Performances of a Boron-coated GEM detector for thermal neutrons at the ISIS Neutron and Muon Source

Dr. Stephanie Cancelli on behalf of the Unimib and ISTP-CNR group

Outline

- Introduction “ The spallation Sources”
- GEM detectors and neutron detection
- The I-MS-BGEM detector
- Characterisation at ISIS
- Conclusions

Introduction

- Increase of the number of the neutron spallation sources.
- 3He Shortage

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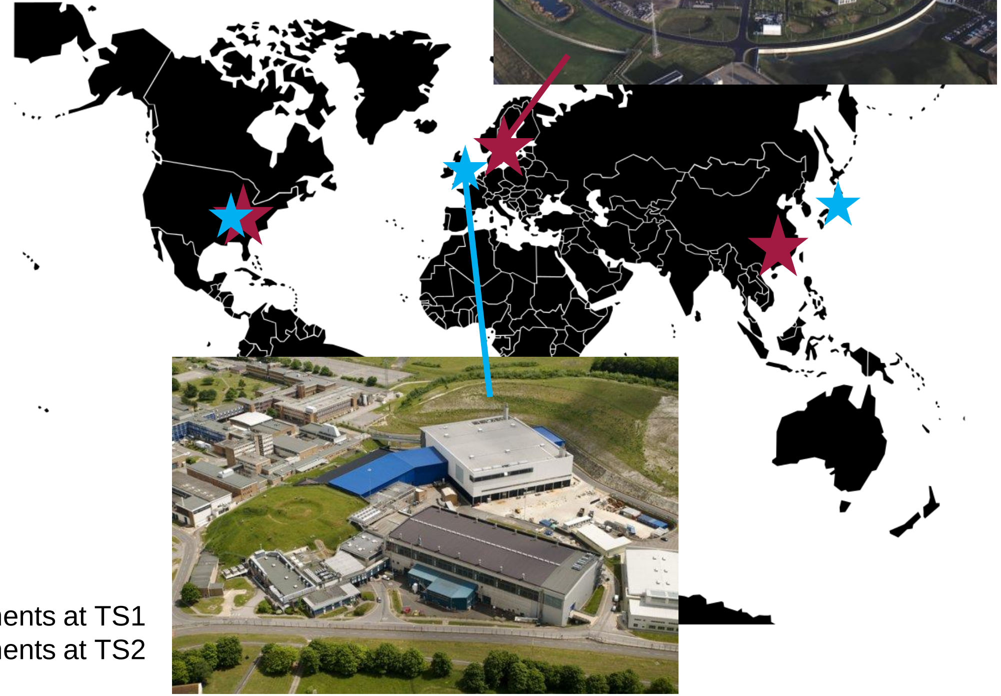
Request of new devices capable to combine high detection efficiency and low costs

New spallation source

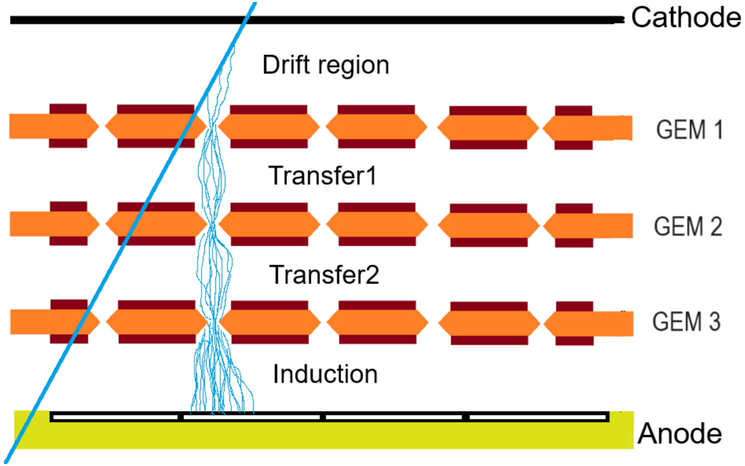
Operative spallation source

ESS (Lund)
Start in 2024
22 instruments to be built



ISIS (UK)
19 instruments at TS1
12 instruments at TS2

GEM detectors



GEM detectors features:

- Very high rate capability (MHz/mm^2)
- Good space resolution (order of μm)
- Time resolution of ns.
- Possibility to be realized in large areas and in different shapes.
- Radiation hardness.
- Low sensitivity to gamma rays.

GEM detectors need a neutron converter.

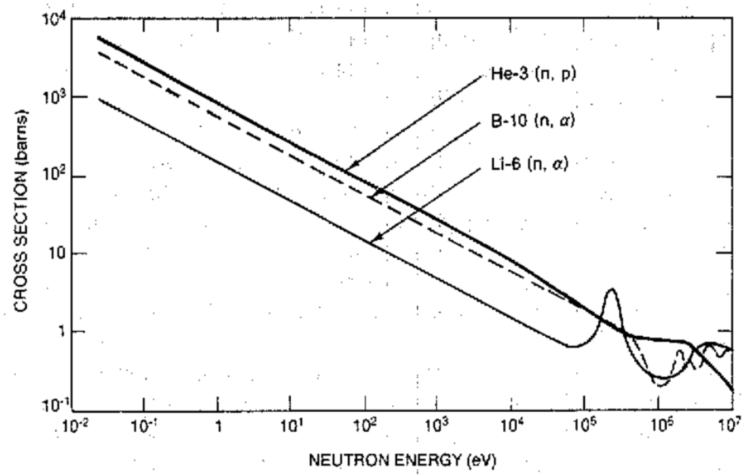
Neutron detection

Mostly based on three nuclear reaction:

