

PHOENIX BETWEEN THE WARS



Tom Dixon was an Aussie who entered Trinity in 1925, spent 7 years getting an engineering degree and played for Phoenix after DUCC's fixtures finished. A quick swing bowler he captained Ireland in 1932, winning all four matches. He took 7 wickets in the win over the West Indies in 1928 and played with George McVeagh in a powerful DUCC XI in 1927. McVeagh probably encouraged him to play for Phoenix. Dixon and his fellow cricketing brother Pat left for India in 1932 and captained Delhi in the first year of the first class Ranji trophy. They both became missionaries and died in Kenya in the 1980s.

TG McVeagh is arguably the greatest all round Irish sportsman ever, being capped at hockey, tennis and squash as well as cricket. His great grandfather Ferdinand had been one of the founders of Phoenix in 1830. A stylish left hander with an eye so good and wrists so strong that he could forego niceties such as keeping his front foot near the ball and still hit the ball elegantly through the covers along the ground. He scored 3 centuries in succession for DUCC when they won the league in 1927 including 170 not out v Phoenix and hit a famous century in the Irish win over the West Indies the following year. His availability for Phoenix, and Ireland, was frequently curtailed by tennis. The star of the Davis Cup team, Ireland reached the semi-final in 1936. He twice beat the great Wimbledon champion Bill Tilden. He won four hockey triple crowns in the 1930s, the last three in succession as captain.

The Irish captain in the 1928 West Indies match was Jim Ganly who was a renowned big hitting batsman, "addicted to tremendous high straight drives", according to an LCU annual of 1941. He was a Leinster CC player until 1932 and won five successive league medals with Leinster. In 1929 he hit 232 in two hours against Phoenix in the league final. He joined Phoenix in 1932, clearly finding the club, or maybe just the bowlers, very friendly. His business was the cattle market just off the North Circular road, so maybe that was a reason for his change of allegiance. In 1936 he won the league with Phoenix, which included scoring 100* in one hour against his old club in Observatory Lane. He was President of the ICU in 1965. He won 12 rugby caps on the wing or centre and was also a tennis international, thus could be seen as a challenger to his friend George McVeagh as Ireland's best all round sportsman.

Jimmy Boucher was certainly the best Irish bowler of his generation and arguably of all time. He was unusual in that he bowled his off breaks at close to medium pace off a fifteen yard run. For a small man he had very long and strong fingers with which he could rip an off break so effectively that a clicking noise could be heard as the ball left his hand and his exaggerated spin caused the ball to dip in flight thus deceiving batsmen. He sometimes had as many as four close catchers on the leg side. He also had batsmen caught at slip with a straight ball. He was the dominating force in Irish and Phoenix cricket as a player and later as administrator. He took great pride in the Phoenix square which he lovingly cared for along with his groundsman. He joined Phoenix as a schoolboy in 1927 (from Civil Service). He took 307 wickets for Ireland at 15.26, topping the English first class averages three times, in 1931, 1937 and 1948. He took 7/13 against New Zealand in 1938, 6/30 versus India in 1936 and 7/37 in an Irish one day win v South Africa in 1947. In domestic cricket he played until the age of 54 and ended his Phoenix career with a record of 1303 wickets at 11.48.



1. Pat Dixon, George McVeagh and Tom Dixon in a DUCC XI, 1928
2. Phoenix Centenary Match team, 1930
3. 1937 Cup Winning XI
4. Jim Ganly in 1923 and as a rugby player
5. Jimmy Boucher