

# THE 'GOLDEN AGE' OF CRICKET



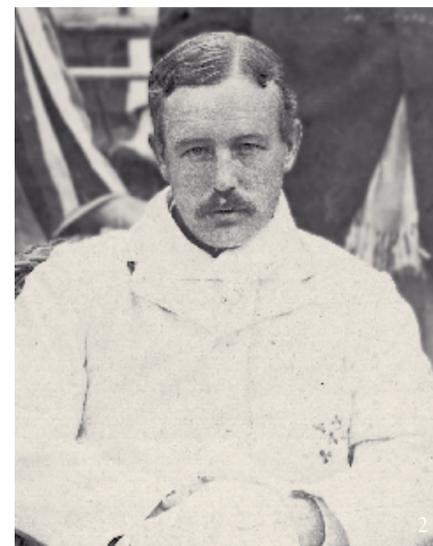
## ARTHUR SAMUELS (1826–1893)

Arthur Samuels appears on the right of the Birkenhead Park photo wearing a top hat. Samuels, who often played as 'S. Arthur', was probably the best known Phoenix cricketer between the 1850s and 1880s and was a resolute defender of underarm 'lob' bowling. He decried the round-arm bowling championed by his pro Lawrence as 'an impurity'. In an 'Under v Round' match that Samuels organised at Phoenix, his underarm team beat the best of the club's round-arm bowlers by 109 runs. 1858 marked the first occasion when an English team travelled to play Phoenix; 'the great Marylebone came over in all its strength', as Samuels put it. Although Phoenix were defeated on this occasion, they won the return engagement in 1862; Samuels played in both matches. He took 53 wickets for Ireland between 1855 and 1869, and was a member of eleven cricket clubs, including DUCC, Kingstown, Gentlemen of Dublin and the United Ireland XI.



## FRANK BROWNING (1868–1916)

Frank Browning can be picked out in many of these photos. He was a first class wicket keeper/batsman who played in what is called the 'Golden Age of Irish Cricket' in the 1890s and 1900s. His greatest success was playing for DUCC Past and Present against the Australian tourists of 1905 in College Park, when he scored a half century in each innings. At a Phoenix v Civil Service match in 1896, Browning was asked by J. Hurford (who was steward of both teams) to play for the opponents in order to 'even up' the two sides. As a result, Browning scored 112 for Civil Service in eighty minutes. Browning played 39 times for Ireland, captaining the side on 14 occasions. He was President of the short lived Irish Cricket Union in the 1890s and President of the IRFU in 1912. On the outbreak of war in 1914 he helped to raise 'D' Company, 7th Dublin Fusiliers from among the city's rugby clubs. The younger soldiers of the 7th Dublins (or 'Dublin Pals') went on to take part in the Suvla Bay landings at Gallipoli, suffering a great many casualties. Browning himself was part of a 'Dad's Army' of reservists for 'gentlemen above military age'. They were known by Dublin wags as the 'Gorgeous Wrecks' because of the 'Georgius Rex' inscription on their armbands and belt buckles. Unarmed, on Easter Monday 1916 they walked into a rebel ambush at the corner of Northumberland and Haddington Roads. Fourteen men were wounded, five of whom – including Browning – later died from their injuries. Padraig Pearse, from the GPO HQ, then sent out an order that no unarmed men, in uniform or otherwise, were to be fired on.



*'A cricketer must have all his nerves and wits about him. The game, more than any other, teaches self-reliance and pluck. It teaches discipline and obedience; and again, it is a game freer from serious accidents than any other'*

—ARTHUR SAMUELS, *Early Cricket in Ireland* (1888)

1. Arthur Samuels (detail from the Irish XI v Birkenhead Park, 1858 photo).
2. Frank Browning (detail from the Phoenix v Free Forresters 1909 photo).

# THE 'GOLDEN AGE' OF CRICKET



## THOMAS COULAND ROSS (1872–1947)

In his book *Cricket in Ireland* (1955), Pat Hone describes Tom Ross as the best Irish bowler of all time, with the possible exception of Jimmy Boucher. He was a medium-paced inswing bowler who bowled an off break for variation. He was compared to the great Sydney Barnes of similar vintage. He played at Lords in 1902 for the Gentlemen v Players and in 1904 took 9 for 28 for Ireland against the South Africans at the Mardyke when Ireland won by 93 runs.

## BLAYNEY BALFOUR 'BUD' HAMILTON (1872–1946)

From an outstanding sporting family, Bud Hamilton represented Ireland in hockey, badminton and tennis as well as cricket. He was a slow left arm bowler who took 95 wickets for Ireland in 19 matches, average 15. Pat Hone describes him as 'very crafty'. Playing for Dundrum, he and Lucius Gwynn once bowled out Pembroke for 4, Hamilton 4 for 0, Gwynn 5 for 1. He founded the auctioneering firm Hamilton and Hamilton with his brother Willoughby. This became Hamilton Osborne King and now Savills.

## LUCIUS GWYNN (1873–1902)

Lucius Gwynn was acknowledged as the best Irish batsman of the 19th century. As an undergraduate in Trinity in 1895 he compiled first class centuries for DUCC against Cambridge and Leicestershire on tour in England. He headed the first class averages that year with 56.87. He played for the Gentleman against the Players on the recommendation of WG Grace and there was a suggestion (unproven) that he was selected to play in the Old Trafford Test against Australia in 1896 but turned it down because of exams. He won seven rugby caps and was on the first Irish Triple Crown team in 1894. In the summer of 1902 he hit four consecutive centuries for Phoenix and in his last match he compiled another, against Leinster. He had not been in good health that summer and died of TB in a Swiss sanatorium on December 23rd 1902 aged just 29.

## WILLIAM ROBERT GREGORY (1881–1918)

Immortalised by WB Yeats in four poems, most notably 'An Irish Airman Foresees His Death', Robert Gregory was the only son of the dramatist, folklorist and patron of the arts Lady Augusta Gregory. Gregory played for Phoenix and Galway in the period before 1914. Drafted as a sub into the Irish XI v Scotland in Rathmines in 1912 he took 8 for 80 in the Scots' first innings in a game lost by three runs. He bowled quick leg breaks. Gregory was an accomplished horseman, an excellent shot and a talented boxer. He studied art at the famous Slade School, and his oil paintings were exhibited in Mayfair and Chelsea in 1912 and 1914. Gregory joined the 4th Connaught Rangers in 1914 and transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in 1916. He was awarded the Military Cross 'for having invariably displayed the highest courage and skill', and the French Legion of Honour for 'many acts of conspicuous bravery'. Gregory is thought to have downed over nineteen enemy planes, and was involved in a dogfight in which Manfred von Richthofen, the 'Red Baron', was shot down. At the time of his death on 23rd January 1918, Robert Gregory was in command of a flying squadron over Padua on the North Italian Front. The details surrounding his final flight are unclear, but it is possible he was killed by 'friendly fire' from an Italian pilot.



1. Tom Ross (detail from the Phoenix XI 1907 team photo).
2. Lucius Gwynn
3. Robert Gregory (detail from a photo of the Galway XI that played Phoenix in August 1909).