

MODEL 400 TL COMPLETE DILUTION

REFRIGERATOR

INSTRUCTION MANUAL

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Section 1

INTRODUCTION

The helium-3/helium-4 dilution refrigerator first proposed by London (1951) has now become a standard laboratory instrument for producing ultra-low temperatures for a variety of research purposes. While the number of scientists interested in the thermo-dynamics of attaining these low temperatures is decreasing, more and more scientists are interested in experimenting at these temperatures. The aim of Oxford Instruments is to provide Dilution Refrigerators for these users by producing a reliable and comparatively simple system which works with the minimum amount of expert knowledge and associated 'black magic' still connected with these instruments.

The present manual contains however a short description of the theory of operation of a dilution refrigerator which will enable the user to gain a fuller understanding of the working and operation of his system. This might also be useful during fault diagnosis when the system, for one reason or another, does not reach the specified temperatures.

The present design of this refrigerator takes into account several years of practical experience and development. The system is now as reliable as present day technology permits. We at Oxford Instruments hope you will be entirely satisfied with both the performance and reliability of the refrigerator and wish you prolonged and successful operation.

The room temperature vacuum pumping system is used to remove the helium-3 from the still, and compress it to a pressure of a few hundred millibar. Since the cooling power of a dilution refrigerator is directly proportional to the flow rate of helium-3, the large cooling power refrigerators must have very powerful pumps, and wide pumping lines are needed in the low pressure regions.

The gas is then passed through filters and cold traps to remove impurities and returned to the cryostat, where it is precooled in the main helium bath and condensed on the 1K pot. A flow impedance in the form of a capillary tube is used to maintain a high enough pressure in the 1K pot region for the gas to condense.

The experimental apparatus is mounted on the mixing chamber, ensuring that it is in good thermal contact. All connections to the room temperature equipment must be thermally anchored at various points on the refrigerator to reduce the heat load on the mixing chamber to the minimum, giving the lowest possible base temperatures. If the experiment is to be carried out at higher temperatures, the mixing chamber can be warmed by applying heat to it directly, and a temperature controller can be used to give good stability.

This description should enable the operator to understand the detailed description of the operating procedure of the system, which will be found later in the manual.

