



It is difficult to imagine how a player with **George Smith's** scoring record might become surplus to requirements even at a First Division club. Having emerged from the Adelphi Lads' Club in Salford (a place familiar to fans of The Smiths, coincidentally!) he joined Manchester City just before the Second World War and played 166 times for them, scoring a highly creditable 75 goals.

City's loss was Chesterfield's gain, and George stayed long enough at Saltergate to take third place in the Spireites' list of all-time League goalscorers. He was immediately noticeable as 'the one with the withered arm.' In fact, his right arm and hand were badly wounded in a "friendly fire" incident during a training exercise while serving with the King's African Rifles in South Africa. Surgery repaired the arm but left City with concerns about his ability to resume a football career.

George went back to Maine Road and settled those concerns in an emphatic manner. After scoring 45 goals in 90 wartime games for City, he won a Division Two championship medal in '46-7, scoring five goals against Newport County at the end of that season. At Saltergate, he scored at least fifteen goals in each of five successive seasons and was selected to play for the Third (North) against the Third (South) in a televised match at Peel Park, Accrington, in 1955.

With his marvellous consistency in mind, it is tempting to speculate how Chesterfield might have done had they signed him a year earlier - when they were relegated from Division Two for want of a regular goalscorer.

Upon leaving The Spireites in 1958 George returned to Manchester, working until retirement in Kennings' tyre department in the city. He served non-league football in the area, being player/manager at Hyde United and manager at Mossley. George was probably the first Spireite to appear in a light entertainment programme on television - he guested on a 1958 "This is Your Life" tribute to Matt Busby that went out a month before the Munich disaster. George passed away in July 2013, aged 92 in a Bury nursing home.

For Chesterfield: 250 Football League appearances, 98 goals.

Career: 416 Football League appearances, 173 goals.