

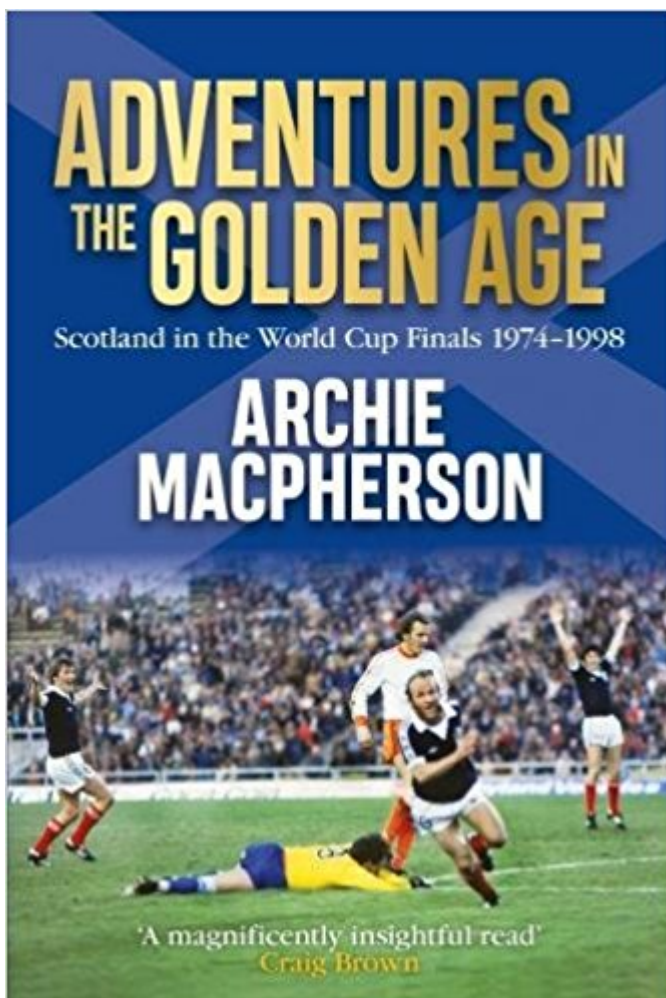
Archie McPherson's book reminds us of Scotland's footballing history

Younger readers may not be aware that the Scottish national football team were regular qualifiers for the World Cup.

At one time it was inconceivable for the Tartan Army that the most prestigious football tournament could take place without their presence.

Unfortunately that ended following France '98 and the Scots have been in an international wilderness ever since.

Between 1974 and 1998, Scotland featured in six World Cup finals, playing 18 games.



Archie Macpherson commentated on all 18 of Scotland's World Cup matches during that purple patch from 1974 to 1998, and now in his *Adventures in the Golden Age*, he tells the story of the matches and the men that raised and dashed hopes in almost equal measure at the greatest tournament on earth.

Between the 1974 clash with Zaire and the defeat against Morocco in 1998, there were adventures against Iran, Peru, Costa Rica, Brazil and many others. And, throughout it all, Archie was the voice of Scottish football. He knew the players, the managers and the fans.

He witnessed clashes of personality, managerial rages, nocturnal antics, BBC wranglings, the shadiness of FIFA and that last painful evening in France.

Archie Macpherson's World Cup adventures are brilliantly entertaining, capturing a golden age in Scottish football that may never be seen again.

"I have some great memories of watching Scotland in the World Cup during the 'golden age' between 1974 and 1998. Each tournament provided something different but the most memorable for me was Argentina in 1978.

"The whole thing was extraordinary. It was played in a continent that no-one had experienced. Argentina was a dictatorship and I would see people lined up with their noses against the wall being searched by armed soldiers. There was a commentary failure in my first game then the worst aspect was when the fans turned on manager Ally McLeod.

"Before that World Cup I had gone round the country with Ally holding public meetings which were sponsored by a brewery, so I got to know him very well. I believe that Ally convinced himself that Scotland would win the trophy.

"Then of course it culminated with the uplifting experience of beating Holland who would go on to reach the final but by

that time we were all fed up and demob happy at the thought of going home.

“I have had good relationships with all the Scottish managers. Willie Ormond was a very nice fellow who was always pleasant and told it straight but the man influence in that team was Billy Bremner. I think there had been some nocturnal unacceptable behaviour prior to the tournament and there had been talk of sending him home but thankfully he stayed and redeemed himself.

“Jock Stein took over from Ally McLeod and I was part of the process in him getting the job although in truth he was not the same man as he had been with Celtic.

” I travelled the world with Jock and got to know him well although he was a private person who kept himself to himself. he was still a hard man though and dropped Danny McGrain after a mistake against New Zealand and didn't take Tommy Burns so he could still make the difficult decision.

“I was at Cardiff the night he died but had left the ground to speak at a dinner organised by Don Revie's son and during the first course he told me that Jock had died. It was terribly sad.

“Alex Ferguson took the team to Mexico in 1986 and I was supportive of him during the occasions he clashed with the SFA officials. We got on really well until we fell out after I criticised his goalkeeper Jim Leighton. once again Scotland were close to qualification but couldn't beat 10-man Uruguay in the final game.

“Four years later Andy Roxburgh led the team to the finals in Italy. Andy was a totally different type of manager to what we had been used to. The press never really accepted him but he was an intelligent man.

“Most of the players liked him although one or two didn't.

“Craig Brown took over from Andy and led Scotland to the European Championships in England in 1996 then the World Cup in 1998 in France.

“Scotland played holders Brazil in the opening game which took place in front of billions of people. There was a great global demand for tickets and it was a game that Scotland could have won. We certainly deserved a draw and only lost following a bizarre own goal from Tom Boyd, who was blameless.

“The press never really accepted Craig as he didn’t have much managerial experience apart from Clyde. They thought it was ‘jobs for the boys’ and classed Craig alongside Andy Roxburgh which was wrong as they were totally different characters.

“Whereas Andy was severe and logical, Craig was humorous and knew how to deal with people. He was also highly intelligence and I have the greatest respect for him.

[Archie Macpherson](#) is appearing at the Edinburgh International Book Festival in August. Tickets go on sale on 26 June 2018 at 8.30am.