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 Landlord: George Smith

Although not a player, George Smith (featured in Foxes Family Album in the Bolton Matchday Magazine) was a key figure in Leicester City's history between 1925 and 1940.

When Leicester City was re-formed in 1919, the role of Secretary and Manager was combined. Peter Hodge was the first man to be appointed to that post and held it twice, from 1919-1926 and again from 1932 until his death in 1934.

In 1925, George Smith was appointed to the newly created post of Assistant-Secretary to help Peter Hodge with the increased workload created by Leicester City being promoted to the old First Division that year.

He fulfilled the same role for Willie Orr (manager 1926-32), Peter Hodge again (1932-34) and Arthur Lochhead who was manager between 1934-36. By the time that Frank Womack became manager in October 1936, the role of Secretary and Manager had been split with George assuming the full burden of the Secretary's duties. This new status is reflected in the 1937/38 team photo (pictured) which shows George (left) and Frank (right) seated at either end of the front row.

In this role George presided over issues related to Leicester City's promotion (1937) and relegation (1939), together with the huge adjustments made necessary by the outbreak of war in 1939, such as Leicester City's participation in the War-time Regional Leagues and War-time Cup competitions, signing guest players and working around the numerous war time restrictions which surrounded football once war had beeen declared.

In 1940, George was suspended pending the outcome of an FA Inquiry into the Club's books which resulted in the Club being found guilty. This led to lengthy suspensions for some players, some directors and a former manager. George, absolved of any blame, resumed as Club Secretary but resigned later that year to run the Earl of Stamford Arms in Groby.

The Pub: The Earl of Stamford Arms

George is first listed as the pub's landlord in 1941.

In George's day, Groby was a small village of about 2,000 inhabitants. There was a quarry near the centre of the village where an industrial estate now stands

The Earl of Stamford Arms, now known as the Stamford Arms, is still a large pub in the centre of Groby today. Now a listed building, it dates from the late 18th century, and became the family home of the Everards Brewery family. It became a pub in 1921.

George (by now confusingly listed in the Electoral Roll as Louis Henry Smith) was still living in Groby in 1956, prior to his emigrating to New Zealand.