



## This month, we've been talking to . . . Susan Brocker

Susan Brocker is the author of over 60 books (both fiction and non-fiction). She has a history degree and a love of social history that is often reflected in her books, and is passionate about writing for older children and teens. She has a close affinity with animals and they often feature in her books as well. In 2010, she wrote the true story of a remarkable New Zealand horse called Bess who served with the Mounted Rifles Brigade in the Middle East during World War One. This book was inspired by her grandfather who was himself a mounted rifleman. Both he and Bess were the inspiration for her latest novel *1914: Riding into War*, the first book in Scholastic NZ's *Kiwis at War* series.

We asked Susan some questions about herself and her writing, and here's what she said...

*Where were you born? Where do you live now?*

I was born in Hamilton (too many years ago now to want to remember!) and I now live near Tauranga on a small farm.

*Where did you go to school? Did you have a nickname?*

I went to school in Taupo, at Hilltop School. When I was little I was called Suzie Wong and now my family and friends call me Suzie.

*What were you like in school? What is the naughtiest thing you did?*

I was way too naughty! I either talked too much or else I daydreamed, so I must've been very frustrating to teach. The naughtiest thing I did was so naughty I can't even tell you.

*What was your favourite book growing up?*

Tricky...when I was younger it was Roald Dahl's *The Sneetches*, and when I was older it was Paul Gallico's *The Snow Goose*.

*Who is your favourite children's author?*

Another tricky one! I guess I'd have to say Jack London followed by Paul Gallico and Mary O'Hara.

*What is your favourite food/colour/movie?*

Food: hot & spicy Indian or Thai; colour: red like a fire engine; movie: *The Shawshank Redemption*.

*Who inspired you to write?*

I had many wonderful teachers and librarians who encouraged my love of writing and reading. Thank

you, kind teachers & librarians, especially when I was so naughty!

*How did you get started? How old were you?*

I wrote my first book when I was about 9 years old. A lovely librarian at my school copied it out and stapled it up into a "book" for my friends and schoolmates to read.

*Why did you want to be a writer?*

I've always loved writing and just knew I had to write.

*How do you think up ideas?*

I love animals and history and often they inspire my ideas. I also love reading, travelling, and simply watching people, and these combine to brew ideas in my head.

*Do you have a special place where you write?*

I come up with most of my ideas while I'm out riding my horse along the beach or in the bush. But I like to write in my study overlooking the farm with my dog and cats as company.

*What is the best thing about being an author?*

My time is my own and I'm my own boss. I can let my imagination run wild without being told what to do and when. And I can go horse riding whenever I want!

*Have you had a funny or embarrassing moment as an author?*

During an author talk at a school, I asked if I could bring along my German shepherd dog Yogi who was the inspiration for my book *The Wolf in the Wardrobe*.

I was about to chat about the book when he hopped up on the chair next to me and gave a massive doggy yawn. He stole the show.

*What do you do when you are not writing?*

I horse ride, dance, walk my dog and roam the planet.

*What would you have chosen to be if you were not an author?*

A vet, working in a wildlife park in Africa.

*Which famous person from the past would you like to talk to?*

Gandhi, because he's been the inspiration for a generation of peace lovers.

*Is there anything else you would like to tell us about yourself?*

I love to hear from kids who've enjoyed my books, so let me know!

*Website/blog details:*

[www.susanbrocker.com](http://www.susanbrocker.com)

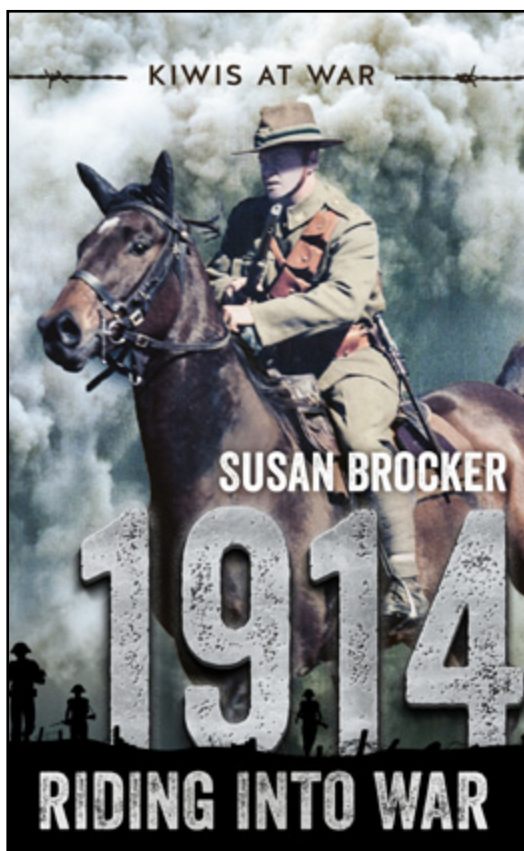
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## SUSAN BROCKER'S FIRST BOOK FOR SCHOLASTIC NZ

*Book 1 in the new Kiwis at War series, tracking each year in World War One from 1914 through to 1918*

### **1914: Riding into War**

Publication	August 2014
ISBN	978-1-77543-206-7
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Format	198 x 128 mm
Extent	216 pp
Age	12+ years



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