



LUGGY

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF PAUL STURROCK

PAUL STURROCK WITH BILL RICHARDS

FOREWORD BY WALTER SMITH OBE

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Introduction

I AM writing this book as a true account of my life – to date – in the game that I love, the characters I have met along the way who have inspired, influenced and shaped my career in football and also to put the record straight on a few issues.

I include the highs and lows of a career in football that spans over 40 years since, some great successes as a player with Dundee United and Scotland, and later as a promotion-winning manager both north and south of the border.

Inevitably, a few of my observations on events over the years will no doubt upset a few readers, but, hopefully, what follows will enlighten and entertain the most important players in the game – the fans.

I was minded to put pen to paper before now but was prompted by the number of people, whether supporters at one of my former clubs or just casual

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inquiries asking ‘what are you up to now, Luggy, isn’t it time you either got back into management or write your life story’.

Well, as the phrase goes ‘be careful what you wish for’ as I won’t be leaving anything out – it’s been quite a journey for a wee Scot who didn’t know whether he would be able to make a living from the game, but always knew he wanted to try.

I am also in a good place right now, both personally and geographically, and that is thanks to the loving relationship I have with my partner of several years, Andrea.

We live together in a small village in south-east Cornwall, Menheniot, where Andrea and myself are leading the good life, fruit and vegetable growing and keeping horses in our stables.

It is our rock-solid relationship and the terrific community life in the village which keeps me anchored in the West Country and I cannot imagine living anywhere else.

This is the real deal.

But it’s time to turn from the present and leaf through my back pages, so here goes.



Luggy

FOOTBALL has been my life pretty much since I was old enough to walk and beneath the now stockier and older version I'm still the same skinny kid who practised on his own for hours kicking the ball with both feet against a wall.

I still strive to improve as a manager and coach just as I was encouraged to do as a young player at Tannadice and that burning ambition to bring success to the great clubs I have been fortunate to have managed has not been extinguished.

I have enjoyed fantastic moments both as a striker for my beloved Arabs and, of course, had the honour of representing Scotland in two World Cups.

It may sound a cliché to say that I haven't lost my enthusiasm despite personal setbacks and

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health problems but it is the literal truth. I still remember vividly the moment when I was informed by a specialist that I was suffering from Parkinson's disease just as I was about to take over at a Premier League club.

Being told I had Parkinson's was a devastating blow not just for my health but for my future. It's like the little boy in the sweetie shop having had a taste of something nice, only to have the door slammed shut on you.

I know for a fact that my illness has cost me the chance to manage at a few football clubs whenever a vacancy has arisen.

Strange that, when you consider I'd already won promotions with St Johnstone, Plymouth Argyle, Sheffield Wednesday, Swindon Town and steered Southend United to a Wembley final, as well as a spell as boss of Premier League side, Southampton.

But I'd overcome disappointments, before, like when I was overlooked for the Dundee United manager's job when it was clear to everyone but the board that I was the best man for the post.

But there's nothing I can do about that now except wonder what difference I might have made in the hot seat when Dundee United were flying.

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I was very upset, too, at being left on the substitutes' bench for the 1982 World Cup finals, although proud and elated to play for my country in the 1986 World Cup.

But you bounce back or give up, don't you? Well, I'm no quitter and my love for the game and self-belief saw me through.

But I have nothing but great affection and respect for Jim McLean whom I rate up there with the fantastic Sir Alex Ferguson as a tactical genius.

However, it still rankles as at that time the Arabs were a brilliant side, winning trophies in Scotland and feared around Europe and I had contributed in no small measure, firstly as a striker and then a youth and first-team coach at Tannadice.

I did get to manage Dundee United but only after I had taken over the reins at St Johnstone, with whom I won my first promotion and helped keep the side in the top flight of the Scottish league system.

As much as I loved Dundee United, I am forever grateful for being given the chance to manage St Johnstone as my own man under an enlightened and supportive chairman, Geoff Brown.

It was a great learning curve and allowed me to stamp my own authority, managing in my own right.

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Another painful memory comes from when I went back to my other great love – Argyle – for a second stint as manager and could not arrest their decline, for reasons outside of my control as I shall go on to explain.

That still leaves a sour taste in my mouth and I don't think the Green Army have been told the full story on that sorry chapter in the club's history.

As I stated earlier, my main reason for writing my life story is to set straight a few misconceptions and thank the supporters at all the clubs I have been lucky enough to either play for or manage for their good wishes.

I have enjoyed a terrific relationship with the supporters whose devotion to their respective clubs through thick and thin never fails to astonish and move me and helps to balance the scales against those in the game for whom I have no time for at all.

They know who they are and so will you by the time you've finished this book.