Leicester City Locations

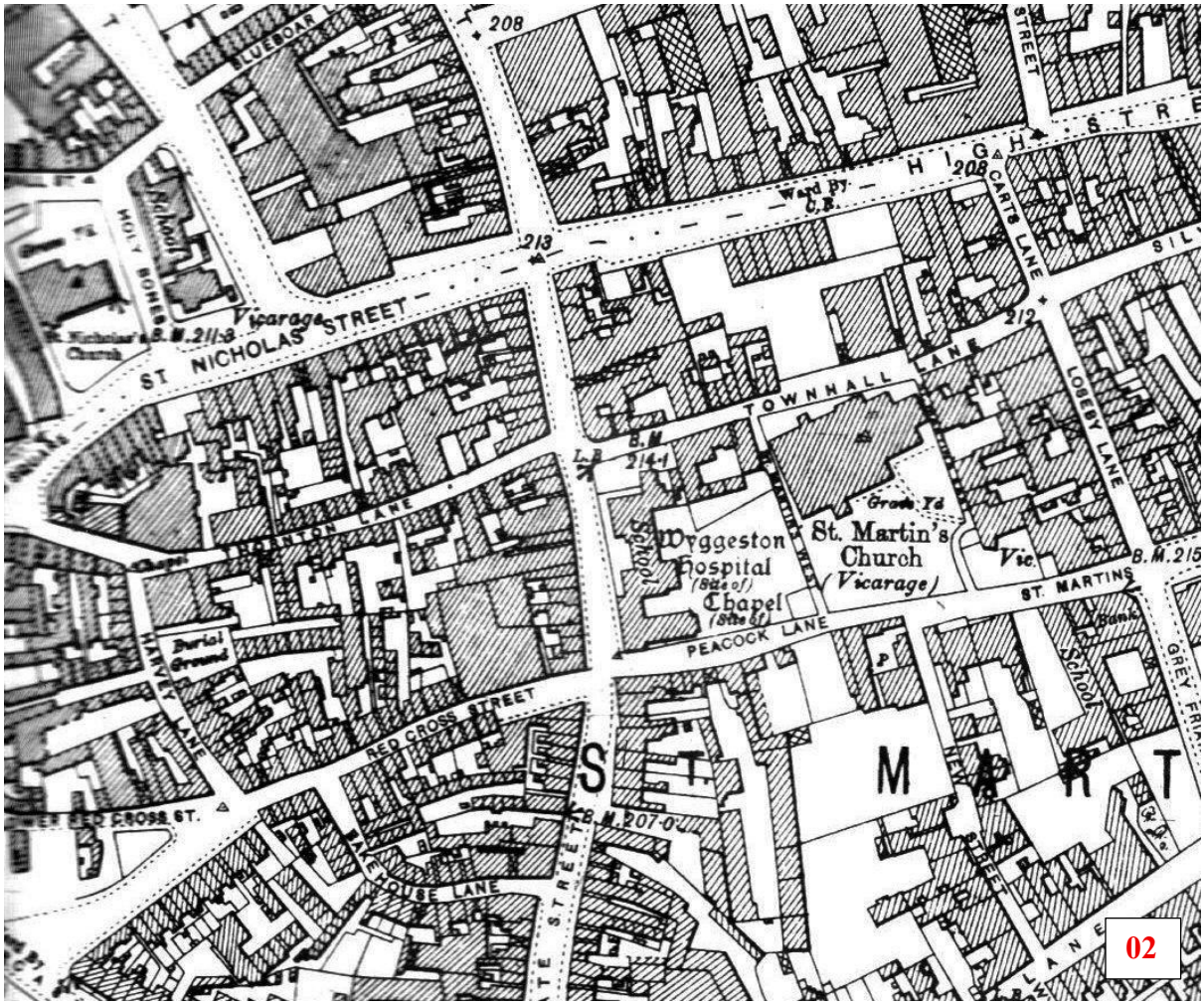
There are many locations in Leicester and Leicestershire which have been very significant in the history of Leicester Fosse and Leicester City.

Some of the buildings have long gone, some have changed and some are still with us. Club Historian John Hutchinson's new series revisits each of these sites and tells the story behind them.

