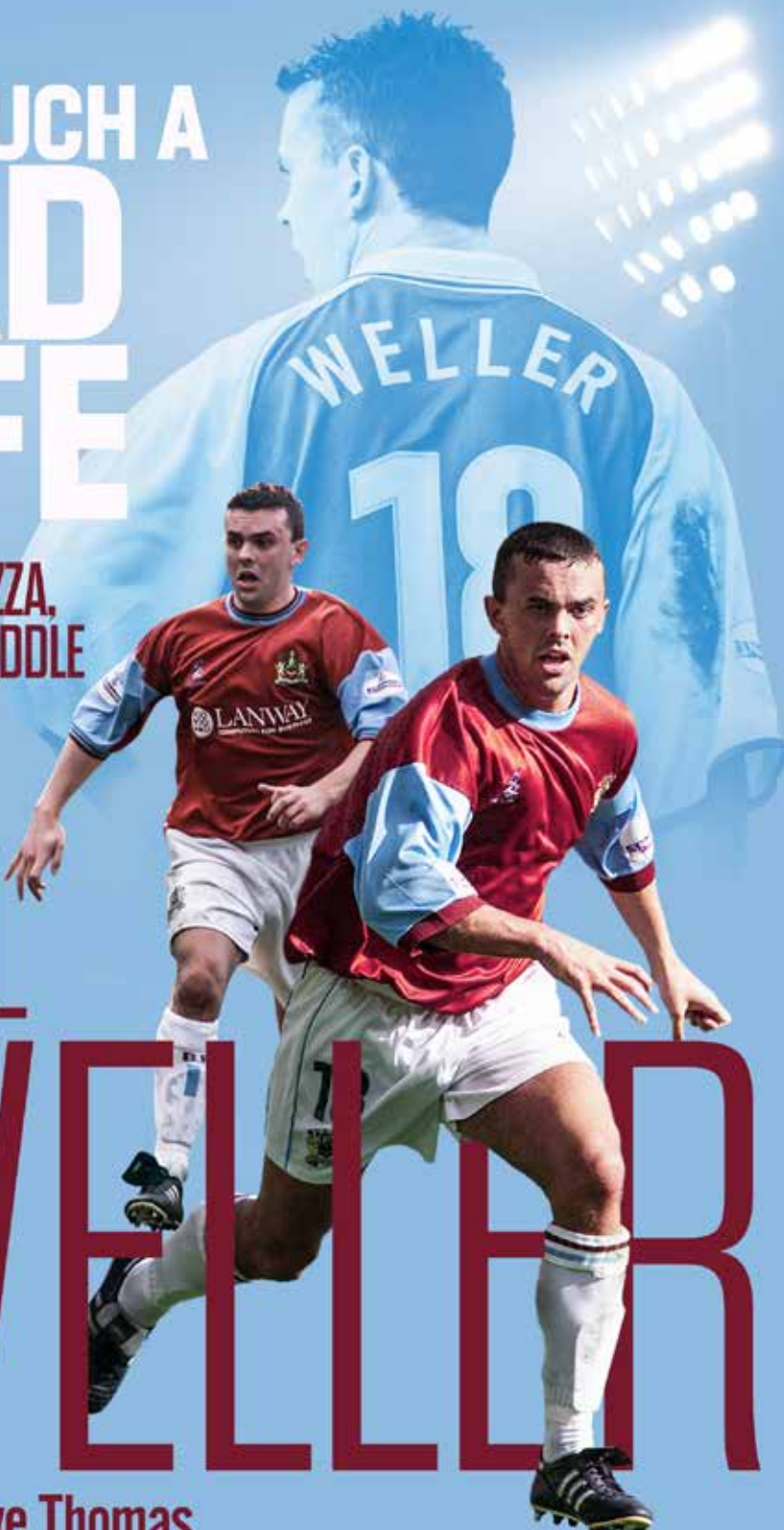


"A superb tale of real guts and genuine willpower..."

