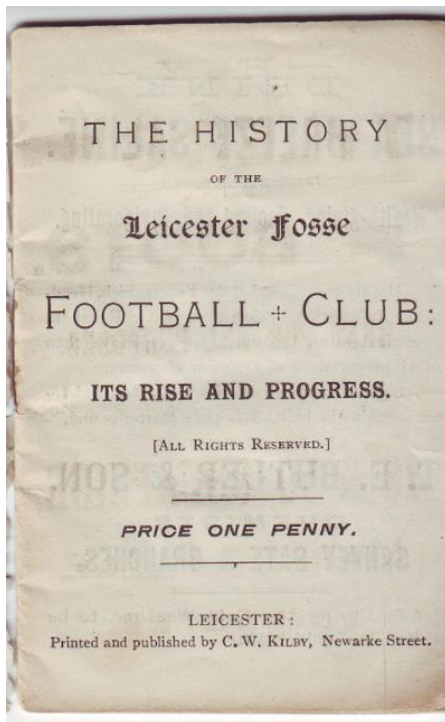


~1885-86~

The popularity of Association Football was increasing across the country. Over 15,000 witnessed the final of the English Challenge Cup Final between West Bromwich Albion and Blackburn Rovers. The game ended in a goal-less draw. The replay, the first in the 10 years of the Cup, was staged on the Derbyshire County Cricket Ground at Derby. So great was the interest that in spite of a heavy



snowstorm on the morning of the match that 12,000 spectators braced the wretched conditions. Winning 2-0 Blackburn were presented with the cup for the third year in succession to equal the feat accomplished by the Wanderers covering the years 1876-77-78. The Wanderers handed back the trophy to the Football Association, stipulating that in the future it could never be won outright. In acknowledgement of the success of the Rovers, the FA presented the club with a commemorative shield.

Leicester Fosse's second season in many ways followed the same pattern as the first. Very little interest was shown in the "kicking game" by the Leicester public. It is often stated that the local press were reluctant to report or to accept any details of matches played. Although this may be true for Leicester, interest in the county was considerable. This was reflected in the numerous match reports written by county town correspondents and published in columns covering news and events in Barrow, Coalville, Loughborough, Melton, and Sheepshed etc.

During the season several new men appeared in the team and it was evident that a determined effort was being made to get a team together to work as a team and not to indulge in individual kick and rush tactics. Weekly team selection and tactics meetings were initially held at the West Bridge Coffee House, before moving to the Eastgates Coffee House, with views of the clock tower, which had been constructed less than years earlier, in the heart the town. William Johnson was again appointed captain. Subscriptions were raised to 3 shillings per annum for the 1885-86, plus a one shilling joining fee. The total receipts for the season were £4 16s 10d and expenditure £4 18s 10 ½ d, resulting in the Fosse the end of their second season two shillings and ha'penny in the red.

Fixtures were still predominantly against local sides - Belgrave, Mill Hill House, Leicester Town and St Marys, amongst others, although they did travel to play Market Harborough in February. Fosse's opening fixture was a 6-0 destruction of Trinity of Hope, who they had beaten in a game of rugger in their inaugural season, at Victoria Park. The first match of note was against Mill Hill House, who defeated the Fosse by one goal to nil on the Victoria Park after one hour and forty minutes play. The School club was assisted by Ernest A Nuttall, who in later seasons proved so able and popular "skipper" for the Fosse team. These were the days when affiliation to official centres of the English Association was unknown in the district. As an example of the irregularities that sometimes occurred, is the engagement entered into between the Fosse club and the "Old Loughborians" to be played at Loughborough on March 20th 1886. When the first team arrived

at Loughborough on that day they failed to find out opponents, or their secretary, or even the ground on which the match was to be played, and presuming that men of Loughborough had gone to the local races, the first team did the same. Not until the last match of the season (Victoria Park, 17 April 1886), did the Club attract considerable attention on the part of the public; the Fosse being successful against Leicester Town's first team by beating them 2 goals to nil. On the field of play they performed well, losing just one of the 11 games played, against Mill Hill House, a team of teachers who were probably at the time the best side in Leicester. They scored almost 2.5 goals per games and conceded just 4 throughout the season.

According to the 1893 'The History of the Fosse' , the club played 18 matches, wining 13, loing 3 and drawing the remaining two. Results have to date only been found for 11 of these games, with a further fixture being known to have taken place, away at Market Harborough in February 1886. Of the 11 games, 9 were staged on Victoria Park, the others took place on a private ground, Belgrave and in Syston.