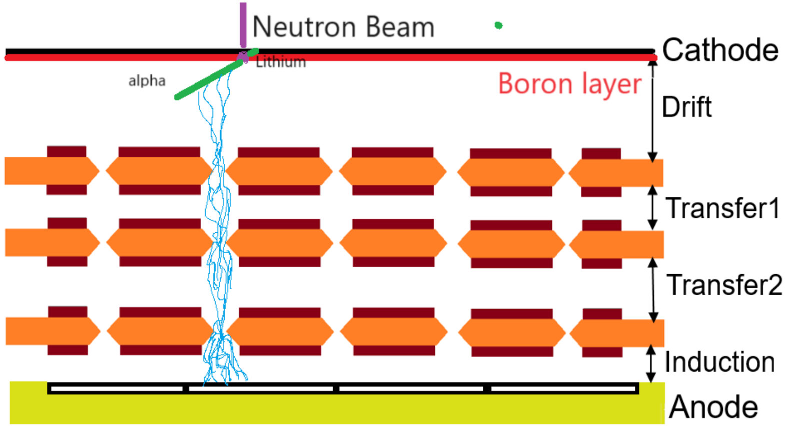
$$n + {}^{3}He \rightarrow {}^{3}H + p \qquad Q_{val} = 0{,}764\ MeV, \sigma = 5330\ b$$

$$n + {}^{6}Li \rightarrow {}^{3}H + \alpha \qquad Q_{val} = 4{,}78\ MeV, \sigma = 940\ b$$

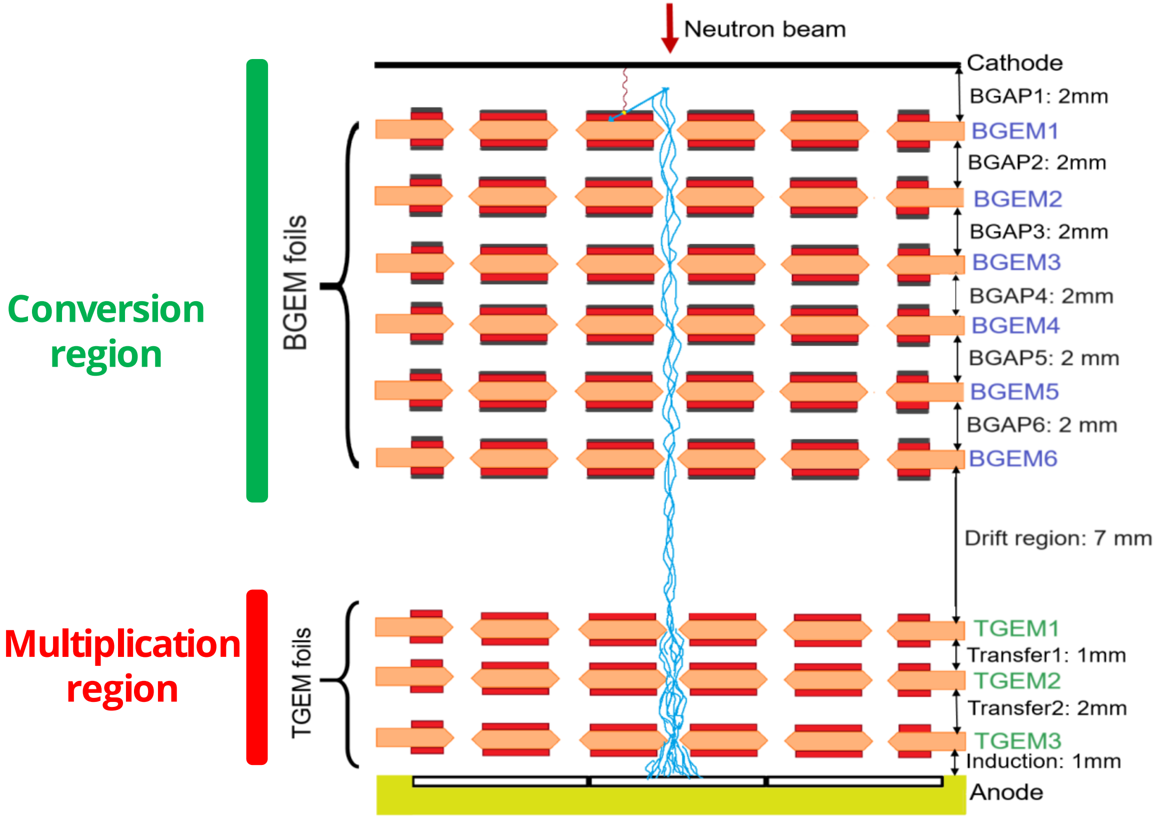
$$n + {}^{10}B \rightarrow \begin{cases} \alpha + {}^{7}Li \\ \alpha + {}^{7}Li^{*} \end{cases} \qquad Q_{val} = 2{,}792\ MeV\ (g.s) \quad \sigma = 3840\ b$$



Knoll “Radiation detection and measurements”



The I-MS-BGEM detector



The detector is composed of two stacks:

