

News from CCP4: Spring 2002



Charles Ballard, Martyn Winn, Alun Ashton, Peter Briggs, Maeri Howard Eales, Pryank Patel

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1. Staff changes

The newest member of the CCP4 staff, **Pryank Patel**, has left the buzz of London for the (hopefully!) slower pace of life at Daresbury Laboratory.

Pryank Patel started in January 2002 on a 3-year post as part of a major new project funded by the EU to expand the activities of the European Bioinformatics Institute and its collaborators. Pryank will be working on expanding the role of Data Harvesting in the CCP4 suite, easing structure deposition from CCP4 and enhancing the existing validation tools. Pryank recently finished an MSc course in Bioinformatics at Birkbeck College, before moving north to join the Daresbury team.

Also **Maeri Howard Eales**, who may be familiar to some of those that attended this year's Study Weekend, took over the reins from the retired David Brown as the Administrative Assistant. As well as taking on the responsibilities that she has inherited from Dave, Maeri will be producing a smaller newsletter twice a year, developing the commercial web pages on the CCP4 website and using her experience from the Study Weekend by attending upcoming conferences, such as the ACA in Texas in May of this year, where she is looking forward to some good old fashioned American cooking!

2. Workshops and Conferences 2001/2002

It has been a busy year for CCP4 on the conference front as you can see by the amount of conferences on our schedule. This does not look as if it will slow down, as the summer months appear to have more than enough conferences to keep all of us busy. Highlights of conferences passed as well as ones upcoming for the summer can be found in more detail in the following paragraphs.

In July CCP4 was again represented at the American Crystallographic Association annual meeting in Los Angeles. Charles Ballard, Peter Briggs and MOSFLM developer Harry Powell were in attendance at the CCP4 exhibition stand, demonstrating the latest versions of the software to an unsuspecting American audience.

In particular, many people asked about using REFMAC5 and the graphical user interface CCP4i, and as always MOSFLM was a popular attraction. The new Windows NT port of the suite was used throughout for demonstrations and performed brilliantly.

CCP4 had a stand at the 20th European Crystallographic Meeting held in Krakow, Poland in August 2001. The stand was manned by Martyn Winn and Harry Powell, with guest appearances by Garib Murshudov, Alexei Vagin, Phil Evans and Eleanor Dodson. CCP4 software was also prominent in the microsymbosia with talks on REFMAC by Garb Murshudov, on ACORN by Eleanor Dodson, and on BEAST by Randy Read.

The main meeting was followed by a satellite meeting entitled "Protein Crystallography beyond 2000: High Throughput and High Quality" which covered future directions of protein crystallography methodology. CCP4 was represented by talks from Eleanor Dodson, Garib Murshudov and Martyn Winn.

The beginning of the New Year was not a quiet time for those at CCP4 as The University of York was host to the annual CCP4 Study Weekend the 4th and 5th of January. This year's topic, High-Throughput Structure Determination, proved to be one of the most popular topics, attracting over 450 delegates to the two day seminar.

Hoping to extend the Study Weekend further afield than just to those that came to York, for the first time in Study Weekend's history, the talks were webcast live. Alun Ashton, Conference Organiser, said "We have tried to make the Study Weekend as accessible as possible to everyone and we felt that this was the next logical step. We researched into whether it was possible and we found that it was not as difficult to set up as we had thought. We hope to use streaming wherever possible in the future and will announce more on this on our website as it develops".

CCP4 would like to thank the scientific organisers - Robert Esnouf (Oxford), Dave Stuart (Oxford) and Keith Wilson (York) - as well as the speakers who braved the cold and ice of the North to present their talks. As usual, staff from Daresbury (Alun Ashton, Maeri Howard Eales, Pat Broadhurst, Sue Waller and Allison Mutch) made sure that registration was as painless as possible and that everyone got the help they needed at the conference. All of the proceedings from the weekend will be published in the Acta Cryst D later in the year.

The upcoming months will prove to be yet another busy one for the members of CCP4 that are attending a wide variety of conferences around the world. In March, we will be attending the most local of the conferences, the annual BCA Conference to be held at the University of Nottingham. Though CCP4 will not be taking a stand at the conference, a session on CCP4 will be chaired by Harry Powell. More information on this can be found at the CCP4 website.

Cowboy hats and boots will be out in force when CCP4 attend the ACA meeting in historic San Antonio, Texas. The meeting, held the 25th to the 30th of May, will be a chance for members of CCP4 to meet with their American users. In addition to this, CCP4 has been asked to host a workshop as an introduction to CCP4 during the meeting. Check the <http://www.hwi.buffalo.edu/ACA.html> ACA website for more details.

And not to be forgotten, CCP4 will be attending the IUCR meeting held in Geneva the 6th - 15th of August. Details on this are just being confirmed and once more information is available, it will be posted on the CCP4 website. However, you can check the <http://www.iucr.org> IUCr website for more comprehensive information on the conference.

4. Other News

Congratulations: A well deserved congratulations goes out to Eleanor Dodson who since May 2001 is known as Prof. Dodson. Eleanor plays an important role in the development of CCP4 and all of us at CCP4 wish her well in her new role.

New Editor: As mentioned in the last newsletter, Peter Briggs has stepped down as the Editor of this Newsletter and the role is now being filled by Charles Ballard. If you have any questions or suggestions about the newsletter, please feel free to contact me at c.c.ballard@ccp4.ac.uk

Charles Ballard, February 2002