

# NELSON DISCUSSION GROUP – JUNE

*‘Enjoying learning from each other’*

Friday 9 June 2017

## Fast Facts

**Discussion Leader/Presenter:**

Simon Nathan

**Topic:**

The Blackwater Mine: an illustrated case history of hard-rock gold mining and ore processing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

**When:**

Friday 9 June  
5:00pm

**Where:**

Nick Smith’s Electorate Office  
544 Waimea Road  
NELSON

James Macdonald on 03 540 3520 or  
[c2skye@gmail.com](mailto:c2skye@gmail.com) for further information

**Parking:**

Corner of Waimea and Quarantine Roads

**Cost:** free for all. Includes drinks and finger food

Our Discussion Group welcomes all persons with engineering, geotechnical, general geoscience and environmental interests. Meetings are normally held on the second Friday of each month from 5:00pm. We learn from each other through relaxed and facilitated discussion in-the-round.

The Nelson Discussion Group series is brought to you by local geoscientists and engineers supported and funded by local professional enterprises, individuals and the AusIMM. This event is worth 2 PD hours



Conveners: John Dow FAusIMM(CP)  
James Macdonald (FSEG)

Simon Nathan will present an illustrated case history of the Waiuta gold mining operations at Blackwater, near Reefton. The Snowy River battery near Waiuta processed gold-bearing quartz ore from the nearby Blackwater mine between 1908 and 1938. Incorporating the latest technology when built in 1908, it was a typical early 20<sup>th</sup> century processing plant. This case study of how gold was extracted from the ore is illustrated by a sequence of photographs taken by Joseph Divis in early 1931. Roasting of the ore concentrates after 1924 had the unanticipated consequence of contaminating part of the area around the battery with arsenic which persists in the soil today. Plans are underway to remediate the most contaminated site.

Simon Nathan is an emeritus scientist at GNS Science. He has worked in many parts of New Zealand, but chiefly on the West Coast of the South Island. He continues to work on historical topics, and recently published an illustrated biography of Joseph Divis (with financial assistance from the New Zealand branch of AusIMM).

**Future Meetings:**

**July 7: Alan Eggers “South Taranaki Bight offshore Iron Sands Project”**

**August 18: Chris Castle “Chatham Rock Phosphate”**