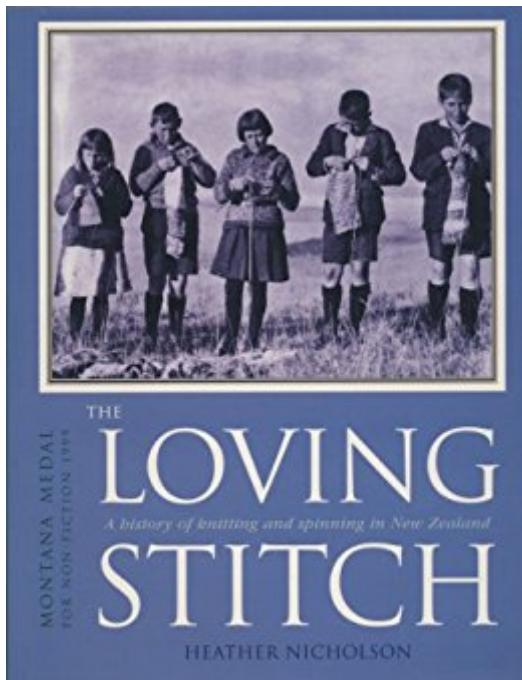


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# The Loving Stitch: A History Of Knitting And Spinning In New Zealand



## **Synopsis**

The Loving Stitch is an engaging history of a subject never before explored but familiar to many New Zealanders. Heather Nicholson's knowledge of knitting and spinning is formidable but she also knows how to tell a good story and has a keen sense of humour. The Loving Stitch presents a chronological account of antipodean knitting, which is also a history of the domestic lives of women, of their resourcefulness, their talent and sociability. She follows the growth of pattern books, the role of knitting for troops in the two world wars, knitting in the Depression and the recent interest in art knitting. She also explores the different items produced by the skilled knitter, from jerseys and guernseys to counterpanes, socks and stockings, and a scarf that stretched right round Parliament Buildings. The book also includes material on spinning and on local wool mills, as well as general good advice drawn from the personal experience of hundreds of knitters and spinners. The Loving Stitch is impeccably researched, it is full of characters, memories and advice, and it is superbly illustrated.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

This is a very well-researched discourse about the history of knitting and spinning in New Zealand. The book takes you from the early days of the English and Scots settlement of the twin islands up to

present day, and reveals how knitting fit into daily life. A good portion of the book is devoted to war knitting, which was a major volunteer activity in World War I and somewhat less, but still important in World War II. The interesting theme that runs through "The Loving Stitch" is that of privation and shortages; knitting yarn was often hard to obtain. During rationing in World War II, baby yarn was almost impossible to get, yet people were limited in clothing coupons. What to do for a newborn who needs clothes and plenty of them? The ingenuity of the Kiwis who wanted or needed to knit was amazing--#8 fencing wire became needles, tapestry yarn (not rationed) patiently gathered until enough was available to make a vest. One enterprising young girl unraveled loosely-woven sugar sacks to make a child's sweater. All this is of course set against the ironic background that New Zealand is a world-class producer of wool. Yet raw wool was merely sent overseas to be spun into carpet and other wool, and the New Zealanders found that the finished product, knitting wool, was hard to obtain and expensive, too. What I found odd in this book were a couple of omissions and subjects only briefly touched one. One was the contribution to knitting by New Zealander Margaret Stove. She is contemporary, but this book does go up to present day, and including her would have been appropriate.

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