# 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.**

## Dennis Sharp's Hosiery Factory, Bell Street, Wigston

Dennis Ewart Sharp **(Picture 01**) was a key figure in the history of Leicester City in the 20th century. He served as a director for 37 years, between 1946 and 1983, twice becoming Chairman, from 1964 - 1967 and from 1978 -1981.

When he joined the Board, he owned a Hosiery factory, D E Sharp Ltd. **(Picture 02)** in Bell Street in Wigston,**(Picture 03**) which he established in the 1930s. It was demolished in the 1960s when the business moved to a factory on Pullman Road in Wigston.

When Dennis became a director in 1946, the Club had survived the challenges brought about by the Second World War, but it was £2,700 in debt ( £124,000 in current day values), had a ground which had been badly damaged by the Luftwaffe and by a fire, and was in desperate need of new capital.

To address these problems, the 1946 AGM increased the share capital from £10,000 to £40,000 (£1.8 million in today's values). Five retiring directors (Alf Pallett, Len Shipman, Tom S. Bloor, William Wileman and Sidney Needham) were re-elected. A sixth retiring director Leslie Lovell Green didn't want to stand due to pressure of business.

Dennis Sharp was elected in his place.

Dennis's decisions and financial support, with funds generated from his factory, were very significant factors in the Club's many successes during his 37 years on the Board.

These included the Club's longest unbroken spell in the top division, a European Campaign, four FA Cup Finals and winning the League Cup, the Charity (Community) Shield and four Second Division Championships.

Reading left to right, **Picture 04** shows Dennis and his wife, together with the Bloors (Meat providers) the Shipmans (Haulage industry), Alf Pallett (Plastics industry) and the Needhams (Shoe industry).

Between them, members of these families served a total of 262 years on the board~~,~~

Dennis was part of the Burridge/Sharp family, which collectively served on Leicester City's Board of Directors for most of the 20th century.

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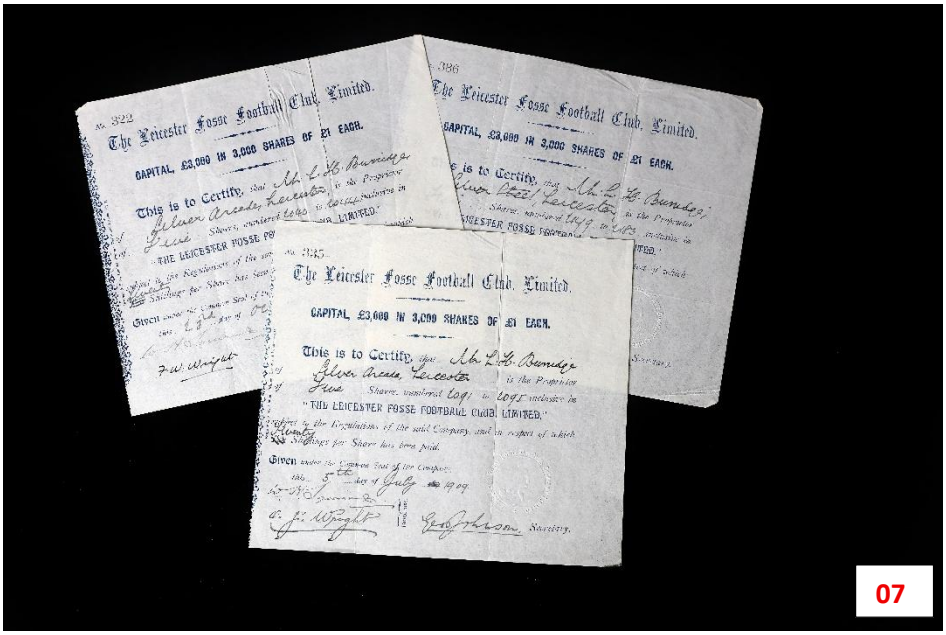
His father-in-law, Louis Burridge **(Picture 05)** had owned a hosiery factory in Wellington Street. Louis' involvement with the Club began as a result of his friendship with the Fosse director (and ex-player) Dick Pudan **(Picture 06**). Louis bought shares in Leicester Fosse in 1909 **(Picture 07),** was a founder director of Leicester City in 1919, served on the board until 1940 and was Chairman twice in the 1920s and 1930s.

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Dennis, whose father Leonard Sharp was a textile wholesaler based in Castle Street and who had been maximum shareholder in the Club, married Ida, Louis' daughter.

Another family member Jack Burridge, was a director from 1959-1974

Dennis' son John Sharp was a Leicester City Director from 1990-1997. When he left the Board he ended a very significant chapter in Leicester City's history because his family had been Directors for

total of over  80 years, dating back to Fosse times. It was one of the great dynastic families which helped establish Leicester City as a force in the football world.

Dennis' daughters, Anne Bloor and Julia Warner have provided us with some further information about Dennis. As well as football and business, their father had a remarkable commitment to the Church. They told us that "He was organist at St. Anne's Church in Western Park for over fifty years. It was football on Saturday afternoon and church twice on a Sunday. We only had two or three Saturdays free in the whole year. The Directors took an interest in the reserves and youth teams and were always travelling to matches. Father and grandfather (Louis Burridge) were both, in their time, Chairmen of the Football Combination (The Reserve League) and the Leicester Mutual League".

Today, nothing remains of Dennis Sharp's Bell Street factory which had played such an important part in Leicester City's history.  The whole of Bell Street has been redeveloped into a partially pedestrianised shopping precinct. **(Picture 08)**