

No.46 Joseph Birch

Joe was born in Hednesford, 6 July 1904, signing for Hednesford Town the day before his 22nd birthday in 1926, performing at full-back in the same team as his older brother, Frank.

Birmingham City came knocking midway through the 1927-28 campaign, signing Joe for their First Division side; a reminder that young talent was bound to move on. He made just one appearance, Boxing Day 1928 in a 6-2 defeat at Bolton Wanderers that same season, before Bournemouth tempted him to join their Third Division outfit in 1929, where he managed 27 first-team games over the next two seasons.

Fulham, who were operating in the same division as Bournemouth, but were heading for promotion to Division Two, acquired Joe's services in 1931. He was to stay with them for the next seven seasons, making 195 appearances and awarded with a benefit match against fellow West London club Queens Park Rangers in 1937.

Joe moved to non-league Colchester United in 1938, with whom he won the Southern League championship in 1938-39. He would stay until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

Joe died in Colchester, Essex, 4 December 1980.



From a set of 24 by Dave Shaw