

BACG Chairman's Report

Grahame R Woollam

Manchester, 30th June 2026

The British Association for Crystal Growth (BACG) remains in a healthy and positive position. Over the past year, the Association has continued to strengthen its activities, expand engagement with the crystallisation community, and build momentum following the focus on standalone annual meetings.

A particular highlight has been the success of BACG 2025 in Leeds, which delivered a net surplus and provided a solid foundation for continued investment in member activities, travel grants, training courses and conference development. We extend our congratulations and thanks to Tariq Mahmud and the Leeds Organising Committee for delivering an excellent meeting.

BACG's core mission remains unchanged: to promote national and international scientific and technological exchange in crystal growth, crystallisation and crystal evaluation. The committee remains committed to ensuring that the Association continues to evolve while maintaining the strong scientific foundations that have defined BACG for over five decades.

Membership and Community Growth

Membership engagement has been a major focus during the last year. Through our partnership with Delegant, we have begun implementing a more structured approach to membership management and community engagement. Current membership stands at 28 members, comprising 6 full members, 5 lifetime members and 17 student members. Student membership therefore now represents more than half of our active membership base, reflecting the strong engagement of early career researchers within the Association.

The transition to Delegant has also enabled progress towards a modernised membership system and improvements to member services. Work has commenced on website redevelopment, membership management processes and improved financial oversight.

Encouragingly, 46 attendees at BACG 2026 indicated that they would like to become BACG members, including 31 students and 15 non-student delegates. These prospective members represent a broad international community spanning the UK, Europe, North America, the Middle East and Asia, demonstrating the continued international appeal of BACG.

Support for Early Career Researchers

Supporting early career researchers remains central to BACG's mission.

Demand for travel support increased significantly during 2026 and, in response, BACG expanded its support through the award of three travel grants for students attending BACG 2026. This represents an increase from previous years and reflects our commitment to ensuring that talented early career scientists can participate in the community regardless of financial constraints.

BACG also continued its support of educational and training initiatives, including sponsorship of the Leeds Crystallisation Course, and Durham Crystal Symposium helping strengthen the pipeline of future crystallisation scientists and engineers.

BACG 2026: Manchester

BACG 2026 marks the Association's third consecutive standalone annual meeting and represents another important milestone in strengthening the identity and visibility of BACG.

The meeting has attracted excellent participation, with 92 registered delegates attending the main conference sessions, 51 delegates participating in the Early Career Researcher Day, 83 attendees joining networking events and 63 attending the conference dinner.

The scientific programme reflects the breadth of modern crystallisation science, spanning fundamental studies of nucleation and crystal growth through to pharmaceutical development, advanced manufacturing, digital technologies and emerging applications of machine learning and artificial intelligence.

The committee thanks Ashwin Rajagopalan, the local organising team, Delegant and all sponsors for their commitment and support in delivering this year's meeting. Their efforts have created a programme that combines scientific excellence with valuable opportunities for networking and collaboration.

Communications and Outreach

BACG's LinkedIn presence has continued to grow significantly and is now our most effective communication channel.

The Association currently has 979 LinkedIn followers and generated almost 59,000 post impressions over the last twelve months, with more than 34,000 impressions in the last 90 days alone with nearly 20,000 in the last 30 days. Conference promotions, speaker announcements and award recognition posts have generated strong engagement and have helped extend the visibility of BACG beyond its traditional membership base.

The committee remains grateful to all members who contribute by sharing news, opportunities and achievements across the community.

Governance and Looking Forward

The past three years have represented a period of significant transition for BACG. During this time, the committee has focused on modernising operations, improving continuity, strengthening engagement with early career researchers and increasing the visibility of the Association.

A key development this year has been the establishment of the partnership with Delegant, providing professional support for membership administration, conference delivery and communication activities. This represents an important step towards ensuring sustainable growth and continuity for future committees.

Looking ahead, BACG continues to explore opportunities for international collaboration and future joint meetings while maintaining the strong identity and community spirit that make BACG unique. The 2027 meeting will be held in Delft in the Netherlands from 14-16th June entitled BRIDGE: an international meeting combining the British, Italian, and Dutch Associations, bringing exciting opportunities to further strengthen links across the wider crystallisation community.

As this marks the third and final year for the current Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, I would like to personally thank the BACG Committee, our volunteers, Delegant, sponsors and members for their support, commitment and enthusiasm. Everything BACG achieves is made possible by people who give their time to support our community.

The Association remains in a strong position and I am confident that BACG will continue to grow, evolve and serve the crystallisation community for decades to come.

Grahame R Woollam
Chair, British Association for Crystal Growth