Stan Tement

NOT SUCH A BAD LIFE

**BURNLEY, GAZZA,
WRIGHTY, WADDLE
AND ME**



**PAUL
WELLER**

With Dave Thomas

NOT SUCH A **BAD LIFE**

BURNLEY, GAZZA, WRIGHTY,
WADDLE AND ME

PAUL
WELLER

With Dave Thomas



CONTENTS

Acknowledgements and Thanks	9
Preface	11
Foreword	13
Introduction.	17
1. Almost the Best Day of My Life.	23
2. Beginnings	40
3. Playing and Losing.	51
4. Glen Little	65
5. Bullying and Bust-Ups	82
6. Managers Come and Go, Mullen and Heath	99
7. The Year of the Waddle	113
8. A Game to Remember and An Illness Begins	124
9. Behind the Scenes and a Tale of Costa Rican Drug Money	137
10. Colitis for Me and an Ailing Club	150
11. Back to a Promotion Season	165
12. Player of the Year and Two Special Games	181
13. How to Win and Yet Still Lose, With a Bloke Called Gazza	200
14. It's Burnley Not Barcelona	219
15. Definitely Not Barcelona.	235
16. Beware the Ides of March	250
17. Winning and All Good Things	263
18. Limbo Land	282
19. Light at the End of the Tunnel.	302
Bibliography	319

Chapter 1

ALMOST THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE

'It was brilliant to see Paul Weller coming on as substitute against Scunthorpe. His courage and determination provide an example to us all. I hadn't realised just how serious his operation had been until I read a piece about him in the local rag. I will spare you the details. Suffice it to say this illness is a pig. It often greatly inconveniences people living quite sedentary lives. To have overcome this disability and to have returned to life as a professional sportsman is an incredible achievement. I'm rooting for you Paul along with everyone else.'

A BURNLEY FAN, Tim Quelch, wrote that in a fanzine way back in October 1999. There have been a few best days but this one was up there with them. I'd been out for an age with this ghastly illness and for this game I was back. It was the culmination of a long, hard slog, days of hopelessness, feelings of worthlessness, feelings of why me? They were days of frustration and despondency. Black days, angry days, days of just feeling utterly fed up. But full-scale

depression, no, that was not in my nature. If it was, I'd have never made it back into the game.

So, it was only Scunthorpe, not exactly Manchester United; there's precious little glamour in Scunthorpe and at the end of 90 minutes it was a game we lost. The ground half empty, supporters wrapping collars and scarves round themselves with drizzly rain spreading over a misty Turf Moor. Scunthorpe fans in a reasonable number and the game on TV. The TV cameras didn't come that often to Turf Moor, so this game was 'a quid a kid' to try and swell the numbers. On the bench I was sat next to Lenny Johnrose; I think of him today as he battles with Motor Neurone Disease and he's not even 50. Here's me, now, today, back up on my feet and running and there's Lenny; when we began this book, he could still walk, but by the time we finished it, a year later, he was in a wheelchair. My problems are nothing. Today I can even turn out for the Vintage Clarets every now and then when we play charity games, some of them in support of the stricken Lenny. He can still joke about it on Twitter, that he is going for the record for how many different ways you can fall over.

In the grand scheme of things football isn't that important if you see it against the backdrop of people's lives, problems, health and real tragedy. I loved playing, but at the end of the day it was just a job and a livelihood, same as anybody else. In the week that I sat there itching to get on the pitch again, there had been the Paddington train crash disaster. It was actually at Ladbroke Grove, but is often labelled as Paddington, and 31 people died. Something like that puts your own problems in some kind of perspective. Mind you, 1999 was also the year of President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, forever to be known as Zippergate – funny that. The manager then was Stan Ternent. We'll mention him a lot. This account of him comes from Dave's book *No Nay Never Volume Two*:

If Jimmy Mullen began the process by which Burnley moved away from the lower reaches of the Football League in Division Four, then it was Stan Ternent who, in 2000, continued that process. He had taken a drifting club, inherited a mixed assortment of players, and eventually taken the club to promotion from Division Two to Division One, later to be renamed and repackaged as the Championship. During that process for every three steps forward there had been two steps back and many, many unhappy experiences. Players had been publicly sacked. Two home games saw 11 goals go in the home net. He was jeered, abused and insulted on several occasions as he did his sorting and stuck to his intentions. Bit by stubborn bit however, things came right as he brought in his own players and turned things round.

