

No.60 Thomas Henry Kinsell

Harry Kinsell, born in Cannock 3 May 1921, began his football career at Chadsmoor's Central school and with the Cannock & District Schoolboys' team in the early 1930s.

In April 1935, the District boys had played their way into Round five of the English Schools' Shield and were drawn away against the Isle of Wight. The match ended 1-1, the replay, on our old Cross Keys ground, attracted 7,500 spectators, and the tie won 3-1. Harry, along with his 12 and 13-year old team-mates, were at home in the next round against Swansea, whose team boasted six Welsh schoolboy internationals. 8,769 proud onlookers watched the match as the local youngsters went down 2-1 at the final whistle; both teams were cheered loudly, with the District boys being lifted high and carried from the arena.

West Bromwich Albion had tracked Harry throughout those early years and signed the 14-year old, on amateur forms, 31 May 1925, when his schooldays were over.

At the end of the 1935-36 season (25 April), aged 14, he made his Hednesford Town debut, at inside right, in a 3-1 defeat away at Stourbridge, retaining his place the following weekend. Albion kept him busy in their junior teams during the next two years, where he developed into a fast, ball-playing left-back with a love for overlapping in support of his winger.

The Baggies signed Harry on professional forms, at their first opportunity, 1 June 1938; the following year he gained his first honour when he received an England junior international cap at the age of 18. However, he had to wait another six years for his Baggies debut as World War Two put a stop to all competitive football.

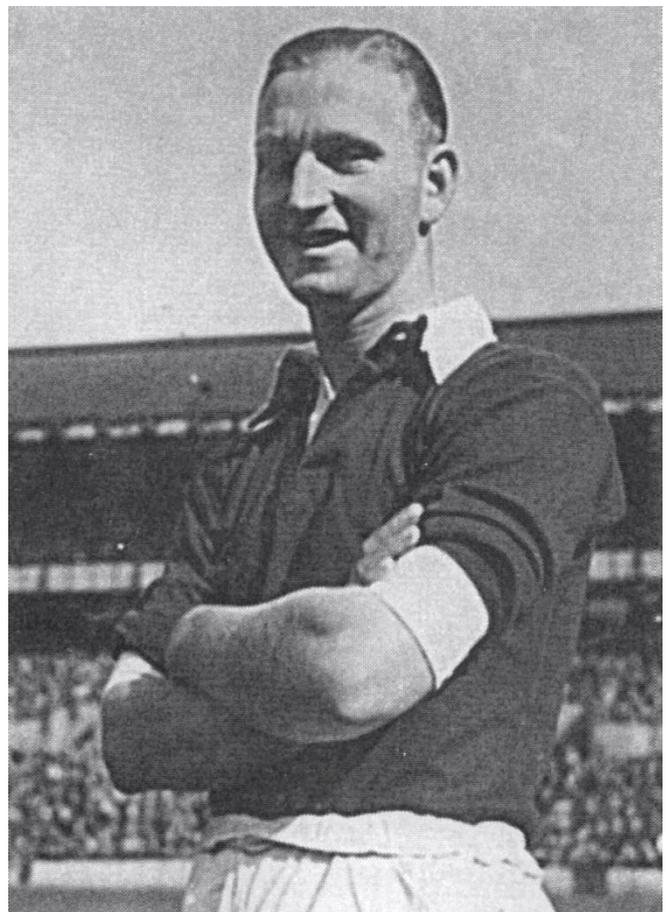
During the hostilities, Harry guested for Grimsby, Mansfield, Middlesbrough, Southend and also represented Blackpool against Aston Villa in the 1944 Wartime League Cup final; he also gained international honours when he lined-up with England in two 'Victory' games against Ireland in September and Wales in October, 1945. Harry also played for the FA Services XI against Switzerland, the Army, Combined Services and Western Command, making a total of 67 wartime appearances.

When League Football resumed, Harry finally got his Baggies League debut in a 3-2 defeat at Swansea Town, 31 August 1946, having made his FA Cup debut for them, 5 January 1946, at Cardiff City; He was a key member of Albion's 1948-49 promotion-winning side. In all he had accumulated 158 senior appearances for Albion, plus 27 for the reserves when the Baggies sold him to Bolton Wanderers, 1 June 1949, for what was then a club record payout of £12,000. He had only 17

games for the Lancashire club before moving to Reading, 1 May 1950.

West Ham United acquired his services, 1 January 1951, for £5,250 where he scored two goals (the only ones of his career) in 101 outings over a five-year period. In May 1956, Harry moved out of League Football to Bedford Town, aged 36, 12 months later, having made an all competitions 290 senior appearances in League Football.

In retirement, Harry ran the Alma Arms public house in Stratford, London and later an off-licence before returning to live in Brierley Hill until his death in Dudley, 14 August 2000.



Harry, seated extreme right with his Albion team-mates in 1946