

*EWAN CHRISTIAN*

Ewan Christian was born in London on 20th September 1814, the son of Joseph and Katharine (nee Scales, of Thwaitehead in Lancashire). His father died when he was seven and his mother the following year, after which he lived with grandparents at Mortlake, Surrey. In 1823 he became a pupil at Christ's Hospital Junior School in Hertford, and shortly afterwards transferred to the great school in Newgate Street, London. When he left school in 1829 he went to live with his brother John.

On his 15th Birthday Ewan was articled to Mr Matthew Habershon, of Cavendish Square, and was quite soon admitted to the Architectural School of the Royal Academy. For a short time he worked in the office of Mr William Railton, who was later to become Architect to the Ecclesiastical Commission. In 1842 he moved to an office at 44 Bloomsbury Square and worked from there until he was appointed Architect to the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1851; at that time he moved his office to the Commissioners' building at 10 Whitehall Place. In 1851 the Bishop of Lincoln asked him to report on the fabric of Southwell Minster (Southwell by that time having been transferred from the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of York to the Bishop of Lincoln in 1841). He was to be the Minster's architect for the next 44 years. Unlike many Victorian architects Ewan Christian did not set out to make the building fashionable, but always made it clear in his reports that he aimed to restore it as it was originally built. We have much to thank him for.

In 1874 Ewan Christian entered into partnership with his cousin, Joseph Henry Christian, and Mr C H Purdy, a former pupil and then his principal assistant. He was appointed President of the RIBA in 1884 and became a Royal Gold Medallist in 1887. On 16th February 1895 he caught a chill, developed erysipelas, lost consciousness and died on the 21st. He was buried at Hampstead Cemetery four days later.