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(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB97/02183 (22) International Filing Date: 14 August 1997 (14.08.97) (30) Priority Data: 9618099.7 30 August 1996 (30.08.96) GB (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): ZENECA LIMITED [GB/GB]; 15 Stanhope Gate, London W1Y 6LN (GB). (72) Inventors; and (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): MONTEITH, Michael, John [GB/GB]; Hexagon House, P.O. Box 42, Blackley, Manchester M9 8ZS (GB). SCHOFIELD, David [GB/GB]; Hexagon House, P.O. Box 42, Blackley, Manchester M9 8ZS (GB). BAILEY, Mark [GB/GB]; Hexagon House, P.O. Box 42, Blackley, Manchester M9 8ZS (GB). (74) Agents: REVELL, Christopher; Zeneca Specialties, Intellectual Property Group, Hexagon House, P.O. Box 42, Blackley, Manchester M9 8ZS (GB) et al.		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, HU, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published <i>With international search report.</i>
(54) Title: PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF BUTANE TRIOLS		
(57) Abstract A process for the preparation of butane triols is provided. In the process, a malic acid diester is reduced with sodium borohydride in the presence of an ether and an alcohol. Preferably, the malic acid diester is an ethyl or methyl ester, the ether is tetrahydrofuran or bis(2-methoxyethyl) ether (diglyme), and the alcohol comprises ethanol. Advantageously, the reaction is carried out at ambient temperature.		