

No.84 Christopher Peter Brindley

During his football career, Hednesford Town legend Chris Brindley became one of the best known and one of the most decorated players thus far in non-league football.

Born in Stoke-on-Trent, 5 July 1969, he developed through our very successful 1985-86 cup-winning Youth-Team to make his first-team debut in a Bill Dellow cup game, 28 October 1986. Chris scored the first and last goals as the team won 5-0 at home to Bilston, and with only a handful of senior outings under his belt Wolves stepped-in to sign him, 1 November 1986.

Chris opened his Wolves account in a 2-0 defeat away at Hereford, 26 December 1986, the first of three consecutive games for him in seven days over the Christmas period, ending the 1986-87 season with seven appearances. He also managed two Associate Members Cup games during his two-year stint at Molineux, but did not add to his tally of League games during his second year as Wolves, now operating in the Fourth Division, staved off extinction at the 11th hour; It was during this tumultuous time that Chris was sold to Telford United in 1987.

His stay at Wolves had coincided with that of Molineux legend, Steve Bull, who made his debut one month before Chris and went on to end his Wolves career with 306 goals in 545 appearances and gain 13 full International caps, scoring on his England debut (as did Wolves' Hednesford born and former Cannock Town right-half, Tommy Galley).

Although ideally built for his role as a central-defender, Chris lacked an extra yard of pace, the one attribute, which would have seen him with a long and glorious Football League career. Even so, he had been there and done it and was back in non-league football by the age of 18, but his best years were, arguably, still in front of him. Chris helped Telford win the FA Trophy during his four-years with them before joining Kidderminster for an eventful six-year spell from 1992; he won the Vauxhall Conference title and played in his second FA Trophy final whilst at Aggborough, ending with a move back to Hednesford in an exchange deal involving Nigel Niblett in early 1998.

After playing well over 100 times and scoring three goals, Chris was released, signing for local rivals Stafford Rangers in June 2000 to score three goals in 71 outings, returning to Hednesford for a third spell in June 2002 as player/ assistant-manager. At the end of 2003-04 local boy and crowd favourite, 'Brino', pushed us to our first, and his third, FA Trophy final, hitting the winner (you couldn't make it up) in a 3-2 victory over Canvey Island at Villa Park.

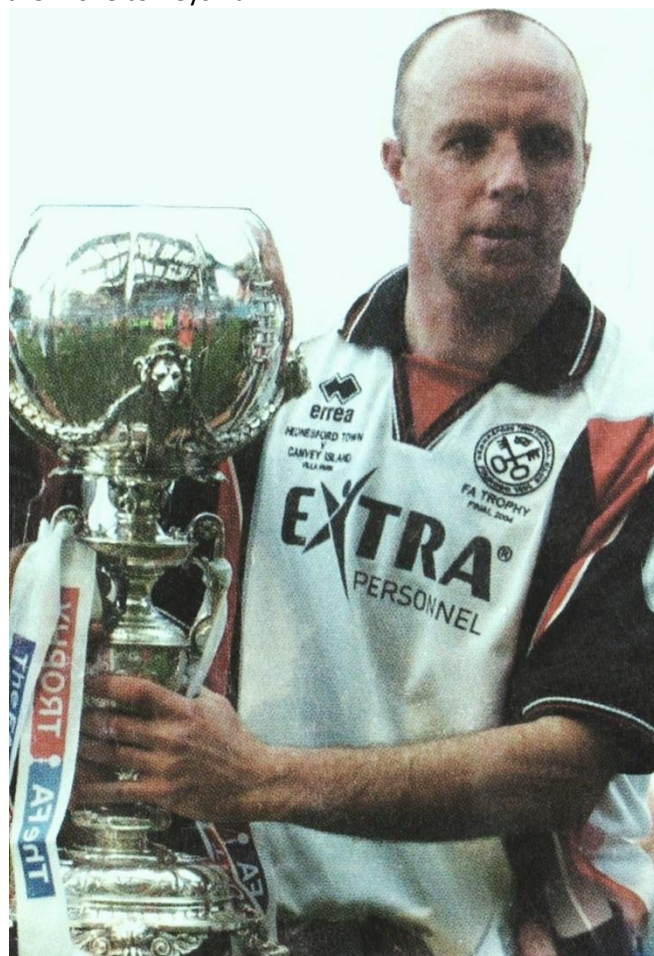
A month after that momentous day, Chris replaced manager Barry Powell, to take us back into the Conference North via the Southern League Premier

Division Play-offs in May 2005. However, a season later and with poor results prior to Christmas, he left Keys Park by mutual consent, to team-up with UniBond League outfit, Gresley Rovers, before joining Halesowen Town in May 2006, again as player and assistant manager.

In December of the same year, former Hednesford players Martin O'Connor and Graham Hyde took the reins at Halesowen with Chris moving to Stourport Swifts. He was on the move again just one month later, linking-up with former Halesowen Boss Paul Holleran at Rushall Olympic, his final role as joint player and assistant manager.

At the end of the 2007-08 season, Chris made the step-up to Blue Square North level once again, with old foes Stafford Rangers as assistant to new Rangers' boss and former Wolves team-mate, Roger Bull. Although he went on to succeed Bull, lack of financial clout saw the departure of both men and the club relegated. Chris now manages Chasetown FC.

Off the field, Chris became proprietor of the Cross Keys Hotel in 1997. Built in 1746, the Inn sat on, what was then, Blake Street, originally an ancient packhorse route; the Inn developed into a coaching house for stagecoaches en-route to London; it also sits in front of what was Hednesford Town's home from 1904 until the move to Keys Park.



From the Dave Shaw archive.



Wolves' 1987-88 squad: Chris is pictured second right, middle row.
Rugeley's Mark Jones is second left, front row.



The Hednesford Town 1998-99 squad.