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.

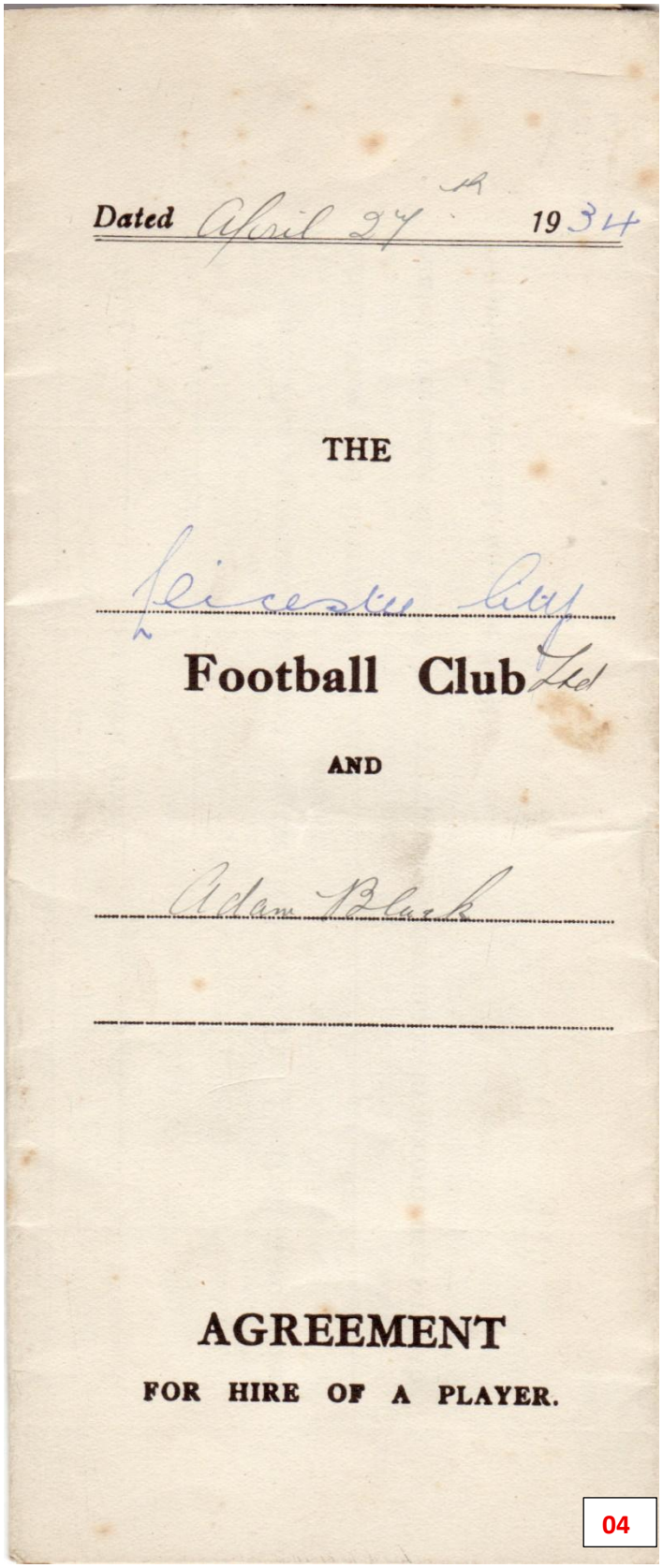
Club Historian John Hutchinson's new series revisits each of these sites and tells the story behind them.

Adam Black's Newsagent and Tobacconist Shop (Picture 01)

On the corner of Wilberforce Road and Gaul Street, not far from the Western pub, there stands a Victorian terrace house which, in the past, had a very strong connection with Leicester City Football Club. A clue to this connection can still be seen in the very faint 'ghost' sign' on the wall of the property, which advertises a magazine called 'Picture Post' **(Picture 02)**

This indicates that the house used to be a newsagent and tobacconist corner shop. For nearly forty years, between 1935 and 1973, this shop was owned and run by Adam Black. **(Picture 03)**

A Scottish full-back, Adam played more league games for Leicester City than any other player (528) in the Club's history. He was in the side which missed the league title by one point in 1929 and he captained the side in the 1930s.



Dated April 27th 1934

THE

Leicester City

Football Club Ltd

AND

Adam Black

AGREEMENT

FOR HIRE OF A PLAYER.

