

## PEN PICTURES

**Charles Dove** born Millwall, June Qtr 1877



Charlie was the only player to play in each of the five complete seasons of Thames Ironworks FC. He had special footballing talents from his days as a schoolboy, and was a regular and captain of Park School, West Ham. In a school article written two years after he had left, he was remembered as being without comparison to the current crop of youngsters. He turned out for Forest Swifts Juniors and as a 15 year old played for local side Plaistow Melville in 1892/93. He also made appearances for South West Ham, but whilst he was employed as an apprentice at Thames Ironworks the Company team was formed, and he became a regular in the side making at least 18 appearances and scoring 6 known goals in that first season, but due to a number of unrecorded statistics it was certainly many more. He could play with equal skill in any position on the field, which he did over the course of his career, even to the extent of playing in goal in a Southern League Division Two match against Maidenhead when he deputised for Tommy Moore, being unbeaten in a 4-0 victory. When the Irons joined the London League in their second season he missed just one game and played in all eight London Senior Cup matches. He also made a total of eleven overall appearances in the Essex Senior Cup, West Ham Charity Cup and friendlies. His season's total goal tally was 9.

Standing at 5ft 11in tall and weighing twelve stone he was not only a very skilful all-round player, but he was absolutely fearless. Due to this commitment in his play he sustained a number of injuries, one of which came after a collision with Arthur Oxspring (later to become a team-mate) in a friendly game against local rivals South West Ham on Christmas Day 1897, which put him out of action until April 1898. Maybe, due to his enthusiasm, he returned too soon, for in the vital London League championship match against the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grenadier Guards he was badly kicked early on in the first half and had to leave the field for the rest of the match. Charlie was in the thick of it again the following season when in a Thames & Medway Combination fixture in November 1898, he 'came into collision' with a Chatham opponent causing an on-field fracas.

He was nothing if not 100% committed. Almost exactly a year later he received a dislocated jaw after 'banging heads' with a New Brompton forward, but gutsy as ever, he was back two weeks later playing in a vital F.A. Cup match against Millwall. In March 1900, due to injuries received, he was advised by his doctor to call it a

day, but the advice was ignored and Charlie was to take part in Thames Ironworks involvement into West Ham United in 1900/01. He was a regular in the first half of the season, but after an ankle injury at Portsmouth, he was no longer considered on a frequent basis and in 1901/02 he joined local rivals Millwall, but his injuries caught up with him and he retired from football in 1902/03.

For Thames Ironworks he played at least 120 first team matches, which does not include a number of appearances in friendly matches in Thames last two seasons; a remarkable figure for an amateur player. When the club became West Ham United he notched up a further 16.

He worked at the shipbuilding yard, rising from an apprentice to the rank of shipwright, following in the industry in the footsteps of his father George, who had been a ships carpenter. Charlie was another player who remained an amateur and was living at that time at 97 Selsdon Road, West Ham.

**Tommy Dunn** born Falkirk, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1873 Died June 24<sup>th</sup> 1938

Began his career at Wolverhampton Wanderers in 1891/92 where he gave strong, consistent performances at full-back, making 88



appearances for the First Division side, and gaining an F.A. Cup runners-up medal with them in 1895/96. During the following campaign he joined fellow First Division side Burnley making six appearances, but made just one more in 1897/98 before joining Kent side Chatham in

the Southern League, turning out for them on seven occasions in 1898/99 before moving to Thames Ironworks later that season and assisting them in their Southern League 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Championship title win, playing in 13 matches including a Championship decider and a Test Match. He also turned out 4 times in the Thames & Medway Combination. He was a regular in the club's final season making 22 appearances in the Southern League (including one Test Match) seven in the F.A. Cup, and seven in the Thames & Medway Combination. He never lost his strong Scottish brogue and eventually returned to Scotland where he took up an undertakers business.

**George Gresham** born Gainsborough 1874

Came down from Lincolnshire after playing for Gainsborough Trinity who were in the Midland League at the time. George was one of the early pioneers of the Thames Ironworks club and in the