

John Desmond Bernal Encyclopedia Article

John Desmond Bernal

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John Desmond Bernal

1901-1971

British physicist who made major contributions to the determination of molecular structures using X-ray crystallographic methods. Bernal is regarded as one of the founders of X-ray crystallography. He was a professor at the University of London (1938-63), where he developed new methods and influenced a generation of crystallographers. He also made important contributions to the study of molecular biology and theories of the origin of life and the structure of the surface layers of the earth.