Leicester Fosse 1885-86

Date	Opposition	Res.	Score	Scorers	Match Details	
1	03.10.1885	Trinity Band of Hope (VP)	W	6-0	J Johnson (2), West (2), Coleman, Lewitt	A one-sided game.
2	17.10.1885	Wyggeston Boys School (VP)	W	4-1		
3	24.10.1885	Harborough 2 nd Team (VP)	D	1-1		
4	07.11.1885	Mill Hill House (VP)	L	0-1		
5	14.11.1885	Belgrave (A)	W	3-0	J. Johnson, E. Johnson, West - played on a private ground	
6	21.11.1885	St Mary's (VP)	W	3-0		
7	30.01.1886	Mill Hill House (VP)	W	3-0	J. Johnson (2), E. Johnson The School played with one player short	Fosse played one man short.
8	06.02.1886	Wyggeston Boys School (VP)	W	1-0		
9	13.02.1886	Syston Wreake Valley (A)	W	2-1	J Johnson, E Johnson	
10	20.02.1886	Belgrave (VP)	W	1-0	Gardner	
11	xx.02.1886	Market Harborough (A)	?	-?		
12	17.04.1886	Leicester Town (VP)	W	2-0	Bankart (2)	

Notes:

VP - Victoria Park, Leicester

A - Away

Leicester Fosse 1885-86

				T Austin	W Johnson	F Burdett	H Johnson	F Gardner	J Johnson	B Lewitt	A West	F Coleman	E Johnson	E Smith	F Bromwich	Toone	F Whitworth	C Coleman	A Simpson	Bone	Staynes	Bolter	G A Knight	Bankart	McAlpin
1	03.10.1885	Trinity Band of Hope	VP	G	TQB	TQB	HB	HB	F	F	F	F	F	F											
2	17.10.1885	Wyggeston School	VP	G	HB	TQB	HB	HB	L		C	C	L		R	R									
3	24.10.1885	Harborough 2 nd Team	VP																						
4	07.11.1885	Mill Hill House	VP																						
5	14.11.1885	Belgrave	A		B	G	HB	HB	L		C		L	C			B	R	R						
6	21.11.1885	St Mary's	VP																						
7	30.01.1886	Mill Hill House a	VP		TQB		HB	HB	LW		C		RW	G						TQB	HB	RW			
8	06.02.1896	Wyggeston School	VP																						
9	13.02.1886	Syston Wreake Valley	A	G	B		R	HB	L		C		L	HB			B		R				HB		
10	20.02.1886	Belgrave	VP	G	HB	TQB	RW	HB	LW		RW		LW	HB			TQB		C						
11	17.04.1886	Leicester Town	VP	G	B			HB	LW		RW		LW	HB			B						HB	RW	C

Notes:

A – away, VP – Victoria Park

a -only 10 men listed in the published match report

Positions

- B Back
- C Centre
- F Forward
- G Goalkeeper
- HB Half-back
- L Left
- R Right
- TQB Three Quarter-Back

~ Fosse Match Reports 1885-6 ~

#1 FOSSE v. TRINITY BAND OF HOPE. – The above match was played on the Victoria Park on Saturday, and after a rather one-sided game, ended in a win for the Fosse by six goals to love. The Trinity kicked off against the wind, but the ball was immediately returned, and during the whole of the first half of the game play was in the Trinity ground. J. Johnson worked well, scoring a goal, and West did the same directly afterwards. After half-time J. Johnson again put the ball through, and although the Trinity backs did what they could West, Coleman and Lewitt each augmented the score by a goal. Fosse: T. Austin (goal), W. Johnson (captain), F. Burdett (three-quarterbacks), H. Johnson (captain), F. Gardner (half-backs), J. Johnson, B. Lewitt, A. West, F. Coleman, E. Johnson, and E. Smith (forwards).

Leicester Chronicle – 10 October 1885

#2 FOSSE v WYGGESTON SCHOOL — The above match was played on the Victoria Park on Saturday last, and after an exciting game, ended in favour of the Fosse by four goals (one disputed) to one goal. The Fosse started play one man short, but notwithstanding this the game carried on mostly in the Wyggeston ground during the first half. J Johnson supported by West, dribbled away in fine style, passing the Wyggeston men time after time. After one of these runs he passed the ball to West, who neatly scored the first goal for the Fosse. On restarting the Wyggeston made an effort to take ball into their opponents' territory, but it was run up the field again and another goal scored for the Fosse, Coleman sending the ball through with hard kick. At half-time both teams worked well and Mr Catlow rushed the ball up the field and put in fast shot, which Austin handled, but, owing to the slippery conditions of the ball up the ground, failed to prevent it from passing through. This spurred the Fosse on fresh efforts J Johnson did good service running the ball up the ground and scoring another goal for his side. After kick-off he repeated run and passed to E Johnson, who sent the ball through, Law objected to the goal on the ground that Johnson took ball out of play, but neither of the umpires was near enough to give a decision after this. Soon after this time was called. Sides: Fosse: T Austin, goal; F Burdett, three-quarter back; W Johnson(captain), H Johnson, F Gardner, half-backs; F Bromwich, Toone, right; F Coleman, A West, centre; E Johnson, J Johnson, left. Wyggeston: Headley, goal; Mr Law, three-quarter back; Mr Thirlby, Staines, half-backs; W Smith, Clarke, right; Mr Catlow, centre; Hames, Gibson, left. Umpires: Mr B Taylor and Mr A Smith.

