

Experiences of working at Daresbury Laboratory

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In 1992 I had been going to the Daresbury Laboratory for 10 years as a visiting scientist, usually in the company of Dr Moreton Moore of Royal Holloway, Dr John Pirie from Aberdeen and at least one other member of our Aberdeen group. For a period of years the other member was Dr Stephen Clackson.

In disciplines traditionally associated with a University Laboratory, an increasing amount of scientific research was being carried out in the 80s and 90s at national, central facilities like the Daresbury Laboratory. Such facilities attracted an international clientele of researchers to some large device, perhaps a telescope, a nuclear reactor, a large laser or a particle accelerator, which in turn supported a clutch of special experimental stations. Today the central facility for scientific research is even more common.

The main purpose of our work over this period was to develop apparatus suitable for energy dispersive diffuse X-ray scattering and make measurements with it. No-one else was doing such work at Daresbury at the time and in its own way it was a pioneering venture.

What was it like to come out of the University laboratory and undertake research work at a central facility? Early in my career, I had made many visits to the Harwell Atomic Energy Research Establishment to use neutron scattering facilities associated with one of their reactors and analyze the results. The Daresbury experience was different in detail – it was some two to three decades later and a different place - but the laboratories had sufficient in common that the flavour of such places comes through, and this account, of which full details are to be found [here](#), is a record of my experiences of working at Daresbury.