



Literature, Identity & Culture

RESEARCH GROUP

SEMINAR SERIES 2009

Professor Lydia Wevers

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Jam Tarts for the Mind

Or so Thackeray described the popular novels of his day, cheaply reprinted and distributed around the world. The Brancepeth Station Library, a collection of 2000 books used by subscribers who worked and lived on Brancepeth Station in the Wairarapa during the 1890s, is 88% 'jam tarts'. The usual explanation for the preponderance of fiction in the collection is escapism—who wouldn't want to transfer their imaginations from a cold wet rabbiting camp to metropolitan London? But were there other connections between the works of the great Victorian novelists—Mrs Henry Wood, M.E.Braddon, Walter Besant, W.H.Ainsworth, Wilkie Collins, Dickens, Trollope—and the lives of lonely men in remote locations? This lecture will explore the webs of intersections between nineteenth century New Zealand rural readers and popular fiction a hundred years ago.

**Thursday September 24th Room 19.1003 12:30pm –
1:30pm**

Room 19.1003 Faculty of Arts University of Wollongong

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