

L.S. Theobald (Transcript of pages 134 and 135, *Anal. Proc.*, Vol 24, May 1987)

Since the Analytical Division has instituted the **L.S. Theobald lecture**, the second of which was delivered (by R.A. Chalmers) earlier this month, some curiosity has been expressed regarding

7KHREDOG¶V OLIH DQG FDU Finding out anything about him has not proved
HDV\ LQ IDFW 3 URIHVVRU (%LVKRS KDV GHVFULEHG KLP

Leslie Stuart Theobald, Theo to his friends, was born in Basingstoke and, after enjoying all-round success at the local grammar school, joined the army. In April 1918, he was wounded and taken prisoner. Repatriation in the autumn was followed by nearly a year in the First London General Hospital and eventual discharge in 1919.

In the October of that year he entered the Chemistry Department of Imperial College and graduated with first-class honours in 1922. He then joined the staff of the British Refractories Research Association (BRRA) in the Potteries under J.W. Mellor, FRS. Here was kindled a lifelong interest in the chemistry and analysis of silicate rocks and minerals. In 1925, he returned to Imperial College as a demonstrator of chemistry, and he was to remain there, becoming reader in analytical chemistry in 1945, until he retired in 1963.

He will not EH UHPHPEHUHG IRU D ODUJH QXPEHU RI SXEOLVKHG
DSSUHQWLFHVKLS· LQ DQDO\WLFDO FKHPLVWU\ DQG VRXJKV
postgraduate, the care, experimental and scepticism required in a true chemist. (It may be that he ploughed an even harder furrow when he tried, with considerable success, to improve their unpublished English.) Generations of practising analysts and those in other branches of chemistry all over the world would have professed their gratitude for his skill, experience and scholarship.

One of his former students, Mike Thompson, recalls:

‡ , HUN SÆDm° GH#8W Td> £P- 2Ytn>jDdªN iäDa M>4A^ä Ø4J4dª A^äE Q8AV^s WF °ô æ

to the general atmosphere of nervousness.

Theo was quite uncompromising in the quest for accuracy. Before one could start actually analysing things. One had to calibrate the balance weights, the burette, the pipettes and calibrated flasks. These results would be checked against results obtained by previous students almost back to the dawn of time. Breaking one of those sacred objects amounted virtually to an act of sacrilege. Apart from having to pay the fine, one felt that one had destroyed a link with history.

T K H R ¶ V F R e f e r e n c e s w e r e s t a g g e r i n g l y l a r g e . I r e m e m b e r a b a n k o f a b o u t 50
drawers for 3 x 5 inch index cards in his office. Every article he had ever read was listed there, I believe.

When he discerned a genuine interest in analytical chemistry (at that time very rare among undergraduates) he was unstintingly helpful. To me he represented a perfect embodiment

Mr Theobald gave freely of his time to outside bodies, notably the Society for Analytical Chemistry (where he was Associate Editor to *The Analyst* for 5 years and served on the Publications Committee for 17 years), the BSI, and the BP Commission (the Inorganic Chemicals and Reagents Committees). He was particularly pleased to become a member, and later Chairman of the BRRA analysis sub-