Call for Papers: Finding New Zealand's scientific heritage

Venue: Victoria University of Wellington

Date: 23-24 November 2015

2015 is a significant year for New Zealand science history. It is 150 years since James Hector arrived in Wellington to set up many of our national science organisations and 100 years since Ernest Marsden arrived in Wellington.

In 1865 Hector was appointed head of the New Zealand Geological Survey, with his responsibilities eventually including the Colonial Museum, Colonial Observatory, Meteorological Service, Colonial Botanic Gardens, and the New Zealand Institute. In 1915, Marsden arrived in New Zealand to be professor of physics at Victoria University. He stayed in this position for seven years then, in 1926, was appointed head of New Zealand's Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, a position he held until 1946.

In 1983, The Royal Society of New Zealand and the Alexander Turnbull Library ran a conference In Search of New Zealand's Scientific Heritage. In the more than 30 years since this date there have been significant research and publications into New Zealand's science history but there is still much to explore. The 2015 anniversaries offer a great opportunity for an academic conference focused on New Zealand's science history and will provide momentum leading up to the Royal Society of New Zealand's 150th anniversary in 2017 and the 250th anniversary of the arrival of the first European scientists in 2019.

The conference committee invites proposals for individual papers, panels, and posters for **Finding New Zealand's Scientific Heritage, 23-24 November 2015**.

Keynote speaker:

Why History Matters: Perspectives from the Recent History of Science

By Professor Naomi Oreskes

Various scholars have argued for the pertinence of historical perspectives to understanding contemporary issues, but historians of science have, until recently, been mostly loathe to inject themselves into contemporary debates. One reason for this is the belief that an important contribution of our field is the understanding of how different "science" in the past was from its present configuration. It is not merely that our ideas about the world have changed, but also that our beliefs as to how we learn about the world have changed, too. Neither the definition of what constitutes "science," nor the methods that have been considered "scientific," have been stable over time; one can discern major changes even within the past century. Yet, despite this, prominent historians of science, myself included, have not only used history to illuminate contemporary debates, but have provided unique and important insights and perspectives. This paper explores how we have done so, and how such efforts can both contribute to society and strengthen our field as an intellectual endeavor.

Professor Naomi Oreskes, Harvard University

Naomi Oreskes is professor of the history of science and affiliated professor of Earth and planetary sciences at Harvard University, and an internationally renowned geologist, science historian, and author.

Oreskes is the author of many scholarly and popular books and articles on the history of earth and environmental science, including *The Rejection of Continental Drift* (Oxford, 1999), *Plate Tectonics: An Insider's History of the Modern Theory of the Earth* (Westview, 2003), and *The Collapse of Western Civilization* (Columbia University Press, 2014). For the past decade, Oreskes has been primarily interested in the science and politics of anthropogenic climate change. Her 2010 book, *Merchants of Doubt, How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco to Global Warming*, co-authored with Erik M. Conway, was shortlisted for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and won the Watson-Davis Prize from the History of Science Society. The film version was released in late 2014.

Oreskes's current research projects include completion of a scholarly book on the history of Cold War Oceanography, *Science on a Mission: American Oceanography from the Cold War to Climate Change* (Chicago, forthcoming), and *Assessing Assessments: A Historical and Philosophical Study of Scientific Assessments for Environmental Policy in the Late 20th Century*. She has lectured widely and won numerous prizes, including the 2009 *Francis Bacon Medal* for outstanding scholarship in the history of science and technology, the 2011 Climate Change Communicator of the Year, and the 2014 American Geophysical Union Presidential Citation for Science and Society.

Other speakers and sessions:

Simon Nathan: James Hector and contemporaries: the H-connection and the 19th century web of science
Rebecca Priestley: "A place among the immortals": Ernest Marsden and his 20th century scientific networks
Panel discussion: The future of science in New Zealand: new areas for history of science research. This panel, of scientists and historians, will explore future challenges for science in New Zealand as a way of illuminating priorities for research into the history of science.

Call for papers

We are interested in receiving papers, or session ideas, on any topics around the history of New Zealand science, including but not limited to:

Scientists and their disciplines, such as

- James Hector and his life in science
- Ernest Marsden and his life in science
- Hector's scientific mentors and contemporaries, eg, Colenso, Hochstetter, Haast, others
- Marsden's scientific mentors and contemporaries, eg, Rutherford, Fleming, Cotton, others
- Histories of the natural, physical and social sciences in New Zealand
- Hector's and Marsden's legacy in New Zealand today
- New Zealand scientists working overseas
- Matauranga Maori in 19th and 20th century Aotearoa New Zealand

Scientific institutions and networks

- Histories of the New Zealand Geological Survey, Colonial Museum, Meteorological Service, Colonial Observatory, Colonial Botanic Gardens
- Histories of the DSIR and its constituent agencies
- Other histories of New Zealand science, scientists, science organisations and museums
- The mobility of scientists during wartime, changing networks and connections
- Indigenous knowledge meets European science

History of science as a discipline

- Books, blogs, and tweets: popularising the history of science in New Zealand
- Sources and records of science: challenges and opportunities for the 21st century scholar
- Painting the scientist: portrayals of scientists in New Zealand art, literature and film

Science in Society

- Historical perspectives on contemporary issues in science and society
- Histories of science education
- New Zealand: "more than any other country made by science"?
- Future challenges for history of science

Special issues of the Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand

The JRSNZ has dedicated two issues of the journal to the history of science in New Zealand. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to submit papers to these special issues, which will be co-edited by Rebecca Priestley and Simon Nathan, for publication in 2017. Deadline for submissions will be December 2015.

Key dates:

Call for papers: closes 30 June 2015
Draft programme available: 1 August 2015
Registrations open: 1 August 2015
Earlybird (discounted) registrations close: 30 September 2015
Full fee registrations will continue to be available through October and November.

Submission of abstracts

Please send abstracts (300-400 words) to the convenor of the programme committee, Jim McAloon, at Jim.McAloon@vuw.ac.nz. Papers will be accepted on a rolling basis, please expect to hear back within 10 working days.

For more information please contact the conference convenor, Rebecca Priestley, at NZhistsci2015@vuw.ac.nz.

#NZhistsci2015