The two seasons after the promotion were heady days. The club twice missed the play-offs by just one place. In one of those seasons, the number of points gained would have earned a top-six place in any other season. All of us will remember the finger-tip saves made by Coventry 'keeper Hedman from Gazza's two free kicks to deny us a play-off place. Those saves denied us a top-six place by just one goal. From then on it was pretty much slowly downhill for Stan and the side.

But I was a part of those two good seasons when success was so close and it was down to all the support I got from Stan Ternent. After that, it was always a struggle with little or no money at his disposal. But he worked miracles and kept the club in the Championship. The more it became a struggle, however, the more support lessened. When the novelty of a Championship place has worn off, when there are no more seventh places, fans vote with their feet. The career of Stan Ternent is told in his book *Stan the Man*. The snapshot is this:

He came to Burnley in the 60s from the north-east, sent by legendary scout, Jack Hixon. Six years later, unable to command a first-team place, Harry Potts sold him to Carlisle United and his travels, as player, manager or coach, took him to Sunderland, Blackpool, Hull, Bradford, Chelsea, Crystal Palace, Bury, Gillingham, Derby County and Huddersfield. He had tremendous success at Bury on a shoestring but his adopted roots remained in Burnley. He belongs to that small group of managers who brought post-war success to Turf Moor, the others being Cliff Britton, Harry Potts, Jimmy Adamson, Brian Miller, Jimmy Mullen, Owen Coyle, and Sean Dyche. Just a handful of names in a 70-year period. They will be remembered whilst others are forgotten.

He remained at Burnley until 2003/04 when it was decided he had taken the club as far as he could. But with better finances who knows what he might have achieved? It was the collapse of the ITV Digital agreement with the Football League that resulted in problems. When that TV deal imploded Burnley had to make major adjustments and changes. Suddenly a major source of income was gone. Players had been signed, wages agreed, policies decided all on the strength of money assumed to be coming in from ITV. He could no longer sign the better players he wanted. Through much of his final season (and mine for that matter) the team hovered worryingly above the relegation zone and towards the end of the season things looked truly ominous. He stated that to keep Burnley in the Championship would be his greatest achievement. He kept them there. He is in a position to say he left the club in a better place than when he found it. There are plenty of people who will say that where Burnley are now, begins with Stan.

Like so many players who came to the club as a boy in the 60s, he went through the Gawthorpe training ground system, stayed in homely lodgings, married Kath a Burnley girl, developed a real affection for the town and came to identify with it. His management

years at Burnley were a labour of love. When the end came for him, he was in tears. It was a day of sunshine and a home defeat to Sunderland. At the final whistle he walked round the perimeter festooned with scarves and received a long and emotional standing ovation. We were watching the end of something special and saying goodbye to a man who had helped us all achieve something. And today I sell him cars.

Tony Grant was a great admirer. 'We had a falling-out once but he was right and I was wrong. You could go to Stan with anything on the pitch or off it, he was approachable and would listen. He cared, he wanted to play football the right way and this was evident every time we were on the training pitch. He would blow his top more when we won than lost. I think it was psychological, a tool he would use. He liked to see players play with what he would call 'a chuckle in their boots, or a smile'.

