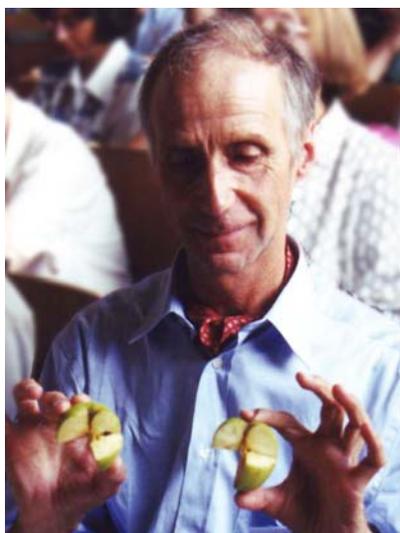




Howard Flack (1943 - 2017)



Howard Flack demonstrates 'la Coupe du Roi' - a method of dissecting an apple into two identical chiral halves, during the 1998 European Crystallography Meeting in Prague. Photo courtesy W. L. Duax.

We are sorry to announce the death of Howard Flack on 2 February 2017. Howard was known to crystallographers worldwide for many achievements in structure determination, symmetry and crystallographic software, and his scientific contributions will be described in a full obituary that is in preparation. However, perhaps less well known is his role as a pioneer in electronic publishing and the information age for crystallography, and his friends and colleagues from the IUCr Editorial office wish to remember those here.

He established an information platform for crystallography, as part of the experimental EU CONCISE project, and very soon after that launched one of the first scientific web servers, advertising news and activities in "Crystallography World Wide".

He was also very enthusiastic about the newly emerging Usenet groups as a means of allowing scientists to communicate with each other within their areas of expertise. As Chair of the IUCr's Committee on Electronic Publishing, Dissemination and Storage of Information from 1997 to 2009, he worked closely with the IUCr editorial office to design and implement the IUCr's web server, with a rich and logical organisational structure that continues to the present. He also took a very close interest in the possibility of publishing journals, reference works and data sets electronically, and encouraged and supported the editorial office in its early efforts in this direction. With Yves Epelboin and Lachlan Cranswick, two other visionaries of electronic publication in its fullest sense, and through close interactions with Syd Hall, Frank Allen and David Brown during the early development of the Crystallographic Information Framework (CIF), Howard was a central figure in putting the IUCr at the forefront of the digital revolution.

We shall miss him.