

Poster Presentation

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Crystallography for the People

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The British Crystallographic Association (BCA) has engaged in public outreach projects over the past two years, aimed at communicating the basic principles and applications of crystallography to the general public, especially in light of the Bragg Centenary Celebrations and the International Year of Crystallography. Based on an activity developed by the Young Crystallographers group of the BCA called “The Structure of Stuff is Sweet”, we have developed a pack which can be used as a walk-up stand at science fairs and festivals, workshops and as science busking in pubs. The activities all focus on highlighting the relevance of crystallography to everyday life and are eye-catching to attract an audience. The biggest of the activities has been the UK Big Bang Fair which took place in both March 2013 and March 2014 in London and Birmingham, respectively. This is a very large science fair for schools and families to learn about different aspects of Science and Engineering, with over 75,000 people attending. The Science and Technology Facilities Council in the UK and the BCA funded a crystallography stand in collaboration with Diamond and ISIS. The stand had appeal to both young and old alike, and there was the opportunity to make unit cells from marshmallows, crystallise lysozyme, and to learn about the principles of diffraction using a lego beamline! We had a team of around 40 volunteers from Universities and institutions across the UK covering biological, chemical and physical crystallography. An outline of the events, pictures and comments from participants are presented, as well as our plans for future events building on these foundations to further strengthen the BCA’s engagement with the wider community and to raise the profile of crystallography in the public domain. Please come to the poster to find out more about the BCA, and what we do.



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