

No.74 Peter Arnold Billingham

The tall, red-haired wing-half, born in Pensnett, 8 October 1938, schooled in Brierley Hill and at Dudley Technical College, began his football career with Worcester City in March 1953, joining Brierley Hill Alliance in January of the following year.

In May 1954, at the end of the 1953-54 season, 16-year old Peter signed for Hednesford. However, the youngster could not find a way into the senior team. Nevertheless, Walsall had spotted him, signing Peter on professional forms in October 1955 and during the next five-years, he made over 100 senior appearances, scoring nine goals, helping them to win the Fourth Division Championship title at the end of the 1959-60 season.

In May 1960, the lanky right-half left Fellows Park for the Hawthorns, at a cost of £7,000, making his debut as a replacement for the injured Bobby Robson in a 3-1 defeat at neighbours Birmingham City, 31 August 1960; Peter was used mainly as a stand-in for Robson, performing alongside Don Howe, Ronnie Allen and Derek Kevin. He also played in 62 Central League games for the Baggies in his two-year stay; Peter's final League outing, having played seven senior games, resulted in a 2-1 defeat at Blackburn Rovers, 5 April 1961.

He returned to non-league football with Worcester City in June 1962 and then with Lye Town the following year. August 1965 saw Peter at Kidderminster Harriers where he stayed until his retirement from the game in May 1967.

He was an animal lover and, during his retirement, Peter embarked on a new career, becoming a very successful greyhound trainer, going on to breed them at his Swindon base in Kingswinford. His dogs won several top races; one of the dogs was 'Skippy', owned at the time by Albion Striker Jeff Astle.

Peter settled in Rowley Regis on retirement.

