



An outstanding teenage prospect, **Shirley Wray Abbott** was born in Alfreton in 1889, the son of an auctioneer. Shirley's career seemed to take off when Derby County took him from Alfreton Town to the Baseball Ground in 1912, but he blossomed after moving to Fratton Park a year later, where he captained Pompey to the Southern League championship in 1920.

Although very much a veteran by the time he joined Chesterfield from QPR

in 1924, Shirley was a steady, dependable presence in the half-back line and was soon appointed captain. He was at one time the club's oldest-ever player, played 127 times in the League for Chesterfield and retired to be appointed to the position of First-team Trainer in May, 1928.

In those days the Trainer usually looked after the team on match days, fulfilling a role now taken by the Manager. Under Abbott's stewardship, two Chesterfield sides won promotion to the Second Division, and he came to be very highly regarded at Saltergate, his cheerful, quiet and efficient manner being particularly appreciated. He held down the trainer's job until being sacked to make way for Billy Day, the new Secretary/Manager Norman Bullock's own man, in May, 1939. Oddly, Abbott was reportedly lined up to go to Bury, where Day and Bullock had come from, but the Second World War put paid to that.

Shirley returned to Portsmouth, his wife's home town, and worked in the dockyards throughout the war before his untimely death from cancer at the age of 58. The choice of forename seems odd, even in a modern age when kids are called after anything from an alcoholic beverage to the dog off "EastEnders," but it reflects a traditional family naming pattern.

For Chesterfield: 117 league appearances, 5 goals.

Career: 226 league appearances, 8 goals.