

## Book reviews

### Batteries for Electric Vehicles

D. A. J. Rand, R. Woods and R. M. Dell (Research Studies Press, Taunton, UK; Wiley, New York, 1998), ISBN 0 471 96799 8; 577 pp; £60 (hardback).

Few people will realise that battery-powered electric vehicles first became commercially available in the 1890s. In the last 40 years, interest in electric vehicles has been renewed whenever oil crises loom. However, current interest is largely driven by global concerns for the environment and the understanding that vehicles powered solely by internal combustion and diesel engines must have a limited lifetime due to the inherent pollution problems they cause. The search for alternative/hybrid power sources has resulted in most vehicle manufacturers taking a close look at competitive batteries and fuel cells for vehicle propulsion.

Although there is an extensive literature on electrochemical power sources for automotive applications, much of it is dated, over-specialized or difficult to digest. This contribution is welcomed as a readable account of modern batteries for electric vehicles; the authors have taken care to ensure that the material is treated in a balanced and digestible fashion, even for the nonelectrochemist.

The work provides an overview of the progress made in the development of rechargeable traction batteries together with a brief resumé of fuel cells. A particular feature is a discussion of the many battery types which have been constructed, aided by well-selected photographs in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 treats

the fundamentals of energy storage, Chapter 3 outlines performance criteria and testing schedules and Chapter 4 provides a detailed treatment of laboratory testing. The major part (Chapters 5–9) provides an account of the advances made in lead/acid-, alkaline-, redox flow-, sodium- and lithium-batteries. The consideration of strengths and weaknesses, brief historical perspectives and industrial developments are strong features. The final chapter takes a broad look at the future development of batteries for electric vehicles and notes that political, environmental and commercial factors will complicate any conclusions made from a simple technical comparison.

The authors (each of whom have many years experience of conducting research into batteries) deserve congratulations for providing such a readable and comprehensive treatment of batteries for electric vehicles. The book should prove useful to a wide range of academic and industrial workers, including automotive design engineers, fuel lecturers, environmental scientists and electrochemists. It is recommended reading for all electrochemists; I have already used some of the material in lectures to environmental and chemistry courses at undergraduate level.

The front cover shows a sports coupé powered by 'solar/electric energy'; we look forward to such developments – as long as the 0–60 mph acceleration time is not decreased too much!

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### Environmental electrochemistry: fundamentals and applications in pollution abatement

Krishnan Rajeshwar and Jorge Ibanez (Academic Press, San Diego, 1997), ISBN 0 12 576260 7/60 pp.

Electrochemistry is now established as a method by which many pollution and environmental problems in industry are solved. This book will help to reinforce this position by bringing together much of the science and technology associated with its application. It is a good source of material on electrochemistry and photochemistry relevant to pollution abatement in a wide range of industrial sectors, with the exception of the nuclear industry, of which the authors profess to have little experience and thus have preferred not to write about. I am sure this absence will disappoint several readers and environmentalists. Otherwise, the text is comprehensive in its coverage of the subject area, including both fundamental aspects and applications. It contains an abundance of references and, importantly, a listing of

companies marketing appropriate technologies and devices for pollution abatement and sensors. This compliments the eighth chapter which focuses on technology and industrial applications of electrochemical pollution abatement.

On an initial inspection readers may be a little lost as the chapters do not carry headings. This is my summary of the material covered: Chapter 1: A general introduction to pollution abatement (56 pp, 72 references); Chapter 2: Fundamentals of electrochemistry and electrochemical cells (68 pp, 15 references); Chapter 3: Electrochemistry of organic, inorganic and organometallic pollutants (72 pp, 123 references); Chapter 4: Electrochemical sensors (148 pp, 575 references); Chapter 5: Electrochemical treatment of pollutants (136 pp, 383 references); Chapter 6: Photo assisted treatment processes (124 pp, 332 references); Chapter 7: Water disinfection processes (60 pp, 187 references); and Chapter 8: Commercial applications of electrochemical and photochemical processes (50 pp, 54 references).