

Introduction

Joanne Wilkes

Welcome to this new issue of the *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies*, my first one as Editor. We also have on board a new Reviews Editor, Alison Bedford.

We are very grateful for the work of our predecessors, Meg Tasker (Editor), and Jocelyn Hargrave (Reviews Editor). Meg is still on deck, since later this year, we will bring out the second Special Issue on Pre-Raphaelitism in Australia, which she is co-editing with Alison Inglis. Thanks also Carolyn Lake for her ongoing technical / formatting work.

This is a General Issue, with a fascinating variety of contents. Margaret Harris and Wes Rogers have uncovered some new letters by novelist George Meredith which have a link to Australia. Members of the Fetherstonhaugh family spent time in Australia, and later some of the sisters became known to Meredith (one was employed as governess to his daughter Mariette). The authors examine how the letters throw light on Meredith's character and preoccupations, while also giving welcome attention to women who are notable in their own right. By contrast, Madoko Nagado highlights a work by a lesser-known writer, Frances Browne, and makes a worthwhile contribution to disability studies. Nagado demonstrates how this blind writer, in her *My Share of the World* (1861), focuses not so much on a physically blind character as on the emotional and mental blindness of a sighted narrator. Finally among the articles, Lucina Ward offers a rich and richly illustrated history of the dissemination of the British Arundel Society's reproductions of great artworks over the second half of the nineteenth century. As Ward's extensive original research shows, there were both personal and institutional subscribers not only within Britain, but also in the US, Australia and New Zealand.

There is an excellent range of reviews, too – covering “weird” fiction, the impact of the Arabian Nights stories on British culture, postcolonial screen adaptations of canonical British texts, the liberalism of Harriet Martineau and Charles Dickens, and the letters of William Sharp / “Fiona Macleod”.

As well as the Special Issue on Pre-Raphaelitism in Australia, there is another Special Issue forthcoming on the topic of “Small Worlds”. We always welcome, too, contributions to General Issues like the current one, on any topic relating to Victorian Studies.

Auckland

April 2021