**RESEARCH AND REFERENCES**

The Girl Who Stole Stockings is a comprehensively referenced book that provides a rich source of information for New Zealanders and Australians who are interested in their colonial history.

More specifically, the book provides extensive sourced details of the convict system that was in place from in the first three decades of the nineteenth century in New South Wales. It was a system that was constantly evolving and changing from its inception in 1778, when the first shiploads of convicts arrived, through to 1840 when transportation to New South Wales largely ceased.

The system that governed the lives of the transported felons during the period in which this book is set was surprisingly flexible but also contrary. Convicts lived in a colony that operated in large part like an open prison in which they worked like indentured servants. They received a small amount of wages though during their sentence; and they could complain about mistreatment by a master. A convict under sentence of transportation could also find employment on their own account after a period of good behavior; a man or woman could even marry and raise a family, earn funds to build a house and operate a business.

Wrongdoers, however, were dealt with severely; they could be flogged or jailed or sent to penal settlements within the colony to endure even more backbreaking toil.

In piecing together the story of The Girl Who Stole Stockings, Auckland-based Elsbeth Hardie travelled to England, Australia and the South Island of New Zealand to research material.

The book includes 55 pages of fascinating references and extensive footnotes that contribute substantial information for anyone interested in colonial history and convict or family history on both sides of the Tasman.

**Website**

In researching the story of Susannah Noon, the author also sought out the stories of the 100 other women that arrived in New South Wales on the convict ship *Friends*. Their stories and biographical details are featured in the website – [www.friendsconvictship.com](http://www.friendsconvictship.com) - that is being launched in association with the publication of this book. The website will go live in September 2015.

