

= Joel Byrom =

Joel Alan Byrom (born 14 September 1986) is an English professional footballer who plays as a midfielder for Northampton Town .

Byrom started his career at Blackburn Rovers at the age of 14 , and spent four and a half years on the club 's books , progressing from their centre of excellence to the reserve team . However , he failed to make any first @-@ team appearances for the club , and was subsequently released in summer 2006 . He joined League Two outfit Accrington Stanley before the start of the 2006 ? 07 season , but only managed a total of two appearances . He was released by the club in January 2007 , and opted to join local side Clitheroe on a short @-@ term basis . Byrom then joined Southport , scoring twice in two appearances for the side , before rejoining Clitheroe in August 2007 ; captaining the side at the age of 20 .

He attracted the interest of Northwich Victoria , who subsequently signed him for a small four @-@ figure fee in January 2008 . Byrom spent a year and a half at the Cheshire club , before joining Stevenage for a fee of £ 15 @,@ 000 in May 2009 ? helping them achieve promotion to the Football League for the first time in the club 's history . Byrom was also part of the Stevenage side that earned back @-@ to @-@ back promotions to League One during the 2010 ? 11 season . He has also played for the England C team and earned his solitary cap in a game against the Belgium U21 team .

= = Club career = =

= = = Early career = = =

Born in Oswaldtwistle , Lancashire , Byrom started his career at the Blackburn Rovers centre of excellence after being spotted playing for local junior side Oswaldtwistle United at the age of 14 . He progressed through the youth system at Ewood Park , and captained the under ? 17 side , before graduating into the reserve team after impressing in the FA Youth Cup in 2004 . However , he failed to break into the first @-@ team and was subsequently released in 2006 . He signed for League Two outfit Accrington Stanley on a six @-@ month contract ahead of the 2006 ? 07 season , after impressing manager John Coleman whilst on trial , a trial which Byrom had requested . He made his debut for the Lancashire side in a 1 ? 1 draw against Carlisle United in the Football League Trophy in October 2006 . However , Byrom found it difficult to break into the first @-@ team , making one further appearance for Stanley , featuring as a substitute in a 3 ? 3 draw with Shrewsbury Town . He was subsequently released in January 2007 , after being deemed surplus to requirements at the Crown Ground . Byrom later stated at this stage in his career he " considered just getting a job and playing for fun " , and that his time at Accrington " wasn 't really a good time for me . I didn 't play much " .

Shortly after , Byrom joined Northern Premier League First Division side Clitheroe on a short @-@ term contract . He finished the 2006 ? 07 season top scorer with 11 league goals despite only joining the club in January 2007 , including a hat @-@ trick against Kidsgrove Athletic . However , Byrom 's Clitheroe contract expired and Conference North side Southport took him on non @-@ contract terms for the start of the 2007 ? 08 season , where he scored two goals in two games . Despite being offered a contract by Southport manager Peter Davenport , Byrom opted to re @-@ join Clitheroe in August 2007 . On signing a two @-@ year deal with Clitheroe , Byrom said " I thought about giving up football when I left Accrington , but I really enjoyed my time at Clitheroe , they 've given me a new lease of life and a licence to do what I want on the park " . Clitheroe chairman , Carl Garner , said " this is a big day for Clitheroe . This is one of the biggest signings the club has made . He 's a special player and a special talent " . In the first half of the 2007 ? 08 season , Byrom scored six goals in all competitions for Clitheroe , which caught the attention of Conference National team Northwich Victoria . He played his last game for the Northern Premier League club in a 3 ? 3 draw with local rivals Rossendale United , a game in which he captained the

side for the first time .

== = Northwich Victoria == =

In January 2008 , Northwich Victoria manager Dino Maamria announced the signing of Byrom on a free transfer . He made his debut for Northwich in a 2 ? 1 defeat against Aldershot Town at Victoria Stadium , scoring Northwich 's goal . Byrom played in the centre of midfield in Northwich 's following match against Burton Albion at the Pirelli Stadium , setting up Northwich 's only goal in a 4 ? 1 defeat . He also assisted Northwich 's second goal in a 3 ? 2 win away at Woking . Byrom scored his second goal for Northwich two weeks later , scoring Northwich 's second as they came back from a one @-@ goal deficit to win 3 ? 1 against Droylsden . He also provided the assist for Mark Roberts to score Northwich 's second goal in a 4 ? 3 victory against fellow relegation candidates Stafford Rangers . Byrom also scored in a 1 ? 1 draw away to Histon in early April 2008 , netting from 25 yards in the 88th minute to ensure Northwich earned a point . He scored a week later against Exeter City at St James Park ; " firing in an unstoppable 30 @-@ yard free @-@ kick " to restore parity in the 11th minute , although Northwich went on to lose the match 2 ? 1 . Byrom added a fifth goal to end the season , scoring the club 's second in a 2 ? 1 away victory at Stevenage , a result that ultimately secured Northwich 's Conference National status for another season . He played in a total of 21 games during the club 's 2007 ? 08 campaign , scoring five times from midfield .

