



Geoffrey King 1924-2007

Geoffrey Stephen Douglas King (Geoff) was born on 7 December 1924 in Ealing. He studied at the Royal College of Science (now Imperial College, London) and obtained a B.Sc. in Chemistry and Physics in 1944. From 1944 to 1953, he was employed by J. Lyons & Co. He began as an analytical chemist, and shortly specialised in crystallographic work, developing software for the LEO computer. While there, he obtained the M.Sc. in Crystallography from Birkbeck College, and determined several crystal structures, including those of nicotinic acid and nicotinamide. Between 1953 and 1956, he held a research fellowship at Birkbeck, where he moved into protein crystallography; among the structures on which he worked were lysozyme nitrate and iodide.

In 1957, Geoff joined the Union Carbide European Research Association in Brussels, where he returned to the field of organic and organometallic structures. Alongside his structural work, he wrote a set of programs for the IBM 1620 computer. He started an international IBM 1620 users' group with more than 70 members, who developed these programs.

In 1971, Geoff was appointed Professor of Crystallography in the Department of Geology and Geography at the University of Leuven. His research dealt with the structures of minerals, and of organic and organometallic compounds. Along with that, he assisted with the development of important software packages, including XRAY-76 and XTAL, in particular their implementation on IBM systems. For a considerable time, he was responsible for the implementation and use of the Cambridge Structural Database in Belgium. In 1976, he was made a foreign member of the Royal Flemish Academy of Science and Arts. In that year, he joined the Belgian National Committee for Crystallography, of which he was secretary from 1980-82 and chair from 1985-88. In 1997 was made an honorary member. Geoff was for many years a member of the European Crystallographic Committee, the forerunner of the ECA, and was its chair from 1987-89. Colleagues in Belgium and abroad valued his unselfish concern for the crystallographic community, his good critical spirit and his warm humanity.

After his retirement with emeritus status in 1990, he remained very active in crystallographic research; many people benefited from his expertise. Geoff died suddenly in Leuven on 11 September, 2007.

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