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.

The Cascelloid factory, Abbey Lane (Picture 01)

For nearly forty years, Alf Pallett **(Picture 02)** was a major figure in Leicester City's history.

Along with Len Shipman**, (Picture 03)** another local businessman, he joined the board in November 1939 to provide much needed capital for the Club. His money came from his large and modern Cascelloid factory in Abbey Lane which was one of the world's leading manufacturers of celluloid goods.

Without him, and the money he made from his Cascelloid factory, Leicester City Football Club might well have gone into liquidation in 1940.

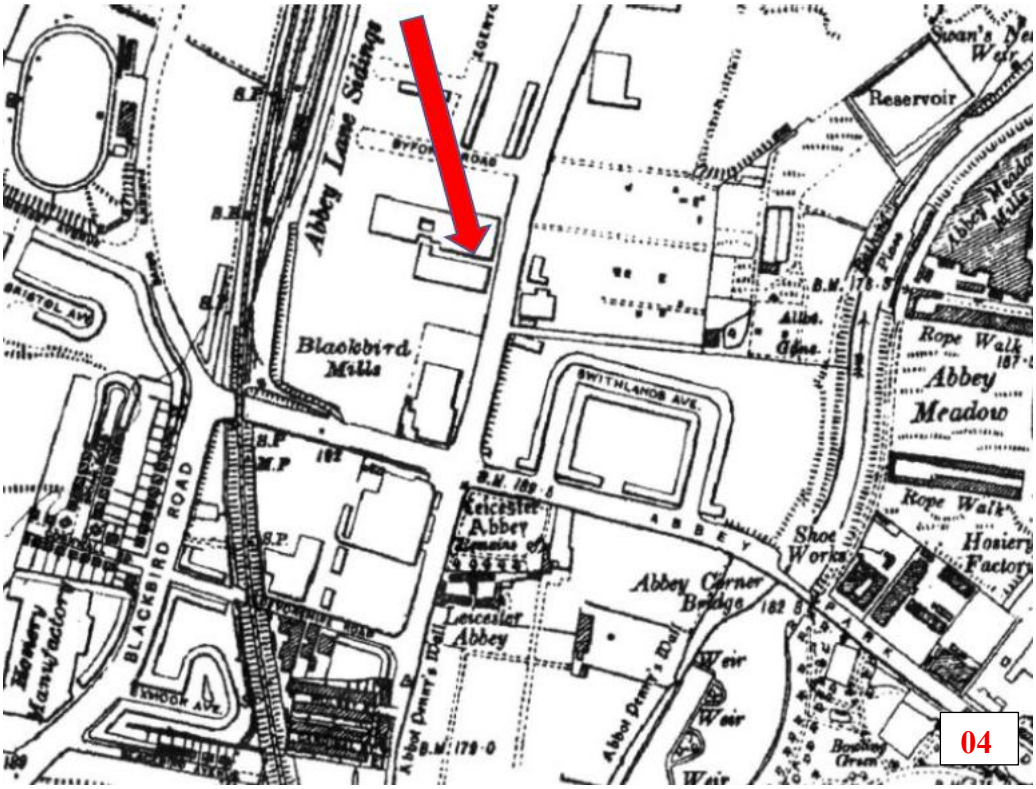
Pallett quickly became Leicester City's Chairman, and he set about guiding the Club through problems that threatened its very existence in 1940. These included a huge financial deficit, infighting between the directors, and an FA investigation into financial malpractice at the Club which resulted in lengthy suspensions for nine directors, twelve players and one former manager. Another challenge was the bombing of Filbert Street by the Luftwaffe.

The Club's archives indicate that some of the Board meetings in 1940/41 were held at his Cascelloid factory. Pallett went on to serve on the Board of Directors for 39 years. He was Chairman twice, between 1940-48 and 1967-70. During that time, the Club won two Second Division titles, reached four FA Cup Finals, won the League Cup, played in European competition and had its longest continuous spell in the topflight.

He had founded his Cascelloid business in Coalville in 1919 to produce celluloid toys and fancy goods.

The first decade was difficult due to bad debts, a disastrous fire, cutthroat competition and a shortage of capital. However, by the end of the 1920s, the company was beginning to flourish and had moved from Coalville toa larger factory in Leicester's Cobden Street.

In 1931, an agreement was reached with a well-established firm called BXL (British Xylonite) who agreed to finance future developments and provide the raw material needed.



The following year, Cascelloid moved to a large, purpose-built modern factory in Abbey Lane, not far from Abbey Park. **(Picture 04)**

A wide range of celluloid goods was manufactured there. These included, toys and dolls, shaving sticks, hairbrushes, table tennis balls and jam pot covers. These goods were sent to countries all around the globe.

In 1935, the company developed the 'Palitoy' trademark for their range of toys and by 1939, two other factories had been opened in Coalville and Stamford.

By the time Pallett became Leicester City's Chairman in 1940, his factory had switched to war production making fuel tanks, parachutes, cartridge containers and eye shields.

The 1,100 employees at Abbey Lane included Leicester City's England international Sep Smith **(Picture 05)** who had a reserved wartime occupation there. This workforce produced over 800 million items during the war.

The factory continued to prosper in the post-war years, manufacturing a huge range of plastic, pvc and polythene products. These included transparent display boxes, moisture proof bags for food packaging, translucent roofing sheets, motor body panels, tank liners and lightweight containers for detergents.

In 2009, Alf Pallett's nephew, Frank Luce, contacted us to say that his uncle introduced him to Filbert Street in 1950, which was the year he also sold Cascelloid to BXL. He then bought two farms, one in Houghton-on-the-Hill and the other in Billesdon, where he developed a herd of short horn dairy cattle.

He also bought two factories in Melton and Oakham which manufactured similar products to those made on Abbey Lane until he retired in 1958.

Continuing on the Leicester City Board for another eleven years he lived on Spencefield Lane before moving to the Albany, near Victoria Park.

After the Cascelloid factory was demolished several years ago, the site reverted to waste ground **(Picture 06)**. Today, an Aldi store **(Picture 07)** stands on the site which was so central to Leicester City's history in the mid-20th century.

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