

Catalogue of the papers and correspondence of

Eric Mitchell Crook

(1914-1993)

By Peter Harper and Timothy E. Powell

NCUACS catalogue no.147/4/06

Title: Catalogue of the papers and correspondence of Eric Mitchell Crook (1914-1993), biochemist and biochemical engineer

Compiled by: Peter Harper and Timothy E. Powell

Date of material: 1937-2006

Extent of material: *ca* 90 items

Deposited in: Special Collections, Library, University College London

Reference code: GB 0103 E.M. Crook

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

PROVENANCE

The material was received from Mrs Julia Crook, widow, via Professor Peter Dunnill, Department of Biochemical Engineering, University College London.

OUTLINE OF THE CAREER OF ERIC MITCHELL CROOK

Eric Mitchell Crook was born on 3 November 1914 in Sydney, Australia, the family moving to Melbourne when Crook was three. Here he received his education, graduating from the University of Melbourne with first class honours in Physics and Chemistry in 1937. After graduation he won a Commonwealth of Australia Travelling Scholarship to come to England to study at Cambridge for his Ph.D. under F.G. Hopkins. He was Hopkins's last Ph.D. student and worked on the isolation and characterisation of redox enzymes and coenzymes. When he had obtained his Ph.D., he was awarded an MRC Postdoctoral Fellowship at Cambridge, moving to University College Hospital Medical School to work on gas gangrene. He moved again during the war to Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, where he was supported by an Agricultural Research Council Postdoctoral Fellowship and researched on leaf protein, biochemistry of stored potatoes and the electron microscopy of plant viruses (with F.C. Bawden), using one of the first electron microscopes in Britain. He was appointed to the Rothamsted staff in 1945.

In 1947 he moved to University College London where he joined the Biochemistry Department as Lecturer; he was appointed Reader in Biochemistry in 1952. Among his wide interests was the study of the mechanism of action of enzymes such as ribonuclease and creatine phosphokinase. He also developed an interest in the newly developing discipline of biochemical engineering, working on projects in collaboration with the UCL Department of Chemical Engineering (Professor M.B. Donald), for example the first production of coenzyme A in Britain. This led to the establishment of a lectureship supported by Arthur Guinness Son & Co. (Dublin) and a postgraduate diploma in biochemical engineering. However, he was greatly disappointed by the decision not to establish a chair in biochemical engineering.

In 1963 Crook moved to the St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College as Head of the Department of Biochemistry and Chemistry. His interest in biochemical engineering continued in association with the UCL Department of Chemical Engineering with research initiated while he was still at UCL on enzymes on solid supports. He built up and expanded his department so that it became highly successful, finding space, for example, for a research group in gastroenterology. An important

achievement was the introduction of an intercalated year in biochemistry for medical students in the University. This started as an Academic Diploma but was later changed to a B.Sc. He retired in 1982 with the title of Emeritus Professor of the University of London.

Crook was a founder editor (with M.B. Donald and E.L. Gaden of Columbia University) of the *Journal of Biochemical and Microbiological Technology and Engineering* (later *Biotechnology and Biochemical Engineering*), first published in 1959. He was very active into retirement in consultancy with biotechnology companies. He died 4 July 1993.

Obituaries of Crook appeared in *Cell Biochemistry and Function* vol. 11, issue 4, p.ii and *St Bartholomew's Hospital Journal*, Spring 1994.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

This small archive documents Crook's interest in the development of biochemical engineering while a member of the University College London Department of Biochemistry and for a period after his departure for St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College. The material covers the period 1937-1982, 2006.

Section A, University College London, forms the largest component in the collection. It comprises papers relating to biochemical engineering at University College. They include Crook's historical account of the development of biotechnology at UCL, documentation of research at UCL in collaboration with the Department of Chemical Engineering and documentation of the establishment in 1959 of the postgraduate diploma in biochemical engineering. The research projects documented are the production of coenzyme A and enzymes on solid supports. An individual item of great interest is the draft of a letter from Crook to the Provost of UCL on his being informed of the decision not to establish a chair in biochemical engineering.

