In conversation with Stuart Pearce

Stuart Pearce was one of those players that every football fan would want to have in their team. In his prime, Stuart was one of the best defenders in the world...and one of the toughest.

When he left school in NW London, Stuart trained as an electrician while playing for his local non-league side, Wealdstone. However it wasn't long before he was spotted and made the move into the professional game with Coventry City as a left back. That was in 1983.

Two years later he moved to Nottingham Forest, although it wasn't because they valued him....he was actually part of deal which saw another player move between the two clubs. But, under the guidance of Brian Clough, Stuart blossomed and went on to play over 400 games for the club. It was during his time at Forest that he won 76 England caps.

After twelve years at the City Ground, he moved north to Newcastle Utd, brought in by Kenny Dalglish to add some experience to the squad and to help with the newly formed reserve and youth teams. Ian Rush and John Barnes also arrived on Tyneside.

In 1999 he moved to West Ham and then in 2001 he was Kevin Keegan's first signing at Manchester City.

There then followed a move into management with Manchester City, the England U21s, the Great Britain Olympic team and, after a spell as caretaker England boss, he moved back to Nottingham Forest where he managed for two years.

In amongst all of that, Stuart is a huge punk rock music fan.

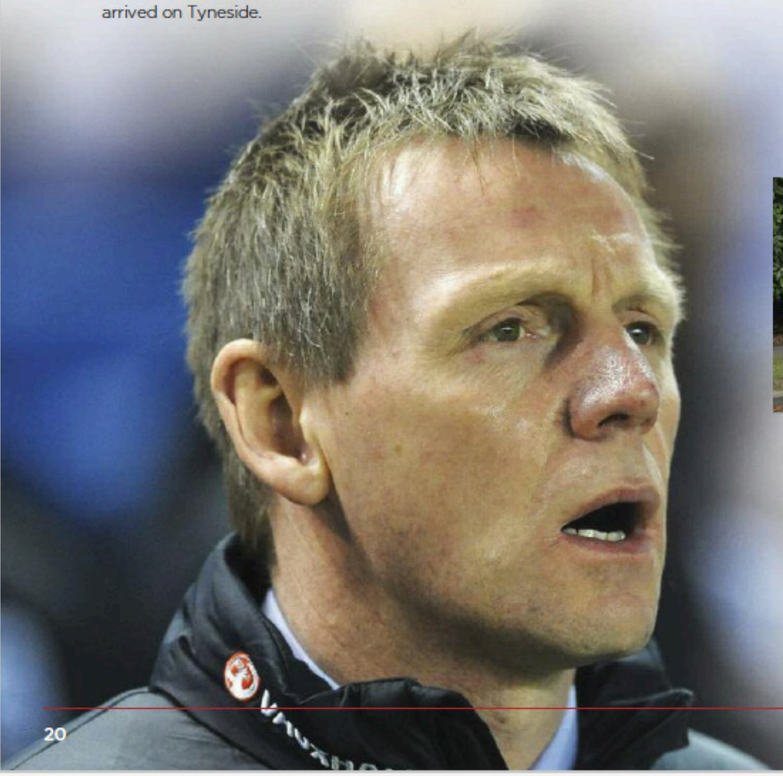
But what about his memories of being behind the wheel. We've been finding out what he'd love to drive and whether he's had any scrapes along the way.

What is the first car you can remember?

The first car that I remember was my mum's Morris Minor. She had a few of them over the years. The last one was written off by my brother who was found in the back seat of the overturned wreck unhurt and fast asleep.

What was the first car you owned?

The first car that I owned was a Morris 1100. It cost me £250. I bought it off a mate called Mick who held the record for the number of people you can squeeze into a car. He was dropping us off on Christmas Day. He got 13 of us into his Morris. There were 9 actually in the car and 4 in the boot. I travelled in the boot in case you're wondering!



Smart car or a mobile skip?

The car is a cross between cleanish on the inside with loads of CD's because my love of music, and dirty on the outside. I do a lot of miles and don't have too much time to wash it. That's my excuse and I'm sticking to it.

Any motoring embarrassments?

Plenty, but here are a couple.

When I was a young non-league player at 18 years old, after training we went to a local night club in Harrow called Tudor's. It was a winter night. We left at 2 am to find my mate's Mini covered in frost so, instead of being patient and defrosting it, we drove out the car park and then heard an almighty bang. As we got out we discovered that he'd had driven into a mound of roadworks and the car was on perched a pile of rubble with no wheels touching the floor. It was like a scene from the Italian Job film.

Another embarrassment was when my first car broke down. It was late one evening and I had been having trouble with the drive shaft so, when I heard a bang and a shudder, I thought it would be best not to drive any further. I just left the car on roadside. I didn't get round to returning to it for about six weeks, and that was only when a friend offered to tow it home. So, we returned to the car to find it had a flat tyre. We put the spare tyre on, jump-started the car which immediately burst into life. The car only had a puncture. It wasn't the driveshaft after all so I drove it home. In other words, I didn't have a car for six weeks because of a puncture which I thought was a terminal mechanical problem!

What's your favourite road trip?

Driving into Cornwall with the sun shining. Can't beat it.

Steady Eddy or a bit of a speedster?

SPEEDSTER!!! without a doubt apparently. I was with a mate and asked for his opinion. This is not my answer, but he's a regular passenger so I can't argue.

Worst accident you have been involved in?

When I was a Newcastle Utd player a dust cart lost control, rolled over and over and landed on the roof of my sponsored Rover car. Thankfully I saw it coming and ducked down across the passenger seat. There is a picture available on the internet!

What have been your favourite cars?

Without doubt my favourite car was a 3 litre S Ford Capri. I had it for six months and it was stolen. The police found it a month later but by then the only bits they recovered were the doors and tailgate in a breakers yard. I was devastated !!

Worst Car?

Datsun Sunny. Cost me £50 and lasted for six weeks! Pulled so badly to the left it snatched the wheel out of your hands when you braked.

And finally... your dream car?

Has to be either an E-Type Jaguar circa 1960s or a VW campervan, but it has to be the one with a split windscreen.