at Wembley.

Then, obviously, Old Trafford last year has got to be...

Yes, I still get goosebumps thinking about that.

Tom Brook: That's a blur to me, for some reason.

Fiona Currie: Oh, it was amazing, the actual experience of being in such a famous stadium for a start, and to see your team go and do at the first attempt in League Two to get into League One, which I don't think anyone really expected us to do.

As fans, you know, with one-off games, who knows, but to actually beat Torquay for the first time, it almost wasn't even about the opposition. It was about where it took you because it was a whole different realm.

It was just incredible scenes.

They put the cup into the fans' hands after the game, and it was literally passed all the way along the fans where we were.

Tom Brook: I was that man.

Fiona Currie: You held it as well, didn't you?

It was just wonderful because they shared it with the fans. That just makes it really personal.

Oh, it was amazing.

There's been so much success. We've had three trips to Wembley, a trip to Old Trafford, and we won the Conference title, obviously, to go up.

Tom Brook: That game at Kidderminster: that is one that...

Fiona Currie: That was where we sealed the Conference - at Kidderminster away.

Tom Brook: That was a fantastic day. It was a good day out. It was a fantastic result.

It was just fantastic.

To see Phil Wallace out on the pitch there, I could see that he really wanted to get in there and celebrate with the boys, but, obviously, he had to be removed a little bit.

Fiona Currie: We saw him before the game, didn't we?

Tom Brook: Yes.

Fiona Currie: He was so nervous.

This is our Chairman.

He was just so nervous. He said, "Do you think we can win?"

You don't know, because it's within touching distance. To have had that conversation with him literally 90 minutes before and then the joy, because we did it, was fabulous.

Finally, we'd got out of this league. It took so long, but it was great.

Tom Brook: What about Ebbsfleet?

What was that game where Phil Wallace was outside, after the game, shaking everybody's hand, when Vincenti scored the one goal?

Fiona Currie: I can't remember.

I know that when we went to Altrincham the week before the Kidderminster game, we really needed to set the final game up.

We went to Altrincham and Charlie Griffin came on and scored, and got us a 1-0 win. It literally left Luton floundering to catch us.

We needed just to win at Kidderminster, and our Chairman was at the edge of the gates, where we were going out, shaking our hands and hugging everyone, thanking us for the support.

It was a cold, dark night as well.

For me, that is what our football club is about. Our Chairman is so passionate about this club.

He went up there and he just appreciated that on a Tuesday night or whatever it was, we'd all made that trip up there.

It was a real nail-biter, and yet he was there. He didn't go into the Directors' Box. He stayed and said, "Thank you," to the fans.

Tom Brook: The thing that comes to my mind is that there were all the security staff hanging around and we'd taken over this corner of the pitch.

We wouldn't let them go, and they didn't want to go.

Then, the security staff were starting to get a bit anxious, fractious and what have you.

Eventually, obviously, we had to go, but it was just the most memorable day that I'll ever remember, I think.

Fiona Currie: I'd just had my shoulder operation as well.

Do you remember?

Tom Brook: That's right.

Fiona Currie: I was all strapped up in a sling and everything.

It was just one of those games where you didn't dare not go, because if we'd have won it and we hadn't been there because of my shoulder op...

I'd only had it about four days before, my operation, but I said to Tom, "I can't not go. I don't want to have followed this club all these years and not be there the time that it happens."

I thank God we went because, even though it was sore, it was so worth it.

It was so, so worth it.

It was just the most amazing...

That's, probably, for me, one of the best ever memories - Kidderminster away, the year we won the title.

Interviewer: You've had your fair share of triumphs over the last 20 years, but there have been some disappointments along the way too?

Fiona Currie: Yes, there have been.

Having won the league and not being allowed up was a gutter.

Interviewer: Yes, what do you remember of that?

Fiona Currie: It's really weird because you only get to hear what people want you to hear.

We won the league fair and square. We had a team then, which is the only team, probably, to rival the side we've got now. They're the two most successful teams in our history that I remember.

We won it and we won it well.

