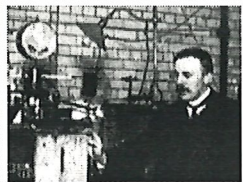


Today in History

10 December



1908 Rutherford wins Nobel Prize in Chemistry

Ernest Rutherford's discoveries about the nature of atoms shaped modern science and paved the way for nuclear physics. Einstein referred to him as a 'second Newton' who had 'tunneled into the very material of God'.

Born in 1871 near Nelson, Rutherford began his international career when he won a scholarship to the Cavendish Laboratory of the University of Cambridge, of which he was to become Director many years later. His discovery that heavy atoms have a tendency to decay into lighter atoms heralded modern techniques of carbon dating and led to his Nobel Prize.

The second great discovery of his career was that the atom consisted of a tiny, dense nucleus surrounded by oppositely charged electrons – a model that still forms the basis of atomic theory today. Perhaps most famously, in 1917 Rutherford 'split' the atom.

Read more about Ernest Rutherford

Image: Ernest Rutherford (Timeframes)

Internal links

Ernest Rutherford stamp Ernest Rutherford

External links

Rutherford: scientist supreme Ernest Rutherford (Chch City Libraries) Ernest Rutherford biography (DNZB)



1962 Wilkins wins Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

New Zealand-born Maurice Wilkins and his colleagues James Watson and Francis Crick shared the prize for their studies on the structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), the genetic molecule found in all organisms. Watson used X-rays to show the shape of the double helix.

Born in the tiny north Wairarapa settlement of Pongaroa, Wilkins moved to Birmingham, England, when he was six. He received his PhD in physics from the University of Birmingham in 1940.

During the early years of the Second World War, Wilkins focused his postgraduate research on improving the cathode-ray screens used in radar before working on the separation of isotopes in bombs. In 1943 he moved to Berkeley, California, where he worked on the Manhattan Project, which helped to develop the first atomic bomb. Wilkins later confessed to feeling 'very disgusted with the dropping of two bombs on civilian centres in Japan'. Disillusioned by nuclear physics and its military applications, he would become involved in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

In 1946 Wilkins moved into the relatively new field of biophysics. He became a member of the Medical Research Council (MRC) at King's College in London, working on the genetic effects of ultrasound used for medical purposes. He then turned his attention to the use of X-ray diffraction to probe the structure of DNA. The patterns formed by the scattered X-rays showed that the DNA molecule appeared to have a double spiral structure.

Watson and Crick were able to build on the work of Wilkins and the British physical chemist Rosalind Franklin to deduce the structure of the DNA molecule in 1953. The discovery of the structure of DNA set the stage for rapid advances in molecular biology over the next 50 years. In the decade that followed Wilkins published a number of papers verifying the Watson-Crick Model, culminating in the award of the Nobel Prize in 1962.

Maurice Wilkins died in 2004.

Image: Maurice Wilkins c1999 (RSNZ)

Internal links

1962 – key events

External links

Maurice Wilkins (Nobel Prize) Maurice Wilkins (RSNZ) Maurice Wilkins (Wikipedia)
Maurice Wilkins: DNA enabler (The NZ Edge)

Timeline Secti

Month Calendar Vi

Today in History

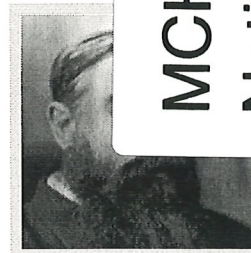
What happ

See historic even
the year by enter
below. Why not t

DD/MM

Visit the

Kiwi of the



Julius Vogel

Premier Julius Vogel's great plan was to borrow heavily to build infrastructure and to lure migrants. It was controversial, but the money and migrants stimulated the economy and created a viable consumer market for producers.

more

Get KotW as RSS

THIS WEEK'S QUIZ

Test your knowledge of NZ history

page
85
92

This Week in History



4 April 2001
Silvia Cartwright



5 April 1932
Death of Phar



6 April 1864 Pai
Marire ambush



7 April 1856 First
state secondary



8 April 1873
Julius Vogel



9 April 1932
Unemployed



10 April 1968
Sinking of the

MCH n.d.