Leicester Daily Mercury - 20 October 1885

#3 The Harborough second eleven played a game with the Leicester Fosse club on Victoria Park on Saturday, which resulted in a draw, each team scoring one goal.

Leicester Chronicle – 31 October 1885

#5 FOSSE v BELGRAVE – This match was played on Saturday last, under Association Rules, on the Belgrave private grounds, and resulted in a win for the Fosse. Play commenced at 3.15, and the Fosse having won the toss, the Belgrave, who kicked off, immediately ran the ball towards the Fosse goal, but Whitworth relieved his side by a good kick which gave the Fosse forwards the opportunity of scoring a goal, the ball being well run up and kicked through by E Johnson. The Belgrave played up well and made two or three good shots at goal, which were stopped by the Fossil backs, and half-time was called before any other alteration being made in the game. The Fosse having kicked off, their opponents again ran the ball dangerously near the Fosse goal, but by good play of Whitworth and W Johnson, the ball was sent forward and placed a second goal to the credit of the Fosse. After the kick off the game was very quick; the Belgrave kicked very hard and obtained two or three corners, but nothing came of them. Towards the end of the game the ball was again run forward and was sent between the posts by A West, who scored the third goal, leaving the Fosse winners by three goals to nil. Sides: Fosse: Goal, F Burdett; backs, F Whitworth, W Johnson (captain); half-backs, H Johnson, F Gardner; right, C Coleman, A Simpson; centre, A West, E Smith; left J Johnson, E Johnson. Belgrave: Goal, Edgely; backs, J Pole, S Pole; centre, G Pole; left, E Carr, G Walton; right, A Smith, H Hobson.

Leicester Daily Post – 17 November 1885

#7 FOSSE v. MILL HILL HOUSE SCHOOL. – The return match between these clubs was played on Saturday. The Fosse (who had to play one man short) having won the toss elected to play with the wind, the School starting the ball. The game was very equal, neither side for some time being able to score, although the Fosse

having the wind in their favour had a little the best of play, but the goal kicking of Whitworth always relieved his side. At length the Fosse having again worked the ball up to the School goal J. Johnson managed to head it through from a very good kick by H. Johnson – thus scoring the first goal. On returning the School's right wing took the ball dangerously near the Fosse goal, but W. Johnson, whom the School forwards could never manage to get by, relieved his side, and the game carried on with varying success until, after some passing, E. Johnson made a neat shot and scored another goal for the Fosse. The School on kicking off renewed their attack on the Fosse goal, and E. Smith had to save his charge by using his hands. The game was even closer than before, the slight wind making the School backs very effective, and most of the play was in the middle of the ground. After some good passing between E. Johnson and A. West the ball was passed to J. Johnson, who scored a third goal for the Fosse by three goals to nil. For the losers Whitworth and McAlpin were the most conspicuous for their good play – the last named eliciting applause from both sides. Staynes and Garner also played well for the Fosse. The teams were:- Mill Hill House: Berridge, goal; Whitworth and Davis, three-quarters-backs; Pilsbury and Clifford, half-backs, Haverfield, and McAlpin, right wing; Brice and Tyler, centre; Sturgess and N. Tyler, left wing. Fosse: Smith, goal; W. Johnson (captain) and Bone, three-quarters-backs; Gardner, Staynes, and H. Johnson, half-backs; E. Johnson and Bolter, right wing; West, centre; J. Johnson, left wing. Umpires – (Fosse) W. E. Taylor, (School) Herr Widmer.

