

## From the Archives

### History of Dunlop Sports

The previous article in the *Roehampton Club Recorder* referred to two members of the Du Cros family who had joined the Club and were involved in the early beginnings of the Dunlop Company. From subsequent research into the history of the Company and the use of the Census records in 1911, it is now apparent that Harvey du Cros who had joined Roehampton Club in 1913 was in fact the founder of the Dunlop Company and not the fourth son with the same name as mentioned in the previous article.

The census records in 1911 confirm a local address for the 64-year-old Harvey du Cros with his 31-year-old wife Florence, his 7-year-old daughter Patricia and eight members of staff ranging from a Hospital Nurse, Lady's Maid,

Domestic Cook, two Housemaids, Scullery Maid, Butler and Footman. The records also confirm the Middlesex address for Arthur Philip du Cros – third son to the founder of the Dunlop Company. Philip also held a senior role in the business as Managing Director. His successful career was also evident from the 1911 census which included references to no less than five servants in his employ.



*Arthur Philip du Cros*

By the time Philip joined Roehampton Club in 1919, the Dunlop business had expanded from the manufacture of pneumatic tyres to extend its influence in the sporting world. The origins of the company were borne from the world of cycle racing when Harvey du Cros was President of the Irish Cyclists Association and his sons were competing regularly in competitive cycle events where he met John Boyd Dunlop. Dunlop was a Scottish inventor and veterinary surgeon who had re-invented a pneumatic tyre which proved successful in cycle racing. Spotting a commercial opportunity, Harvey du Cros convinced Dunlop to accept a small cash sum and a small shareholding for the rights to use his pneumatic tyre design to form a company. From these humble beginnings and the financial expertise of the Du Cros family, the Dunlop name became enshrined in the burgeoning automobile industry going on to make its name in the sporting world where the Dunlop brand is recognised to this day within the Club and across the globe.

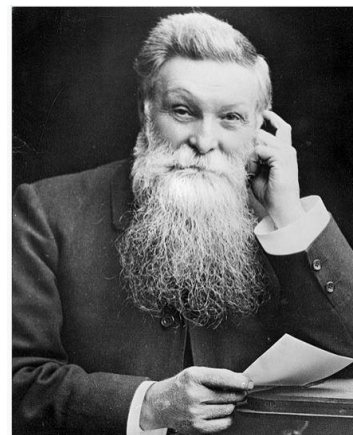


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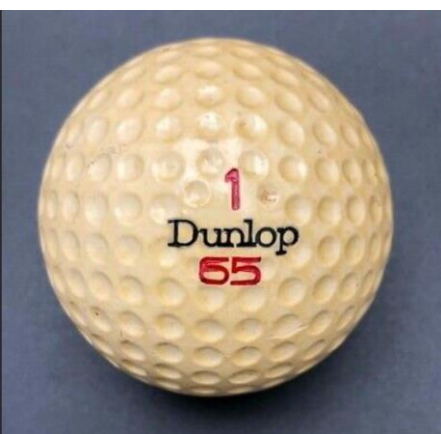
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*John Boyd Dunlop*

Early signs of the Dunlop name were apparent in popular sports at Roehampton Club such as golf, tennis, and squash. Dunlop Sport was set up as a British Sports Equipment Manufacturing Company in 1910 when it began the manufacture of rubber golf balls from its factory in Birmingham. In 1922, the Company introduced the Dunlop Maxfli Golf Ball and in 1924, Dunlop extended its activities into the manufacture of tennis balls. In 1925, the Company acquired a business for the manufacture of tennis rackets and in 1928, the Company established the name of Dunlop Sports as a subsidiary of Dunlop Rubber.



In 1946, the Dunlop Masters Golf Tournament was established at Stoneham Golf Club near Southampton with a tied finish between Jimmy Adams of Scotland and Bobby Locke of South Africa. The event continues to this day as the British Masters scheduled this year at the Belfry in May but without the sponsorship from Dunlop. The Dunlop 65 Golf Ball in 1934 was inspired by the second-round score of Henry Cotton at Royal St Georges Golf Club on his way to winning the Open Championship in the same year. In the world of tennis, more players have won Grand Slams using Dunlop tennis rackets than any other brand. Notable players past and present associated with Dunlop rackets include Jamie Murray, Heather Watson, Greg Rusedski, Rod Laver, Pat Cash, Virginia Wade, Steffi Graf and John McEnroe. As we approach, the centenary of the Dunlop Tennis ball in 2024, Roehampton Club can be rightly proud of its links with the Du Cros family and their achievements in establishing an iconic brand across many sports in which the Club has also played its part in its own sporting heritage.



Steve Riedlinger – Club Archivist

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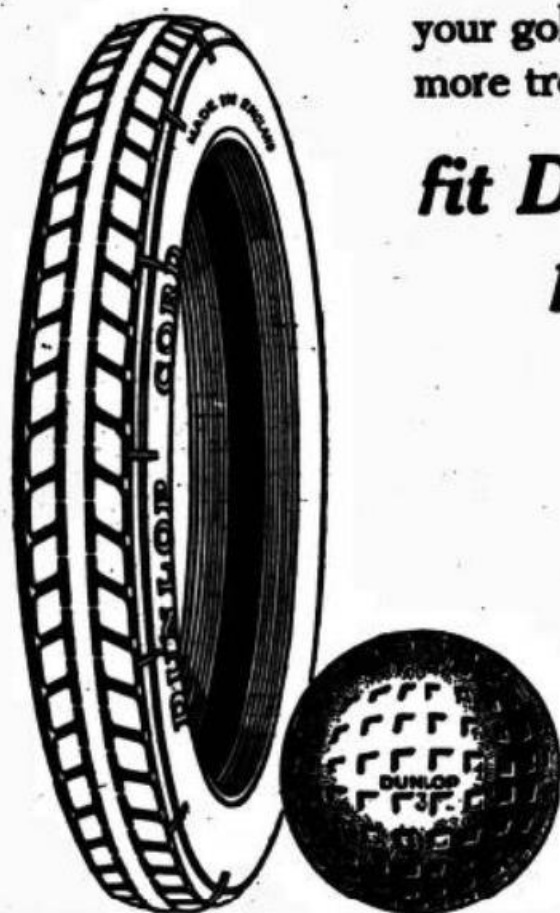
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