

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

ECCLES, Rev. Charles Stewart

Ecclesville, Co. Tyrone 1749 – Bath
17.VIII.1777

Honorary exhibitor of crayons in Dublin and London. The Rev. Charles Stewart (or Steuart) Eccles was the youngest son of Charles Eccles (1709–1763) of Ecclesville and Fintona, High Sheriff of Tyrone, and his wife, née Rebecca Anne Stewart. He became a student at Trinity College, Dublin (records indicate that he did not complete his degree), where he was influenced by the doctrines of methodism and became an influential preacher. In spite of his suspected dissenting views, in 1771 he was appointed rector of Birtsmorton, Worcestershire, a living under the patronage of Charles, Earl of Bellamont. He then travelled as a missionary to Georgia, and it is said was head of the college in Savannah, returning to England in 1774. He was involved in a bizarre controversy in which it was claimed that he had written a popular but anonymous novel, *The man of feeling* (1771), which purported to have been published from a dead man's papers; Eccles had supported his claim by transcribing the whole novel, adding "an appropriate allowance of blottings, interlineations and corrections". Either by an extraordinary coincidence, or as some have suggested an act of suicide, Eccles himself died attempting to save a boy drowning in the River Avon. He had made a will on 1.1.1777 naming a Miss Martha Hudson of Bath as universal legatee. He possessed "an uncommon genius for painting, shown in many examples, chiefly in crayons".

Bibliography

Stephen Bending & Stephen Bygrave, introduction to Henry Mackenzie, *The man of feeling*, Oxford, 2001; Breeze 1985; Samuel Burdy, *The life of Philip Skelton*, Oxford, 1914; William Prideaux Courtney, *The secrets of our national literature*, London, 1908, p. 217f; *Gentleman's magazine*, 15.VIII.1777; Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour, *The life and times of Selina, Countess of Huntington*, 1840; Waterhouse 1981

Pastels

- J.297.101 Head of a gentleman, crayons, Dublin 1767, no. 117
- J.297.102 Gentleman, crayons, Dublin 1770, no. 92
- J.297.103 Lady, crayons, Dublin 1770, no. 91
- J.297.104 Fruit piece, crayons, Royal Academy 1777, no. 405