Section B, Lectures, is slight but includes drafts for Crook's Procter Memorial Lecture 'in honour of the father of British leather chemistry'.

Section C, Publications, comprises material relating to Crook's own publications, especially a bound volume of his offprints, 1937-1964, and correspondence and papers relating to the founding of the *Journal of Biochemical and Microbiological Technology and Engineering* (later *Biotechnology and Biochemical Engineering*), 1957-1962.

Section D, Societies and organisations, presents brief documentation relating to three organisations, Medical Research Council, Science Research Council and University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, 1971-1978.

Section E, Visits and conferences, is likewise brief, documenting seven meetings and visits, 1967-1982, relating to Crook's biochemical engineering and biotechnology interests. Included is a 'Biochemistry and Biochemical Engineering Report' by A.R. Thomson of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell of his visit to the USA in March 1971.

Section F, Non textual material, consists of just two photographs, a photograph of Crook taken ca 1952-1953 and an unidentified group photograph.

Section G, Biographical, presents biographical notes prepared by the family specially for the collection in 2006.

There is also an index of correspondents.

Peter Harper
Timothy E. Powell
Bath 2006

SECTION A UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, A.1-A.52 1944-1981

This section documents Crook's role in the development of biochemical engineering / biotechnology at UCL in the 1950s and early 1960s, and his continued association with the work after he became Head of the Department of Biochemistry and Chemistry at the Medical College of St Bartholomew's Hospital, London.

A.1-A.9 HISTORY AND GENERAL

A.10-A.41 RESEARCH

A.42-A.45 TEACHING

A.46-A.52 STAFF

**A.1-A.9 HISTORY AND GENERAL 1957-1981 and
n.d.**

A.1 'How Biotechnology Developed at U.C. London' N.d.

11pp typescript with 1p manuscript 'insert' beginning 'To talk/write about the development of Biotechnology at University College is to talk/write about my own career thirty years ago'.

A.2 'Notes on Scope and Potential of Biochemical Engineering' N.d.

5pp typescript; manuscript notes found with the typescript.

A.3, A.3A Correspondence and papers relating to the development of biochemical engineering at UCL and biochemical engineering more generally 1957-1960 and
n.d.

Contents of untitled folder.

A.3 Includes draft of 'Memorandum on the Development of Biochemical Engineering at U.C.L.' by Crook, 25 June 1957 and draft of 'Memorandum on the Development of

University College London, A.1-A.52

Biochemical Engineering: University College London;
14.11.57'.

A.3A	Includes draft of 'Memorandum on the urgent necessity of setting up a Biochemical Engineering section at University College' and duplicated copy of 'Memorandum on the Development of Biochemical Engineering University College London'	N.d.
A.4	Typescript draft with manuscript additions and corrections of 'private and confidential' letter from Crook to UCL Provost The letter from the Provost (not with the papers) to which this is a draft reply appears to have informed Crook that the 'long-agreed' chair in Biochemical Engineering would not be established.	N.d.
A.5	Memorandum on air conditioning to biochemical engineering rooms by F.C. Webb, 7 January 1962	1962
A.6, A.7	Crook's correspondence with UCL after his departure for St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College Crook's correspondents include academic colleagues and administrators.	1963-1981
A.6	1963-1964	
A.7	1967-1981 Includes typescript draft of paper by Peter Dunnill 'Immobilized Cell and Enzyme Technology' for Royal Society meeting 'New Horizons in Microbiology', 20-21 June 1979.	
A.8, A.9	Miscellaneous duplicated and printed papers <i>re</i> biochemical engineering at UCL and biochemical engineering more generally. Two folders.	1957-1981

