

MOORES



THE FIGHTER'S FIGHTER
MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

JAMIE MOORE
WITH
PAUL ZANON

FOREWORD BY
RICKY HATTON

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Contents

Acknowledgements	9
Introduction.	11
Foreword	13
Made in Salford	17
A Second Home	28
Fistic First	39
Bad Habits	48
Vans, Dogs and Helicopters	56
Meat and Two Veg	65
Bully Boy	70
Career Change.	75
Pro Decision.	81
The White Nigel Benn.	91
Knocking On Damien's Door	99
Warning Bell.	110
Rule Britannia	116
Wedding Belle	131
Me and Mr Jones	147
Me and Macklin	167
'4 U Nan'	176
Champions League	186
Career Change.	199
Chosen One	212
Peaky Blinding.	215
Train Ticket	218
Old Acquaintance	226
3.36am	233
Family Adjustment.	249
'Harder We Fall'	256
Frayed Nerves	263
Chicken Nugget.	269
Precious Time	275
Boxing Career	283

Introduction

STONEHENGE, the Colosseum and the Taj Mahal – all ‘Wonders of the World’. How Jamie used to make 154lb as a professional fighter should also be added to that list. Walking around at about 185lb now, although partial to the odd biscuit and a giant latte, he hardly carries an ounce of fat. The sport which positively consumed him from the age of 13 rarely allows him to drift far from a boxing gym to this present day. Call it a discipline, call it a way of life, or as Jamie would say in his strongest Salford accent, ‘Call it what you like mate!’ Bottom line – he’s still lacing up gloves. Just not always for himself.

A devout family man, with an incredible wife and two beautiful children, Jamie seems unconsciously to spend every heartbeat in the pursuit of happiness. Rarely his – mainly everyone around him. You may well be under the illusion that this outlook in life is as a result of being shot at five times – it’s not. That’s just the mettle of the man he’s always been. His children are also cut from the same cloth and that hasn’t happened by accident. Jamie is a strong believer that we are all products of our environment. He’s obviously created a near on-perfect one under his roof.

And within boxing? You’ll have the pleasure of reliving his finest moments as a boxer and trainer in this book. With an infectiously positive character and a smile for everyone he crosses paths with, it’s no real surprise that he’s known to many in and around the square ring as Mooresy – The Fighter’s Fighter.

Paul Zanon – April 2016

Foreword

Ring announcer – 16 January 1995:

*‘In the red corner we have R. Hatton
from Sale West ABC.*

*‘In the blue corner we have J. Moore
from Hulton ABC.*

‘Seconds out – round one.’

THE first time I met Jamie Moore was in the ring. We were only 15 years old and boxing in the first round of the Schoolboy Championships.

For the first minute he was jabbing and moving well, so I decided to throw a big left hook to the head, which missed him by a mile. He ducked under it and moved to the centre of the ring. I thought to myself, ‘Wow! I’ve got me hands full here.’ Then I managed to get him on the ropes and hit him with a left hook, which forced him to take a count.

When he got up, I put in a barrage of punches until his corner threw the towel in.

The second we both stepped out of the ring, I went over to Jamie and said, ‘Don’t be too embarrassed about that. I’ve had over 30 fights and won four national titles. I’d never thought you’d fight me after eight fights – but you did. What you did early on in that round tells me you are going to go far in boxing.’ And I wasn’t wrong.

MOORESLEY – THE FIGHTER’S FIGHTER

Jamie’s fighting spirit is unbelievable. He could have quit after I’d beaten him but he didn’t. He could have quit after the Scott Dixon fight but he didn’t. He’d have had every reason to cancel his third fight against Michael Jones, a rematch for the British title, as his grandmother had only just passed away two days earlier but he didn’t. The last fight was a very close call though.

I remember going into his changing room about an hour before, knowing he was having second thoughts about fighting and in my most diplomatic way I said, ‘Are you chucking in the towel tonight? You don’t look like you’ve come here to win. Stop feeling fucking sorry for yourself. Pull your socks up and let’s get this done. She’s up there watching you now. She won’t want you to spew it. Get it done for her.’

