



Apprenticed as a fitter with the East Midlands Gas Board, Albert Holmes turned down an offer from Rotherham United in order to finish his studies. Having played for a local gas board team, Albert joined the Spireites on a semi-pro basis in 1960 before signing full-time the following year. Blessed with excellent balance, Albert was consistent, hard-working and skilful, with sound positional play, and adopted a no-nonsense attitude to the game. Off the field, he was well-known for an

infectious sense of humour.

He made his name as a defender but was sometimes thrust into the forward line when the forwards were suffering a lean spell; he scored a few goals under such circumstances, his best being a twenty-yarder against Cambridge United in 1974. Fans will remember him more for his trademark sliding tackle, though, where he usually came away with the ball, on his feet, ready to launch another attack.

After a long and distinguished career that saw him rise to the status of one of the all-time greats of Saltergate, he was freed by Jim McGuigan in 1974. He went to Scunthorpe for talks, and was offered terms, which he verbally accepted. Days later, McGuigan left for Rotherham, Chesterfield offered the manager's job to the man who had tempted him to Scunthorpe, Alan Ashman, and offered Albert a deal for the new season. Albert then went on holiday, uncertain of who he might have to play for next season: he returned to find that Ashman was the new manager of Grimsby and that he was clear to re-sign for Chesterfield.

Albert turned down a testimonial in 1976, feeling that, with the club doing indifferently at the time, there was no point in having one: in Albert's estimation, the fans had paid enough to watch him, over the years. He was ever-present in three of his sixteen years at the club, often missing games with niggling injuries: the most curious of these was the F.A. Cup tie with Bradford City in November, 1975. Albert sat the match out after hurting his ankle while parking his car. After leaving Chesterfield he joined Boston United in March 1976, retiring the following season.

His son Paul was a professional footballer, having played for Doncaster, Torquay, Birmingham, Everton and West Bromwich Albion. After football, Albert worked for British gas as an engineer, before becoming a self-employed gas engineer, until retirement in 2006.

For Chesterfield: 467 + 3 Football League appearances; 10 goals.