



Born in Chesterfield in 1924, Billy Linacre came through the junior ranks during the second world war. Although ostensibly a right-winger, "Legs" often took on a roving brief on the pitch. Brilliantly unorthodox, he was capable of quite unpredictable flashes of baffling skill and, during the war years at least, he enjoyed a good scoring record for a wingman. He joined the Spireites on amateur forms in late 1941 and turned semi-pro in February 1944, completing his progress to full professional status

as the war drew to a close.

He broke a leg in November 1945 (Club minute-books suggest he did this playing without permission for Bolsover Colliery!) and broke it again ten months later, in only the second match of the 1946-7 season. His unfortunate record with injuries did not put the nation's leading clubs off, though, and Manchester City made a successful £8,000 bid for him in October 1947. He enjoyed two injury-free seasons at Maine Road before Middlesbrough added £2,000 to that earlier fee and took him to Ayresome Park. There, however, his bad luck returned and two more leg-breaks in three years saw him released to Goole Town.

Hartlepool offered him a way back into the league at the age of 29 and he enjoyed two good years there before spending his last League season at Field Mill. The Linacre connection with Hartlepool continued with his sons Phil and John, who were both on United's books.

After football Billy settled in the Middlesbrough area, working in the construction and onshore oil industries, before passing away in January 2010, in Aklam, aged 85.

**For Chesterfield:** 22 Football League appearances, 3 goals.

(101 appearances / 40 goals in wartime football.)

**Career:** 230 Football League appearances, 21 goals.