They said the ground wasn't suitable for the League and so we couldn't go up.

It had happened to a few other clubs - Macclesfield and Kidderminster - beforehand, so it wasn't totally unexpected.

Then, our Chairman at the time decided to go to court and to challenge the ruling.

In effect, even though we didn't go up, he did win the case in a way because the team was then given longer at the end of the season to have it ready.

The clubs, in the end, all benefited because we'd only come up the year before from the Isthmian Premier. It was our second season in the Conference that we won it.

To be fair, at that level of football, that's lots and lots of money to invest in something that might happen, because you had to do it before a certain date in that season.

It was unfair.

Anyway, they went to court. Even though they wouldn't allow us up, they changed the ruling, so then the clubs had more time to do it.

Torquay, ironically, survived because they were the one at the bottom of the league.

They survived.

Woking had come second that year, and they were our big rivals back then. I think they were a bit miffed as well because they couldn't go up.

I think, sometimes, they heard that maybe they'd let the second place up, but promotion is for winners in that respect.
(Laughter)

It's a strange one when they've got the play-offs. Obviously, I'm not going to argue with the play-offs because it makes the season exciting.

Interviewer: Did the supporters attach any blame to the Chairman at the time?

Fiona Currie: Did they attach blame?

As much as he wasn't overly popular, I don't recall because it was the same rules. We'd seen other clubs have it happen to them.

Macclesfield and Kidderminster all had to win it a second time to go up, but they all did it in within a couple of seasons.

I don't remember loads of grief.

Like I say, he wasn't very popular anyway with the fans, so he would have probably got the grief anyway.

Interviewer: There was no feeling that if he knew the rule, he should have got the ground ready?

Fiona Currie: Well, I think there was a lot written about it and that, but I'm not sure it was necessarily the fans.

Tom Brook: I think the conversation has got to come into play, hasn't it?

Fiona Currie: I think it may well have been the media and things like that. There were a lot of things going on and people were accused of trying to bribe people and all sorts. It was a most bizarre situation.

Interviewer: Was there any blame attached to Torquay?

Was there a sense of justice coming around when you beat them all those years later or did people not remember that?

Fiona Currie: Oh, no, the fans remember.

There's always been this talk of righting the wrongs that have gone on in the past, and the Torquay one was a big one.

We had never beaten Torquay in the times that we had played them, and that was just the greatest stage to do it - we'd go up and they'd stay where they were.

They got let out of jail.

A few teams used to have that privilege. We did have a campaign to get two up because it was so unfair that every other league had more than one team go up and, with the Conference, it was like chairmen as turkeys voting for Christmas and all of this malarkey.

No-one wanted to have this trap door widen in the League.

I think when they did the vote, Rushden and Diamonds were the only club, as a League club then, to vote to have two up.

When I think about how many of those teams that had struggled to get out of the Conference into the League, they just didn't look back. They didn't want the drop.

You can understand it, but it was only right that it came about, and so 'two up' happened eventually.

It just seems to be a very closed book in the League.

With a lot of these clubs that drop down, very rarely are they not in financial difficulties, and yet, we're a well-run club here that doesn't operate outside a manageable budget.

At the end of the year, we're debt-free. This is what our club is about, and there are so many teams are struggling.

They all came down to us, Billy Big Boys, giving it large and yet their clubs are minus points because they're in administration, have got no money, and haven't paid their bills.

All of these clubs had the chance to turn it around in the Conference.

Some of them have come back up and they're bigger and better, but, with a lot of them, the attitude to the non-leaguers...

Yes, it wasn't good.

Interviewer: You think Stevenage could have had their success without the input from the Chairman in terms of the finance?

Fiona Currie: Yes, it's a team effort, isn't it?

You've got your Chairman there to do a good job behind the scenes. You need the Manager there to do his job. You need the right players and the fan base.

I do believe the fan base has a big part to play, but you need to get all those right ingredients at the right time all together, and it's just an incredible achievement.

The Chairman gives the budget to his Manager, and the Manager does what he sees fit.