Leicester Chronicle – 6 February 1886

#9 FOSSE v WREAKE VALLEY (SYSTON) – The return match between these clubs was played on Saturday, at Syston, under Association rules. The Wreake Valley won the toss and elected to play against the wind, the Fosse therefore having the kick-off. During the early period of the match the play proved very even, and nothing of a definite character was recorded. The Fosse made some very near shots but could not get the ball through. On both sides the forwards worked vigorously, Brain did some good service for his side. After crossing over at half-time (the Fosse now having the wind against them) the character of the game seemed to change entirely. The Wreake Valley kicked off and at once made a rush to the Fosse goal, and were very near scoring. This attack seemed to rouse the Fosse, and they in their turn rushed the ball towards their opponents' goal, and J Johnson, by some plucky play, managed to put it through – scoring the first goal for the Fosse. On restarting, the Wreake Valley played fiercely and worked hard to score, but the Fosse backs kept their goal intact, and the forwards receiving the ball from the again rushed it up the field, and H Johnson, evading the Wreake Valley backs, put a second goal to the credit of the Fosse. The Wreake Valley, who still played most determinedly, were at last rewarded for their exertions by a goal, which Brain kicked from the middle of a scrimmage in front of the Fosse goal. H Johnson ought to have scored again for the Fosse, but after getting by the Wreake Valley backs he missed his shot at goal. There was no further point score by either side, although the Systonians tried hard to make the game a tie, but Whitworth's defensive play was too good for them, and the call of time left the Fosse victorious by two goals to one. Brain was the most conspicuous for his good play amongst the Wreake Valley forwards; Sharpe and Hitchcox also played well and Dalley, at the back was very useful to his side. Wreake Valley: - Goal, H. Parry; backs, Dr Baird, and Woodcock; half-backs, Dalley, J. Parry and Rogers; forwards, (right) Sharpe and Stacey, (centre) Brain, (left) Nutall and Hitchcox. Fosse: - Goal, Austin; backs, F Whitworth and W Johnson; half-backs, Knight, Gardner and Smith; forwards, (left) J Johnson and E Johnson, (centre) S West, (right), A Simpson and H Johnson. Umpire, W E Taylor.

Loughborough Herald & North Leicestershire Gazette - 18 February 1886

#10 FOSSE v BELGRAVE – These teams met on Saturday last, on the Victoria Park under Association rules. The Belgrave turning up rather late, play was not commenced till four o'clock, when the Fosse kicked off. The game was very evenly contested and for some time neither side was able to score, but at length Gardner put in a neat shot and secured a goal for the for Fosse. On restarting the Belgrave played with great spirit and about five minutes before half-time they worked the ball towards the Fosse goal, and one of the Fosse, in stopping it from going through touched it with hands and the umpire gave a foul, but the ball going through just after, the Belgrave would not give in to the umpire's decision, and claimed a goal which the Fosse disputed. After half-time the Fosse kept the ball entirely in the Belgrave ground but could not manage to put it through, although many shots were made. Both sides worked hard and towards the latter part of the game the Fosse had several corner kicks but nothing of them, and at the call of time the Fosse claimed victory by one goal to nil. Whitworth played well at the back for the Fosse. The following composed the Fosse team: Austin, goal; Whitworth and Burdett, three quarter-backs; W Johnson (captain) Gardner and

Smith, half-back; forwards, H Johnson, and West, right-wing; Simpson, centre, J Johnson and E Johnson left-wing. Umpire W E Taylor. The Belgrave names are not to hand.

Leicester Daily Mercury – 23 February 1886

#11 FOSSE v. LEICESTER TOWN A.F.C. – The return match between these clubs was played on Saturday on Victoria Park. At 3.45 C. McAlpin started the ball for the Fosse. The game was pretty even for a considerable time, until the ball was at length worked towards the Leicester goal by the Fosse forwards, assisted by the good play of Knight at half-back; and Bankart placed the first goal to their credit. On restarting Leicester tried hard to equalise matters, but in spite of the good play of their forwards the opposing backs succeeded in relieving their side, Whitworth and W. Johnson being especially conspicuous. After kick-off both sides worked hard to score, and the ball travelled from end to end, Smith having to handle several times to save his charge. Knight and McAlpin made several runs down the field, and from a good centre by the former Bankart scored a second goal for the Fosse. Soon after a corner-kick fell to the Fosse but owing to the wind the ball went outside. Leicester now carried the game dangerously near their opponent's goal, but they were again unsuccessful. Soon after "time" was called, leaving the Fosse victorious by two goals to nil. Sides, Leicester: - W. A Smith (goal), D. McAlpin, K. Pearse (backs), E. Pearse, Horner, Sims (half-backs); forwards, Harrison, W. Smith (right), Bates (centre), Wilkinson, Chadwick (left). Fosse: - Austin (goal), F. Whitworth, W. Johnson (backs), E. Smith, G.A. Knight, F. Gardner (half-backs); forwards, West, Bankart (right), C. McAlpin (centre), J. Johnson, E. Johnson (left). Umpire, Mr. W.E. Taylor.

Leicester Chronicle – 24 April 1886