

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

BELLERS, William

fl. London 1734–73

Between 1761 and 1773 Bellers exhibited landscapes in oil, crayon and chalk at the Free Society, none of which is now known but which are said to be in the manner of George Lambert (*q.v.*). The much earlier portraits in the British Museum and in a private collection may well be by the same William Bellers (or possibly by a son of the same name), presumably the person who matriculated at the University of Oxford on 9.IV.1734 described as “illuminator”. The descendant and owner thought that the 1740 portraits “have little artistic merit...though probably accurate likenesses enough of the sitters”. William Bellers dealt in prints in Oxford and Cambridge, and was supplied by Arthur Pond; the business was carried on at Poppins Court, Fleet Street, London from the early 1750s. He also gave drawing lessons. He was an active member of the Society of Arts, attending 16 meetings in 1762 (more than any other artist). According to a 1767 probate record, “William Bellers of London, painter” and his wife Ann inherited the estate of his sister Sarah Hodgson, widow, of Boston, New England. As her husband had died in 1756, it seems more likely that she was the sibling of the Oxford Bellers than of a putative son.

Bibliography

A. R. Bayley, *Notes and queries*, CIII, 1901, p. 413; Timothy Clayton, *The English print 1688–1802*, 1997; Heinecken 1788; *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, CXXXII, 1986, p. 274; Oxford DNB; *The New-England historical genealogy*, 1885, p. 28; Saur

Pastels

?Self-portrait, cr. clr/ppr, 43.7x34.9, sd “Guls. Bellers Pinxit 1733” (British Museum 1908.0511.2. Dr J. Law Adam; acqu. 1908) ϕ



Two portraits of members of the BAYLEY family, pstl, sd 1740 (A. R. Bayley 1901)

Elderly gentleman, pstl/ppr, 36.2x26.1, 1734 (British Museum 1939.0713.1. L. G. Wooldrige; acqu. 1939) ϕ



Two landscapes, crayons, Free Society 1761, no. 119

A moonlight, crayons, Free Society 1762, no. 150

A sunset, crayons, Free Society 1763, no. 9

A moonlight, crayons, Free Society 1763, no. 10

A sun rising, crayons, Free Society 1765, no. 18

A sun setting, crayons, Free Society 1765, no. 19

A moonlight, crayons, Free Society 1767, no. 21

A sunset, crayons, Free Society 1767, no. 22

Head of Our Saviour, crayons, Free Society 1772, no. 239