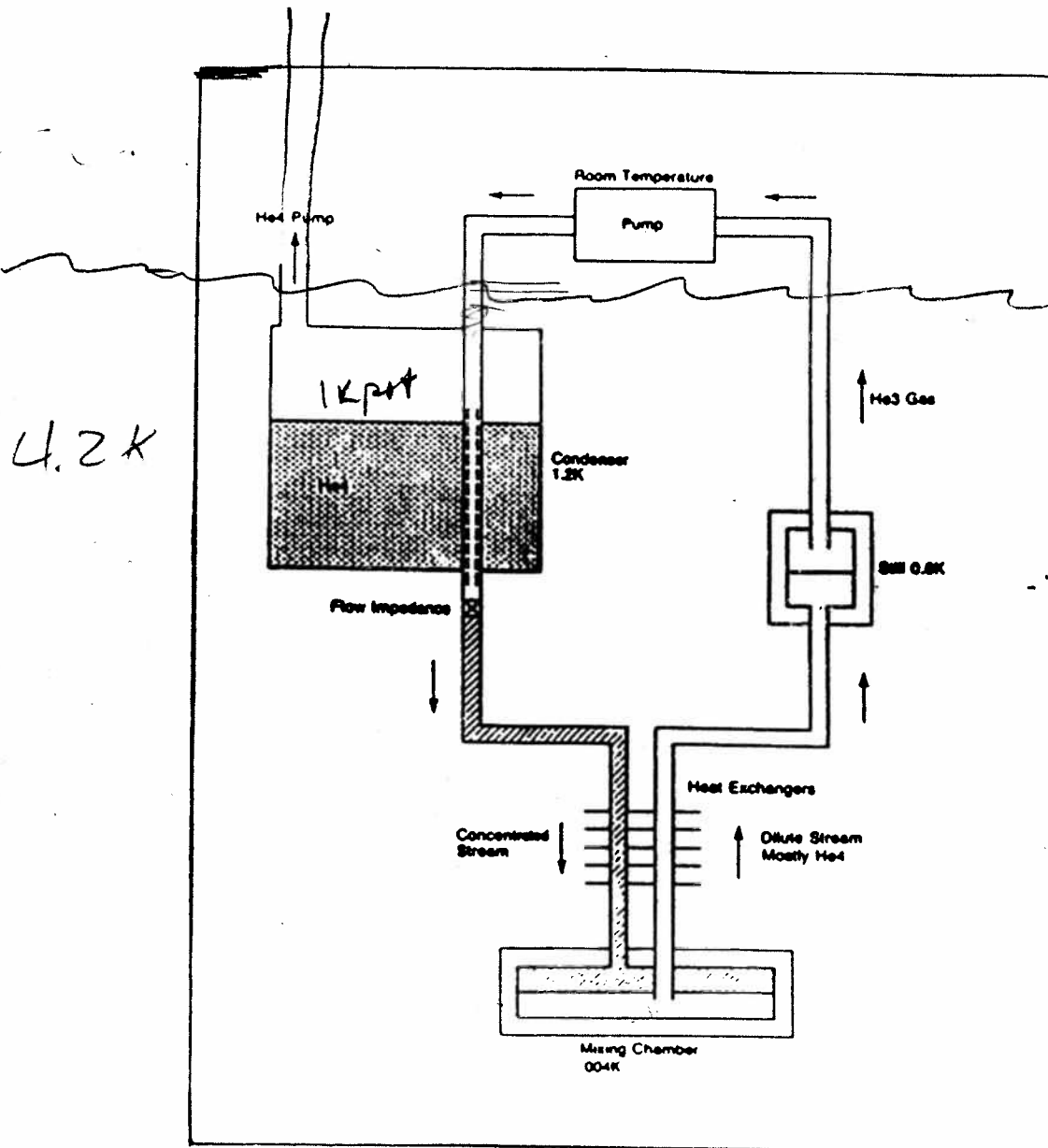


fig 2.2 A schematic diagram of the dilution refrigerator

Section 3

3.1 Description of insert and dilution unit

Enclosed with the manual are drawings of the top plate, the top of the IVC and the bottom of 1K pot, with a description of all ports and services needed for the operation of the D/R or for customers use.

Drawing No.	AFA0410	System GA
	AFA0601	Sample Holder
	ARZ0403	Pumping Cabinet

The temperature can now be varied by either changing the flow rate or by putting extra heat into the mixing chamber via the M/C heater or the experiment. An electronic temperature controller can be used, but one should be aware that below 20 mK, the time to reach equilibrium will be long - sometimes up to an hour.

Experience will teach you what is the best operating mode for your application.

5.10 Operation of the continuous fill needle valve on the 1K pot

Measure the helium boil off from the 1K pot in the single shot mode. Open a needle valve sufficiently to increase the boil-off by just more than a factor of two. At this rate the pot will fill continuously.

The level in the 1K pot can be conveniently seen on the level meter provided. Note that the electronics are set differently for the probe operating in superfluid. The 1K pot level indicator and the main bath indicator electronics are not interchangeable.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE CRYOPUMP IS ONLY USED TO STORE THE SMALL AMOUNT OF MISTURE WHICH WAS IN THE PIPEWORK. IF TOO MUCH MIXTURE IS PUMPED INTO THE CRYOPUMP, IT IS POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP DANGEROUSLY HIGH PRESSURES.

When the mixture is allowed back into the system it is important to make sure that the high pressure "Hoke" valve is only opened slowly, and that the other valves i.e. 6, 7 and 11 are already open. In this way the only part of the pipework which is subjected to a high gas pressure is within the cryopump, which is designed for this purpose. The other seals in the the system are only reliable for vacuum operation.

Section 9

Security, safety and trouble shooting

9.1 Active security systems

As indicated in section 4 the helium-3 gas handling system is fitted with several sensors which, when triggered, will stop the helium-3 circulation and allow the system to warm up safely. For that purpose an electrical bypass valve is mounted parallel to valve 2, between the condenser line and the still pumping line.

This valve is "normally open" and is activated to close during running of the dilution refrigerator, i.e. when the power is switched on and the cooling water is running.

In table 9.1 we have summarised the status of the different pumps and valves after one of the sensors has been triggered.

When a fault indicator is illuminated the fault should be rectified immediately. If one of the pumps fails it will normally blow a fuse first but is most likely to be a failure associated with the pump or its motor. This should be checked before resetting the refrigerator. The "N₂ level low" indicator will light up if nitrogen level in the cold trap dewar is too low and no other actions are triggered. Refill immediately.

ACTION TABLE OF SAFETY SENSORS

	Booster Pump	QSB	rotary	bypass
AC power fail	off	closed	off	open
Overpressure G4	off	closed	off	open
Water fail	off	off	on	open
³ He rotary fail	off	closed	off	open
Nitrogen	on	open	on	closed
Booster Overheat	off	closed	on	closed
Booster fail	off	closed	on	closed

Table 9.1

8) Oscillations in still pressure which do not disappear after several hours.

Level of liquid in still rises as condenser pressure falls - remove some helium-4.

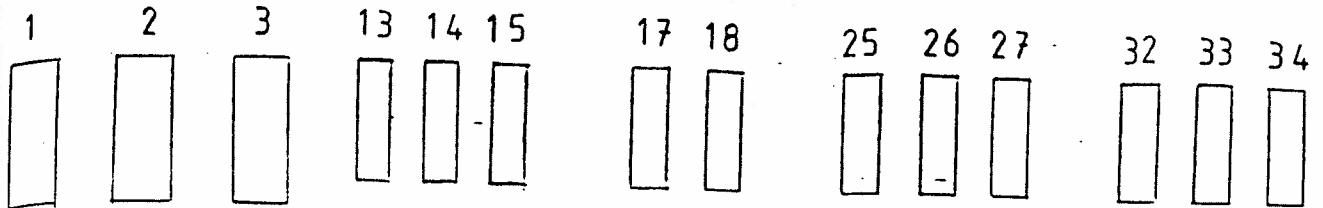
9) Oscillations in condenser pressure.

Check symptom 8 and symptom 3.

11.2 Pumping System

A full set on electrical diagrams of the gas handling system is included in the manual.

FUSE DETAIL



Ø 4

Ø 5

Ø 6

Ø 7