My words of encouragement must have helped. It turned out to be a fantastic fight. Jamie is a very passionate guy who would often leave everything in the ring and would get off the floor to win fights, and the fans off their seats. He certainly did that night.

He got knocked down twice by Jones in the third round and you could see he was hurt. It looked like the fight was over. Instead, he got on his feet, fought back and that round turned out to be one of his best ever and one of the best I’ve ever seen.

The only time I’ve hated watching any of Jamie’s fights was against Matthew Macklin. I used to train with Macklin at Billy Graham’s gym at the time, but I also used to go in the corner for Billy’s fighters. With Macklin due to face Jamie, the last thing I wanted was to be in the opposite corner to Jamie.

I was sat on the couch at home talking to my brother Mathew not knowing which way to turn. Luckily I got a phone call from Adam Smith from Sky Sports. ‘Hiya Ricky. With Jamie and Matthew fighting, it’s like a Manchester derby. I know Matt’s from Birmingham, but he trains in Manchester, at the same gym as you. We’d love to have you in the studio doing commentary.’ I breathed the biggest sigh of relief. Even to this day, I don’t know what that decision would have been.

FOREWORD

The fight itself was an uncomfortable experience for me. Macklin set off at a hundred miles an hour, whereas Jamie boxed a very clever fight in the early rounds, weathering the storm when he needed to, keeping a nice tight guard. He probably thought that there was no way Macklin could keep it up, but he did and it turned into a brutal fight.

To tell the truth, I was choked up from about the sixth round as they were both taking so much punishment. Adam Smith was looking to get a few words from me, but he could see I was in an emotional state and carried on without me.

It was hard enough watching it in the commentary box, two mates knocking seven bells off of each other, but when Macklin went down in the tenth, it was a horrible sight, one of the most devastating knockdowns you'll ever see. He collapsed flat on his face and as the paramedics came into the ring with oxygen and a stretcher, we all started to fear the worst. Thankfully he regained consciousness.

Jamie became best mates with Macklin straight after that fight and is now training him. That in itself is a beautiful story. It sums up what a wonderful game boxing is and also how it brings us all together like a family.

* * * * *

When Kerry Kayes phoned me up on 3 August 2014 and told me that Jamie had been shot in Marbella, the first thing I said was, 'Who'd want to shoot Jamie Moore?' As I write this foreword I'm filling up with tears thinking about it.

It wasn't until I went on holiday to Tenerife with Jamie and his family a few months later that he told me the full story for the first time. He explained how he'd been shot, had blood gushing out of him and he was going in and out of consciousness. 'All I could think about was that I was never going to see my kids again,' he told me. Jamie started getting a bit emotional and being

MOORESLEY – THE FIGHTER’S FIGHTER

a father myself, despite trying to hide behind my sunglasses, I had tears rolling down my cheeks. The main thing is that he pulled through and this is not some kind of tribute message.

I’d like to sum up Jamie as one of the most down-to-earth guys you could possibly meet. A man who never feared or shied away from anyone in the ring, a good family man and someone who has always been close to his Manchester roots, particularly Salford.

Anyone who can count Jamie Moore as a friend is very fortunate. He’s one of my closest friends and I’m honoured to have been asked to do this foreword.

Ricky ‘The Hitman’ Hatton MBE
Two-weight world champion

1

Made in Salford

*'I love my accent. I thought it was useful in
Gone in 60 Seconds because the standard
villain is upper-class or Cockney.'*

Christopher Ecclestone, actor and proud Salfordian

I WAS born at 12.06am on 4 November 1978 at the Hope Hospital, Salford. I was bang on the weight, leaving the scales at 7lb 11oz. According to my mum, she'd had a great pregnancy and the birth went very smoothly. The dramas were actually outside of the delivery room.

