

Measuring the Heat Capacity of Air

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The maximum rise in pressure, Δp , for a given heating time, ΔT , was measured by using a pressure meter connected to the glass bottle in the experiment. The final result for C_V obtained from the data was $36.1 \pm 0.6 \text{ J mol}^{-1} \text{ K}^{-1}$. This result is much larger than the expect result of $C_V = \frac{5}{2}R$. The likely origin of this discrepancy could be due to the fact that pressure inside the bottle did not remain constant after the current was switched off, or possibly due to the fact that ambient infrared radiation would have been being absorbed by various parts of the apparatus.

I. GRAPH

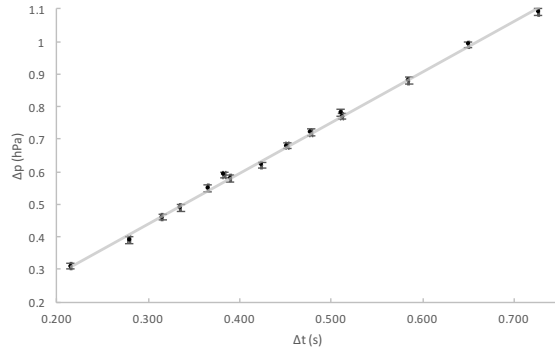


FIG. 1: The maximum rise in pressure recorded as a function of heating time. The error bars on the time are too small to be seen.

II. EQUATION, MATHS, AND SYMBOLS

The experiment considered here is an attempt at measuring C_V for air at room temperature and at atmo-

spheric pressure. Air can be considered to be an ideal gas in the present context. If the volume of air is heated up, V , is constant, the change in pressure Δp produced by a change in temperature ΔT can therefore be obtained from the ideal-gas law, $\Delta p V = n R \Delta T$, where R is the gas constant. Hence,

$$C_V = \frac{Q R}{\Delta p V} \quad (2)$$

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Google with all it's help with LaTeX, and also TexShop for not breaking on me, and also coffee for allowing me to pull through this long long evening.