

## Professor Sally Ledger 1961-2009

With the scholarly community of Victorianists throughout the world, the Australasian Association for Victorian Studies mourns the sudden death of Sally Ledger, Hildred Carlile Professor in English and Director of the Centre for Victorian Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London. At her death, she was just about to give the opening keynote lecture, “The Nineteenth-Century Man of Feeling,” on her new projects on sentiment and science to AVSA in Dunedin. This lecture would have been her most philosophical work to date, addressing problems of ontology and the meaning of being human through the great nineteenth-century archive.

Having had access to Oxford and London libraries for much of her career, Sally was a superb archival scholar, as historical as literary, exploiting visual material as well as text. Her research began with the *Fin de Siècle* and in recent years has covered the scope of the nineteenth century, reaching back to the sentimental novels of the eighteenth century. *The New Woman* (1997) was a foundational work within the field, and *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (2007) made an impact in analyzing popular radical traditions that cemented her relationship to the California Dickens Project. An energetic but easy-going networker and collaborator, she also edited and co-edited important collections *Political Gender* (1994), *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle* (1995), Dickens’s *Christmas Books* (1999), and George Egerton’s *Keynotes and Discords* (2003). Her and Roger Luckhurst’s *Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History* (2000) is a standard text for interdisciplinary masters courses on the period. On the Executive Committee of the British Association for Victorian Studies (BAVS), Sally was planning to host a summit meeting of UK Victorian Studies centres at Royal Holloway in April 2009.

As of January 2009, Sally had supervised 21 Ph.D. students, many of whom became very close friends and colleagues, and examined 28 doctoral theses. She was also known for her ability to multi-task (she was Head of Department while she wrote her book on popular radicalism), and as a fair and just manager of academics. For a younger generation, hers was a model of a life balanced between her work and her family, Jim Porteous and their son Richard, who when they could accompanied her to conferences.

Sally joined the Advisory Board of *AJVS* in 2007, and was a willing reader of submissions. Her keynote at the Dunedin conference was to be published in the journal later this year. Sally’s advice, both general and specific, was also highly valued. *AJVS* and AVSA join the scholarly community, friends, and her family in our grief at her loss.