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Friday, August 18, 2017

Dear Mr. Krivit:

I wanted to follow up on your emails to thank you for alerting the Center for History of Physics at AIP of the error regarding the description of Ernest Rutherford as the discoverer of the artificial transmutation of elements in his 1919 experiments regarding the impact of alpha particles with Hydrogen nuclei. You were correct to point out that this error is common in many historical accounts. While Rutherford was interested in “disrupting” the nucleus in 1919, he did not address transmutation. As you detail, it was Patrick Blackett who demonstrated the nature of the interaction of the alpha particles with hydrogen nuclei in 1925, and who first showed the process of transmutation in action. We were happy to correct this error and very much appreciate you pointing this out to us. We hope that the corrected web exhibit will make this story better known.

Sincerely yours,



David Surman
Interim Chair
AIP Board of Directors

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