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: Mike Stringfellow

Mike Stringfellow, who played for Leicester City between 1962 and 1975, was the only player at the time, apart from Arthur Chandler, to appear in the Club's top ten lists for both appearances (370) and goalscoring (97). A goalscoring outside-left, he formed a legendary partnership with inside-left Davie Gibson. He played in the 1963 FA Cup Final against Manchester United, was a League Cup winner in 1964 and a League Cup runner-up in 1965. Injuries, which blighted his later career, prevented him from playing in the 1969 FA Cup Final. He was awarded a Testimonial by the Club in 1975.

The Pub. The Plough at Littlethorpe.

In November 1975, Mike became landlord of the Plough at Littlethorpe, a pub he drank in. This followed a casual conversation with the retiring landlord who asked him if he fancied taking over the pub when he had gone.

Mike was attracted by the idea, and after a training course at Buxton, he was accepted by Everards Brewery and took out a three year tenancy.

Mike really enjoyed being the landlord. It was a busy pub, particularly in the long hot summer of 1976 with people sitting and drinking both outside the pub and in the adjacent park.

Running the pub was hard work for the Stringfellows, even though the licensing hours were limited. In those days, the pub opened from 12-2pm and from 6pm until 10.30pm, (extended until 11pm on Fridays and Saturdays).

The pub used to do lunchtime snacks and the skittle alley was always very popular, as was the darts team. The rent was £30 per week at a time which was double that paid by Mike's predecessor, at a time when the price of beer was only 20p a pint. Former players, like Jeff Blockley and Dennis Rofe, who both lived locally, used to visit the pub.

Although they enjoyed the life, Mike and his wife left the pub when the tenancy expired in November 1978 as they had two young children at the time. For the next few years Mike worked for Victoria Wine before becoming a newsagent in Sutton-in-Ashfield in 1985.

Mike is a regular attender at Leicester City's home matches.