

After John Campbell published [this article](#) in the CERN Courier, I contacted him and told him that he was mistaken. I told him that his belief that Rutherford accomplished the first artificial transmutation, changing nitrogen into oxygen, was unfounded. I told him that the credit belonged instead to Blackett.

Campbell was very unhappy to hear the news. For decades, he had celebrated this alleged transmutation discovery as one of Rutherford's greatest accomplishments. Campbell was initially unwilling to accept that Rutherford therefore, was not the world's first confirmed alchemist, and that Rutherford was not the first person to have accomplished artificial transmutation. He told me in an e-mail that he still intended to recognize Rutherford with such accolades by virtue of the fact that instead, Rutherford had changed nitrogen into a proton.

This is exactly what Campbell did several weeks later in his [Physics World article](#). He also attempted to bolster his thesis by citing a newspaper article that claimed that Rutherford had transmuted elements. Several weeks later, Campbell spoke at a one-day meeting at the University of Manchester. By this time, Campbell had stopped playing word games and fully avoided any assertion that Rutherford's 1919 experiments provided evidence of transmutation. At the end of his lecture, he [admitted his mistake](#).

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