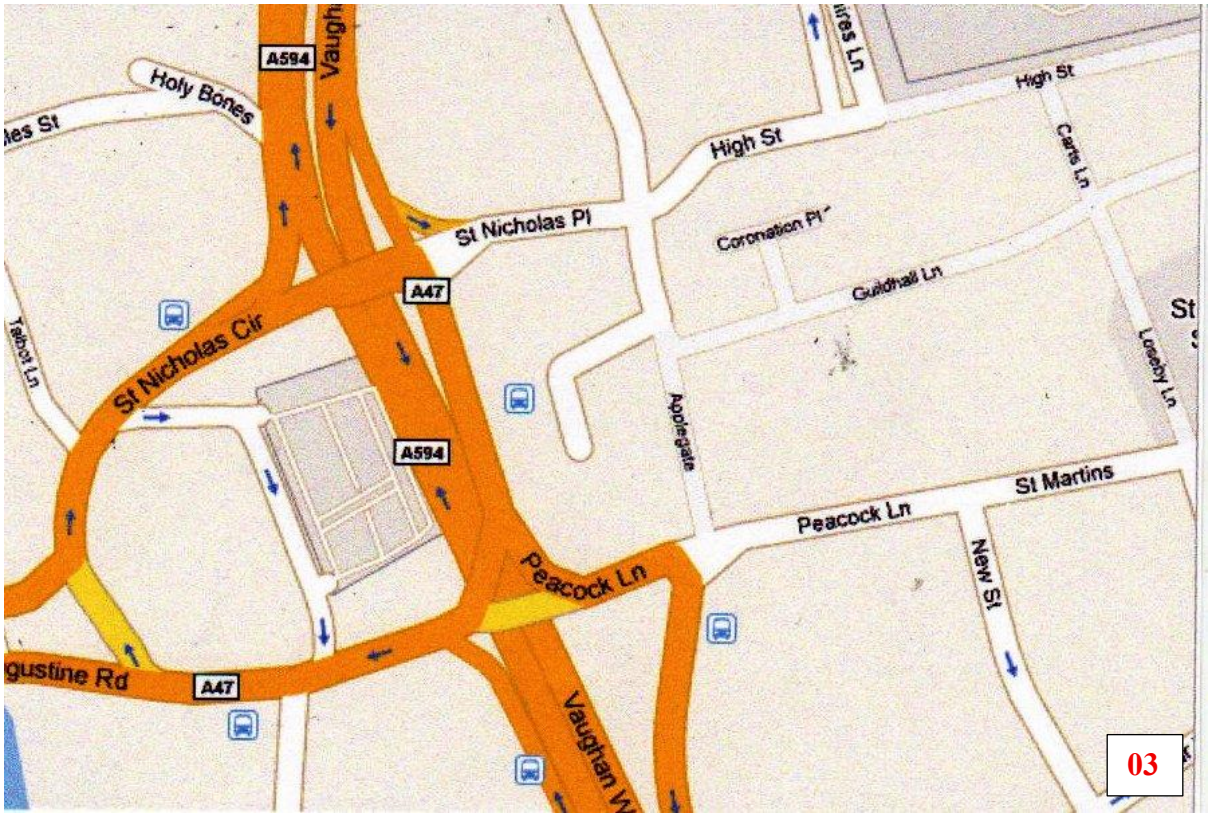
2. Wyggeston School

Several of the original founders of Leicester Fosse, the forerunner of Leicester City Football Club, were ex-pupils of the Wyggeston Hospital School.

Picture 01 is an early photograph of the school. It is the three storey building to the left of the photograph.



Picture 02: This was located on the corner of Peacock Lane and Applegate Street next to what was St Martins Church, which later became Leicester Cathedral.



Picture 02a is a map of the area today which has been much changed with the construction of Vaughan Way, the Southgates Underpass, St. Nicholas Circle and Jubilee Square.

Picture 03 and 04: The school was built in 1876. It had 500 pupils and 20 teachers, and contained science laboratories, an art room and a technical teaching room.

It was built on the site of the old Wyggeston Hospital, **(Picture 05)** chapel **(Picture 06)** and almshouses. These were demolished in the 1870s.

In later years the school building housed Alderman Newton School and then Leicester Grammar School.

It is now part of Leicester Cathedral's St Martin's House. **(Picture 07)**

In the Club's archives, there is a letter written nearly twenty years ago by a lady called Gillian Ashby.

This unique letter gives an understanding of the role Wyggeston School played in the foundation of Leicester Fosse because it provides an insight into the family life of one of the Wyggeston pupils who helped found the Club.

This boy was her grandfather Arthur Douglas Ashby, who was also known as Ada, after his name's initials.

Gillian's great-grandfather, Ada's father, was William Ashby, who had a boot and shoe factory on Gwendolen Road in North Evington.

Ada and his six brothers all went to Wyggeston School, as did his two sisters who went to Wyggeston Girls School which was then on Humberstone Gate.

This large family all went to Friar Lane Baptist Church in Leicester, which had a football team, in keeping the Muscular Christianity movement of the late 19th century, which encouraged sport on the grounds that it was a force for the good, both morally and physically,

Ada played for Friar Lane Baptist Church's football team but some of his Wyggeston school mates played for the Emmanuel Baptist Chapel, which we featured in the first instalment of this series.

Gillian's letter goes onto explain how Ada encouraged some of his Wyggestonian friends who went to the Bible Class at Emmanuel Chapel to join the Friar Lane team.

The strong link between the football teams of the two chapels resulted in some of the lads meeting in a garden shed at the Ashby family's home on Fosse Road to form Leicester Fosse Football Club in 1884.

Ada played in the very first Fosse game on 1 November 1884 on a field off Fosse Road. In later years, his wife, Gillian's grandmother, kept his shirt from that game for 40 years and then cut it up for dusters.

Gillian's letter then reveals information about the subsequent lives of Ada and his siblings who all attended the Wyggeston School. This information has never been published before.

In later years, Ada, like his brothers Percy, Sidney (and possibly Kenneth) stayed in Leicester, working in the family firm, although Sidney later set up his own elastic webbing business called Ashby and Brant in a factory near Vestry Street , off Humberstone Gate.

Two other brothers, Archie and Reg emigrated to the USA, where Reg was murdered when his store was attacked. His body was found behind the Hoover Dam on the Nevada Arizona border.

His two other brothers were Percy who worked as a traveller in Scotland and Charles who became a telephone area manager in Norwich.

Ada's sister Isobel supported the women's suffrage movement, was a JP and a Quaker and helped with the Kindertransport helping child refugees who had fled Nazi Germany.

His other sister Edith joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment as a nurse during the First World War.

Isabel, Edith Sidney shared a house in Stretton Road and future Prime Minister Ramsey McDonald stayed with them whenever he visited Leicester.

Ada died when he was only 36.

In 2002 Gillian placed a brick in the stadium wall detailing Ada's name and the date of Leicester Fosse's first ever game as a way of acknowledging her grandfather's role in the establishment of the Club. **(Picture 08)**

Gillian's letter gives a hitherto unknown insight into the influence that Wyggeston School had, not only on the Ashby family but also on some of the other founders of Leicester Fosse.