

From " BELL'S LIFE IN LONDON "

October 26th. 1878.

DEATH OF FRANCIS ELLISTON ERWOOD. This celebrated racket player who was formerly Champion of England, died on Monday, Oct. 7th. at the age of 54, and was buried at Wickham Cemetery, near Plumstead Common on Thursday following. He was the second son of Mr. George Erwood, of Great Knight-riding Street, Doctor's Commons, Baker, and great nephew of the celebrated Elliston, the actor and manager of Drury Lane Theatre. He was possessed of wonderful scientific skill and dexterity in the art of racket playing, and has played numerous matches with the best men of his time, and in all of which he successfully triumphed over his opponents, but his most celebrated matches were with Mitchell of Birmingham for £50 a side, which was played in that town, and Erwood won. He afterwards played Mitchell a return match at the Royal Artillery Racket Court, of which Erwood was then Marker, for £100 a side, and this the latter won after very close splendid play in beating his opponent by the drop balls. In his earlier career he was Marker at Lord's Cricket Ground, and here he not only instructed and played with many of the nobility and gentry and other eminent and professional players who then frequented the grounds, but he also delighted and entertained the visitors by his wit and humour and beautiful singing. Some few years since, Erwood left Lord's on his being appointed Racket Marker at the Royal Artillery Court, where he continued up to the time of his death, and it was while here, although a long time since, that on one occasion, while he was playing with one of the officers, that Erwood met with a severe accident, owing to the ball of the officer, whilst in play, striking Erwood on the left cheek bone with great force, and in addition to other injuries, not only broke his cheek bone but greatly disfigured his face causing him much suffering and great pain, and so affected his left eye that it prevented him playing any matches ever afterwards. Erwood was not only a skilful and splendid racket player but also an excellent vocalist and used to entertain and amuse his numerous friends and acquaintances by his singing and his anecdotes. The various articles and notices which appeared from time to time in Bell's Life in London and other sporting papers relative to Erwood and his matches when he was in his prime, fully certify to the ability and talent of this splendid racket player. His loss will be greatly felt by a large and numerous circle of friends by whom he was much esteemed, and by whom his memory will long be cherished and retained.

Extracted from Bell's Life by F.C. Elliston Erwood, eldest grandson of Francis Elliston Erwood, December 31st. 1924.