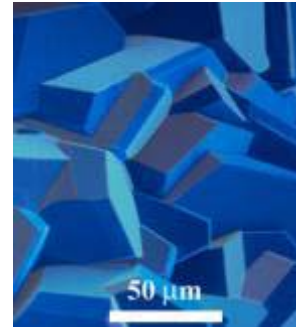




Sir Aaron Klug: Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1982



Sir Aaron Klug



Sir Aaron Klug was born in 1926 in Zervas, Lithuania. His family moved to South Africa in 1928 and he grew up there. He entered Durban High School and then the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, taking the pre-medical course. However, he turned to general science (chemistry, physics and mathematics) and then he did a master degree in physics research at the [University of Cape Town](#). In 1949, he became a PhD student at [Trinity College](#), Cambridge, and began his research at the [Cavendish Laboratory](#), working on a theoretical problem in the study of steel. After completing his PhD, he spent a year in the Colloid Science department in Cambridge. By 1954, he had accepted a job at Birkbeck College, London, where he worked in virus research.

In 1962 Klug moved to the newly built MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, continuing his virus research specialising in spherical viruses. The [MRC Laboratory](#), under the leadership of [Perutz](#), was to house the original unit from the Cavendish Laboratory ([Perutz](#), [Kendrew](#), [Crick](#) and, later, Brenner), and the [Biochemistry Department](#) of the University of Cambridge. It was difficult to understand the structure of viruses in 1960s. Through consistent hard work, Klug finally developed a technique called crystallographic electron microscopy and also used structural modelling to study the three-dimensional nature of poliovirus and other viruses. This new method was very efficient and it provided scientists with important information about viruses. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 1982, "for his development of crystallographic electron microscopy and his structural elucidation of biologically important nucleic acid-protein complexes".

Klug enjoyed teaching, as he liked interacting with young minds, but he has become less involved in teaching in recent years. He is still a Director of Studies in Natural Science at [Peterhouse College](#), Cambridge, a position he has held for about 20 years. Klug was knighted in 1988. He married Liebe Bobrow in Cape Town, before moving to Cambridge in 1949. They have two sons.