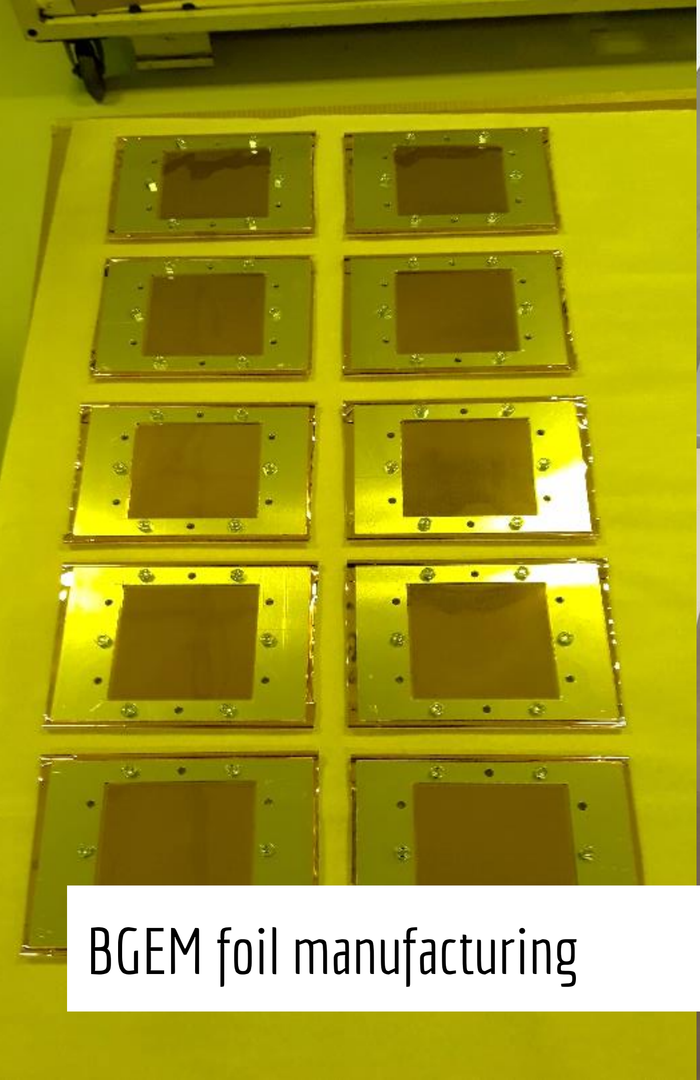
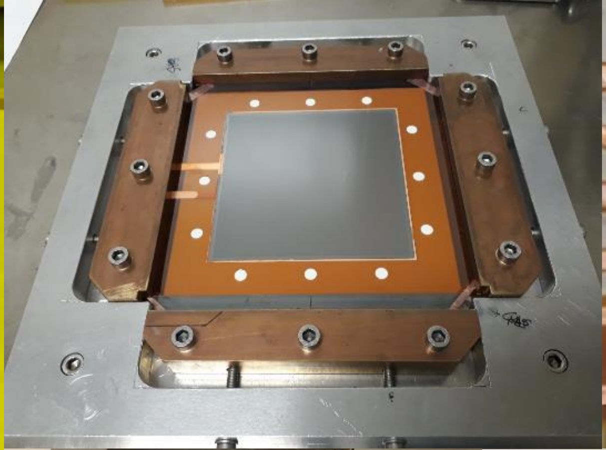
- The **conversion** stack
- The **multiplication** stack

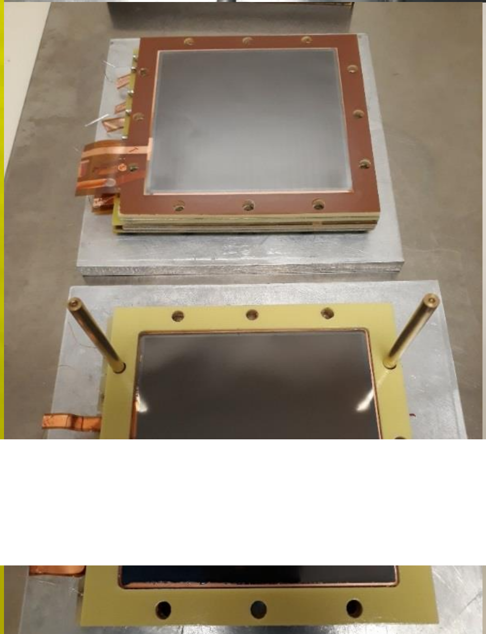
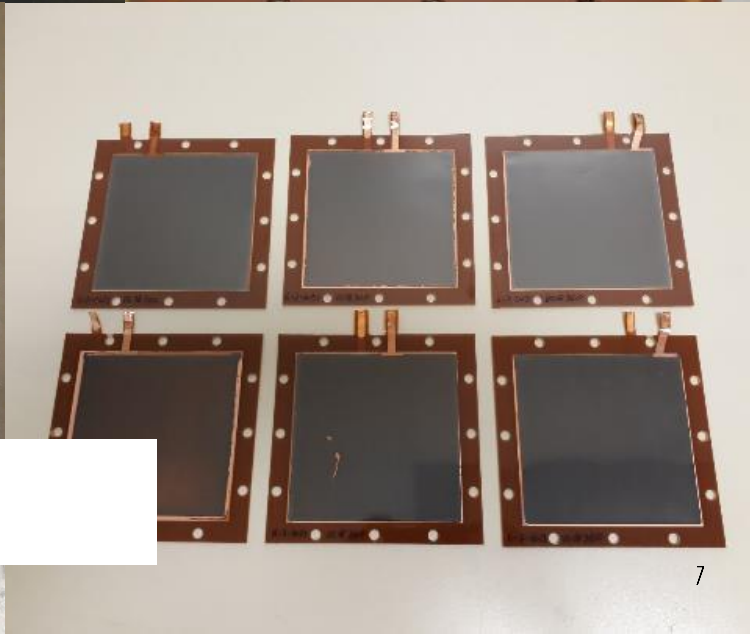
The conversion stack must have a **unitary gain**, in order to:

- Have the same response inside the region.
- Avoid discharges.

