LEICESTER CITY LANDLORDS

Throughout the history of the professional game, players have faced the problem of what to do when they hang up their boots. Many Leicester Fosse and Leicester City players took over pubs, several of which have now disappeared. This season we will be rediscovering and revisiting these 'Players' Pubs' and uncovering the stories about them and about the landlords who ran them.

The Player: Charles Rosevear

Charles Rosevear signed for Leicester Fosse in March 1900 from Leicester Imperial. Having earned his living in Leicester's shoe making industry, he played for Fosse as an amateur. He was a centre-forward who played in the 1901/02 season, when the Club was embroiled in a fight against re-election. When he left Leicester Fosse in 1902, he played for Leicester Imperial again before moving to Leicester Olympic. After he retired from football, he became landlord of a pub at 29 Northgate Street called The Crown and Thistle.

The Pub: The Crown And Thistle

The location of the Crown and Thistle was one of the worst pub sites in Leicester. Northgate Street was in Leicester's densely populated Frog Island area. A blue brick railway viaduct cut a swathe through the area's houses and factories at roof level. This carried trains to the nearby Great Central Railway Station. The railway crossed Northgate Street on a steel bowstring bridge. This bridge was only inches away from the Crown and Thistle's

upstairs rooms (see picture below). The noise of the trains was deafening for the drinkers in the pub, which was not only shaken by the proximity of the passing trains but also regularly enveloped in the steam and cinders which issued from the passing steam locomotives.

The Crown and Thistle predated the railway and had a history of larger-than-life landlords. In the 1870s it had been run by a colourful Leicester-born character called Halford Horatio Heich. He had fought in the American Civil War for the Northern side, before returning to England with a considerable amount of gold. This was stolen from under his bed in his lodgings in Wharf Street by his landlord's family. He returned to America for a brief spell before taking over the Crown and Thistle with his wife Fanny.

Charles too was a larger-than-life figure. He was a well-known singer in the clubs around Leicester. His spell as landlord at the Crown and Thistle lasted for many years. He was still working behind the bar when he was 80 in the late 1950s.

Charles died in 1961, two years after pulling his last pint. The pub itself, along with the railway bridge, and much of the viaduct, was demolished in the 1980s.