Yes, most of it is right. You get a few odd players that, maybe, are not the right ones, but, in general, he's kept a team together that has a lot of self-belief and is a very confident side. They're mentally strong.

That's where, I think, we win games.

Our footballing budget is nothing compared to the Sheffield Wednesdays, the Charltons and the Huddersfields. It's a fraction, yet we go and give them a game.

We beat Charlton. We beat Sheffield Wednesday.

We lost to Huddersfield because we missed a penalty.

We compete. Now, we haven't got the same ability as some of their big players, but we have drive, determination, passion, and they work hard as a team. They really do.

We have some skilful players, but we don't have a whole team of them like these clubs can afford.

It's just the team spirit, I think, that is what's doing it.

Interviewer: There have been some managers during your 20 years of supporting the Club?

Fiona Currie: Yes. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Good and bad?

Fiona Currie: Yes, that's fair to say.

Paul Fairclough: probably, for me, and people will argue this one, our best ever manager.

As much as our current manager has done a fantastic job, getting out of Non-League is no mean feat. It is horrendous.

I think Cloughie won something like four titles in quick succession to get us to the Conference and what have you, and that is harder because no-one is interested in putting money in a club that low down the Non-League.

As much as people say, "Graham Westley is this, this and this," he is a good manager. He has done superbly well.

I would never say differently, but the roots and foundations were paved before him from Paul Fairclough's success.

Then, we've moved up from there.

We won the title with Cloughie. Obviously, we couldn't go up. Then, we've floundered and we've had some less great managers, shall we say.

Interviewer: What about favourite players during your time supporting the Club?

You can both answer that one.

Fiona Currie: I've got some oldies.

I have John [Nirsher 0:33:16] on my back. He's one of my favourite players.

Tom Brook: Ronnie Henry sticks in my mind because he's the oldest one that I can recollect now from when I first came.

Fiona Currie: The most loyal, yes. He's been here a long time.

Tom Brook: Yes, he's been here a long time, and he hasn't missed out on many games.

All the other players are relatively new to the Club, in the last four or five years.

Yes, I think Ronnie Henry...

Fiona Currie: We wrote down a few names because I was talking to my daughter. She obviously remembers Boro way back.

She threw a few names into the air.

Tony Lynch. He had dreadlocks, and, as a child, my daughter remembers him putting them up in like a pineapple on his head. They used to sing this about him.

She remembered Tony Lynch. He was a really nippy winger.

Then, we've got Efe Sodje. I think he's got to be my all-time favourite player.

He won the league with us. He stayed a season later to see if we could do it again. Then, he was at the beginning of his career. You couldn't hold onto him.

He's gone.

Ironically, today, we are playing against him because he plays for Bury now.

Interviewer: Didn't he play here last season as well?

Fiona Currie: Last year, we played against them, yes.

He wears the bandanas, and, at home, we have one of his bandanas that he gave to us.

He is just a complete gentleman and a fabulous person that has come when he's not played in the past. He's come back to his roots.

That's the beauty of Non-League. You have people like Barry Hayles, who still come back. Paul Fairclough, the Manager, pops back, and things like that.

Interviewer: Do you remember Barry Hayles playing?

Fiona Currie: Oh, yes, the guy was amazing. That was the time when we had a striker where you knew, give him a chance, it was in the back of the net. It was as simple as that.

They're so hard to come by now. We've got some good players, but we need a prolific striker.

Interviewer: Of course, you sold the other one [Crosstalk 0:35:17].

Fiona Currie: Well, Steve Morison went off to Millwall.

Again, you can't hold these players back. He left when we were still in the Conference, the year before we won the title.

We all thought, "Oh, that's our chance gone."

To be fair, the goals went through the team, didn't they?

Tom Brook: Yes, it wasn't just one striker. It was coming from all angles of the pitch.

Fiona Currie: Midfielders, defenders, the whole lot.

It was incredible.

Tom Brook: Anybody could score, so who would they mark?

Who they did mark, somebody else would get it.

In a way, it's quite a good tactic to be able to do that because you can come from anywhere on the park.