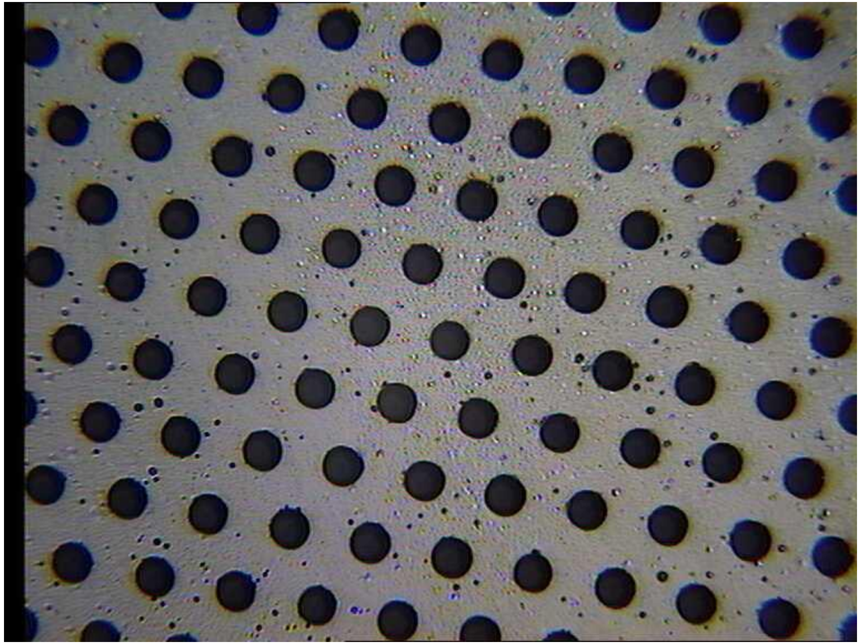
The electron multiplication must happen only inside the multiplication region.

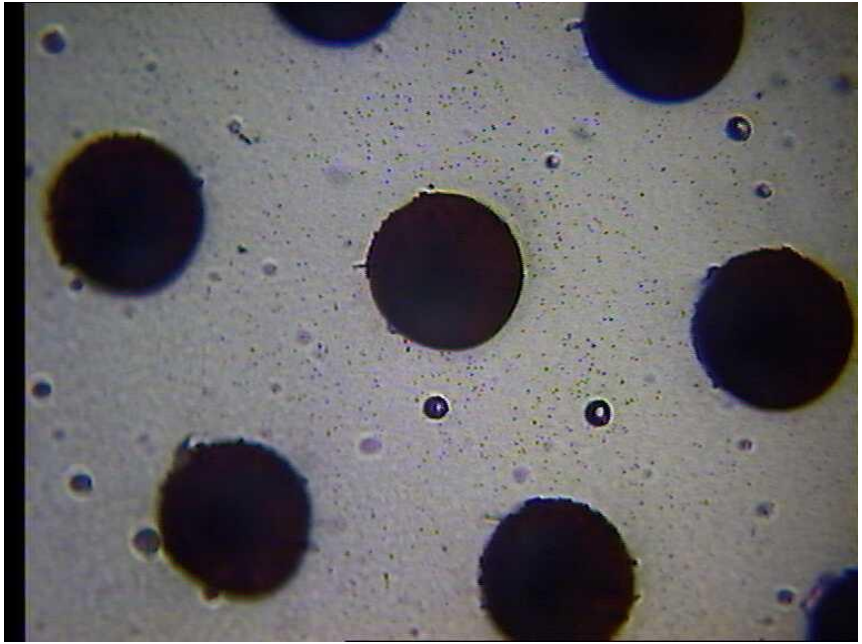
The way to set an unitary gain is to determine an appropriate detector **working point**.