04

Adam's final playing contract at Filbert Street **(Picture 04)** expired on 4 May 1935. He was paid £7 per week (equivalent to about £530 today). This was amended to £8 for first team appearances and £6 for the close season.

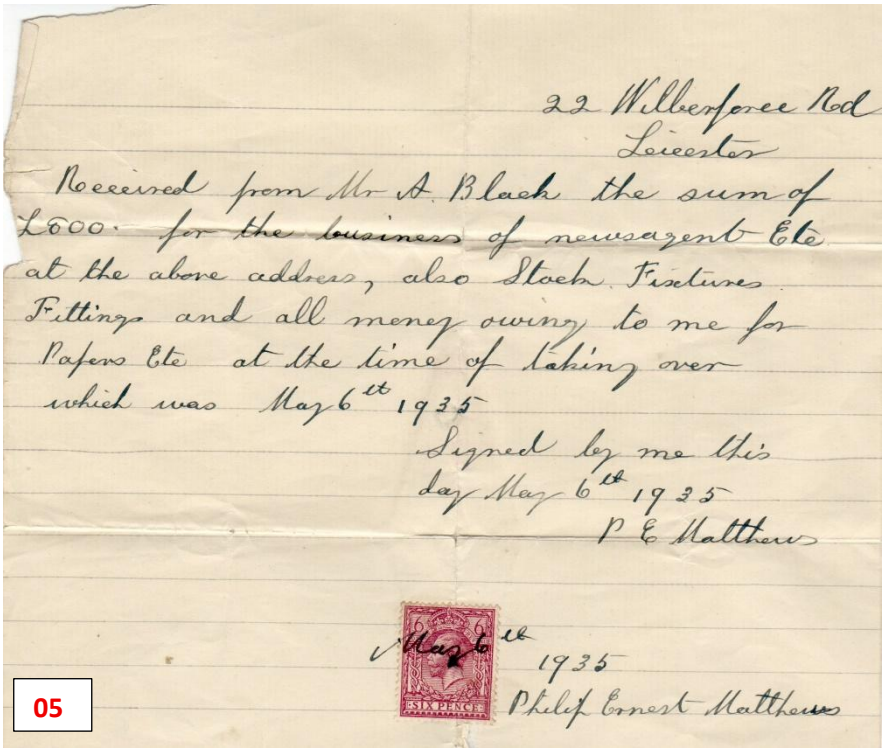
This receipt **(Picture 05)** indicates that when Adam retired from playing in 1935, he paid Philip Matthews £800 for the "*business of newsagent ….also stock, fixtures, fittings and all moneys owing for papers etc at the time of taking over which was May 6th 1935.*" £800 (the equivalent of about £60,500 today) was about two years' wages for Adam, but he had also been awarded three benefit matches by the Club during his career.

Adam's grandsons Alistair and Andrew have given us some unique insights into Adam's post-football career as a newsagent and tobacconist.

They recalled that the shop was always very traditional, dark and musty and that Adam carried a large stock of fireworks for bonfire night. He stacked them alongside boxes of matches! The family always had the best fireworks in the neighbourhood.

The shop's catchment area was between Upperton Road and Braunstone Gate. Many customers were railway men from the nearby Great Central goods depot and engine sheds. One of them gave a model Canadian Pacific locomotive to young Andrew.

The shop's main income was from cigarettes and Andrew recalled that his father and uncle both got into trouble with Adam as youngsters by removing the threads from the silk cigarette cards which were in the packets. They were caught after customers complained.



Adam's favourite tenor was an Italian called Beniamino Gigli. Andrew still has Adam's programme from a performance at De Montfort Hall on 3 December 1946. Adam's carefully hand written notes on the programme can still be seen.

In the 1950s there wasn't a phone at the shop and when Adam's wife sadly died of cancer in 1955, the Club's doctor, when he received the sad news at Filbert Street from the hospital, came to the shop to notify Adam that his wife had passed away.

Adam continued to have a season ticket to watch Leicester City long after he finished playing. He knew the man at the gate and when Andrew as a young boy started going to Filbert Street in 1960, Adam used to smuggle him into the ground under his big belted great coat.

Adam **(Picture 06)** was still delivering papers from his shop well into his seventies, before giving up the shop in 1973.

Sadly, in August 1981, when he was 83, Adam was killed when he was hit by a train.

Today, the ghost sign on the wall of his old shop, which has been now converted back into a house, is a poignant reminder to those who understand its significance of one of Leicester City's greatest players.