

Obituary

Professor Peter F. James



It is with deep regret that we announce the premature death of Professor Peter James on July 2, 2005. Professor James had recently retired from his post at the University of Sheffield where he had been Head of the Glass Group. Professor James joined the University in 1970 and his research activities covered fundamental studies of crystal nucleation and growth in glasses, properties and applications of novel glass ceramics and sol–gel processing of glasses and ceramics. He produced seminal papers on glass nucleation and crystallization. He studied nucleation kinetics and the application of various theories and models to crystal growth, as well as immiscibility and its effects on crystallization of glasses with special attention to homogeneous and heterogeneous nucleation sites, nucleation agents and processes. His research experience in sol–gel processing focused on the production of fiber-reinforced composites using mullite and other fibers, of fine submicron powders, and of coatings. His studies also covered glass strengthening using sol–gel and other coatings. Professor James published numerous papers in the *Journal of Non-Crystalline Solids* and was very active in supporting the quality of publications in the field. His presence and contributions will be deeply missed by all of us.

Joseph H. Simmons

### Personal Comments – Edgar Dutra Zanotto

The premature passing on of Peter F. James on July 2, 2005 is a deep personal loss to me.

Peter began teaching glass science and technology at Sheffield University, UK in 1970, after completing his studies and research on glass crystallization under the guidance of Peter McMillan, in Warwick. His research activities covered three main areas: fundamental studies of crystal nucleation and growth in glasses; properties and applications of novel glass-ceramics; and sol–gel processing of glasses and ceramics.

As a result of this wide range of research interests, Peter not only published numerous scientific papers but also held several patents in all these subjects. His papers are widely and frequently cited. He was often invited to deliver lectures at major glass-related congresses and symposia, and was an active member of the TC 7 (Crystallization Committee of the ICG). Peter supervised several post-doctoral fellows, PhD, MSc, and diploma students. I was his fourth PhD student, after Gordon Rowlands, Anthony Ramsden and Carlos Gonzalez-Oliver.

Peter was only 65, and below I reproduce a message I sent to Peter on the occasion of an event held to celebrate his retirement from Sheffield University last April: *Hi Peter, I have heard about your coming retirement, but never believed it! To be honest with you, I am really sorry. I am now at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida, enjoying my third sabbatical, but I vividly recall the day I arrived in (cold) Sheffield in March 1979; 26 years ago! We went to the Elmfield building and you served me my first cup of English tea in the Turner Museum of Glass. I had then just finished my MSc in Physics in São Carlos, Brazil, under Aldo Craievich's supervision. I worked with small angle X-ray scattering in some phase-separated glasses, and Aldo strongly recommended that I pursue PhD studies under your supervision. I took his advice and was lucky to get a grant from a Brazilian funding agency. At that time you had only one post-doc (Carlos Gonzalez-Oliver) and one MSc student (Ivan Wozniak), so in those good old days we both had a lot of free time for scientific discussions. . . I learned so much from you and truly enjoyed my three years in Sheffield. I should emphasize on this occasion that I also owe a lot to the Elmfield technicians, particularly to Ernest, Jim, Roy and Michael; and to the faculty: the late Prof. Harold Rawson, the late John Isard, Sidney Parke, Michael Cable and John Parker. I hope you can join us at the next Crystallization symposium in the USA in September 2006. Please convey my warmest regards to Susan and the girls! Edgar April 26, 2005.*

The last time I saw Peter was at the *Seventh International Symposium on Crystallization in Glasses and Liquids* in Sheffield, 7–9 July 2003. An extract of *Crystallography News* reads ‘Conference proceeding started with an address from the chairman, Professor Peter James, paying homage to Michael Weinberg (deceased 30 December 2002)’. By the end of the symposium Peter was obviously exhausted from the burden of organizing and hosting the conference, but for some inexplicable reason he invited some of his closest collaborators to a pub (Peter was a reserved person, so this invitation came as a surprise to us. I had known him for 24 years and this was the first time we went to a pub together. . .). We talked at length about the old days and I felt this informal gathering was his way of saying farewell! On that same occasion, Lindsay Greer, Ken Kelton and I started to discuss the organization of a surprise symposium to honor Peter's prolific career and achievements. I also preliminarily discussed this idea with the editor of JNCS – Joe Simmons – and with Peter's former colleagues, Russell Hand and Angela Seddon. But unfortunately we never got past the planning stage. . .

I am desolate, Peter, for your creative ideas and critical insights will be sorely missed by everyone who had the good fortune to know you. We are deeply indebted to you for the invaluable legacy you left us!

Edgar Dutra Zanotto

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