Seven hours earlier, my mum was sat at the bottom of the stairs of her flat, huffing and puffing while having contractions. My dad came home as soon as he could in order to get her to the hospital, but having worked on a construction site for 12 hours, he was caked in black dust.

As he ran through the door, he undressed and ran up to the bath tub so quickly he almost tripped over his trousers. 'Hurry up!' my mum kept screaming with every contraction. Fair play to my dad, as they managed to arrive at the hospital at 6pm, less than an hour after he'd flown through the door.

MOORESLEY – THE FIGHTER’S FIGHTER

Once my mum started going into labour, my nana Maureen (Mo) from my dad’s side of the family was called, letting her know she’d be a grandmother very soon. Unlike my two other grandparents who’d already arrived, Mo was agoraphobic and replied in a panic, ‘I don’t think I’ll be able to come to the hospital. I’ll do my best.’

Not long after I’d been born, nana Mo arrived. Whenever she did venture anywhere outside, she’d need a drink to calm her nerves, so what she did next didn’t come as a massive surprise. As she walked over to see my mum with me in her arms, she opened her jacket to reveal a bottle of cider and said, ‘That’s got me here to see my first grandson!’

Fourteen months later with the arrival of my sister Michelle, the Mooresley family at C6 Langdale House, Oldfield Road, Salford, was complete.

* * * * *

One thing that has always remained incredibly sharp all through my life, is my memory...that’s long-term. Short-term is shocking! Ask most people what they can recall aged two or three and they will likely shake their head and shrug their shoulders. I remember pretty much everything.

I grew up in a council flat on the Ordsall estate. The front landing overlooked the railway going into Manchester and you could also see Manchester United’s stadium, Old Trafford, in the distance. No surprise that everyone in the area was a Red and I was no exception.

We stayed in that flat until I was nearly three and then moved to Central Avenue, Walkden, in 1981, which was part of the Salford overspill council estate, alongside the likes of Little Hulton. The estate was built after the Second World War to help solve a major housing shortage caused by bomb damage and too many slums. Although it served a purpose, not a great deal of

MADE IN SALFORD

thought or structure went into the overspill and years later that became pretty clear.

It didn't take me long to settle into Walkden, especially as there was a massive park just behind our house, called St Mary's, which was where all the kids went to hang out. Whether it be after school, at weekends or during the school holidays, that's where you'd be.

You didn't even need to arrange a time to meet your mates, because that's where everyone was waiting to play football, ride a bike, climb a tree or just mess around. There was a tight little gang of about ten of us and if someone didn't turn up, you knew that they were either ill or in trouble. Although we didn't own the deeds to the park, it was as good as ours.

Despite moving away from Ordsall at a young age, I spent a lot of time going back there in my younger years, as my auntie Trisha (my mum's sister) moved into my parents' old flat straight after we left. Every Saturday, my dad would be racing pigeons, so me, my mum and sister would jump on the bus to visit her and nana Mo, who lived round the corner.

There wasn't a lot to do really. We would spend a bit of time with them, but then we'd go off and play with our cousins and the other kids from the estate. Messing around as kids do, we'd climb on to the roof of the local school, run up and down the landings of the estate and knock on people's doors before doing a runner. We also used to mess around in 'Hamburger Park', which had a play area. That wasn't its real name, but it had four spaceships with ladders connected to each one, which we thought looked like hamburgers, hence the name.

After having some grub and pop, we'd say bye to my nana and auntie and we'd get the last bus back to Walkden. That was my routine for the next few years. The block of flats has since been demolished and you'll find a Sainsbury's there now. I wonder if you could still get that view of Old Trafford from the supermarket's roof?

Back in the 1980s Salford was on the map, but mainly for all the wrong reasons. When I mentioned earlier that we were part of the Salford overspill, I’m not just referring to the area, but also the people. Often referred to as ‘Salford overspill scum’, we were like outcasts of society who had been placed in a part of Manchester and left to get on with our lives.

Ordsall in particular had certainly earned its reputation. When we used to stay over at nana Mo’s, you’d be lying in bed and would hear car tyres screeching. We’d instantly jump up and run over to the nearest window at the front of the house to see what was happening.