In an interview with Dan Barnes Tony added, 'Everyone had their ups and downs with Stan because he wore his heart on his sleeve. He would be quick to put an arm round you and quick to tell you off, but deep down was a really good fella. Away from football he is a guy you'd like to class as a friend, someone you respect. There was a lot of love between the players and Stan.'

Gareth Taylor is another who remembers Stan fondly. 'You have to take your hat off to Stan really; he would drive you nuts on a daily basis really, and you'd think you'd had enough. He could be like a bear with a sore head every single day, but he commanded respect. You couldn't help but love the fella. He knew how to manage people, usually with an iron fist, but I got used to that. You had to have the skin of a rhinoceros to survive. Telling you one week you were brilliant and the following week that you were useless. I don't think you'll see the likes of Stan again.'

Goalkeeper Brian Jensen, a Ternent signing, was well aware of how volatile Stan could be but on a Monday morning any dressing-

down was always forgotten. But he remembers he was the victim of a memorable Stan put-down one day. Jensen lived in Congleton at the time, an hour's drive from Burnley on a good day. Stan would much have preferred him to live closer. 'Congleton,' he humphed one day, 'a three-day camel ride from Burnley.'

Robbie Blake has a fund of memories of Stan and was on the receiving end of his outbursts many times. Funny how it was the two flair players, Robbie and Glen, that seemed to get the most batterings. Robbie tells a few stories on the *Under the Cosh* podcast on YouTube.

'My start was an absolute disaster but after the hernia op it took off. But while Stan was nailing you, he always had your back. Madman he might have been but as the full package, he was the best,' Blake recalled. 'You never knew what to expect. He was unique. Anything could happen on any day.'

'There was a pre-season when he arrived down at Gawthorpe. "I've been watching the World Cup," he said. "I've been watching Brazil. That's the way forward; we just keep the ball. If you keep the ball, they can't get it. Just keep that ball moving."

'So off we go and start playing. This is great, we thought. Deano inside to Skip, Skip to Cox, Cox to Branchy, Branchy a Cruyff turn, back to Cox, Cox to Skip, Skip to Deano, Deano is just about to play it and there's a loud "WHOA STOP... WHAT ARE YOU DOING? JUST GET THAT BALL FORWARD!"

'We stop and Skip asks "But, I thought we were going to play like Brazil?"

"I've changed me mind," Stan humphed. "I saw the first coupla passes from you lot, and thought, no, just get the ball fucking forward into their half." Add a few more expletives into all this and you get the picture.

Robbie Blake continues: 'There's a Tuesday game. I was living in Harrogate and had a few red wines when I got back. Probably had

too much. Come the morning I'm thinking I'll stay at home, not feeling too great. Stay in bed. So, I phone Soz, that's Ian Liversedge the physio, and tell him, "Soz I'm not coming in, I don't feel well. Don't feel great at all." "OK", says Soz, "I'll tell the boss." I stay in bed. Suddenly at 12 and I'm laid in bed still and there's a buzz on the intercom. There's a little camera and I can see who's there. Oh, fucking hell it's fucking Stan at the door. There's that moment of shock, surprise, what the fuck do I do? Right, yeh, just ignore it, hide behind the sofa, he'll go away. But then there's the sound of someone scrambling up the drainpipe and Stan's voice.

"Soz, ged up there, ged up that drainpipe, make sure you ged up there, I know he's in."

'So, there's Soz up the drainpipe leaning over trying to knock on the window. Years later it's hilarious thinking about it. At the time it was terrifying. He'd driven all the way from Burnley to Harrogate to check up on me.'

Dave Thomas told this story to Stan Ternent to confirm whether this actually happened. 'Absolute rubbish,' Stan said. 'No way did we climb up a drainpipe. We found a bloke with a ladder and we climbed up that.'