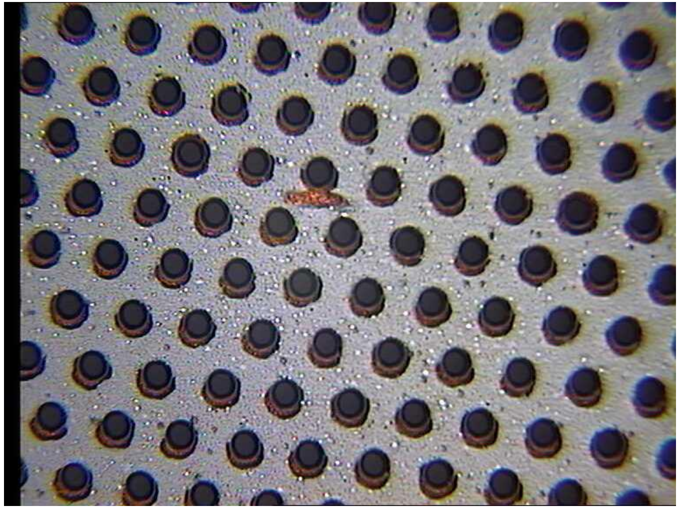



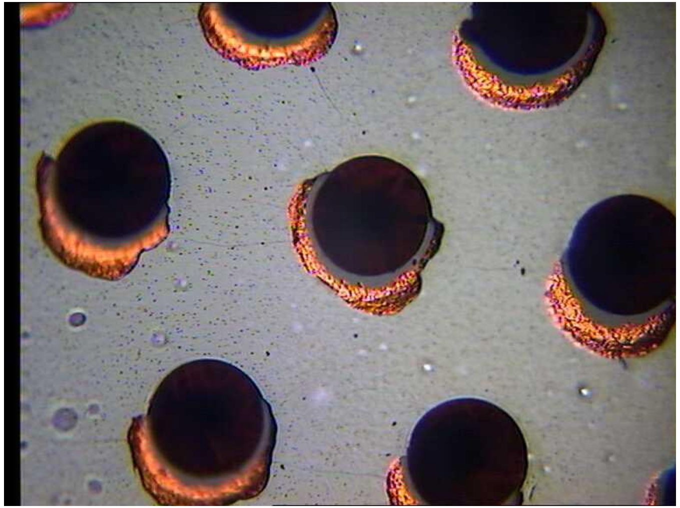
BGEM foil manufacturing

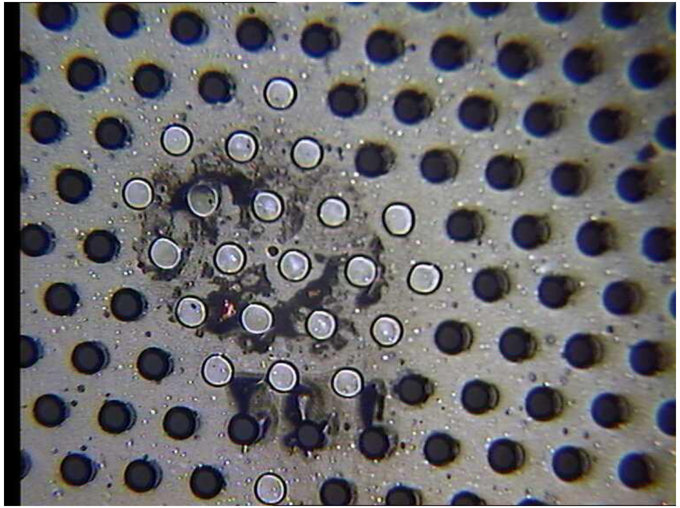




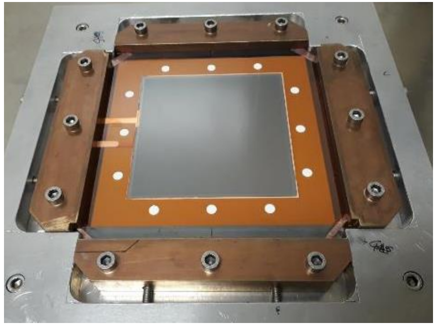
BGEM foil manufacturing



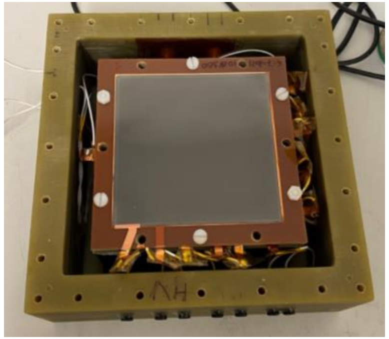




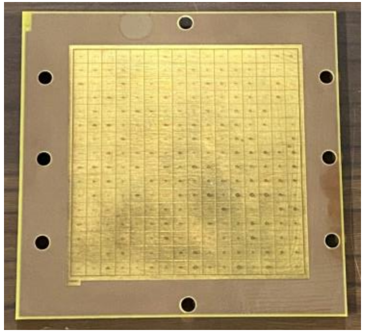
Detector Realisation



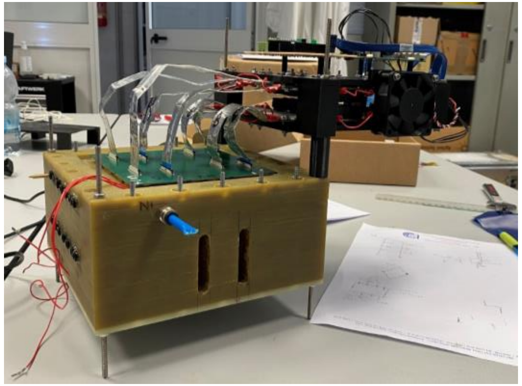
BGEM foil stretching



BGEM foils stack placed inside the faberglass box



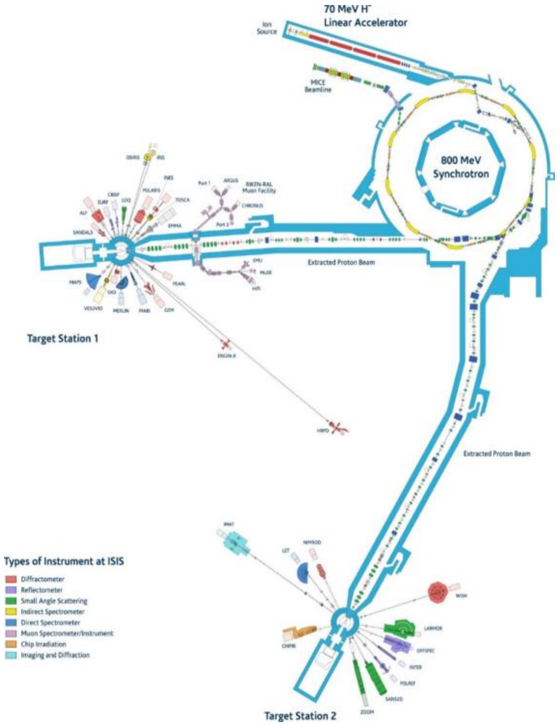
Padded anode

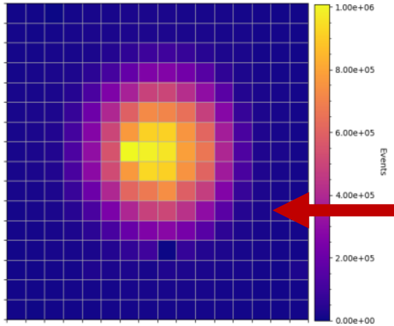


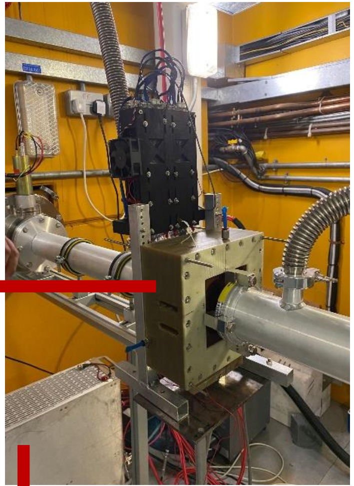
The detector with the GEMINI readout

