



BACG

British Association for Crystal Growth

Registered Charity No. 261780

BACG AGM meeting

2nd July 2025 17:30

In person, BACG Annual Meeting 2025, Leeds

Minutes

Prof. Sally Price Chaired the Meeting, which was quorate. General welcome and thanks to the conference organizer and the BACG committee for their work.

1. Minutes of the AGM held on Tuesday 2nd July 2024 18:30 during the BACG Annual Meeting at Loughborough University, were proposed by Elena Simone and accepted by Grahame Woolam.
2. Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
3. Grahame Woolame, presented the Chair's report below.

The British Association for Crystal Growth (BACG) remains in a healthy and stable position. In 2024, we recorded a modest deficit of £746, further we incurred future reduced income, resulting from targeted incentives aimed at increasing participation among Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and the broader membership. These included a 20% registration discount for prize recipients, made possible by the strong financial outcome of the BACG/ISIC joint meeting in Glasgow 2023. That event welcomed a record number of national and international delegates and generated a significant surplus.

BACG's core mission continues to be the promotion of national and international scientific and technological exchange in the theory and practice of crystal growth, crystallisation, and crystal evaluation. The committee remains committed to ensuring that the association is well-positioned to serve its members.

We were recently approached by prominent industrial members from the UK pharmaceutical and agricultural sectors, requesting BACG's support in addressing a current challenge. Further details will be shared during the AGM.

Membership and Engagement

A key challenge for 2025 is membership engagement and management. Most payments are received via direct debit (typically £8), but new memberships appear limited. This may be due to annual membership being included in conference registration, which could be affecting how new members are tracked and recorded.

Support and Awards

We continued to support our community through travel grants, which were prominently advertised for BACG 2025. Two grants were awarded, and we've implemented learnings from previous years—particularly the importance of early communication to support visa

application timelines.

Two retired members were granted complimentary registration this year.

Awards and Recognition:

- Young Scientist Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Annual Lecture
- Poster Prizes: 2
- ECR Talk Prizes: 3
- Crystal in Art Prizes: 2

These recognitions highlight the benefits of BACG membership, which also include discounted registration, eligibility for awards, and the opportunity to join the newly formed Early Career Researcher Committee. This committee successfully chaired the dedicated Researcher Day, which attracted 80 registered delegates.

BACG sponsored two external events in 2025: Leeds Crystallisation Course; and Durham Crystal Symposium.

Conference and Future Planning

BACG 2025 currently has 120 registrations. The committee extends its sincere thanks to the organising teams for curating a high-quality programme and to the University of Leeds for hosting. This year's meeting features a diverse lineup of invited speakers from academia and industry worldwide. We are also grateful to our sponsors for supporting both the main conference and the ECR Day.

Looking ahead, BACG 2026 will return to Manchester in early July. This will mark our third consecutive standalone event since ISIC/BACG, reinforcing our identity and supporting membership growth. We continue to receive interest in joint meetings, including from the Dutch Crystal Growth Association.

Governance and Operations

This year marks the first full term for the new Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Despite the geographical spread across Switzerland, Italy, and the UK, the team has met regularly. We've also included ECR Lead Frank in recent meetings to ensure effective communication and access to resources. I would like to thank the committee for their dedication and patience during this transitional period.

We have established a Microsoft account and Teams channel to centralise information and preserve institutional knowledge for future committee transitions. However, this platform remains underutilised and would benefit from increased engagement.

Communications and Outreach

Website management has been taken on directly by Elena. While newsletter email drops have decreased, LinkedIn has emerged as our most effective communication channel.

Members are encouraged to share relevant news or vacancies and to tag BACG and its active members. We will continue to update the website and are exploring the services of a professional membership vendor (contact has been made with CJAM).

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

We reaffirm our commitment to embedding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) into BACG's culture. This year, we have dedicated a central session in the main programme to foster meaningful dialogue and learning.


Preserving our History

The BACG Archive needs a new home, UoM have a willingness to support but are limited on space.

Discussion on the archive issue. Ashwin Rajagopalan from Manchester offered to keep the archives momentarily in his lab. Then we will need to find a more appropriate location.

Karen Robertson and Huaiyu Yang suggest to digitalize most of the material.

Treasurer report from Zarrin Ansari:

<u>BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR CRYSTAL GROWTH</u>		
Charity number 261780		
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		
FOR April 2024-March 2025		
		
<u>Receipts:</u>	2023/2024	2024/2025
Sponsorship	£0.00	£0.00
Membership Subscriptions	£503.00	£391.00
Conferences	£39,192.00	£0.00
Accounts Interest	£0.00	£0.08
Account Transfer	£0.00	£0.00
Other	£3.55	£0.00
TOTAL	£39,698.55	£391.08
<u>Payments:</u>		
Sponsorship	£500.00	£500.00
Membership Expense	£0.00	£0.00
Conferences	£550.00	£570.00
Committee Expenses	£2,561.31	£725.55
Administration	£1,590.66	£612.27
Account Transfer	£0.00	£0.00
Other	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL	£5,201.97	£2,407.82
<u>Net Receipts for the year</u>	£34,496.58	-£2,016.74
Cash Funds - 1st Apr 2024	£28,928.16	£63,324.74
Cash Funds - 31st Mar 2025	£63,324.74	£61,308.00
All amounts relate to unrestricted funds		
Cash Funds:		
Nat West Current Account	£37,625.49	£35,608.75
Nat West Business Reserve Account	£0.00	£0.00
National Savings Bank - Savings Account	£25,699.25	£25,699.25
Outstanding uncleared cheques	£0.00	£0.00
CLOSING BALANCE TOTAL	£63,324.74	£61,308.00

Small loss incurred from BACG2024 meeting but accounts sustained by profits from previous year.

