

Professor Ern Dawes **Joint Winner of the 2004 Chromatographic Society Jubilee Medal**



Ern Dawes is the founder of the SGE Group of Companies, beginning his career in 1949 training in glass instrument making in the Chemistry Department of Melbourne University, Australia. In 1953 Mr. Dawes joined ICI to set up the glass workshop at the newly formed Central Research Laboratories in Melbourne. One of the projects at these laboratories involved the then new technique of Gas Chromatography from which came the development of the Flame Ionisation Detector (FID) by Ian McWilliam in 1958. For his work Ian needed microlitre capacity syringes and other components that were not readily available at the time and so he turned to Ern Dawes to produce various devices including in 1959 very early glass capillary columns for use with Ian's FIDs. These columns were produced following help from Dennis Desty during visits to his laboratory.

In response to the demand for microlitre capacity syringes in the early 1960s he formed his company, Scientific Glass Engineering Pty. Ltd., to manufacture these small capacity syringes for gas chromatography. The original production of the syringes was in the garage at the back of his home but a small factory was rapidly constructed and the business rapidly expanded, particularly after the opening of an UK sales office in 1968.

Ern Dawes's interest in chromatography was never limited to solely syringes and over 40 years there has been a constant stream of developments that he has been directly involved in for gas and liquid chromatography as well as mass spectrometer interfaces and even atomic adsorption high intensity light sources. Important developments along the way have included Glass Lined Steel Tubing (GLT), graphite ferrules, capillary GC columns and liquid chromatography systems from sample introduction techniques through different types of columns including nano LC columns through to detector development. He has had an involvement over a long period in many facets of chromatography.

Ern Dawes has been recognised not only for his work in chromatography but also for his work in the development of the scientific instrument industry in Australia for which he was awarded the OBE in 1981.

At 75 years, including 50 years of work with chromatography and 43 years after founding SGE, Ern Dawes maintains a strong involvement with chromatography with current hands on projects developing components for nano-LC.