Research definitions

The following phrases, frequently found in technical writings, are defined below for your enlightenment. They are adapted from 'A glossary for research reports, by C. D. Graham, Jr., which appeared in Metal Progress, Vol. 71, No. 5, May, 1957. Graham had evidently read too many scientific papers by the time he composed this clever compilation.

PHRASE: "it has long been known..."
DEFINITION: I haven't bothered to look up the original reference.

PHRASE: "Of great theoretical and practical importance..."
DEFINITION: Interesting to me.

PHRASE: "While it has not been possible to provide definite answers to these questions..."
DEFINITION: The experiment didn't work out, but I wanted to publish anyway.

PHRASE: "Extremely high purity"
DEFINITION: Composition unknown except for the exaggerated claims of the supplier.

PHRASE: "Three of the samples were chosen for detailed study."
DEFINITION: The results on the others didn't make sense and were ignored.

PHRASE: "Accidentally stained during mounting"
DEFINITION: Accidentally dropped on the floor.

PHRASE: "Handled with extreme care during the experiments"
DEFINITION: Not dropped on the floor.

PHRASE: "A fiducial reference line on the specimen"
DEFINITION: A scratch.

PHRASE: "Although some detail have been lost in reproduction, it is clear from the original micrograph that..."
DEFINITION: It is impossible to tell from the original micrograph.

PHRASE: "Typical results are shown"
DEFINITION: The best results are shown.

PHRASE: "The most reliable data are those Jones..."
DEFINITION: Jones was a student of mine.

PHRASE: "Agreement with the predicted curve is excellent."
DEFINITION: Fair.

PHRASE: "...good."
DEFINITION: Poor.

PHRASE: "...satisfactory."
DEFINITION: Doubtful.

PHRASE: "...fair."
DEFINITION: Imaginary.

PHRASE: "Correct within an order of magnitude"
DEFINITION: Wrong.

PHRASE: "It is believed that..."
DEFINITION: I think...

PHRASE: "It is generally believed that...
DEFINITION: A couple of other guys think so too.

PHRASE: "It might be argued that..."
DEFINITION: I have such a good answer for this objection that I shall now raise it.

PHRASE: "It is clear that much additional work will be required for a complete understanding of..."
DEFINITION: I didn't understand it.

PHRASE: "Thanks to Joe Glotz for assistance with the experiment, and to John Doe for valuable discussions."
DEFINITION: Glotz did the work, and Doe explained what it meant to me.