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A.10-A.41	RESEARCH	1950-1967
A.10-A.23	Coenzyme A The Coenzyme A project was a collaborative venture between the Departments of Biochemistry (Crook) and Chemical Engineering at UCL (M.B. Donald) supported by the Medical Research Council. The project was originally envisaged to prepare CoA, hitherto unavailable in Britain, in quantities sufficient to satisfy the present British demand.	1950-1962 and n.d.
A.10-A.16	'CoA 1950s' Contents of folder so inscribed: correspondence with colleagues, suppliers, patent agents, etc.	1950-1962 and n.d.
A.10	1950 (one letter only), 1954-1955 Includes 'Interim Proposals for Beginning Production of Co-enzyme A', 2pp typescript, 29 July 1954.	
A.11	1956	
A.12	1957 February - June	
A.13	1957 July -December Includes 'Report of DPN kinase enzyme and about an enzymatic synthesis of Triphosphopyridine nucleotide', 2pp typescript by H.F. Pogany, 26 July 1957.	
A.14	1958	
A.15	1962	

University College London, A.1-A.52

A.16	N.d. Manuscript and typescript notes and drafts. Includes 9pp typescript 'Analytical Techniques The Co-enzyme A Assay'.	
A.17-A.20	'CO A - MRC & Prof Marrian' Contents of folder so inscribed: principally correspondence with the Medical Research Council <i>re</i> its support for 'work on the large scale production of Co-enzyme A.' Crook corresponded with G.F. Marrian about the coenzyme project and future developments in 1957-1958.	1954-1958
A.17	1954-1955	
A.18	1956	
A.19	1957	
A.20	1958	
A.21, A.22	'CoA Finance' Contents of folder so inscribed divided into two for ease of reference: correspondence and financial statements.	1954-1958
A.23	Coenzyme financial statements and reports Contents of untitled folder. Includes 'Report on Co-enzyme A The Project at University College London', 3pp typescript by Crook, n.d. and 'Memo for submission to the M.R.C., A.R.C., and D.S.I.R.', 3pp typescript 'Draft', n.d.	1954-1957 and n.d.

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A.24-A.26	'Arthur Guinness Dr A.K. Mills'	1957-1962
	Contents of folder so inscribed: correspondence with Mills about mutual interests in research, biochemical engineering developments, visits by Mills to UCL, etc.	
	Mills was the Chief Chemist of Arthur Guinness Son & Co. (Dublin) Ltd.	
A.24	1957	
	Mills initiates the correspondence with a letter of 11 January 1957 beginning ' I understand that you are carrying out some work on Co-enzyme A at University College, London'	
A.25	1958	
	Includes 'Memorandum on Development of Large Scale Biochemical Processes at University College London', '3.9.57'. The memorandum was prepared by Crook for the Medical Research Council and a copy was sent to Mills, 14 March 1958.	
A.26	1959-1962	
A.27-A.39	Enzymes on Solid Supports	1960-1967
	This work was supported by a grant from the Whitehall Foundation. It was envisaged as a collaboration between the Departments of Biochemistry (Crook) and Chemical Engineering (M.B. Donald) at UCL. The basic research was under the direction of Crook who was responsible for drawing up the original proposals. After Crook's departure for the Medical College of St Bartholomew's Hospital he continued the research in collaboration with the Department of Chemical Engineering UCL. The grant expired on 31 July 1966 but an unexpended balance enabled the work to be extended for a period. A re-application to the Foundation in 1967 was unsuccessful.	
A.27-A.32	Correspondence and papers <i>re</i> Whitehall Foundation support for research on enzymes on solid supports, especially the financial administration of the grant.	1960-1967 and n.d.
	Includes initial correspondence with the Foundation and Crook's correspondence with Donald, Department of	

University College London, A.1-A.52

Chemical Engineering UCL, and the Finance and Accounts Departments at UCL and Medical College of St Bartholomew's Hospital, respectively.

