

*Victorian Artists and Their World 1844-1861: As Reflected in the Papers of Joanna and George Boyce and Henry Wells* edited by Katie J.T. Herrington. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 2024. xviii, 312 pp. + 66 colour and 44 b/w illus. ISBN 978 1 78327-259-4. £115.00.

Primarily known for watercolour landscapes, George Boyce has long been regarded as a Pre-Raphaelite artist thanks to his friendship with Rossetti and others in the circle. Joanna Boyce, his sister, has more lately been welcomed into the same fold, as scholarly interest in women artists has grown and her standing among coevals has been understood. With a more conventional career chiefly in portraiture, Henry Wells, Joanna's husband and George's brother-in-law, has received less critical attention.

Henry's grief at Joanna's untimely death from post-natal sepsis caused him to treasure all her work and correspondence, which with material from himself and George formed a large archive that was published in 2019 as *The Boyce Papers*, also by Boydell Press. Edited by Sue Bradbury with support from Richard Barber and members of the extensive Boyce/Wells clan descended from Joanna and her siblings, this cache forms the basis of the present volume. Although it reads like a collection of conference papers, it is in fact ten essays independently edited by Katie Herrington to form a useful contribution to historical knowledge of the three artists and the art world they inhabited. The dates given in the subtitle are a little misleading, as the essays range beyond Joanna's death in 1861.

They begin by setting the scene relating to the artists' European travels in the mid-century. Sue Bradbury chronicles their trips to France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy made possible by the growing rail network. George also made it to Egypt. He and Henry could travel solo, leisurely or at speed; custom obliged Joanna to wait on escorts and others' itinerary. The purposes were Turner-esque sketching en route and old Master art in Paris, Brussels, Venice, and Rome, as well as the experience deemed essential to professional status.

Matthew Porter of Northumbria University surveys the art education opportunities taken by our trio, at a moment when it became possible for gentlemen to become professionals and for women to aspire similarly, albeit with more encouragement to remain amateur and on no account neglect their domestic "duties." Henry, whose father failed in business, was apprenticed as an engraver and miniature painter while attending Leigh's evening class, before reinventing himself as a portraitist in oils and crayons. George trained as an architect, but, having a private income and no dependents, switched to landscape painting, with modest ambition. Joanna pursued training assiduously, always seeking the rigour on which success seemed to depend. Using