Fiona Currie: Yes, there's a threat everywhere, isn't there?

Our last big, before Moro...

Well, he played with Moro.

It was George Boyd.

The guy is a football genius, especially at Non-League level. He was incredible. He's now playing at Peterborough.

He was just something else that you just didn't see very often in Non-League.

I think he was with us from about 16-years-old. The guy was an incredible footballer. He still is. It's just a pleasure to watch him.

I know when he left that a lot of us all went up to Peterborough to watch him, and he came over.

Again, it's this Non-League thing. He came over and he gave some of the fans memorabilia and bits. He gave one of the lads his football boots and shin pads, and was signing autographs and having photographs...

This is where you like the players, because they remember where they came from.

He still comes back.

'Smudger'. I've got to say Mark Smith.

Again, he was one of Boro's strongest defenders. He will claim that he had Alan Shearer in his pocket for the Newcastle game. He marked him well.

Interviewer: I've seen a picture of the two of the going chin to chin.

Fiona Currie: Oh, there were fireworks.

Interviewer: Was he an aggressive player most of the time?

Fiona Currie: No, not really. He did his job.

He was a strong player. He took no nonsense, and he certainly took no prisoners.

The other player that he would have played with back then was Robin Trott.

I remember Robin Trott saying, and maybe he won't appreciate this, "If I don't get the ball, the player is not going anyway either. They're not both getting past me. As a defender, you've got to go with it."

They were cracking for that level, with that the commitment and the camaraderie. Everything was good.

Tom Brook: At that level, they've got things to go for.

Fiona Currie: Well, that's right.

We're going back to days where a lot of these players had jobs as well as playing football.

We did eventually go full-time and we were still Non-League when we went full-time, so that was really quite ambitious, but I think, eventually, it's paid off.

Now, obviously, we have full-timers all the time.

Yes, it was good.

Interviewer: Apart from Ronnie Henry, what about the current crop of players?

Any favourites?

Tom Brook: Oh, we've got some blinding players.

Fiona Currie: Yes, we've got quite a special team, really.

Our captain is superb. He came from Northwich about three years ago, and hasn't looked back. The guy is incredible. He wears his heart on his sleeve and he leads from the back. He's a real leader.

If we're not winning or anything like that, you'll see him charging up the pitch to make sure...

Interviewer: This is Mark Roberts?

Fiona Currie: Mark Roberts.

He'll put that ball in the net, won't he?

He's a superb leader.

Tom Brook: They're all brilliant in their own way.

Everybody has a bad day at the office, but, overall, Scott Laird, Chris Day...

Interviewer: Most football teams always have one player who the crowd groan a bit at when the ball goes to them.

Is there no-one like that in the current team, then?

Fiona Currie: Not really.

Tom Brook: No.

Fiona Currie: I think that first 11, if fit, almost pretty much picks itself.

Doesn't it?

There's always the frustration of, "Where are the goals coming from?"

I think if ever there's a bone of contention, it's a case of, "Where are the goals coming from?"

The midfielders tend to pop in with a few and what have you.

At the moment, we can't score a penalty for love or money, but it's good times.

'Moose', John Mousinho, has just missed a couple of penalties, which have been quite crucial, but he's a Boro player. He wears our shirt and you support him. It's as simple as that.

The guy has been a revelation since he's signed for us.

He's probably the only player that has signed for us from a League club. The rest pretty much came up from the Conference with us. We've added a few, but, really, I think Moose is probably the only one in the squad.

Chris Day, the goalkeeper, came to us. He'd played in the League, obviously, with QPR and wherever else he'd played.

Moose came to us from...

Was it Wycombe?

Interviewer: Yes, it was Wycombe.

Fiona Currie: Other than that, I look at that team and think, "They played Conference football three years ago. How far they've come."

Tom Brook: That's right.

We've got to be careful that we don't forget this.

Fiona Currie: Well, that's right, and when the tough times come, they're still learning. We can't get on the players' case. I think if you have to support them, regardless.

Tom Brook: When you think about it, last season, we thought that some of our players weren't quite up to the mark in playing in League Two. Now, they've come up into League One and they seem to have played better.