A.27	1960-1961	
A.28	1963	
A.29	1964	
A.30	1965	
A.31	1966	
A.32	1967 and n.d.	
A.33-A.35	'Whitehall Foundation Reports' Contents of folder so inscribed: reports, correspondence <i>re</i> grants, etc.	1962-1966 and n.d.
A.33	Annual reports 1961-1962 - 1965-1966 (5 reports) and typescript note 'Enzymes on Solid Supports'	1962-1966
A.34	Correspondence <i>re</i> reports, administration of grant etc.	1965-1966
A.35	'Environmental perturbation as a factor in enzyme catalysis' 9pp manuscript 'Report from C.W. Wharton'.	N.d.
A.36	'Whitehall Re-application May '67' Correspondence with the Foundation.	1967

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A.37-A.39	Manuscript and typescript drafts etc <i>re</i> work on enzymes on solid supports Contents of untitled folder divided into three for ease of reference. The material appears to relate to the Report to the Foundation for 1963-1964 (copy at A.37) and paper (with M.D. Lilly, C. Money and W.E. Hornby) 'Enzymes on Solid Supports', <i>Biochem. J.</i> 1965 (offprint at A.37).	1964-1965
A.40, A.41	Miscellaneous correspondence and papers <i>re</i> research, grants, equipment, supplies etc Two folders. At A.41 is a manuscript draft of Report to Whitehall Trust for 1961-1962.	1958-1963
A.42-A.45	TEACHING Correspondence and papers <i>re</i> one year postgraduate diploma course in biochemical engineering and related matters. The diploma course was established in 1959.	1944-1962
A.42	'Scheme for a Degree Course in Chemical Engineering', Institution of Chemical Engineers, London Printed booklet.	1944
A.43	Correspondence and papers <i>re</i> introduction of the Diploma including syllabus	1958-1959
A.44	Correspondence and papers <i>re</i> diploma course including timetables	1960-1962
A.45	Miscellaneous papers found together ? <i>re</i> teaching Includes duplicated practical details of preparations.	1956, 1958, n.d.

University College London, A.1-A.52

A.46-A.52

STAFF

1954-1961

Correspondence and papers *re* appointment of technicians and research assistants, deferment of national service, etc.

Includes references and recommendations.

7 folders.

SECTION B **LECTURES, B.1-B.3** **N.d.**

B.1, B.2 'Procter Memorial Lecture' N.d.

Crook's lecture begins 'It is a great privilege to be invited to assist in honouring the memory of the "father of British leather chemistry".'

Typescript and manuscript drafts.

Two folders.

B.3 Manuscript notes ? for lecture N.d.

SECTION C	PUBLICATIONS, C.1-C.18	1937-1976
C.1-C.3	OWN PUBLICATIONS	1937-1976
C.1	Bound volume of Crook's scientific papers	1937-1964
C.2	Offprints of Crook's scientific papers Three offprints only.	1966-1976
C.3	'Some changes in the reactivity of enzymes resulting from their chemical attachment to water-insoluble derivatives of cellulose' Typescript draft of paper by Crook (with W.E. Hornby and M.D. Lilly) with covering letter to the <i>Biochemical Journal</i> , 21 August 1967.	1967
C.4-C.18	PUBLICATIONS CORRESPONDENCE	1957-1962
	<i>Correspondence and papers re Journal of Biochemical and Microbiological Technology and Engineering (later Biotechnology and Biochemical Engineering).</i>	
C.4-C.15	'Biotechnology and Biochemical Engineering' Contents of folder so inscribed: correspondence and papers re the founding of the <i>Journal of Biochemical and Microbiological Technology and Engineering</i> (later <i>Biotechnology and Biochemical Engineering</i> . Correspondents include Dr Paul Rosbaud, fellow editors, members of editorial advisory board, publisher and contributors. Papers include typescripts etc of some of the scientific papers that appeared in the first volume of the Journal. The initial approach to Crook about a new journal was from Rosbaud. The first volume of the Journal was published in 1959 by Interscience Publishers, Inc, New York. The editors were Crook, Biochemistry Department	1957-1962

Publications, C.1-C.18

UCL, M.B. Donald, Department of Chemical Engineering,
UCL and E.L. Gaden, Department of Chemical
Engineering, Columbia University.