'Stan was gold, a madman. "You trying to run my club for me?" was one of his favourite lines,' added Blake. 'What made him so good was that he got so many things right. But the batterings from him were always just around the corner. Even if you were winning. We were beating Gillingham 2-0, I'd scored one and made one, but half-time and in he comes and I just knew he was going to go for me. He's gonna punch me, I'm thinking, as he sets into me and I'm saying "but Stan I made one and scored one". His arm is pulled back and he swipes me but in so doing he knocks the teapot off the top of the nearby fridge. Mick Docherty is standing in the nearby doorway, tea everywhere and all over Mick, all over his face. It was always me and Glen that got the bollockings without fail.

Poor Mick now had a bright red, tea-stained face and was wiping himself down.'

Luke Chadwick was at Burnley on loan for just one season but he has fond memories of Stan Ternent. When Sir Alex Ferguson explained to Luke where he was heading, he told him what a character Stan was.

'But he made you feel wanted,' Luke added, 'and had a great sense of humour. Stan was good for me and I loved Robbie Blake and Glen Little. I loved the journeys back from away games with beers and fish and chips on the way. But not the factory run, that was a training run round Padiham. One story I always tell is about the night we landed back at Turf Moor to collect our cars after a pre-season in the Isle of Man. It was late, we were all tired, and most of the cars were blocked in. Suddenly Glen's loud car horn starts blasting away and this was late at night. There are houses around with folks fast asleep. Stan was tired and weary and certainly had the 'ump. He marches over to Glen's car. Glen winds the window down to ask "what's wrong gaffer?" Stan is trying to welly him through the car window, gives up on that and starts whacking the car with his bag. I still smile about that and always think of Basil Fawlty thwacking his car with the tree branch.'

* * *

Stan must have been in despair after the poor result against Scunthorpe. Me coming on made no difference, there was to be no fairy-tale equaliser. The Scunthorpe goalkeeper drove fans mad with his time-wasting, the Scunthorpe fans rubbed it in with their chanting. Burnley couldn't have played worse if they tried and here was I, back after the draining illness, desperate to do well. A few boos rang round the ground at the final whistle. In the away area the Scunthorpe fans sang their heads off at this unexpected bonus 2-1 win. It rained as we came off on what was supposed to be my

big day. I'd been out for months. The word dismal was and still is inadequate. I should have been coming off and heading for the dressing room on cloud nine. This was what I'd worked for, for so long, getting back on the pitch but you can't feel elation after a defeat when your team-mates sit slumped on the chairs and the moans begin about where the game went wrong and you wait for the manager to have a go. All of this was on Sunday, 10 October 1999. None of us knew of course that the final game of the season, again against Scunthorpe, would see the score reversed and Burnley promoted. None of us knew that one of the club's biggest ever signings would take place in February before the end of the season. Our mouths dropped when the news broke that Ian Wright was on his way.

The rumours had been going around the dressing room but it was still a jaw-dropper when it was confirmed. Ian Wright had signed for Burnley on a free transfer from Celtic. He wasn't the first big name – we'd already had Chris Waddle – but Wright, just his name gave the place a lift. We were his fourth club that season; he'd gone from West Ham, to Nottingham Forest, then Celtic and now he was at Burnley. Mitchell Thomas knew him already; Stan knew him from way back at Crystal Palace. Wrighty had once said he didn't want to drop down the leagues and end his career on a low. Burnley weren't exactly 'low', certainly had a big history, and he saw an opportunity to help a club that was on the fringe of doing well and maybe provide the push that at least got them into the play-offs. Stan certainly thought so.

The club confirmed the signing in mid-February and it emerged that Mitchell Thomas had been the go-between. At first it was all kept very quiet, in fact it stayed under the radar for a surprisingly long while.

'We managed to keep it quiet, which in Burnley should have got me awarded a VC,' said Stan Ternent.

Wrighty had been having a hard time at Celtic. 'Come down here and play,' Stan told him. Things had been bad enough for him to consider packing the game in altogether.

'Promotion is what Burnley want,' said Wright, 'and I just hope I can make a contribution. I've known Stan since I turned professional and he's been on at me for years to sign for him so I've finally given in. If Burnley can get into the play-offs it means I could finish off my career with a play-off final.'