On one occasion, these teenagers had stolen a Ford Sierra Cosworth which had a big whale tail spoiler at the back, and were doing donuts with it. They’d show off in front of the shopping precinct on purpose, just to get the attention of the police. With technology not being what it is now, it was much harder for the police to catch a stolen car, so it was down to a good old-fashioned street chase, which was exactly what the thieves wanted. It seemed that it wasn’t until the early 1990s that helicopters were brought in for car chases and thefts.

A little personal experience down the line would in fact confirm that was the case.

Two songs by The Smiths, ‘There Is A Light That Never Goes Out’ and ‘Stop Me If You Think You’ve Heard This One Before’, featured Salford Lads Club, Ordsall. The videos had backdrops of half-empty industrial estates, derelict houses, barbed wire, graffiti, fly tipping and boarded-up houses with grey sheets of metal.

While it wasn’t quite that bad in Walkden, it wasn’t a million miles away either. When you looked around the parks and streets you’d see loads of supermarket trolleys, but never for a moment thought that the nearest supermarket was two miles away. You’d see parents carting their kids home from school in them, or people filling them up with scrap metal to take down the local yard, to get a price for the lot – including the trolley!

MADE IN SALFORD

Despite all the bad press Salford has received over the years, it wasn't a 'dump' as everyone made out. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't a millionaire's paradise, but neither did it deserve all the negative media it received during the 80s and 90s.

Opened in 1894 by Queen Victoria and built by the Manchester Ship Canal Company, the Manchester docks were split into two – Salford and Pomona – with Salford being the bigger. Covering hundreds of acres of water and land, the docks provided good honest work to thousands of Manchester folk over the best part of 90 years.

The sight of smoke chugging away from the boats and the sound of cargo being unloaded, would often be the tales we kids would listen to from our grandparents. Barges would travel in and out of Manchester's canals, which would link to the whole UK network and beyond – a very similar setting to the BBC drama series *Peaky Blinders*. More about that later.

The Salford my dad grew up in during the 1960s was a buzzing place. He spent most of his childhood down the docks, playing around the grain elevators and catching pigeons around train bridges. As he used to say, 'Wag school, go down the docks, catch pigeons.' While my dad's family has been based in and around Manchester for several generations, my mum's route to Salford had a bit of a journey behind it and some heritage that I would become very proud of. Of Irish stock, her mum and dad came from Kilkenny and Mullingar. Despite both of them emigrating from Ireland to England in 1958 in search of work, they actually met in Manchester.

My mum's dad had just come out of the Irish army, where he served as a cook and was looking for any available work, whereas my mum's mum had a sister who was already in Manchester working on the buses. Living in the same area, they soon started to cross paths.

Soon after hooking up, my grandparents made Sale their base and within a short space of time they moved to Keppel Road in

Chorlton, which is where the Bee Gees were living at the time. I only found that out when getting this book together!

Aged three, my mum moved to Salford, on a road just by the dock gates, where the lorries would park up before either dropping off or collecting goods. As a kid, my mum and her mates loved climbing all over the lorries, making it their onsite playground, although I’m not sure the drivers would have seen the funny side of it.

My mum used to tell me about how painters would line up the docks with their easels, sketching the steam boats coming in and how everyone seemed to be in a hurry, whether it was to work or back home. Everyone was busy and had a few quid in their pocket. But that changed pretty quickly when the docks closed and some major factories stopped trading.

Similar to east London, the Manchester docks were dealt a rough hand with the introduction of massive shipping containers. The issue was simple enough: the size of the ships carrying the containers became too big to navigate down the canals. As a result, the docks were closed in 1982 and 3,000 people lost their jobs in and around Salford. The one-time buzz vanished and soon everyone was in a hurry to go nowhere.

The docks didn’t just close overnight, so you’d have thought there was a plan B in place. Not a bit of it. The closure left behind loads of derelict land and with very few jobs available, drug and alcohol abuse became common; crime rocketed as people had to make ends meet somehow.