Ahead of the 2008 ? 09 season , Byrom featured regularly in Northwich 's pre @-@ season campaign , and scored twice in a friendly game against Manchester United reserves in August 2008 . During the early stages of the season , Byrom was a permanent fixture in the centre of Northwich 's midfield . He created both of Northwich 's goals in a 2 ? 1 win at home to newly promoted Barrow , as well as scoring away at Kettering Town , a " 25 @-@ yard drive into the top corner of the net " . He also created both of Northwich 's goals in a victory against Grays Athletic in October 2008 . However , Byrom had a hernia operation shortly after the club 's 4 ? 1 loss to Eastbourne Borough in December , keeping him out of the first @-@ team for a total of ten weeks . He returned to first @-@ team action in February 2009 , playing the whole match in a 1 ? 0 defeat to Altrincham . He was a regular until the end of the season , and scored his second career hat @-@ trick against Rushden and Diamonds in a 4 ? 2 victory , although could not prevent the Vics relegation from the Conference National in April 2009 despite the club winning their last six games of the campaign . Byrom 's last match for Northwich was in the club 's 2 ? 1 away win at the Kassam Stadium against Oxford United . He played a total of 52 games during his one and a half @-@ year tenure with Northwich , scoring nine goals .

== = Stevenage == =

In May 2009 , Stevenage signed Byrom for a fee of £ 15 @,@ 000 . Byrom was assigned the number 13 shirt ahead of the club 's 2009 ? 10 campaign . He made his debut for the Hertfordshire side in a 1 ? 1 draw at home to Tamworth in the opening game of the 2009 ? 10 season , but was sent @-@ off in the 90th minute for a second bookable offence . He scored his first Stevenage goal on his return to the first @-@ team in a 3 ? 0 win against Ebbsfleet United , and also provided the assist for Stevenage 's second in a 2 ? 0 victory over Eastbourne Borough . Byrom scored his second goal for Stevenage in a 1 ? 1 draw against Kettering Town in October 2009 , curling a free @-@ kick around the wall and into the net . He netted his third of the campaign in March 2010 , scoring from just inside Crawley Town 's half , lobbing the ball into the net from 45 @-@ yards . Shortly after , Byrom added a fourth goal to his tally in Stevenage colours in April 2010 , scoring from six yards in a 2 ? 0 win over Forest Green Rovers to ensure Stevenage were just two victories away from promotion . The following week , he scored in the second in a 2 ? 0 win against Kidderminster Harriers in a game that witnessed Stevenage secure promotion to the Football League for the first time in their history . On finishing the season as league champions , Byrom said ? " It feels brilliant . Words can 't really describe it . It 's an unbelievable feeling " . He played 48 times in all competitions during his first season with the club , scoring five goals .

Byrom started in Stevenage 's first ever Football League game , a 2 ? 2 home draw against Macclesfield Town . He played in Stevenage 's televised League Cup loss two days later against Championship side Portsmouth . The following week , Byrom gave away a penalty in a 1 ? 0 defeat at Bradford City , which Gareth Evans converted to score the only goal of the game . After playing the whole game in Stevenage 's 1 ? 0 defeat at Cheltenham Town in September 2010 , Byrom suffered a number of injuries that kept him out of the first @-@ team for five months . He returned to first @-@ team action in February 2011 , coming on as an 89th @-@ minute substitute in a 3 ? 0 loss at Bury . Four days later , he started in a 1 ? 0 defeat at Shrewsbury Town . He was an unused substitute for Stevenage 's next five league matches , before starting in the club 's 3 ? 3 home draw with Bury on the final day of the 2010 ? 11 season ? playing a key role in two of Stevenage 's goals to ensure the club reached the play @-@ offs . Byrom scored his first goal of the season in Stevenage 's 2 ? 0 home win against Accrington Stanley in the play @-@ off semi @-@ final first leg , reaching the ball before Accrington goalkeeper Alex Cisak to double Stevenage 's lead . He played the whole game in the second leg , a 1 ? 0 victory that ensured Stevenage made the play @-@ off final . Byrom started in the final , a 1 ? 0 victory against Torquay United at Old Trafford , a win that meant Stevenage earned back @-@ to @-@ back promotions to League One . Despite ending the season on a positive note , Byrom made just 12 appearances , scoring once , due to a host of injuries interrupting his campaign .

