

## **The architect Eley Emlyn White (1853 - 1900)**

This information is from [www.stjohnswoodmemories.org.uk/page.aspx?id=73](http://www.stjohnswoodmemories.org.uk/page.aspx?id=73)

Eley White was born in Hampstead, and married Mary, who had been born at sea, off Malta, in 1860. In 1891 the couple were living at 53 Clifton Road East, St John's Wood, London, with a cook and a housemaid.

White was the partner of John Thomas Christopher, and worked briefly in the office of the famous architect William Burges. The firm Christopher & White, whose offices were at 6 Bloomsbury Square in London, was responsible for building St Matthew's church in Grandpont, Oxford; St John's at Watford; and for repairs to St Anne's at Siston in Gloucestershire.

Unfortunately White's private life was turbulent, and led to tragedy. He and his wife Mary decided to live apart, and he moved to Cedar Mansions in Kensington. He met a 21-year-old Empire Theatre actress, Marie Gibson, who visited his flat as 'his niece' which Mrs Shea, the housekeeper, never believed.

One night, the hall porter rushed into Mrs Shea's room saying "*Who is this young lady in the hall? Mr White has shot her, and shot himself*". Mrs Shea found Miss Gibson lying across the front door, unconscious and shot in the face. White had shot himself through the brain, and was dead.

Miss Gibson recovered, although she lost the sight of one eye, and gave evidence that White had wanted her to live with him, but that she had declined "*as he is a married man I did not think it right and proper. He has a wife living - he threatened to shoot me once before.*"

White left a letter to his wife saying "*I do not intend continuing a life I dislike as I am not happy. I am very sorry that I have acted so badly to you, for you were a good little wife*". He was 47.