The headlines in the local papers were dominated by firebombs, muggings, burglaries and shootings. Many of the original Salford houses which had been built in the mid-19th century were literally collapsing about 100 years later. The problem was they weren’t being rebuilt in the 1980s and instead, massive tower blocks suddenly took over the landscape and in no time they gained a strong reputation. On the plus side, my dad was able to land himself a job in demolition.

MADE IN SALFORD

As a kid born in 1978 and growing up at that time, I knew no better. I didn't really understand what working class, crime or unemployment meant. I was a little boy with fantastic parents, who taught me from a young age the difference between right and wrong. If I did come off the rails at any future point in time, it was never because of how they brought me up.

The good thing about having family values is that you get to see your family, especially when they are in Ireland. In 1985, aged six, I had my first major adventure as I travelled with my mum, sister and nana Mary to Kilkenny, for a family wedding. My dad drove us to the Liverpool docks to get the ferry and then we were picked up at the other end. It was my first time away from Salford, so you can imagine the excitement of the ferry trips, going to Ireland and meeting new family.

Within days of arriving, I'd manage to take a ride on the potato man's donkey cart round the village, had learnt how to shoot a bow and arrow, and play a drum. I didn't stop banging that thing for the whole holiday to the point that I must have irritated the hell out of everyone. I was six years old and living the dream.

Despite being able to holiday in Ireland, money was very tight in the Moore household. That said, my dad would always make sure that we didn't go without our Friday treat once he'd been paid. After working a really long day down the demolition site, he'd always go to the local newsagent's and come back with sweets. This would usually consist of a bottle of pop, something like Tizer or Dandelion & Burdock, then a quarter (pound) of sweets such as cola cubes, chocolate limes, chocolate peanuts or bonbons. We'd then pull the sofa right up to the fire and watch television, while stuffing ourselves on pop and sweets. Great times and happy memories.

* * * * *

By 1990, I was now approaching my teenage years and despite being very protective of my sister, we started having the standard

arguments that siblings have. She’d want to hang around with me and my mates, but I didn’t want her clinging on. Then if she did come out, I’d be over-protective and she’d tell me that she was old enough to stand on her own two feet. We’d fight like cat and dog, but at the same time love each other to bits. Although we did sometimes push each other to the limit.

One day I decided to play a prank on her while she was in the bathroom. I kept shouting for her to come out and she kept replying, ‘Go away.’ I kept pestering and in the end she came out. The second she opened the door, I jumped at her with Vicks vapour rub on my thumbs and rubbed it into her eyes.

She ran downstairs screaming and seconds later my mum flew up the stairs and gave me a right wallop. She said, ‘Why did you do that for?’ I replied laughing, ‘I thought it would be funny.’ My mum then said, ‘What, to make your sister go blind!’ She did have a point.

Not long after, Michelle had a friend staying over and I started acting up again. This time she picked up her mate’s shoe and smacked it over my head. A couple of minutes later, they were both laughing like mad as I came up the stairs crying, holding a frozen beef burger on my head.

It wasn’t just at home that I misbehaved. From my first day at senior school, me and my good mates Clint Grundy and Neil Marston (Mars) started to annoy the teachers. It wasn’t major stuff, just distracting the other kids, chatting amongst ourselves when we should have been quiet, that sort of thing. The problem was that we were doing it all the time.

There was however a line I didn’t want to cross. I might not have paid much attention to people in authority, but when a letter was sent to my house saying I was misbehaving, I made sure I listened when I got a rollocking off my mum. From that point onwards I was a model student. Well, let’s not go that far, but in my defence, there were so many distractions on my doorstep.

MADE IN SALFORD

Despite only being 12, it became obvious that if I didn't have something to take up my time and energy, I'd start looking for ways to do so. Football played a big part in the lives of most kids in Salford and without it, the number of people who might not have made it to their 20s, either alive or behind prison bars, would have been a lot higher. But when you're 12, you don't see it like that. You play because you want to be as good as the Manchester United players. Things like fitness, discipline and routines only become part of your life if you eventually decide to take it seriously.

