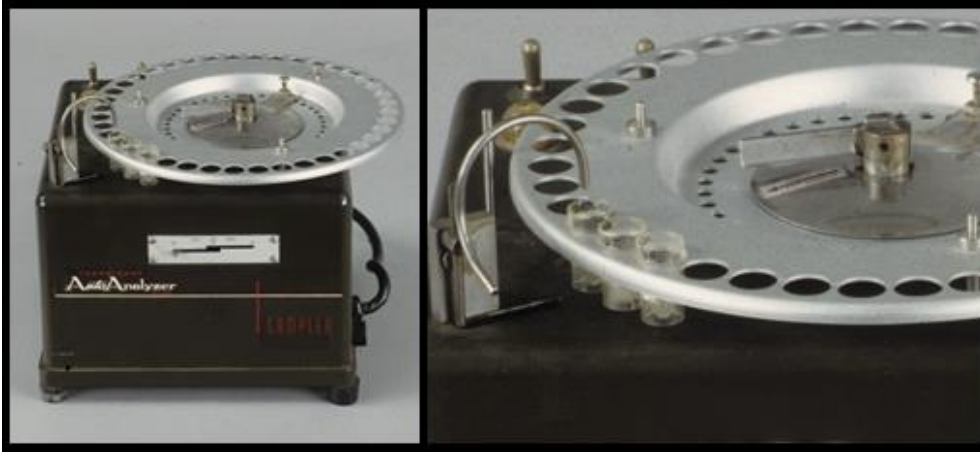




The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Object 48: Technicon Autoanalyzer



What is it?

The Technicon Autoanalyzer is an automated machine used in biochemistry laboratories. Its introduction was a step change in the way in which samples were processed and analysed.

History

In 1950 scientist Leonard Skeggs contacted Technicon Corporation, a relatively small American scientific instruments company, about an idea he had for a new analyser. Technicon initially turned down the opportunity to develop Skeggs' idea but were more interested when he returned in 1953. Technicon spent several years turning Skeggs' model into the first automated analyser based on continuous flow analysis – a concept that revolutionised clinical biochemistry in more ways than one.

Pathology

Before the Technicon Autoanalyzer was introduced most assays were done manually and were very labour intensive, requiring a team of technicians. The Technicon Autoanalyzer allowed rapid analysis of serial samples by separating each sample by an air bubble. This kept samples separate so that multiple specimens could be analysed and contamination was reduced. The Technicon Autoanalyzer improved analytical quality and sample throughput, allowing up to sixty separate samples to be analysed in an hour, supervised by a single technician. Continuous flow technology was used until the 1980s, when it was superseded by more advanced, computer-based technology.

Find out more

Read more about Leonard Skeggs and his invention on the [Science Museum website](#).

You can see modern analysers in action in biochemistry labs around the country. Find your nearest lab open day on the [RCPath Website](#).