

# CARBERRY'S ULTIMATE PAPER

ARIS McPHERSON RUTHERFORD

University of Minnesota

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

WITH THE PROBLEM of a bloated literature with us so much these days, it was encouraging to learn recently [1] that one particularly prolific contributor at least had written his last paper. The announcement was made whilst the cardinal's nephew was travelling incognito in Italy, but it is confidently rumoured that he returned from Russia with such love that he is now lost in the deeper anonymity of matrimony, thus putting a term to his publication list—at least for a time.

While he is to be congratulated on his determination to add no more to that superabundance of papers, concerning which it is frequently and truly said "the burden of them is intolerable", it would seem only proper to honor the imperishable memory of so great a publisher by giving an account of his last work. After all, Carberrry was the founder and president of the Lucrezia Borgia Society [2] and the only recipient of the University of Minnesota's prestigious Wet Test-Meter (whatever that may be) Award. The reader should be warned however that Carberrry's work is neither clear of form nor elementary of content and though the present editor hopes that his long friendship with the author will allow him to excogitate the main ideas, he is well aware that his efforts are only preliminary and that the full exegesis will give scope to not a few PhD students.

The manuscript which has come into the editor's hands is a palimpsest, a bundle of *foliae rescriptae*. It is written in a crabbed script reminiscent of the darkest Borgia period; the paper itself, the underneath script, is indeed so illegible that the editor is forced to adopt an almost narrative style in this preliminary exposition. (The upper script is an indescribable cursive and caused the editor a great deal of confusion until he discovered that it was the game plan for an Interhall football foray, cribbed, if you please, from the little known monograph "American football—a guide for interested Scots" [3] published by the



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A. McPherson Rutherford was born 45 years ago in Strath Spey, where he grew up with a natural bent for distillation and graduated with distinction from the Glenlivet Institute later becoming chief tester of the famous Strath Spey Distillation Company. Author of "Sampling Techniques" (1957) and "Distillation Procedures" (1963), both published by the Drambuie Press, he has lately turned his talents to mediating the American sports scene to British readers in a series of books "American X — a guide for interested Y" where X = (Football, Baseball, Basketball) and Y = (Scots, Englishmen, Welshmen). Professor Rutherford is listed in Who's Who in America.

Drambuie Press in 1960. Unfortunately this provides us with no clue for dating the paper.) The text is in Italian (suggesting that it was composed at that intermediate stage of inhibition at which the language comes most naturally to him) and parts are in terza rima to which the editor's halting prose does less than justice. However the authenticity is unquestionable since under a broken-backed T-bone formation a colophon may be discerned—*apud laboratorium catalyticum nostre damensis*—a hybrid formula of doubtful latinity but known to be used by clerks of that institution.

The title, as before announced, is "N<sup>th</sup>-order adiabatic reaction in a plate and frame filter press". The editor, innocent of such marvels as a p. and f.f.p., was relieved to find that such carnal

knowledge was unnecessary for the MS begins "Let  $\Pi$  be a plate and frame filter press in which the reaction  $aA + bB \rightarrow j^2C$  takes place." At first blush we feel that here is a mind of hyper-Boudartian asceticism [4] at work, for not only are the chemical species abstracted but the very reactor itself has become generalized. However there may be a Titchmarshian picturesqueness [5] hidden in the symbols for reactants and their stoichiometric coefficients which are more than likely to mean "an Ancient & bountiful Bourbon". (An alternative interpretation, that relates A to Antoinette, B to bread and C to cake, fits the action of the filter but fails on historical and linguistic grounds, since A, P and B would have to be used and the attribution to Marie—A is questionable [6]). It is to be noted that the stoichiometric coefficient of the product is positive since only an electrical engineer would be guilty of the barbarism  $j^2 = -1$ . After this auspicious beginning the text degenerates rapidly and it is difficult to discover what value or values of N the author had in mind. It appears that a cake gets plastered in or on  $\Pi$  and rapidly builds up to such a thickness that N becomes  $\frac{1}{2}(N + 1)$  with dire consequences. The reaction is exothermic so that the cake is baked in situ and in the experi-

mental section there is a record of one run (an assistant K. Alfred was in charge) which ran away to such high temperatures that  $\Pi$  was ruined and had to be thrown out. Carberry evidently believes that gamma radiation will fix this—or at least fix Alfred.

There are several other esoteric effects that Carberry considers in his terse and lapidary style and it is with mingled emotions that we recall that this is to be his last paper. It is perhaps proof of the proof of the reactants that he finally lumps together many of these—diffusional intrusions, monoliths, filter cloths, something called naphthalene, inverse kinetics, carbon monoxide and much more—and uses his poet's license to dismiss them:

*Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda, e passa.*

(Let us not speak of them, but look and pass on). □

#### REFERENCES

1. Chem. Eng. Educ. 8, 2 (1974).
2. Chemtech. Feb. 1974, p. 124.
3. Who's Who. 1974-75 Edn. 2, 2672.
4. Boudart, M. Kinetics of chemical processes. Prentice-Hall. 1968. p.v.
5. Titchmarsh, E. C. Introduction to the theory of Fourier integrals. Clarendon Press. 1937. p.v.
6. Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. 2nd Edn. 329:18.

### The Short Happy Life of Aris Rutherford\*

It pops up on page 2,672 of the current edition of "Who's Who in America," a thirteen-line biography set between those of James Merle Ruth ("food co. exec.") and David Ross Rutherford Jr. ("educator"). The luminary is Aris MacPherson Rutherford, a Scottish-born professor who graduated from the "Strath Spey and Glenlivet Institute of Distillation Engineering," is a trustee of the "Scottish-Greek Friendship Foundation" and has written a book called "American Football: A Guide for Interested Scots."

Aris MacPherson Rutherford is also a phony. For the first time in its 78-year history, "Who's Who," that fusty arbiter of American celebrity, has been victimized by a hoaxer. The confessed perpetrator is Rutherford Aris, 45, a normally nonsensical professor of chemical engineering at the University of Minnesota. A while back, Aris, who was already listed in "Who's Who," received a biographical form from the reference book's publisher addressed to "Aris Rutherford." Aris assumed correctly that the name transposition was a computer error and let it pass, but a rather pompously insistent follow-up letter convinced

him that "Who's Who" was "begging to have its leg pulled." Since Aris Rutherford sounded Scottish, the professor meshed the fictional specialty of "distillation engineering" with the name of Glenlivet, a label familiar to lovers of unblended malt whisky.

This is not the first time that the 70,000-odd entries in "Who's Who" have included a fake. In order to discover those who use "Who's Who" as a source for mailing lists, the book's Chicago-based publishing firm occasionally inserts bogus biographies using employees' home addresses. "But I know of no other instance," sighs Kenneth Petchenick, the firm's president, "where a made-up biography has gotten in from the outside." After The Minneapolis Star exposed the hoax, Aris sent an apologetic letter to Petchenick, although he had already submitted an update on Rutherford's record to include the title of his latest book: "American Baseball: A Guide for Interested Englishmen."

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