Now, whether that's part of their training regime or they've now got to grips with it, I don't know, but they are...

Fiona Currie: Or maybe it's the way the leagues are played.

I think this league has suited Scott Laird so much more than League Two did.

Tom Brook: Oh, yes, definitely.

Fiona Currie: It's incredible, and I'm really proud of the team. They've all done fantastically well.

We're still in a position, because we're new to it all, where we can enjoy it. There's no pressure, and that's unusual because, up until going up, we were always under pressure. We were the big boys in the Conference, or one of the big boys, and expected to be there or thereabouts.

No-one mentioned us for either League Two or League One.

That's fine, because you can enjoy it. It's a different expectation.

For me, being fifth from bottom will be fine.

Yes, I think we'll be a little bit higher, but, as long as we don't get relegated, I'm fine with that.

Tom Brook: I say we could win it.

Fiona Currie: Stop it. (Laughter)

Interviewer: Who do the fans sing about?

Fiona Currie: All of them pretty much.

Tom Brook: All of them.

Interviewer: All of them?

Tom Brook: Yes, new players and old players. There's no...

Interviewer: Has there been a difference in the volume of support in the last two seasons?

With the chanting and the singing, have you noticed any differences there?

Fiona Currie: Not really.

Tom Brook: No, not really.

Fiona Currie: It's more enthusiastic, and more people join in because we're now in more successful times. Success rubs off and the fans feel it.

On the East Terrace where we all stand, obviously, we've got drums and we've got all the singers. Everyone claps and chants.

I think the difference is that more people who maybe wouldn't have done it before are now finding themselves clapping and singing.

That's a good thing.

Even the posh people in the seats here sometimes clap.
(Laughter)

We do rib a few of them.

Some of our friends who we drink with in the pub, before the game, come and sit down. They sit there with their blankets over them and act all old. We do rib them on that.

We've even witnessed them clapping occasionally, so the atmosphere is building.

It's 'habits', isn't it?

Interviewer: Where do the new songs come from?

Fiona Currie: Ah, now that would be the Barmy Army, as they call themselves.

A lot of them obviously hear them from different grounds and whatever. If you can fit it to your team or your player, then you'll do that.

They do the 'Dale Cavese', don't they, and all that?

Tom Brook: They're quite musical anyway, some of them who do...

Fiona Currie: Yes, we've got a couple that are in bands or whatever, or have been in bands, and they write some fun lyrics and what have you.

Tom Brook: Some aren't as... (Laughter)

Fiona Currie: What I love about this club is that the fans will laugh at themselves.

We know what we're up against with all the League and everything else, and the League mentality.

Our favourite chant at the minute tends to be, "We used to be Non-League," when we're beating an established League side.

They want to throw "Non-League" at us if it's a bad thing.

We're proud of where we come from, and if we say it, what can they say?

There's some good humour that goes on.

"Everyone hates us. We don't care."

Tom Brook: As I see it, it doesn't matter who we're playing against or whatever club, we're all here, hopefully, for the love of football and the love of the game.

It doesn't matter who we're playing, whether it's the Manchester Uniteds, Arsenal, West Hams or all those clubs.

We're there for the game, because we love it.

Interviewer: Stevenage don't have a hooligan element, then?

Fiona Currie: No, we're very proud of that as well.

Tom Brook: I'm the only hooligan. (Laughter)

Fiona Currie: The weird thing in the League is that we have police officers that have to travel to away games so they know who we are.

This is something that, for us in Non-League, didn't happen.

He's terrific. He really is. He's a lovely guy.

We've got some youngsters that just need reminding that they are having to behave themselves.

They're not bad kids, but everyone has a learning curve in what environment you're in, what's acceptable and what's not.

They listen to us oldies.

Tom Brook: 'Self-policing', I think they call it.

Fiona Currie: It is self-policing, and it works.

I'm really proud of our youngsters, because, like I say, they're the future of our club.

As soon as they're 17 and can drive, you see them driving up and down the country to the games. Sometimes, they're on the trains with us.

