

## Partial Background Material “Mind Map”

### SEA TRAVEL/CONVICT SHIPS

- +Voyage to New South Wales takes 6-12 months
- +In the first years of the colony, several supply ships sink, taking with them necessary supplies and ALL messages from the colony.
- +Voyages run by private companies in conjunction with the British government.
- +Ship’s “agent” procures food and supplies. His honesty determines the convict’s quality of voyage
- +Many convict ships have 50% survival rate
- +Storing techniques for food onboard
- +Menstruation with 200 women and no clean water
- +Babies conceived en route
- +Stops during voyage (Rio, Capetown)
- +Dynamics of women on board
- +“Sea Wives”
- +Contraception beliefs in the late 1700’s

### NEW SOUTH WALES

- +First crops in the colony fail: seeds eaten, soil sandy
- +Violent clashes with indigenous peoples
- +All-male penal colony
- +Sodomy
- +Britain desires to develop the colony. Expansion of empire, source for raw materials.

### INDIVIDUAL STORIES

#### Kinds of crimes

Mary Bryant

John Nicols

Sarah Whitelam

Polly Fletcher

Elizabeth Barnsley

Families left behind

Advantages to being a “sea wife”

New alliances on board

### PENAL COLONIES

- +Georgia: the penal colony in the Americas
- +The Gambia: a failed experiment (penal colony slaughtered)
- +New South Wales

### SOCIAL CONTEXT IN BRITAIN

- +The American Revolution
- +Soldiers returning to Britain, taking jobs that had been filled by women during the war
- +Female crime rate skyrockets
- +Humanist movement: anti capital punishment
- +Alternate ideas for punishment: penal colonies
- +Women have harsher penalties for crimes: burned for crimes men are hung for.
- +Women as the morally virtuous gender
- +Outdated laws: stealing over 7 pence is a hanging offense
- +Gin flooding the city: higher alcohol percentage than ale
- +Higher rates of alcoholism

### LANGUAGE

- +*The Beggar’s Opera* by John Gay
- +*Jack Maggs* by Peter Carey
- +*Hard Times* by Charles Dickens
- +*Moby Dick* by Herman Melville

## Sources

### Historical Accounts

*The Diary of John Nicols*

*Floating Brothel* by Sian Rees

*Fatal Shore* by Robert Hughes

*Mary Bryant*

“Floating Brothel” –documentary film

*Craze: Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason* by Jessica Warner

### Novels and Other Works

*The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay

*Jack Maggs* by Peter Carey

*Our Country is Good*

*English Passengers* by Matthew Kneale

*The Secret River* by Kate Grenville

*Hard Times* by Charles Dickens

*Moby Dick* by Herman Melville