

BACG Chairman's Report

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Leeds, 2nd July 2025

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. Do we have other options?