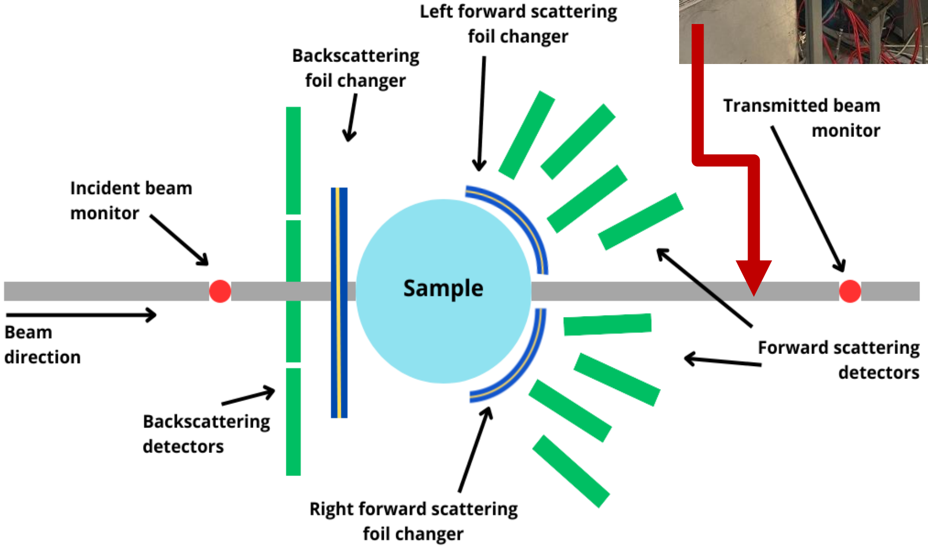
Characterisation at ISIS

ISIS Neutron and Muon Source (UK)



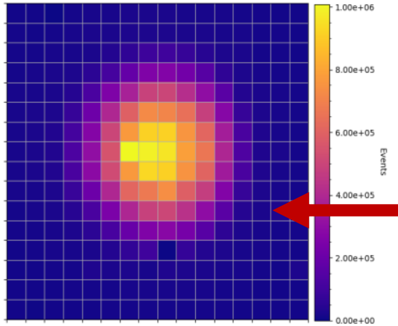


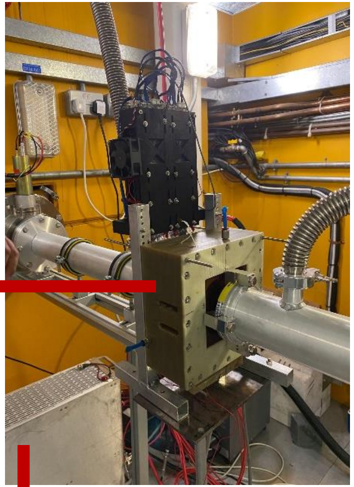


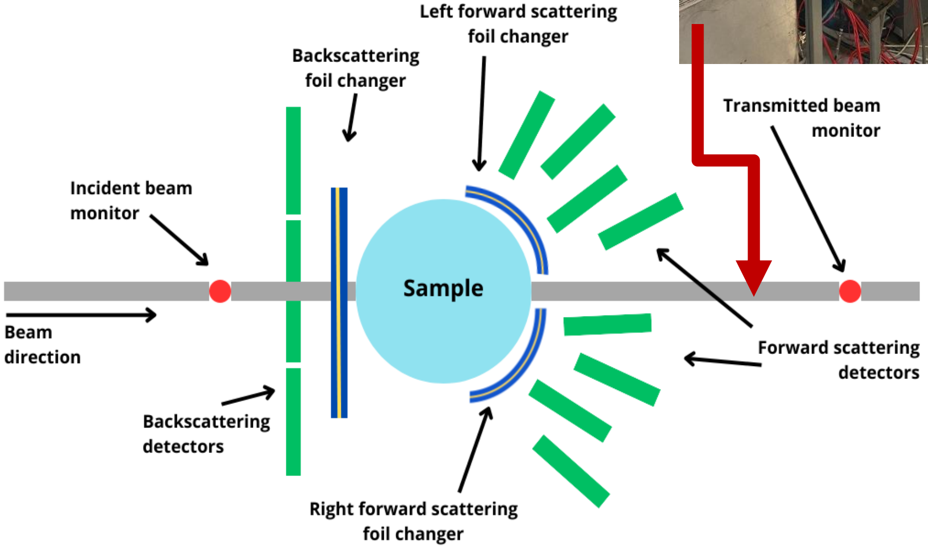


Characterisation at ISIS

- Use of the **VESUVIO spectrometer**
- Thermal and epithermal neutron beam from 0,02 up to 150 eV.
- n flux of $\approx 10^7 \frac{n}{s*cm^2}$
- Use of **Time of Flight (ToF) technique.**
- 6MBGEM detector placed at 12,6 m from target and at 40 cm from the VESUVIO transmitted beam monitor.
- The VESUVIO transmitted beam monitor is a 6Li-based scintillator (**GS20** detector).