C.4	1957	
C.5, C.6	1958	
	Two folders.	
C.7-C.11	1959	
	Five folders.	
	At C.9 are typescript and proof copies of paper by Crook, Donald and M.C. Reece 'The Evaluation of a process for the preparation of Co-enzyme A from Yeast'. This paper appeared in the first volume of the Journal.	
C.12-C.14	1960	
	Three folders	
C.15	1961-1962	
C.16-C.18	Contents of untitled folder	1958-1962
C.16	Correspondence with publisher	1958-1961
C.17	Production slips	1959-1961
C.18	List of 1961 subscribers	1962
	With covering letter from publisher, February 1962.	

SECTION D SOCIETIES AND ORGANISATIONS, D.1-D.5 1971-1978

D.1 MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL 1978

Re compiling European Biomedical Research Inventory on behalf of the Commission of the European Communities.

D.2-D.4 SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL 1971-1977

Contents of folder: correspondence and papers *re* SRC research on enzyme and microbial technology.

Includes papers for meetings.

Three folders.

D.5 UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY 1971

Paper *re* Biochemical Engineering Option Course as part of Department of Chemical Engineering's M.Sc. course in Advanced Chemical Engineering.

SECTION E	VISITS AND CONFERENCES, E.1-E.9	1966-1982
E.1	<p>Meeting of the South East Branch of the Institution of Chemical Engineers on Biochemical Engineering, March 1967</p> <p>Correspondence <i>re</i> arrangements.</p>	1966
E.2	<p>UKAEA Research Group Memorandum 'Biochemistry and Biochemical Engineering Report on a visit to the U.S.A., in March 1971'</p> <p>The visit was made by A.R. Thomson of the Chemical Engineering Division, Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell.</p>	1971
E.3	<p>Institution of Chemical Engineers Approved Short Course on Biochemical Reactors - Theory and Practice, University College London, 17-21 April 1972</p> <p>Provisional schedule, registration form etc.</p>	
E.4, E.5	<p>Society of Chemical Industry meeting on Enzymic and Non-Enzymic Catalysis, April 1978</p>	1978
E.4	<p>Article on 'Enzymes and industrial catalysis - a discussion', <i>Chemistry and Industry</i>, 1 April 1978</p> <p>This article served to introduce the meeting that was to take place 'later this month'. Participants in the discussion with <i>Chemistry and Industry's</i> editor were one of the symposium's organisers, Peter Dunnill of UCL and three of the meeting's session chairmen - Crook, Malcolm Lilly of UCL and Clement Bamford of Liverpool.</p>	
E.5	<p>Transcript of session on the state of enzyme chemistry and technology, chaired by Crook</p>	
E.6, E.7	<p>Chemical Society Review Symposium on 'Enzymes in Industry and Medicine', Exeter, 11-12 September 1978</p> <p>Crook lectured on 'Enzymes in manufacturing processes'.</p> <p>Correspondence <i>re</i> arrangements, programme of lectures,</p>	1977-1978

Visits and conferences, E.1-E.9

list of participants, summary of Crook's lecture, general information, etc.

Two folders.

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|-----|--|------|
| E.8 | Sixth-form Day Conference Enzymes: Structure, Function and Uses, College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth, 28 March 1979 | 1979 |
| | Crook lectured on 'Enzymes in manufacturing processes'.
Programme, brief correspondence <i>re</i> arrangements. | |
| E.9 | Biochemical Society Symposium on 'Biotechnology', University College London, 20-21 December 1982 | 1982 |
| | Includes Peter Dunnill's 'first effort at a piece for the Biochemical Society meeting' entitled 'The Future of Biotechnology'. | |

SECTION F	NON-TEXTUAL MATERIAL, F.1, F.2	c.1952-1953, n.d.
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Photographs.

F.1	Photograph of Crook inscribed on verso 'Christmas 1952 or 3 at Mill Hill ...'	c.1952-1953
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F.2	Unidentified group photograph	N.d.
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SECTION G

BIOGRAPHICAL

2006

G.1

3pp typescript biographical notes.

Prepared specially for the collection by Crook's family.

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