None of us knew it but we'd do better than that. We'd end the season with automatic promotion. It was something that for certain never entered my head, months before, lying in a hospital bed for weeks on end wondering if I'd ever get back on the pitch again.

To put it mildly the town went mad and the club shop went into overdrive. The next home game was against Wigan. The stands quickly sold out. T-shirts and giant hands flew out of the shop. The shop manager was run off his feet. A normally quiet Tuesday was manic. Sky TV descended on the club. The whole town had the Ian Wright bug, Burnley was back on the map. The queue at the ticket office was all the way down Harry Potts Way. Fans were interviewed. We were famous for 15 minutes. People stood in the rain to see him. He had his own TV chat show at the time, *Friday Night's All Wright*, and he was given time off to keep his media commitments. He was probably the first and only Burnley player to appear on the Richard and Judy *This Morning* programme.

The buzz we got at his first training session was huge. He was just brilliant to be around and so much fun. We were constantly laughing. The smile on his face was infectious, he was constantly grinning, constantly happy. This guy was a winner. His personality bubbled. His grin was infectious. The place was a joy to be at. Every day something was different, a fancy car or even a motorbike. He lifted the place.

It became clear very quickly that he was a team man. Any ego was hard to find. He knew all the top TV stars but there was no Charlie Big Time although he did always joke about was the north really like this, he'd only seen it before on *Coronation Street* and it was like going back in time. He moved in with his mate Mitchell Thomas in the little house that Mitch had. We called them the Odd Couple. Privacy, soon, was hard to find. Whenever they went out to the corner shop, they were surrounded. It became another joke that Wrighty was always cold up here in the frozen north. If it was a culture shock for me coming up to Burnley from Brighton it was an even bigger one for him. The cars he drove cost more than an entire terraced street.

And then it was the Wigan game and was there ever such an anti-climax? On the Friday before the game 1,000 Ian Wright scarves had been sold, 500 foam hands, 600 T-shirts and 300 No 33 shirts. Come matchday and the hysteria was palpable, more TV cameras, a gorgeous day, excellent pitch, the faraway hills looking green and resplendent from the Upper Longside Stand, and a full house. Except of course for the away end. This was Wigan, don't forget, and their end was a third empty. Chairman Kilby and the accountants probably looked at those empty seats and humphed. Rodney Marsh was watching from the Sky Sports studio and you could get 10-1 on Ian Wright OBE being sent off or 5-2 on not scoring. Out they came, Wright receiving a tumultuous reception. Alas, nobody scored, the first half was a bore-fest with a few dubious challenges on the new man. A run from the halfway line that took him past five players woke up the spectators. Burnley dominated the second half; Wright shot straight at the keeper and later also chipped him, leaving him clawing at thin air, but the ball missed the target.

So, 20,000 spectators left disappointed with a 0-0 draw. The match sponsors made him man of the match. Maybe the pace

was gone and the electric movement and speed off the mark, but what was still there was the touch, the movements and skill of an international-class footballer.

It actually took him a few games to score and he was fretting about it, but when the goal came it was one of those last-minute goals that wins a point. Away at Gillingham, the night freezing cold and losing 2-1, Wrighty came on after 70 minutes. With 86 minutes gone, we were resigned to defeat against a side that were strong and cussed. Mitchell Thomas sent over a long looping cross more in hope than anything and before you could blink Wrighty was on to it, controlled the ball and lashed it into the roof of the net. It was sudden, deadly, blink and you missed it, and the goalkeeper's attempt to save was simply not worth the effort. It was a reminder of what a talent this bloke was and then he was buried, mobbed by the whole team.

More points were accumulated, but there was still no indication of a top-two finish and automatic promotion. Racist abuse was hurled at Wrighty on occasions and at Colchester it was appalling. Stan Ternent was livid. The 2-1 win seemed unimportant. Ian too was seething, but also hurt that it had been so vicious, even in the car park after the game where it was up close and personal. Stan had let him drive to Colchester from his London home; Lord knows what he thought as he drove back.