It's not that I didn't take it seriously – in fact, I was so good I even picked up the name Jamie 'The Cat' Moore for my goalkeeping skills. I used to practise all the time in the park with the lads, until one day, my mate Gaz Lewis suggested I come down to Barr Hill Football Club in Salford, which his dad used to run. I went down for trials, everything went well and I ended up playing a couple of seasons, picking up some silverware and even going on a few tours to Blackpool and Wales.

My mates always used to say I was a much better goalkeeper than outfield player, but I think they're basing that on one little episode. We were playing Hulton High and winning 10-0, so the coach decided to give another kid the chance to go in goal and moved me to centre-half. 'Jamie, you come out, Lewis is going in goal.' 'Brilliant,' I thought. With us 10-0 up, I was sure I might even nick a goal myself.

I handed my gloves over to Lewis and everything was going well. However, two minutes later, the other team crossed the ball over into our penalty box, I leapt up in the air, caught the ball and shouted, 'Keeper's!' Couldn't be happier. Everyone looked at me, 'What are ya doing?' You could probably say I was a little embarrassed. It was 10-1.

* * * * *

The early 1990s brought some exciting opportunities for our family. My dad, like his dad, had worked in demolition most of his life. As I’d mentioned before, there were a lot of buildings coming down all over the place at the time, so work was usually available somewhere. The only thing was, it wasn’t steady work. Once he’d finished with one site, he kept his fingers crossed that there would be another job for him to jump into straight after. Week by week he was bringing in the money, but there was always the threat that work might dry up.

Then came a defining day for him. He’d gone out to work in the pouring rain waiting for his lift to pick him up. Unfortunately, it never did. Absolutely drenched and freezing, he came home deflated and said to my mum, ‘I can’t do this anymore.’

They went to the job centre that same day and there was a vacancy which said, ‘Sales person required.’ My mum pointed to it and said, ‘What about that?’ He replied, ‘No.’ She said, ‘Read it. They’re looking for a driver. It’s a delivery job – delivering beer for a distributor. Why don’t you ask about it and see what it involves?’

Still not totally convinced, he decided to go for the interview and got the job. It was one of the best decisions he’d made and would even end up helping me out later on. Now my dad had a steady job and my mum had part-time work at the cinema, they looked at their income and realised they had enough to be able to take out a loan and make payments to buy the council house we were living in. They bought the house for £11,500 in 1993, but in total borrowed £15,000, because it needed some work. It was a hell of a lot of money in those days.

To celebrate, my mum and dad took us out for a nice meal, which is something we’d never do. I can’t remember the restaurant exactly, but I remember thinking, ‘Wow, this is posh.’ It was probably just a pub lunch, but it felt like we’d just walked into the Savoy.

MADE IN SALFORD

Not only that, they did something incredible. They'd borrowed enough money so we could go for a holiday to see our friends Derek, Denise and their kids Rachel, Stuart and Adam who'd emigrated a few years earlier to Atlanta, Georgia. We'd gone to Manchester airport to see them off and my mum was heartbroken, as our families were really close. My mum had been saying for ages, 'We've got to go to the States to see Derek and Denise,' but money was always the deciding factor – we simply didn't have any. But now we did.

My overriding memory of the plane journey was being sat next to this big fat bloke with a thick moustache, whose gut was literally spilling over his chair into mine. He was smoking a massive cigar and I was coughing dead loud on purpose, as if to say, 'Will you put that bloody thing out.' But he didn't. That cigar went on for hours. The only time he stopped smoking was to feed his fat face. Thankfully the rest of the holiday more than made up for the journey.

By now I was 14 and life had suddenly become very exciting. However, that wasn't purely down to my parents buying the house and giving us a great holiday. A trip to Kenyon Way in Little Hulton a few months earlier was to have a dramatic influence on the rest of my life.