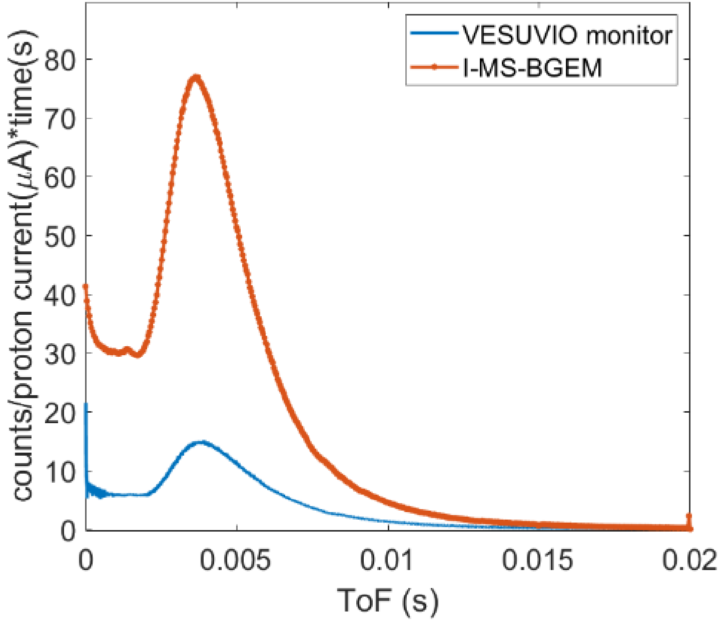




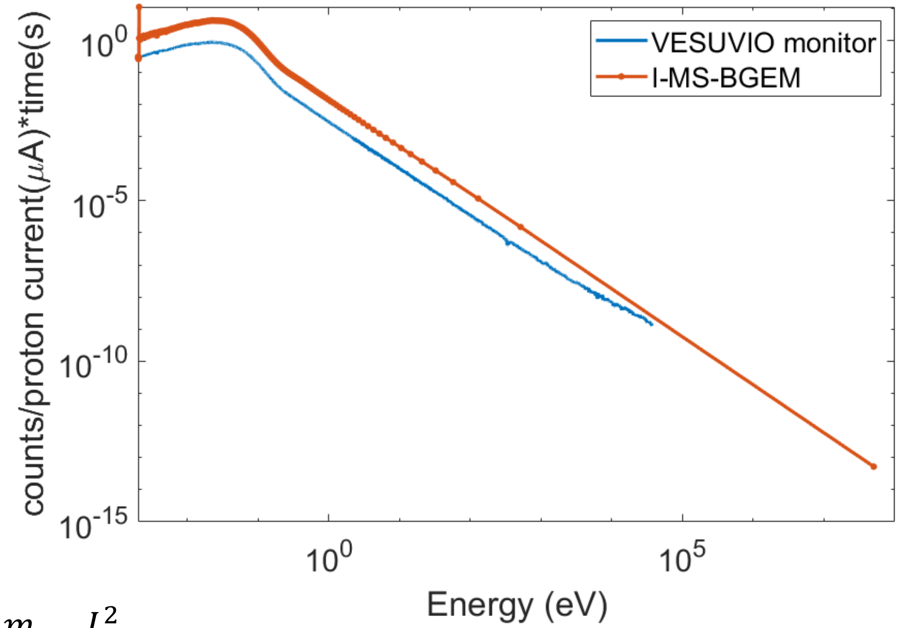


I-MS-BGEM detector

ToF spectra



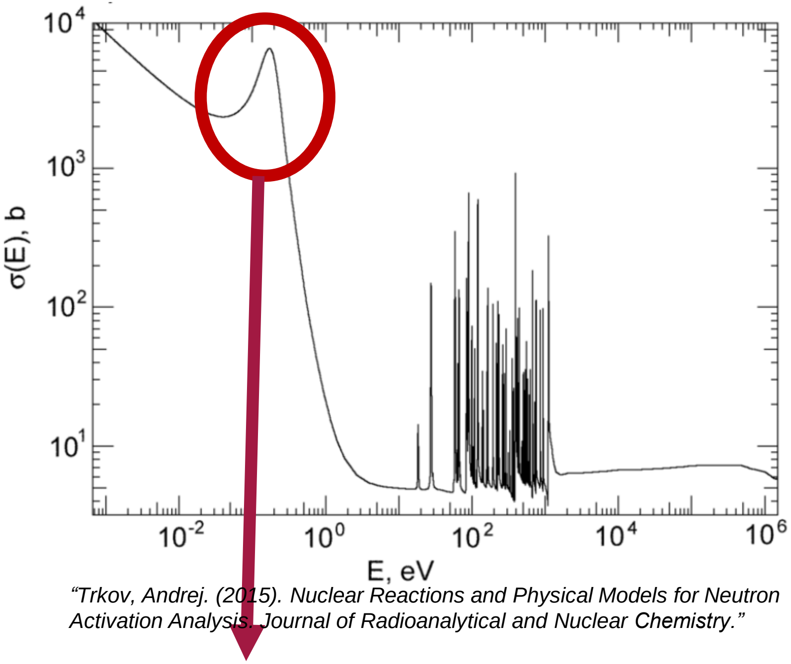
Energy spectra



$$E_n = \frac{m_n}{2} \frac{L^2}{t_{ToF}^2}$$

I-MS-BGEM detector

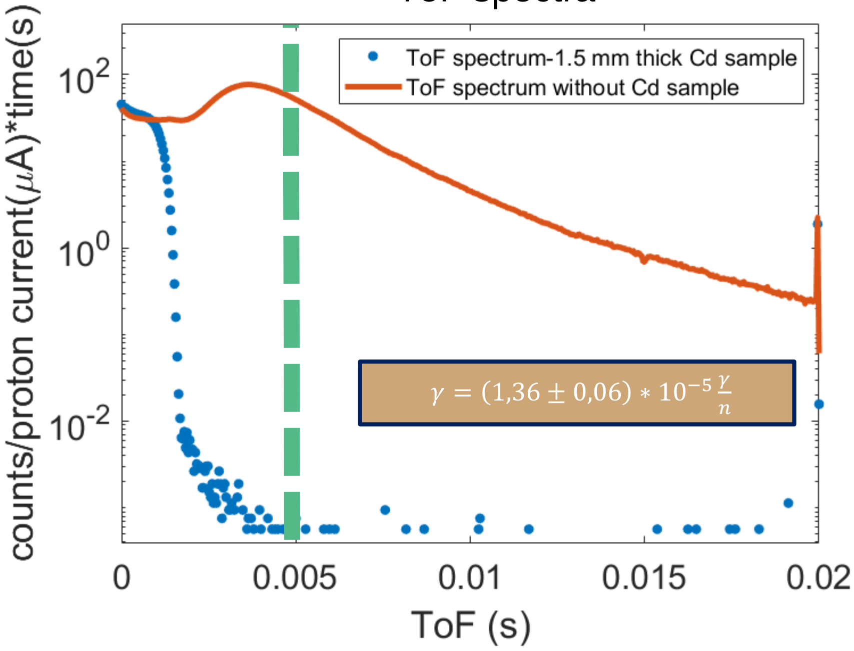
Cadmium total neutron cross section



"Trkov, Andrej. (2015). Nuclear Reactions and Physical Models for Neutron Activation Analysis. Journal of Radioanalytical and Nuclear Chemistry."