Stan banned the players' outing to Cheltenham races, wanting all of us to concentrate fully on the league. Nevertheless, some of the lads went down. Who should they bump into but the chairman in one of the bars? 'Guess who I met at Cheltenham,' said the chairman to Stan. Life makes you laugh out loud sometimes. Stan fined them. They weren't laughing then.

With eight games still to play we were seven points away from a top-two promotion place. Then the legend scored another crucial last-minute goal against Notts County who had equalised to make

the score 1-1. Draws were no good. Steve Davis thumped the ball forward as everyone was expecting the final whistle but there was Wrighty to collect the ball and smash it home from 25 yards. There was complete mayhem; this might well have been goal of the season.

I'd been out of the team but if there was a game that signalled that Burnley could do something special it came away at Oxford with me brought back to the subs' bench. This was a big surprise; I thought I was yesterday's man. Stan and I had had yet more differences and blow-ups with me arguing that I was fit to play. I got the hump and went on the transfer list for a while. Losing 1-0, Stan made changes. I was one of them. It was a dream game for me, crossing the ball for big Steve Davis to head home from the edge of the box. One point was better than none but it was to get even better. Wrighty had come on as well at the same time as me and the game wound down with all of the away support assuming that this would be a 1-1 draw. Three minutes of extra time was held up on the board and we pressured strongly. Ian Wright chased a lost-cause ball on its way out. He caught it. He wanted the win and banged it over and I was on the end of it and headed it in. The noise from the away end was deafening. There was barely time to kick off again and the final whistle went just a few seconds later. Me: grinning from ear to ear. I had been lying in a hospital bed having had a major operation, not once but three times, at one point looking at my intestines lying on top of my stomach, wondering if I would ever play again. Looking back, you see some games as defining. This was one of them. And something to tell the grandchildren one day; I scored the goal from Ian Wright's cross.

Four of the next five games were victories. The last of them was away at Scunthorpe and the 2-1 win was enough to secure second place and automatic promotion. Everyone knows what the situation was that day. Gillingham, if they won at Wrexham, would get the second automatic slot. I wasn't even on the bench but shared

the joy as much as anyone as the win secured promotion because Gillingham lost. Funny how things panned out. Scunthorpe were managed by ex-Burnley player Brian Laws, who later returned to manage the club. Wrexham were managed by former Burnley player Brian Flynn. It was forever a mystery why he never returned to take up a post at Burnley. Supporters always maintained it was a mystery why Laws was ever appointed after Owen Coyle had upped sticks and left the club in mid-season.

The celebrations after the win at Scunthorpe were just mind-blowing, for both the players and fans. A huge crowd had watched at Turf Moor on a giant screen. The dressing room at Scunthorpe was on pins until the result from Wrexham finally came. And then all hell was let loose as a crate of champagne arrived. The pitch was invaded at both grounds. Stan was in tears and hoped the players didn't see them. Nobody can put a true value on this result and the promotion. You could say it kick-started the slow, steady progress towards the Premier League that came several years later. I doubt Stan has ever had the recognition he deserves but it was his triumph. Nor was there any real recognition from the media on the day. It was Gillingham who were expected to go up and the press said that Burnley had sneaked in. The journey back took place in a haze. Cars and coaches passed us on the M62 waving and scarf-flying. Up outside of Burnley on the way to the moors is a pub called the Kettledrum. The coach pulled up there and we piled in with what seemed like hundreds of supporters all crammed like sardines in a tin. People still talk about it. Stan had blurted out on the radio that we were heading to his local pub, 'the Drum', for a pint. It seemed like everyone who was listening made their way there as well. In the evening many of the players headed for the clubs and bars in the town. The story goes that Wrighty, the inspiration for much of what had happened, was barred from one club because he was wearing trainers.