Help us improve this website [TAKE THIS 10 MINUTE SURVEY](#) Go in the draw to win a \$100 voucher

Today in History

◀ 10 December ▶



1908 Rutherford wins Nobel Prize in Chemistry

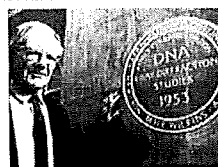
Ernest Rutherford's discoveries about the nature of atoms shaped modern science and paved the way for nuclear physics. Einstein referred to him as a 'second Newton' who had 'tunneled into the very material of God'. more...

Internal links

Ernest Rutherford stamp Ernest Rutherford

External links

Rutherford: scientist supreme Ernest Rutherford (Chch City Libraries) Ernest Rutherford biography (DNZB)



1962 Wilkins wins Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine

New Zealand-born Maurice Wilkins and his colleagues James Watson and Francis Crick shared the prize for their studies on the structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), the genetic molecule found in all organisms. more...

Internal links

1962 - key events

External links

Maurice Wilkins (Nobel Prize) Maurice Wilkins (RSNZ) Maurice Wilkins (Wikipedia) Maurice Wilkins: DNA enabler (The NZ Edge)

This Week in History



15 August 1951
Troop ship
Wahine
wrecked en
route to Korean
War



16 August 1944
CORSO formed



17 August 1839
NZ Company
ship Tory
arrives



18 August 1955
20-year old
hanged for
murder



19 August 1944
Kiwi pilot's
sacrifice saves
French village



20 August 1940
Turakina sunk
by German
raider in
Tasman



21 August 1958
Auckland
pedestrians
begin 'Barnes
Dance'

Timeline Sections

Month Calendar View

Today in History

What happened that day?

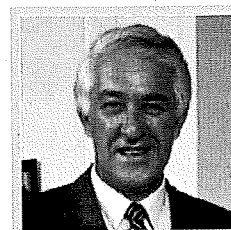
See historic events for any day of the year by entering the date below. Why not try your birthday?

DD/MM



Visit the full Calendar

Kiwi of the Week



Paul Reeves

Sir Paul Reeves was Archbishop of New Zealand and in 1985 became this country's first Māori governor-general.

more

Get KotW as RSS

THIS WEEK'S QUIZ

Test your knowledge of NZ history

Culture and Society

PRE-1840 CONTACT
HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT
DISASTERS
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT
HEALTH AND WELFARE
IMMIGRATION
TRANSPORT
DECADE STUDIES
SPORT
LIFESTYLE
PLACES
THE GREAT OUTDOORS
MEMORIALS

Politics and Government

POLITICAL MILESTONES
PROTEST AND REFORM
TREATY OF WAITANGI
MAORI LEADERSHIP
THE GOVERNORS
PARLIAMENT'S PEOPLE
WORK OF GOVERNMENT
NZ IN THE WORLD

War and Society

NZ'S INTERNAL WARS
SOUTH AFRICAN WAR
FIRST WORLD WAR
SECOND WORLD WAR

POST SECOND WORLD WAR
OTHER CONFLICTS
WAR MEMORIALS

The Classroom

NCEA LEVEL 1 HISTORY
NCEA LEVEL 2 HISTORY
NCEA LEVEL 3 HISTORY
SOCIAL STUDIES LEVELS 4 AND 5
PRIMARY SCHOOL HISTORY
LINKS AND RESOURCES

Hands On History

LINKS AND RESOURCES
HISTORY GUIDES

Media Library

INTERACTIVES
VIDEOS
SOUNDS
PHOTOS

General

SITE INFORMATION
QUIZZES
CALENDAR
BIOGRAPHIES

Other MCH websites



© Crown Copyright. All text is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 New Zealand Licence](#). Commercial re-use may be allowed on request. All non-text content is subject to specific conditions.

This site is produced by the History Group of the New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage. [Meet the NZHistory.net.nz team](#)

[Contact Us/Site Feedback](#)

[Copyright, Disclaimer and Privacy](#)

[newzealand.govt.nz](#)

[Sign up for our free email newsletter](#)

Other Ministry