He made his first start of the 2011 ? 12 season in Stevenage 's first home win of the campaign , playing the first 76 minutes in a 4 ? 2 victory over Rochdale on 3 September 2011 . Byrom scored his first goal of the season in the club 's emphatic 6 ? 1 away victory against Colchester United in December 2011 , scoring the sixth goal after a fine individual run and finish . The following month , on 14 January 2012 , Byrom doubled his goal tally for the season when he scored with a first @-@ time finish from Luke Freeman 's cross in Stevenage 's 5 ? 1 win over Rochdale at Spotland . Byrom scored in Stevenage 's televised FA Cup tie away at Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur in that year , scoring from the penalty spot to give Stevenage a brief lead before Tottenham came back to secure a 3 ? 1 win . He went on to score two further goals during the latter stages of the season ; once in a 2 ? 2 draw away at Sheffield United , and the other in a 3 ? 0 win over Bury , on the last day of the regular season as Stevenage secured a play @-@ off place following their sixth @-@ place finish . He played in both play @-@ off semi @-@ final legs , which Stevenage lost 1 ? 0 on aggregate to Sheffield United . He made 40 appearances during the season , scoring five times . Despite appearing regularly under new manager Gary Smith , Byrom rejected the offer of a contract extension , and left Stevenage in May 2012 . During his successful three @-@ year spell with the club , he made 100 appearances in all competitions , scoring eleven goals .

= = = Preston North End = = =

After leaving Stevenage , Byrom joined League One side Preston North End , then managed by Graham Westley , who had previously signed him for Stevenage . He signed on a free transfer . Byrom made his competitive debut for Preston in the club 's 2 ? 1 away victory over Bury , coming on as a second @-@ half substitute . It took Byrom just three games to open his goalscoring account , scoring the first goal in the club 's 5 ? 0 win over Hartlepool United at Deepdale . In the club 's following match four days later , on 22 September 2012 , he netted in a 3 ? 1 away defeat to Walsall , arriving unmarked in the area to give Preston an early lead in the match . His third and final goal of the campaign came at the beginning of November 2012 , scoring from the edge of the area in Preston 's 3 ? 0 FA Cup win over Yeovil Town . Byrom made 27 appearances , eleven of which as a substitute , during his first season with the club , scoring three times .

On 17 December 2013 , Byrom extended his contract with Preston for a further twelve months , thus keeping him at the club until the summer of 2015 .

= = = Oldham Athletic (loan) = = =

On 14 March 2014 , Byrom joined League One side Oldham Athletic on an emergency loan until

the end of the 2013 ? 14 season .

At the end of the season and at the end of his loan spell , Byrom had made 4 appearances for the club during an injury ? ravaged spell .

= = = = Northampton Town (loan) = = = =

Byrom joined Northampton Town on loan on 21 August 2014 until 4 January 2014 .

= = = Northampton Town = = =

On 8 January 2015 , Byrom joined Northampton Town in a deal running until the end of the 2014 ? 15 season after his contract with Preston was terminated by mutual consent .

= = International career = =

Byrom was called up to the England C team in May 2009 , for the 2007 ? 09 International Challenge Trophy final against a Belgium U21 side . Byrom started the match , as England were beaten 1 ? 0 at the Kassam Stadium .

= = Style of play = =

Byrom is a midfielder , and is more comfortable in the centre of midfield . He is left @-@ footed , although the left side is not his natural position , and he is rarely deployed as a winger . In 2007 , Clitheroe chairman , Carl Garner , said that Byrom has " tremendous skill and potential " , adding " Joel is a quality player . He can do things with the ball that players on the television can 't . In May 2009 , Stevenage manager Graham Westley believed that the acquisition of Byrom would " give the squad more balance " , and has also described him as having a " cultured left @-@ foot " that enables him to open up opposition defences . On securing the signature of Byrom , Westley said , " Joel is very creative going forward and is going to be one hell of a player . I was delighted to secure his signature as he is a real talent " . Dino Maamria has called Byrom a " creative midfielder " , as well as being able to unlock defences . Byrom has called himself " a good passer of the ball " , as well as being able to " chip in with a few goals and generally get the team ticking over " . In March 2010 , following Stevenage 's 3 ? 0 win against Crawley Town , a game in which Byrom scored a goal from just inside Crawley 's half , Westley said that Byrom has the " ability to score spectacular goals " .

= = Honours = =

Stevenage

Conference National (1) : 2009 ? 10

League Two play @-@ offs (1) : 2010 ? 11

Northampton Town

Football League Two (1) : 2015 ? 16

= = Career statistics = =

As of 12 January 2014 .