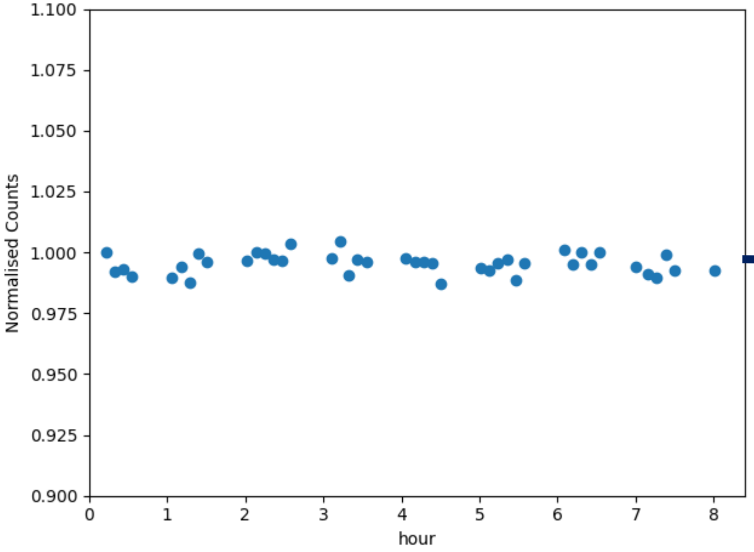
Cadmium Black Resonance at 0,5 eV.

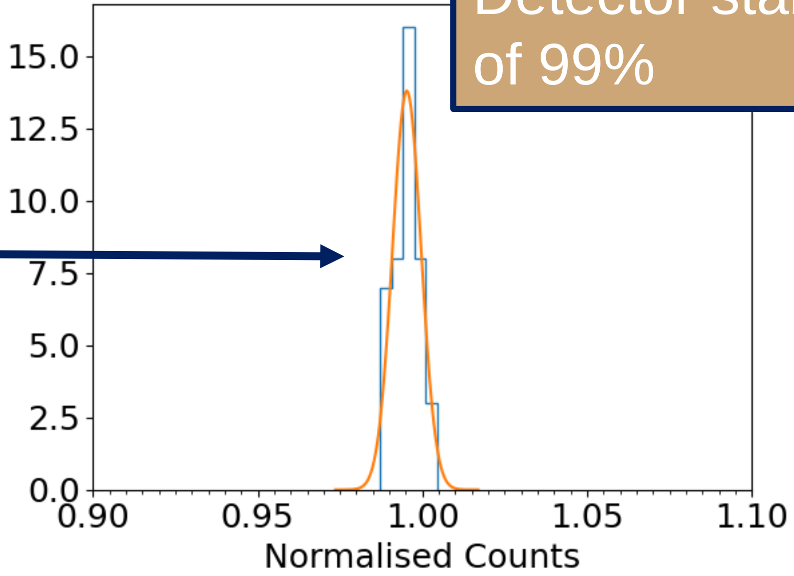
ToF spectra



$$\gamma = \frac{Area\ inside\ resonance\ with\ Cd\ mask}{Area\ outside\ resonance\ without\ Cd\ mask}$$

I-MS-BGEM detector

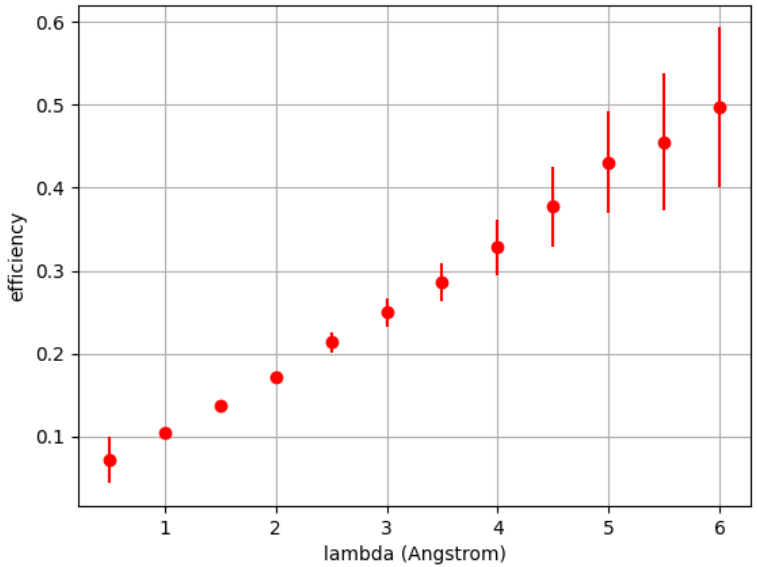




Detector stability of 99%

- Measurements conducted with the use of a Cd mask with a hole of 6 mm of diameter.
- Measurement time of 2 minutes and 10 minutes between each run.
- The measurements have been normalised for a reference run.

I-MS-BGEM detector



$$E_n = \frac{m_n}{2}\frac{L^2}{t_{ToF}^2}$$
$$E_n = \frac{hc}{\lambda}$$
$$\rightarrow \lambda = \frac{h * t_{ToF}}{m_n * L}$$

- Measurements conducted with the use of a Cd mask with a hole of 6 mm of diameter.
- The measurements obtained with the 6MBGEM and the GS20 detector have been performed with the same experimental conditions.
- The efficiency has been estimated with:

$$\varepsilon_{6MBGEM} = \frac{counts_{6MBGEM}}{counts_{GS20}} * \varepsilon_{GS20}$$

$\varepsilon_{GS20} = 0{,}6\%$ at 82 meV

At 1,8 Å (25 meV) the I-MS-MBGEM efficiency is 16%

Conclusions

- The I-MS-BEGM detector has shown a good response at thermal and epithermal neutrons:
  - Counting rate stability during a long period of measurements of 99%.
  - Gamma insensitive factor in the order of 10^{-5} Y/n.
  - Detection efficiency of 16% at 1.8 Å.
- The next step will be the use of the BGEM foils coupled with a strip anode for imaging measurements.

Thank You for your attention

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