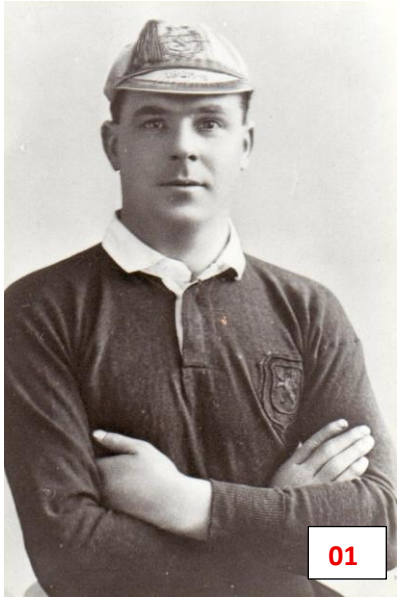
Leicester City Locations

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 Turk's Head. 1930-1966



Johnny Duncan **(Picture 01)** was an inspirational and influential Scotland international who captained Leicester City to promotion in 1925 and to the runners-up spot in the top flight in 1929. Twenty years later he was the first manager to take Leicester City to an FA Cup Final.

A magazine in the Club's archives called 'Football and Sports Favourite,' published in 1928, describes Johnny Duncan as 'one of the finest half-backs in the land'.

Despite his key role in Leicester City's side, Duncan's playing career ended prematurely in 1930.

This was because Johnny wished to become landlord of a pub called the Turk's Head **(Picture 02)**, which was opposite the gates of Leicester Prison. **(Picture 03)**

However the Club refused him permission to be a publican. This was because his contract stated, 'The player shall not engage in any business or live in any place which the Directors of the Club may deem unsuitable.'

Johnny went against this clause in his contract, thus ending his playing career.

Johnny's daughter, Jenny Blackhurst, who is still a regular Leicester City supporter, and who sometimes worked in the pub, has shared her memories of the Turk's Head with us.

The pub dated back to at least 1776.

The building had three storeys. The lounge, tap room and front smoke room were on the ground floor, their walls adorned by pictures of Johnny's football career, including this one of Johnny leading out the Leicester City team **(Picture 04).**

There was a yard at the back, with steps leading down to Infirmary Road **(Picture 05)** There was a cellar underneath the three storeys and barrels were rolled through the yard into the cellar, which was later used an air raid shelter during the Second World War. As you entered the double door into the cellar, there was an area which was later used by the Duncan family to park their car.

.Johnny's brother Tommy Duncan **(Picture 06)** helped him run the pub until he died in 1940. Tommy had also played for Leicester City. His daughter Elsie married the young Leicester City star Don Revie, who later managed Leeds United and England.

The Turk's Head quickly became Leicester's premier sports pub frequented by local sportsmen, local bookies, media people and sporting celebrities.

John Arlott, the renowned cricket commentator, would always have a sandwich and a sherry in the lounge before reporting on Leicestershire County Cricket games. The prominent BBC Sports reported David Coleman was another customer.

Matt Busby the legendary Scottish Manchester United manager also drank in the pub as did the famous Arsenal player turned sports reporter Alex James seen here leaving the pub with Johnny **(Picture 07).** Alex had been a team mate of Johnny's at Raith Rovers in their early days and their Scotland debuts had been on the same day in 1925.

Other customers included the jockey Tom Best who had won the 1946 Lincoln Handicap on Langton Abbot and the Leicester Tigers captain England international Bobby Barr, who later became Secretary and President of the Tigers.

Johnny's ex- Leicester City teammate Arthur Chandler also drank at the Turk's Head as did many local bookies.

Whilst still running the pub, Johnny became Leicester City's manager in 1946 and three years later, he led the team to the Club's first ever FA Cup Final.

Johnny left his post as Leicester City manager in 1950 following disagreements with the Board.

His family were due to move out of the pub in 1966, but just before this, Johnny sadly died in May 1966.

The pub was demolished in the 1970s. Today a carpark **(Picture 08)** stands on the site.