

**Lachlan M. D. Cranswick (1968–2010)**

Lachlan Cranswick began his working life at Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in the early 1990s, where he joined the battery group of the then Division of Mineral Products. Having collected routine diffraction data as a small part of that job, he later became X-ray Diffraction Laboratory Manager, and the die was cast. Lachlan was always an 'early adopter' of all things computing, and the X-ray diffraction laboratory was soon peppered with PCs with access to the fledgling World Wide Web. Like the internet itself, Lachlan became a conduit of information and gave freely of his time and knowledge to help the science of others. He began sending out CDs of freely available crystallographic software (NEXUS) to institutions without web connectivity. This ethos became a way of life for him and continued beyond his association with CSIRO. Lachlan acquired, and more importantly maintained, friendships no matter where he was. His scientific curiosity, broad interests (<http://lachlan.bluehaze.com.au>), strong social conscience and willing sense of mischief endeared him to many across the globe.

In the UK, when funding for CCP14 (a collaborative computer project for small molecule and powder diffraction) was renewed in 1997, the grant holders perceived Lachlan as the ideal candidate for the postdoctoral research associate (PDRA) position, located at the Daresbury synchrotron, despite the absence of a PhD. The post required someone both



**Figure 1**  
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computer and web literate, enthusiastic, confident, with the ability to interact with those crystallographers involved in software creation around the world – and Lachlan was clearly the man for the job! CCP14 had previously been something of a failure, but with Lachlan it was an instant success. After three years, funding was renewed for five more, and CCP14 moved to the School of Crystallography at Birkbeck College, London. Whereas in Cheshire he enjoyed wildlife photography, in London he loved to attend classical music concerts, especially the free lunchtime recitals held in the city's numerous churches. However, his insistence on living within the prime London borough of Kensington and Chelsea on a PDRA budget meant accepting poor quality accommodation that even students would eschew.

Lachlan left the UK for Canada in 2003. Here, he worked on the neutron powder diffractometer at the National Research Universal (NRU) reactor, Chalk River. He made several improvements to the hardware, increased automation and became famous for his level of service. Perhaps his proudest achievement may have been doing the impossible: neutron diffraction from Gd compounds. He organized several Canadian powder diffraction workshops, and was invariably busy editing newsletters, organizing workshops and conferences for the International Union of Crystallography and the American Crystallographic Association *etc.* He loved the rural area and enjoyed walking, canoeing and sailing. He became vice president of the Squash and Curling Club, where he managed the bar, although a teetotaler.

He packed a lot of life into his 41 years and shared that life with friends and strangers alike. The 'gypsy scientist', whose journey in diffraction began over 20 years ago in Port Melbourne, Australia, has left an indelible mark on his discipline. He will be sadly missed by the many that knew him, and by the hundreds who never met him, but benefited from CCP14 or a NEXUS CD coming through the door.

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