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: Les Major

Les Major came agonisingly close to becoming the first ever Leicester City goalkeeper to play in an FA Cup Final. In 1949, when Leicester City were defeated by Wolverhampton Wanderers at Wembley, Les stood a very good chance of playing.

He had started the season as reserve to Gordon Bradley, who, in addition to his goalkeeping prowess was a talented professional lawn tennis player. Les nevertheless made several appearances up until the time that manager Johnny Duncan signed Arbroath's goalkeeper Ian McGraw in December 1948.

McGraw was then the undisputed first choice and played in every one of the eight games in the FA Cup run which took the city to the Cup Final. However seven days after his heroics in Leicester City's FA Cup semi-final victory over League Champions Portsmouth, McGraw suffered a broken finger in a match at Grimsby, an injury which resulted in the eventual amputation of the injured finger.

Les Major returned to the Leicester City goal for the three league matches leading up to Wembley but was dropped for the big occasion with Gordon Bradley being recalled. His disappointment was probably not eased by the fact that, in the hectic week after Wembley, Les played in two of the three league games which were absolutely vital in the City's desperate and ultimately successful attempt to avoid relegation to the old Third Division.

Like Ken leek, another Leicester City player who was bitterly disappointed to miss out on an FA Cup Final 11 years later, Les left the Club shortly after Wembley and signed for Plymouth Argyle.

The Steward. Hugglescote Working Mens' Club.

Like so many other ex-players, when Les retired from football in 1957 after seven seasons at Plymouth, he entered the licenced trade.

Although he did not become a pub landlord as such, he took on jobs with very similar responsibilities becoming a steward at three Working Mens Clubs in Leicestershire, most notably at the impressive red

brick Hugglescote Working Mens' Club, near Coalville following spells at Newbold Verdon WMC and Coleorton WMC.

As bar steward, Les was a key figure in the life of the local community at a time when Working Mans' Clubs were very popular.

Hugglescote WMC survived until 2011 ago when it changed its status to a Social Club in an attempt to halt the decline in membership.

Les, who died in 2001 shortly before his 76th birthday, also worked at Whitbread's Brewery in Loughborough.