

## Peter A. Thrower

### A tribute to a half-century of dedication to carbon materials

## Francisco Rodríguez Reinoso

### A significant role to advance the quality of carbon journal

Harry Marsh<sup>1</sup>

#### Professor Peter A Thrower

Born in 1938, and educated in Norfolk where he was described as being a strong pupil, Peter was accepted into the University of Cambridge (UK) obtaining his B.A. (1960) in Physics, his M.A. (1963) and finally his Ph.D (1969). After graduating Peter was employed as a Scientific Officer with the UK Atomic Energy Authority, Harwell leaving as Head of Carbon and Graphite Materials Section (1969). This covers his period of major interest in the use of graphite as a moderator in nuclear reactors. It was at this time that a similar interest in graphite and other carbon materials was expanding at Pennsylvania State University, in the USA, under the direction of Professor P.L. Walker. Peter was recruited as an Associate Professor of Materials Science creating a research team working with graphites (1969-1983). As an outstanding teacher and researcher, he was elected to a full Professorship in 1983, retaining this position until 1998 when he retired as an Emeritus Professor to return to the UK and his home near to Great Yarmouth.



During his working days when at Pennsylvania State University, Peter worked closely with the American Carbon Society in the promotion of its Biennial Conferences. As Chairman of three such Conferences, his organization was immaculate and contributed greatly to the creation of the world-wide community of carbon scientists as we know it today. By so doing, he became familiar with the diversity of structures, properties and applications of carbon materials. More than that, he became well-known to the carbon community undertaking further tasks to advance carbon materials.

As if this sustained and dedicated support to the international carbon community was not enough, Peter took on a further responsibility, not one to be taken lightly. It was the position of Editor-in-Chief of journal Carbon taken up in 1982. No other scientist was better qualified for this position than Peter A. Thrower.

The story of this journal goes back to 1953, the time of the genesis of the carbon community. Graphite, as a moderator of neutrons and as a major component in steel production, dominated the scene. The mastermind behind the growth and coordination of research and development into carbon materials was Professor Stach Mrozowski. In 1953, he brought together for a Conference in Buffalo, USA, 75 scientists and engineers to discuss graphitic materials. The proceedings of this Conference were published in book format. In 1955 and 1957 meetings

and publication of books of proceedings were again published the latter running into two volumes. By now it was realised that interest in carbon materials had expanded so much that the book format was totally inappropriate. Working with the American Carbon Society and Pergamon Press, Stach Mrozowski 'created' the journal Carbon and became its first Editor-in-Chief. After small beginnings the journal reached a size where Stach Mrozowski needed assistance. So in 1982, Peter was in the Editorial seat and publishing 540 pages in that year. Peter has stayed in that seat for 30 years with Volume 49 containing 5400 pages, a ten-fold increase. The years saw the transfer of publishing from Pergamon to

Elsevier and the modernisation of manuscript submission from regular mail to electronic submissions. Peter transferred his office from PSU to his home in the UK in 1998. The journal has seen interests move on from graphite dominance, to the debates of 'surface area' in porous carbons, to the stories of fullerenes, carbon fibres and nanotubes and graphene.

In 2007 the American Carbon Society recognised the massive life-time contributions, made by Peter, and still ongoing, by the special creation of the Peter A Thrower Award, the first recipient being Peter.

This year sees Peter's 30th year as Editor-in-Chief (his last year) with over 50 years of close association with carbon materials. The many capacities with which he has been associated owe their success to his tenacious attention to detail and accuracy, so characteristic of Peter. This is the hallmark which has made him such an outstanding Editor-in-Chief of the journal Carbon.

The journal Carbon, during the years of Peter's editorship has seen grown both in size, to 5400 pages in 2011 and in its Impact Factor to 5.378 in 2011. This is a magnificent achievement.

Peter is departing from the Editor's chair on the occasions of his thirtieth year of service and the fiftieth year of the journal. It is a time for celebrations. The carbon community owes Peter an immense expression of gratitude. We wish him well.

*Harry Marsh is a life-long friend and associate of Peter Thrower.*

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### Professor Francisco Rodríguez-Reinoso (Paco)

For decades Paco acted as an Editor on the Editorial Board of Elsevier's journal Carbon. This is a position which rarely, if ever, sees the limelight. It requires the careful and detailed scrutiny of manuscripts submitted to Carbon for publication following an initial assessment of the reviewers. The journal publishes papers which cover the wide range of scientific topics associated with the structure, properties and applications of carbon materials. An Editor on the Editorial Board needs to have expert knowledge of some of these topics. Paco is an international scientist, travelling to all parts of the world to lecture, to educate and to formulate research topics. At home, for about forty years in the Department of Inorganic Chemistry, University of Alicante, Spain, he was Head of a large group of international research students, studying a variety of topics, but always including studies into the



production, structure and applications of microporous carbons. As such, Paco found himself at the centre of the many controversial theories which purported to describe the adsorption of gases and liquids into the microporous networks which constitute porous carbons. It was essential that the several approaches should be published, with Paco taking care for a balanced and realistic approach. For many years, Paco has been a 'king-pin' in the organisation of The Editor-in-Chief, Professor Peter A Throver. It has to be acknowledged that Paco played a significant role to maintain and advance the quality of publications

in the journal Carbon, a task that is without much glamour. He is standing down this year of 2012 knowing that his is a job extremely well done.

*Harry Marsh is a life-long friend and associate of Paco.*