

Thoughts on Carbon Rapture by Graeme Jones

The Royal Society of Chemistry has been in Burlington House since 1857 and has never exhibited in the court yard before so it was a huge privilege and responsibility to be asked to be the first chemist to exhibit. All my work over the past few years has been focused on trying to re-establish science at the heart of culture and where better than in front of the Royal Academy of Arts. I strongly feel that it is this loss of scientific cultural identity that has increased the public's mistrust in science and scientists. I hope Carbon Rapture can do its bit and that the public enjoy all our hard work.

I was asked to fit into the RSC's 2009/2010 theme which is Food and to produce something that was large, possibly some sort of record. This was a tall order trying to come up with something that would be visually exciting and interesting to the general public. There were also a number of technical obstacles to overcome, the main one being the precious granite slabs, you can't anchor anything down!!

I ended up plumbing for carbon as it is in all foods and delighted myself with the title Carbon Rapture.

The Diamond model has been made before at the Science Museum and this one is no larger, I have given up on records for the time being. I particularly like this model as the carbons are now transparent and the bonds translucent giving it a more diamondy feel. Yet again Molymod supplied all the atoms and bonds, three cheers for James Spirling and his wonderful models. The Keele students with the sore fingers who helped me put it all together were Tim Bolt, Charlotte Slater and Angela Cartlidge.

I knew the Buckyball would be in the Mega Mols as everybody loves it but I took the opportunity to redesign the atoms. This was probably a mistake and had a mega effect on the carbon footprint of the exhibition as I had to make a mad dash to Cumbria to sort out a problem.

What else can I say but a big thank you to UKCG for the loan of an electrode. I was amazed that they agreed to loan me one and they must have thought I was nuts to go for the 1 tonner, but for me the bigger the better. Of course Graphite was the only form of carbon I could afford to have there in a large quantity. This also shows off the skill of Complete Fabrication who made all the stands, a superb job.

Pauline Meakins has been a tower of strength at the RSC and I thank her for thinking of me, all her hard work and the financing that she has persuaded out of the RSC. EPSRC, through our Molecules Out and About PPE award, Keele University and make it molecular also threw money at the project to make it work. Here is also a cheer for Ralph Pattison, the ever patient and always smiling face of stores in the Lennard-Jones at Keele.

Finally a special thanks to Sue, Wil, Dad and Emma for helping out with Polly and Lottie while I played mad scientist.