Fabulous, and no trouble. None whatsoever.

I think some guy smacked Scott Laird at the end of a game last year, and he got a banning order, but I do believe he's the only one and he wasn't even a regular here.

Interviewer: That was the Newcastle game?

Fiona Currie: That was the Newcastle game.

You see, that's the trouble when you draw a big team. You get all sorts of elements coming in.

No, I'm very proud of the fact that we can go away or people can come here and they will not get bad treatment or our lot won't misbehave. I'm very proud of that.

Interviewer: There's been quite a lot of talk in the press this week about racism in football, particularly with the comments between John Terry and Anton Ferdinand.

Is that anything that you hear from the Stevenage fans?

Fiona Currie: Not here.

Being mixed-race, myself, I have experienced it when we went to an away game at Oxford, and that really shook me up because you don't experience it very often.

I don't get it here.

I wrote to the Club here saying how upset I was about it, and I wrote to the FA about it as well because there's no room in football for that kind of behaviour. There's no need.

One thing I've always found is that when you go up and down the country, there doesn't seem to be a lot of ethnic groups that go to football.

You do wonder why.

I don't think it's rife like it used to be, but it is there, without a doubt. It is there, and it's unacceptable, whatever.

I don't care whether it's someone because they're Irish or because they're black. It's unacceptable.

They're a footballer or they're a fan, but it's not anything to do with colour, religion or race. It is just unacceptable and it can't happen.

The FA have to do something.

Tom Brook: I think we've got to be a little bit more stringent.

Fiona Currie: What frustrates me is that there are signs around the ground about swearing, racism and what have you, and I do think it's something that each club, individually, need to portray to their stewards and what have you.

"If you see it or hear it, please remove it."

It's as simple as, but a directive needs to come from the FA.

Tom Brook: There's got to be no tolerance.

Fiona Currie: Zero tolerance.

That has to come from the FA, I think, and then spread through the clubs.

Tom Brook: Whether it's the FA or whether it's the club...

I think the club have got to be the first to initiate it to put it in place.

Fiona Currie: We don't get a lot of trouble. We don't really get much.

The language, sometimes, make my hair curl a little bit, but I don't hear racism here, and I think that would be outed straightaway.

Interviewer: What about homophobic chants?

Are there any here?

Fiona Currie: No, not really.

Tom Brook: I think you get little elements, but it's on more of the banter level rather than on a personal level.

Fiona Currie: The only one I can think of is if a footballer is a bit of a hair guru and likes his long hair. He gets called a "Gypo".

That's as bad as I really hear it, I suppose.

I would hate to be surrounded by people who are ignorant like that.

Fortunately, sometimes, this is where it's an advantage to being a small club. You see, if you do get it, you can root it out.

When you've got thousands upon thousands of fans, it's so much more difficult.

Yes, it's not always great, big. Being small, compact and 'community', I think, keeps it nice and it encourages families.

Interviewer: Have you been welcomed as a relatively new supporter?

Are new supporters welcomed with open arms?

Tom Brook: Oh, God, yes.

Interviewer: Even if they were Chelsea fans beforehand?

Tom Brook: It doesn't matter. They're there for the love of the game, as I am.

I was welcomed, basically, with open arms.

I've made so many new friends, and it's fantastic. That's what I liked about it and that's what drew me back - because of the welcome that I got.

Interviewer: Finally, from you, what advertisement could you give to other people in the town to say, "Come along and watch our team"?

Fiona Currie: I just think the Club has achieved so much in its short history.

Right now, this is a really good time to come and see what it's all about.

It's very friendly. It's totally safe. There are no issues that people might associate with going to football.

We have so many kids here. Everyone is friendly and caring.

The football is good. The atmosphere is fantastic.

A couple of games here and you'll be hooked.

I can't think of anything better to do on a Saturday. I genuinely can't.

Tom Brook: Shopping?

Fiona Currie: No.

Christmas is coming and that's going to have to be done in the week. Saturday is football.

Yes, Saturday is Stevenage.

END AUDIO

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