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: Rodney Fern

Rodney Fern, who played in the 1969 FA Cup Final was a pupil, and near contemporary, of Leicester City team mate and captain David Nish at Ashby Grammar School, before going on to play for Measham Social Welfare. From there he was recommended to Leicester City, for whom he signed in December 1966, aged 18. He went on to play 187 games for Leicester City, scoring 40 goals. He played under Matt Gillies, Frank O'Farrell and Jimmy Bloomfield.

Many of these games were in the old First Division. He scored some memorable goals, perhaps the most notable being his spectacular overhead kick against Birmingham City in the opening match of the 1969/70 season. At Leicester, he played alongside such strikers as Frank Large, Andy Lochhead and Allan Clarke. He won a Second Division title with the City in 1971, the Charity (Community Shield) three months later and was a regular in Jimmy Bloomfield's side which consolidated their position back in the top division in 1971/2. In his final season at Leicester he played alongside Keith Weller, whom he regards as the best player he ever played with.

In a move that he later regretted, he signed for Luton Town in 1972 and then played for Chesterfield (1975-79) and Rotherham United (1979-83). He retired in 1984 after a career in which he played nearly 500 games

The Pub: The Ferrers Arms, Lount

Whilst playing for Rotherham United (with whom he won the Third Division title in 1980/81) Rodney and his wife Linda went into the pub trade taking over the Ferrers Arms on Ashby Hill at Lount, a small village near Ashby de la Zouch. He had only intended to play at Rotherham for a year but ended up playing there for three seasons. Although Rodney enjoyed the pub trade, playing football and running the pub was hard for the Ferns although Rodney was still scoring goals. Eventually, after seven years, Rodney

and Linda came out of the pub trade. Rodney then went on to develop a coal merchant business based in Measham operating in the North West Leicestershire and Derbyshire area, where he was very well known. Rodney and Linda then moved to Appleby Magna where they had a livery stable.