

News Release



Monday 30 June 2003: For Immediate Release

Work of Bragg and Bragg to be celebrated by a Landmark Event at the University of Leeds

The work W.H. Bragg and W.L. Bragg, for their roles in the development of X-ray Crystal Analysis, will be honoured by the Royal Society of Chemistry at The University of Leeds on Tuesday 1st July 2003.

By demonstrating the feasibility of X-ray crystal-structure analysis, albeit at first on simple structures, the Braggs developed a powerful means of investigating the solid state. This transcended any other method and has retained its pre-eminence to the present day for finding the arrangement of atoms – their angular and spatial distribution and dimensions – in larger and larger molecules.

The research careers of WHB and WLB had very different starting points, one beginning research in mid-career, and the other achieving distinction unusually early. On the other hand, their careers had much in common. They both became Professors at northern English universities, and they exhibited an enthusiasm for the application of academic science to industrial problems, and an awareness of the relevance of fundamental science to military and naval operations. In continuous parallel careers, each established a major school of X-ray crystallography, and continued to contribute actively to science through his seventies. Each, as the head, made an impact on the

Royal Institution, with its diet of “library, laboratory and lectures” and was much involved with the diffusion of scientific knowledge to the public and with science policy. (On the other hand it was said that neither regarded it as necessary to train or teach PhD students or tell them what to do!) Both father and son had mathematical backgrounds but became experimentalists. They made immense contributions to our knowledge of chemical structure and were remarkably perceptive of the potential future applications of X-ray crystallography to chemistry and to the structure of large biological molecules.

Chief Executive of the RSC, Dr. David Giachardi, will unveil the plaque in University House and in a lecture to an invited audience, Professor Durward WJ Cruickshank will explain the influence the work of W.H. Bragg and W.L.Bragg has had and continues to have on scientific development.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

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1) Photographs will be available from the Royal Society of Chemistry after the event.

2) The landmark plaque will be unveiled at 11.45p.m. on Tuesday 1st June 2003 at the University of Leeds. A buffet reception will take place after the ceremony. **Members of the press are welcome to attend provided they notify Claire McLoughlin at the Royal Society of Chemistry in advance.**

3) The Royal Society of Chemistry is the leading organisation in Europe for advancing the chemical sciences. Supported by a network of 45,000 members worldwide and an internationally acclaimed publishing business, our activities span education and training, conferences and science policy, and the promotion of the chemical sciences to the public.