

## Alexander Crum Brown

Alexander Crum Brown, who was a Scottish organic chemist, was born in Edinburgh on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March in 1838. He was the only child of Dr John Brown, who was a minister, and his mother (nee Crum). He had a half brother John Brown, who was a physicist and an essayist. He died on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1922, in the same place he was born, Edinburgh.



Crum studied one year at the Royal High School, succeeded by Mill High School. He also studied at the universities of Edinburgh and London, but later returning to accept a post of teaching at the University of Edinburgh in 1863.

He discovered the carbon double bond of ethylene, which is a flammable hydrocarbon gas. This is now an important part of the modern part of the plastic industry.

He also made rather significant pharmacology and worked with physiology, phonetics, mathematics and crystallography. Looking back we can only catch a glimpse of this magnificent scientist. His contributions to chemistry were huge and his MD thesis of 1861 containing the first ever pictures of a molecule structure. In the 1880s, he also developed a method to prevent the forgery of banknotes for the Bank of Scotland, but this was soon defeated.

**Cameron Lennon & Kieran Lindsay, S1 Lossie High, 28.9.11**