

Mr Marshall, Mrs Gunn, fellow guests, the library service in the Nelson Settlement had its origin among the plans set up for the establishment of the **Second Colony of New Zealand**. The New Zealand Company Court of Directors had accepted the proposition from the committee formed to establish the colony as laid out in a letter of 3 February 1841 from Bryan Edward Duppa of Hollingbourne House in Kent, and his 14 Committee-men. Once the personnel of the Company's Preliminary Expedition, with the officers and other staff were appointed and before the expedition sailed on 27 April 1841, from members of the original Second Colony Committee had been selected an organising-committee to establish **THE**

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION OF NELSON:

- Chairman, Captain Arthur Wakefield, R N etc, etc;
- Committee of Management, Frederick Tuckett Esq.,
 - Alfred Domett Esq.,
 - B E DUPPA Esq.,
 - W Curling Young Esq.

As the Institution Chairman, Arthur Wakefield had chaired an inaugural meeting in his cabin on the flag-ship, WHITBY, of the Second Colony's Expedition fleet on 17 May 1841 while crossing the Bay of Biscay, attended by the expedition officers aboard, mainly survey staff including 6 improvers and 2 volunteers, 16-19-years-old, referred to his diary by Captain Wakefield as 'the young gentlemen'. Wakefield diaried the purpose of the meeting as establishing the Institution, 'to be called **THE NELSON LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION** for the object of diffusing general knowledge (by means of an extensive library) and encouraging any scientific researches' After provisional rules were drawn up it was proposed that a second meeting should be held when the WILL WATCH and the other expedition officers could assemble with them in Teneriffe in the Canary Islands.

This second provisional meeting took place aboard the WHITBY on 2 July 1992, where the rules were settled: an entrance fee of £1 was collected; promises of books in the officers' luggage made; letters written to be posted from Santa Cruz ordering periodicals, reviews, and other books to be sent from England. The young gentlemen had about 700 books aboard, which was considered to be a good nucleus for a library.

With the Second Colony well-established it was decided by the temporary committee elected from Preliminary Expedition officers, in April 1842, to advertise in The Nelson Examiner a meeting, to be held on the 8th, of all those interested who should consider 'the best means of attaining as early as possible the use of the books already contributed to this institution'.

A well-attended meeting on 6 June 1842 of colonists had met to lay-down rules and fix fees and checks on eligibility for membership. The interm-secretary, Dr Alexander Macshane, disputed the attempts to create an exclusive club with joining fee and annual subscription, too expensive and a black-ball ballot which could be used to exclude some colonists and walked out of the meeting taking the minutes he had kept at previous meetings with him. However, the men in attendance agreed, that with over £200 collected as applications for joining, there were sufficient funds to commission the building of a Library and Reading Room.

With Mr A G Jenkins' gift of a piece of land from his town acre No 445, at the foot of the hill on the western side of Trafalgar Street, now the site of Chez Eelco Coffee House, construction began in the first week in July. The commodious reading room, 30 feet by 16 feet, with a library of 500 volumes was officially opened on 27 September 1842. This small building, here depicted on the plaque about to be unveiled, was the house of the Library for the next 20 years when it was superceded by a larger one in Hardy Street.

On 21 June 1859 the Nelson Provincial Government passed THE NELSON INSTITUTE ACT, creating the now more well-known name 'THE NELSON INSTITUTE'

- the institution - 'a public utility for the diffusion of useful information on literature, science and arts'. As well from the Nelson Trust Funds a grant was made and a site on the Provincial Council Building's section donated for the construction of a building 'that would be worthy the object for which the Institution had been formed...'. The foundation stone had been laid on 26 August 1859 and the completed wooden structure with fittings, books and display cases for artifacts installed was ready for use by 1862 for book issues, lectures and museum displays. A museum wing, alterations and extensions, to the value of £530 was added in 1883. By 1884 the running of the Museum had been taken over by the Nelson Philosophical Society.

The Library part of the Nelson Institute Building was razed by fire on 25 February 1905, but a majority of the books were salvaged, The Nelson Fire Brigade was able to save the museum wing. The Nelson Institute Committee were able to move the salvaged books into the Athletic Club Rooms, on Bridge Street, now the site of Rutlands Garage, and a week later books were again available for issue.

The Central Government passed THE NELSON INSTITUTE ACT on 12 April 1907. The third Nelson Institute Library Building, on the same site as that destroyed by fire, constructed of reinforced concrete with some brick veneer was opened, by the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Hon Francis Dillon Bell, son of one of Nelson's pioneer administrators, on 27 November 1912.

From that date until 1 April 1965 the Nelson Institute Library and Museum was administered by an elected committee and operated by a small staff, financed by a Nelson City Council grant.

The third Nelson Institute Library Building is now the Fisheries School of the Nelson Polytechnic vacated by the Nelson Public Library when this building in which we are now assembled was occupied under the memorial name, the Elma Turner Library.