Subsequent 2025 sponsorship:

Awarded 2 travel grants for students to attend BACG 2025 meeting
Sponsored Leeds Crystallisation Course and Durham Crystal Symposium
The interim report is approved by the AGM attendees.

Committee opening positions from Grahame. Two co-opted members that can be renewed for a year. Otherwise we will open nominations for two new co-opted members.

Year	Jul 19/Feb 2021 (long year)	Feb 2021/July 2022 (long year)	July 22_Sep 23	July 23_Sept 24	July 24_Sept 25
Graham Woollam	co-opted	✓	✓	✓ (Chair)	✓ (Chair)
Jan Sefcik		✓	✓	✓	✓
Elena Simone		✓	✓	*(S)	*(S)
Simon Lawrence		✓	✓	✓	✓
Zarrin Ansari			✓	*(T)	*(T)
Ashwin Rajagopalan				✓	✓
Karen Robertson				✓	✓
Mingzhon Li				✓	✓
Tariq Mamhud				✓	✓
Cameron Brown				✓	✓
Fragkoulis Theodosiou					co-opted
Huaiyu Yang					co-opted
	10	10	10	12	12
President					
Bill Jones	last year				
Sally Price		✓	✓	✓	✓
Kevin Roberts					

New presidency:

As the term of Sally Price comes to an end the chair announce that there has been one nomination for the president, for Kevin Roberts, University of Leeds. The chair asks for further nominations (none was made) and Kevin is officially made the new president for the next term of three years.

Industrial statement:

GSK, AstraZeneca and Syngenta produced a document stating the challenges that the industrial crystallization community is facing. Jennifer Webb from Syngenta illustrate the problem and a discussion arises.

Crystallisation Science in the UK in 2025

Amy Robertson^{*a}, Alan Collier^b, John Hone^b, Mei Lee^c, Jennifer Webb^b and Robert Willacy^c

- a. Chemical Development, Pharmaceutical Technology and Development, Operations, AstraZeneca, Macclesfield, UK
- b. Particle Science Group, Syngenta, Jealott's Hill International Research Centres, Bracknell, UK
- c. Drug Substance Development – Materials Science, Medicine Development & Supply, GSK, Stevenage, UK

Problem Statement:

The future of industrial crystallisation in the UK presents both challenges and opportunities necessitating a strategic approach to workforce development, academic research, and engagement with funding bodies. Crystallisation, isolation, and drying processes remain fundamental to the production of pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals, highlighting the need for a workforce equipped with specialised skills in these areas. However, the current state of education and training for these processes at the MSc and PhD levels is insufficient to meet this demand.

Key Issues:

1. **Education and Training:** There is a gap in the teaching of crystallisation, isolation, and drying techniques at higher education institutions in the UK, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. As digital approaches evolve rapidly, a new skill set is required, yet core experimental skills remain crucial. Effectively addressing future industrial challenges will continue to require research and teaching that integrates both digital and experimental approaches.
2. **Workforce Development:** There is a decreasing number of individuals leaving UK academia with the combination of digital and experimental skills to innovate and optimize crystallisation, isolation, and drying processes. Tailored training programs reflecting current industry needs are essential for nurturing both new graduates and the existing workforce. Such programs could be implemented at either the MSc or PhD level to promote continuous learning and development.
3. **Influence on Academia and Funding Bodies:** Addressing these educational challenges requires strategic collaboration with UK academia and funding bodies to prioritise research and teaching on industrial crystallisation, isolation, and drying. Encouraging investments in research programs, continuing to collaborate between industry and academia, technological advancements in these interrelated processes can be accelerated.

A coordinated effort to reform teaching, enhance industry-academia partnerships, and secure appropriate funding for research in this area is essential. By continuing to build on the world-leading crystallisation research already happening here the UK can secure its industrial competitiveness and maintain leadership in this vital sector.

Matteo Salvalaglio points out that attracting students for a PhD is very difficult and support from industry (in kind, co-funded scholarships) can make positions more attractive.

Sven Schroeder explains why it is difficult to attract funds in crystallization; this is because it is seen as a mature technology that does not need further research. A suggestion could be to discuss together the more interesting scientific challenges, also from industry to be more attractive to the funding bodies.

Elena Simone proposes to organize a workshop to discuss further this topic and focus on solutions, the BACG can partly sponsor it.

Grahame Woolam suggests to publish the problem statement on the website to ensure we can get more feedback from the community.

General conference feedback:

The ECR day was particularly appreciated and well attended, with around 80 participants. Kevin Roberts complimented on the organization and the quality of the proposed talks, especially the career ones.

Joint meeting with the Dutch association:

As representative of the Dutch crystallization association Renee Stendaam was present at the AGM. It was agreed to have the meeting of the 2027 as joint (perhaps involving the Italian crystallography association) in the Netherlands. The AGM attendees agree with the proposal.

Any other business. There was no further business to discuss

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be at the BACG 2026, Annual meeting, which will be held in Manchester.

Elena Simone
Secretary
5th July 2025