

There can be no better situation for a new keeper than to have to come in for a chap who let in ten in his last game - almost anything would look like an improvement! We know, of course, that Jim Brown, **Carl Muggleton's** predecessor, was injured conceding the first of those ten at Gillingham in 1987, which might have made us more patient with the thin strip of a lad who let in three on his debut, at home to Port Vale, on the day before his nineteenth birthday.

Carl visibly grew in confidence during a loan spell here that saw him save penalties in consecutive games, and save another with almost his last touch of his Chesterfield spell, at Fulham, in a 3-1 win. Carl returned to Leicester and England under-21 caps came, but he was farmed out on loan a further six times before signing for Glasgow Celtic for a £150,000 fee in January 1994. He didn't hit it off there and was sold to Stoke City for the same amount six months later.

Stoke provided Carl with a more stable career, although he was still sent out on loan five times. One of these loan spells - at Sheffield United - saw Carl play as an outfield substitute: another loan spell was spent back at Saltergate, bringing some stability to a side on its way down to level four of the pyramid in 1999-2000.

Carl might have rejoined Chesterfield in 2001 but Nicky Law was apparently uninterested or, in the financial climate of the time, unable to make any offers until a week or so before the season started. By then, Carl was fixed up at Cheltenham. A year later, though, Carl signed for Chesterfield, for a third time, joining the likes of Ernie Moss and Les Hunter in this select band of three-time Spireites. In his first season back he kept six straight clean sheets as the club climbed to 8th, but nearly half a season was lost to injury. The team had sunk to 20th by the time he returned.

2003-4 saw Carl achieve "ever-present" status for the first time in his career. Despite the side's constant struggle against relegation Carl came up with a vintage season. The following season saw Carl first-choice again, until injury struck, forcing him out as the season closed. Something seemed to go from Carl's game with this injury; Barry Roche came in to provide competition in 2005 but started the season, and ended up keeping his place, to the extent that Carl was released and moved to Mansfield Town.

Nineteen different spells at fifteen different clubs in a career that has spanned twenty-odd years and amounted to more than 600 appearances - his memoirs should be worth a read! Chesterfield supporters will remember his bravery and agility, along with his knack of being in the right place at the right time to pull off

another stunning save. Those lucky enough to have spoken to him will remember a bloke unfazed by his chosen career, without a sliver of false superiority and always pleased to talk to anyone about the game. Carl moved into goalkeeper coaching at the end of his playing career, becoming part of Martin Allen's regular management team, and returned to Chesterfield as a coach when Allen came to manage Chesterfield in 2018. Carl's son Sam played for The Spireites during this time.

For Chesterfield: 134 Football League appearances. 32 clean sheets, 189 conceded.

Career: 393 + 2 Football League appearances.