



## The Nelson Science Society:

The Nelson Science Society started as part of the Literary and Scientific Institution of Nelson in May 1841 on the New Zealand Company's ship *Whitby*, with Captain Arthur Wakefield as the chairman. Nelson at that stage was a name only and even the location of the settlement hadn't yet been decided. In October, the *Whitby* reached the land that was to become Nelson.

The passengers from the *Whitby* and its sister ship *Mary Ann* met and decided that an Institute to promote literature and science was a good idea. Meetings were started in 1842. A library and reading room were erected to house the initial collection of 700 books donated by passengers, and money was sent to England for more books, journals and periodicals. In 1859, the foundation stone of a new, larger building was laid by Dr F. Hochstetter. At this stage the Institute did not function as a learned society and there doesn't seem to be a record of what the early meetings were about. (<http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/science-history-and-organisation-in-new-zealand> (accessed 18 Jan 2017))

The Nelson Literary Scientific and Philosophical Institute continues to this day but at some stage a separate group devoted just to science must have been established. It is unclear about the possible starting date of this group, or when it became a branch of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

The Nelson Science Society was originally called the Royal Society of New Zealand Nelson Branch but in the late 1990s the name was changed to the Nelson Science Society (NSS).

NSS remains a branch of the Royal Society Te Apārangi and promotes science locally, regionally and nationally by holding regular scientific talks and by promoting science education in schools and colleges. NSS has a separate Astronomy section with its own programme of events.

NSS has over 150 paid up members and a contact list of over 500. Past Presidents are, from 2016, Simon Crase, Nigel Costly, Des Duthie, Peter Balance, Dick Roberts and Guyon Warren.

*Jenny Pollock, President Nelson Science Society*