

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

WATERFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



(Cover of the magazine "Le Petit Journal" dated 25 August 1907 the murder case)

Vere Thomas St. Leger Goold (1853-1909) **Tennis Player**

Born in Waterford on 2nd October 1853, Goold became a keen player of lawn tennis in its early days in his native city, and became a member of Fitzwilliam Lawn tennis club in Dublin. In 1878, he won the men's singles event of the first Irish Open, which was held in Limerick. The following year the Irish Open was staged at his home club's courts, and he again won the men's singles title, receiving a prize of £20.

His performance at the Irish Open that year saw Goold installed as the favourite for the Wimbledon championship held a week later. However, he was defeated in the final by Reverend John Hartley in front of over one thousand spectators. Unfortunately, this was to be not only Goold's only appearance in a Wimbledon final but also the tournament as a whole.

Goold was considered an important member in the administration of the Fitzwilliam Lawn tennis club. His most notable tennis achievement till the end of his career in 1883 was winning a doubles match for Ireland against England in what has since been recognised as the first international tennis match between two nations.

In 1886, Goold moved to London, and met a Frenchwoman, Marie Violet (twice widowed) whom he married in 1891. After a brief period spent in Canada, they returned to London in 1903. However, an ill-fated foray into the laundry business led them to move to Monte Carlo, trying to achieve wealth through the gambling tables of casinos.

On the 6th August 1907 Goold and his wife were arrested after the discovery of a dismembered body of a woman, named Emma Liven, in their luggage. The trial revealed that Liven was murdered after trying to obtain repayment of a loan she had given Goold and his wife, and was

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struck when a heated argument erupted. As a result, Goold was imprisoned on Devil's Island, French Guiana and died a year later on the 8th September 1909. His wife was imprisoned and died in 1914.

Vere Goold holds the two distinction of being the first tennis player born on the island of Ireland to contest a Wimbledon final, and also the only Wimbledon finalist to be convicted of murder.

Cian Manning