

Gatan International Pleasanton, CA

A person history by Peter Swann, Chairman: Gatan owes its existence to a dog called Laika that orbited the earth on the Russian spaceship Sputnik 2 in 1957. This event sparked a technological crisis that brought hundreds of graduates (such as myself) from Universities in Europe to high salary jobs in USA. Armed with a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, I was fortunate to join a group headed by Dr. Robert M. Fisher at the E.C. Bain Laboratories of US Steel Corp. Bob had just embraced the new technique of transmission electron microscopy and created a research environment that could not have been more stimulating. In those days, electron microscopes had neither specimen tilting capabilities nor anticontaminators and obtaining a good micrograph was a stressful experience. However, *necessity is the mother of invention*, and we soon had all kinds of EM accessories to improve our productivity. These developments caught the attention of Cornell von Muswitch, the colorful USA Sales Manager of Siemens, USA, who asked me to make column accessories to help sell more Siemens TEMs. My brother Rex had just had joined me in Pittsburgh, PA after completing an instrument maker apprenticeship in England and so with an advance payment from Siemens to buy the required lathe and milling machine from Sears and Roebuck, we set up a small workshop. Gatan, Inc. was then formed. The name Gatan came from my German language teacher and is the past participle of a German irregular verb (*Ich habe es getan* means "I have done it"). Unfortunately our attorney spelt the word incorrectly. In 1966 I was sent by US Steel to the University of Göttingen and when I returned to Pittsburgh a year later, recruiters were touring the country persuading UK scientists to go back to England. I took the bait and went to Imperial College to become a full Professor at the University of London while Rex and a colleague, Bill Piper, moved Gatan more towards the subcontracting business and manufactured products for various medical companies in the Pittsburgh area.


In England, I continued to design TEM accessories on a part time basis but after eight years, the part time business became too big and in 1978 I returned to Gatan, Inc. I then developed an ion mill (the DuoMill™) and the ultrasonic disc cutter which both sold rather well under the expert guidance of Gatan's new Sales manager, Terry Donovan. I then started work on an electron energy loss spectrometer and, fortunately, I confided my plans to Dr. Nancy Tighe (one of my research students at Imperial College). She put me in touch with Dr. Ondrej Krivanek at UC Berkeley. Ondrej turned out to be an exceptional instrument designer and as a Gatan consultant he managed the development of our first electron spectrometer.


In 1982 I decided to set up Gatan's R&D center in Pleasanton, CA and persuaded Ondrej to become our Director of R&D. In the meantime, with help from a talented German engineer, Bernd Kraus, I developed a new line of TV cameras and a cryotransfer holder. By 1983 it became clear that our growth was market size limited and to correct this problem we formed Gatan GmbH in Munich, Germany with Bernd Kraus as the Technical Director and Dr. Walter Hert as the Sales and Marketing Director, and Gatan Ltd. in England with Kevin Scudder (formally our talented East Coast Sales Manager) as its Managing Director. I also asked our West Coast Sales Manager, Dana Clough, to set up distributorships in the Pacific Rim. With these developments, Gatan's export revenues reached 56% of total revenue by 1987.


By 1989 it became clear that to develop further as an instrument company we had to design our own software. Ondrej took on this responsibility and formed a small, but very talented software group which developed one of the best imaging and analysis software packages on the market today. This software is key to our future development because it will form the core to any instrument we choose to develop in the broad field of imaging and analysis. To date, our PEELS™, slow scan and TV cameras, DigiScan™ module, and electron imaging filter all depend on this software.


By 1992, with over 200 employees and annual sales exceeding \$20 million, I could no longer work as both product designer and CEO so Rex and I decided to restructure Gatan into three separate companies - the Contract Division became Canberry Manufacturing and Chick Machine Tool and the EM Products Division became Gatan International. We then found an investment partner and a new CEO, Bill Offenber (formally CEO of Spectra Physics Analytical), to manage Gatan International.

Now, I am back to my first love which is instrument design, and I will watch Bill Offenber manage Gatan's continued development from the sidelines. In retrospect, I see that Gatan's success came partly from its experienced and dedicated workforce in Pennsylvania which formed the essential backbone of the business and partly from our innovative scientists who understood the field and the customers. I feel very privileged to have been able to come to the USA and make my contribution. My only regret is that the Federal Government has forgotten all about Laika. ■




Q: How many science professors does it take to change a light bulb?


A: Only one, assuming that he has enough graduate students to actually do the work, and then he gets three tech reports out of it.



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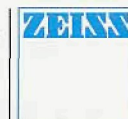
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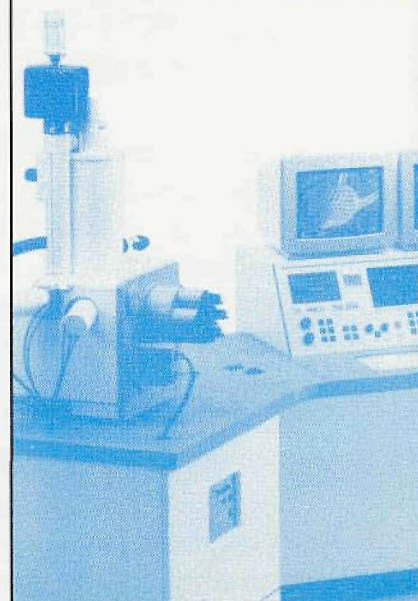
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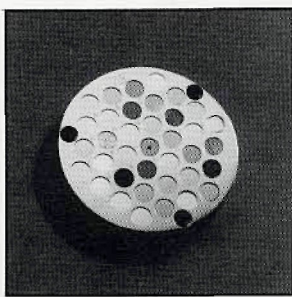
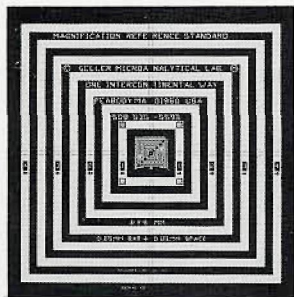
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Thanks for the Memories . . .

The now infamous burglar, responsible for numerous thefts of computer memories at the University of Washington, is no longer singing this tune - or is he?

A costly (to the unfortunate victims) and aggravating (to the UW police) string of 30 different burglaries of valuable computer memory boards from 333 offices and labs in various buildings on the UW campus has finally ended. Several hours after midnight on Saturday, August 28, the police were alerted by a UW staff member when his computer, when taken off line, had "called" his personal pager. The police responded quickly and soon spotted an intruder on the third floor of a University building with a pipe wrench in hand and a trail of 33 broken door locks behind him. A dramatic moonlight chase across campus, with police in hot pursuit, culminated with the suspects capture near Husky Stadium. He was found to be a California resident and further questioning revealed that his travels had put him close by when similar computer thefts occurred at several Universities in California and Oregon.

The statement that the computer thefts "may finally ended" is used above advisably as the culprit pleaded not guilty and, with the kind help of a bondsman, put up \$100,000 bail and promptly left town before a fugitive warrant from California could be processed. If he does come back, he will need money to cover his legal expenses so protect you computers accordingly.

Unfortunately, the campus-wide relief that followed the news that a prime suspect had been apprehended was short lived. Soon after, a very confident young man with a lab coat over his street clothes walked into the drama department library and informed the surprised but initially unquestioning student librarians that their high end Hewlett-Packard printer was being recalled. He put the nearly new printer in his truck but unfortunately "forgot" to return with the recall authorization papers.

R. M. Fisher
University of Washington

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