The procession around the town, the civic greeting at the Town Hall, the acclaim from the crowds as the bus drove round the streets were all the things that footballers remember and work for. Next season it would be the Championship. But before that we had a trip to Portugal as one of the rewards. It didn't get off to the best of starts when the plane had to turn around after take-off and return to Manchester; a problem with doors or something. Wrighty had been asleep and as we exited the plane, he thought this was Portugal and was aghast at how cold it was. We all wanted him to stay on for the next season but it wasn't to be. He had made his mark and left an indelible impression. He had made 17 appearances and scored crucial goals. His smile and enthusiasm never left him. He learned to love Burnley and the fans. In Stan Ternent's book there was one paragraph that was quite telling.

There is no doubt that Wrighty was a better person for having lived in Burnley. When he arrived, he imagined locals lived like *Oliver Twist*. He was right in one instance. There weren't too many Bentley Continentals in Burnley. There are not too many millionaires. But people here are proud of their football team and Wrighty understood that he was privileged to be part of it.

He was one of three what you might call galacticos I played with. The other two were Chris Waddle and Paul Gascoigne. The first was impossible to understand and relate to. The second was just a sad case by the time he arrived at Turf Moor.

But I was elated. I was back on the field. We'd won promotion. I'd played a part in that. There were some great fixtures to look forward to. I was settled again and part of things. I couldn't help but look back on how and where it all started and the things that I'd been through to get to this stage. I had never had it easy, that was for sure.

I am forever in Stan's debt. He could be brutal with his players but you knew where you stood with him. So did the directors. I can remember him laying into three of the directors sitting at the front of the coach on one away trip. Barry Kilby and Clive Holt were two of them and I forget the other. I sat and watched, thinking 'How can they just sit there and take all this. How can he speak to them this way?' This was the chairman he was berating. If it had been me sat there, I'd have ordered him off the coach. In fact, it was usually Stan that ordered people off the coach, once for the daftest thing. It was his coach Ronnie Jepson who used to make the teas and coffees on the bus and Stan got so irate at the number of times Ronnie asked him did he want a tea, Stan flipped and ordered him off the coach. Quite funny really.

Suffering with Colitis like I did, I saw the caring side of the man. That, plus the fact that he has had so little recognition for what he did for Burnley is why this book begins with him. He took a club that was left in the dumps after Chris Waddle, with players who were just not up to it, with results that were patchy to say the least, and got it promoted to the Championship. He joined the club when it had stayed in Division One by the skin of its teeth on the very last day. It was in a mess and he sorted it out, got it promoted in 2000 and kept it up there. You could say he set Burnley on the road to where they are now, as we write, in the Premier League. But you won't find his portrait on the walls of the stand, or many pictures of him inside the club; there isn't a stand or a room named in his honour. Yet he still lives in the town as he has done since he first joined the club as a player in the 60s. It was always his dream to manage the club; how he would have loved to have got it into the Premier League. Twice he came close to the play-offs. When he finally left in 2004, after a horrendously tough season at a club without a penny to its name, he walked round the pitch after the final home game in tears with a Burnley scarf round his

neck. That's how much it meant to him. Burnley Football Club is in his bones.

Stan knew at that moment he was leaving, but I didn't know that I too was on my way out. But I'd find out soon enough from the new manager Steve Cotterill when he arrived. The way I left was quite pitiless, and that's part of this story.

My experiences have been nothing in comparison with those of many others. There's a list of Burnley players who have suffered far worse than me; Marvin Sordell with racism and bullying, Lenny Johnrose now in a wheelchair with Motor Neurone Disease, Gary Parkinson with Locked-in Syndrome. There are others who have had drinking problems, some with marital problems, there are others who have had gambling problems. Willie Irvine and Clarke Carlisle both tried to take their own lives. Football, tough on players, is filled with their stories. Mine is just one of them.