

Interviewee: Clare Peleschka
Born: West Middlesex, Brentford
Father's occupation: Lawyer/solicitor
Mother's occupation: Legal secretary
Date of interview: 28th February 2020
Location of interview: Griffin Park
Interviewer: Eshan Puri
Summary: Ioana Constantinescu

Clare Peleschka is the landlady of the Griffin Pub and is a lifelong and enthusiastic Brentford supporter.

Clare first went to a Brentford game with her dad when she was 2 or 3 years old. As a teenager Clare found that she could attend matches for free after half time and within 2 years was a full season ticket holder. Her family were all Premiership supporters. Clare introduced her children to Brentford and also her friends, going to youth team games. She recalls going to Portugal with her dad and the team in 1988.

She's always been a supporter because it's a community club where everyone knows one another, or at least, of each other, from managers to supporters.

Her match day routine has changed since she's had the pub. Clare relates how she moved from the Braemar stand to New Road as she's a smoker and the small changes over the years such as attendance going up and the chants that are not now allowed. Clare prefers sitting now she's older but understands why younger people would want to stand.

She stood out as a girl and still has people remembering her from the 80s. Clare has met most of the players, has their autographs and in the pub, a signed shirt, but explains there's no hero worship; the players are "celebrities but not celebrities". You "see them in Tesco's".

On food, Clare says chips stopped being served because when the fat fries were turned on they often "blew" the floodlights.

Her favourite chant was "Marcus Gayle".

Clare believes that Watford are Brentford's main rival. "Everyone knew about QPR". Clare describes a couple of away game experiences at Chester and Bristol and being late to a Liverpool game when everyone's inflatable bees popped not long after they arrived.

On the Portugal trip Clare recalls that the Brentford and Brighton teams shared a hotel. Brighton's manager got upset at the amount the Brentford team drank and said so. He was told by the Brentford manager to F off! Brentford had all the wrong kit and the Brentford goal keeper had to borrow a supporter's cap so that he could see in the sun.

When Clare and her husband first took over the pub it was when Matthew Benham was around and they sponsored the kit and ticket office staff had their lunches at the pub.

Clare talks briefly about the failed QPR takeover and how she stopped going to games during the Ron Noades era as she didn't like the atmosphere; "not a nice period". She was involved with BIAS for a short time and helped by putting money in buckets. Clare found the Griffin Park Grapevine depressing.

On aggressive behaviour, she's never seen any from Brentford fans but recalls a couple of minor incidents at away games against Bristol City and Millwall, when Brentford supporters ran away. Clare found incidents like these funny.

She's not really seen racism or homophobia which she believes sometimes happens but is "not meant".

The changes Clare has noticed over the years are more youngsters and females attending.

She goes on to talk about the issue of all seating which she believes should be well organised.

Clare loves Griffin Park and doesn't want to move to the new ground. She doesn't think it will affect the pub. She hopes that the new ground won't change the community aspect of the club but understands that it has to run as a business.

Her proudest moment was when Brentford went up in 1992 and the team travelled from the ground to the civic centre in an open topped bus.

Her worst moments were at Wembley when Brentford always seemed to lose and the Ron Noades years when she stopped going to matches.

For her, Brentford is "brilliant" and you "meet so many people". She has "an interest, connections, friends" that wouldn't have happened if it weren't for Brentford.

On match days in the pub, despite having some excellent staff, the hardest part for her is finding enough staff, because they "pride ourselves on quality and speed" and "the atmosphere is great especially after when we get the Brentford supporters in, especially if Brentford has won" "great atmosphere".

Clare describes the match day pub routine and a bizarre incident when one of the supporters decided to throw toilet rolls down the stairs. She says they have police support and describes their strategy for dealing with "silly behaviours".

At one time the pub used to be the changing room for the players and the pub has always worked with the club.

Clare talks about the introduction of women's football and female commentators.

Finally, she relates a story about her one year old son escaping naked onto the pitch and being brought back home by security.