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## GEORGE DANIELS

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For immediate release

### As his outstanding collection of vintage motor cars goes under the hammer at Goodwood Festival of Speed this week, Web of Stories celebrates the life and work of legendary English watchmaker, George Daniels.

George Daniels CBE, DSc, FBHI, FSA (19 August 1926 – 21 October 2011) was one of only a few modern watchmakers who could create a complete watch by hand, including the case and dial, without any assistance. He is most famous for creating the co-axial escapement (the device that drives a timekeeping mechanism) which has been described as the most important horological development for 250 years.

He created his first mechanical watch in 1969, making less than 100 pocket watches and wrist watches in his lifetime, each of which typically involved 2,500 hours of work. In 1981, he was awarded an MBE and in 2010, a CBE. He is the only watchmaker to ever have been awarded the honour of 'Master Watchmaker, for services to Horology'. He was a former Master of the Clockmakers' Company of London and had been awarded their Gold Medal, a rare honour, as well as the Gold Medal of the British Horological Institute, the Gold Medal of the City of London and the Kullberg Medal of the Stockholm Watchmakers' Guild.

Web of Stories has a series of insightful video clips from Daniels, sharing priceless memories of his career including the complexities of creating the co-axial escapement as well as his early years, including his first experience of a watch: *'My interest in watches was first aroused by the discovery in the house of a watch. I don't know who it belonged to, but it was fair game to open it up with the bread knife and examine its contents.'*

Daniels also shares the fascination and appreciation of vintage cars that led to

his staggering collection: *'Some people have said I have an obsession with motorcars, but it's not true. I have an obsession with horology and I very much enjoy motorcars, but unlike horology, I've never seen the necessity for attempting to make an improvement in the motorcar.'*

He reminisces about buying his first Bentley and how this kick started his love affair with vintage cars, including the purchase of the 1930 Birkin supercharged Le Mans team car: *'It was quite fun to turn up at a meeting with the world's most famous supercharged Bentley. I drove it for about 12 years and then I got tired of it, the size and weight, and in spite of all its history, I decided it would have to go. But I added to its history while I had it at the Nürburgring in Germany when a race was introduced for Bentleys and Mercedes... The race was terrific fun and I wasn't sure which lap I was on and I wasn't sure what I was doing. I only sat there with my foot glued to the floor to keep the car at maximum speed and at the end of the allotted time, it transcribed that I had won. And so it was a great victory for the car... that was my contribution to England's reputation as a racing nation.'*

These fascinating recordings, and many more, can be watched as a number of short video clips, with a fully searchable transcript. All Web of Stories videos are easy to share with friends and colleagues, and may be embedded into personal blogs and websites.

<http://www.webofstories.com/people/george.daniels/78>

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS ABOUT WEB OF STORIES

Everyone has a story to tell. Over time many stories become forgotten, but now Web of Stories offers members of the public the chance to tell their stories for future generations to enjoy. The project is built on the belief that we all have wonderful stories to share, and have family and friends whose tales we would like to hear.

Web of Stories began as an archive of life stories told by some of the great scientists, writers and artists of our time. As the number of stories grew, it became obvious that some were on related topics and that a web was slowly being created of connected stories.

We welcome anyone to come and talk about virtually anything they like. Just like our famous speakers, we hope you will record your stories for others to enjoy.

#### CONTACT

For more information on Web of Stories or any of our videos please contact the Press Desk on +44(0)20 7323 0323 or [press@webofstories.com](mailto:press@webofstories.com)

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