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Roger W Smith's GREAT Britain watch

WATCHES

Roger W Smith, a great British showcase

The eminent watchmaker's work forms an important part of the GREAT Britain campaign, says James Gurney



BY JAMES GURNEY
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If you felt the need for a little horological education, you might do worse than take a detour to the [Watch Club](#) in the Royal Arcade off Bond Street, where [Roger W Smith's](#) GREAT Britain watch is temporarily on show prior going on a world tour as part of the government's [GREAT Britain campaign](#) – a showcase of this country's academic, business and cultural achievements.

My first reaction on learning of the project was surprise – the choice to include Smith's watch as a symbol of UK PLC's industrial strength seemed a little strange given that his watch is about as pure an expression of handmade watchmaking as you could hope to find. But that was to miss the point, both of the campaign and of the watch (and quite possibly Britain's industrial USP

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The watch is Smith's latest word on watchmaking and the "Daniels Method"

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There's no doubt that Roger Smith has a place in a campaign that promises to showcase the best of what Britain has to offer, there is a bare handful of watchmakers in the world that have mastered so many of the crafts in the way he has done, or who have such a clear vision to work to.

The watch is Smith's latest word on watchmaking and the "Daniels Method" – the approach to watchmaking developed by Smith's mentor, the much-feted [George Daniels](#). Essentially, it is a doctrine that seeks to balance technical innovation, aesthetics and craft purity.

At the heart of the watch is a new escapement, a "single-wheel Daniels Co-axial". The mechanism is much lighter than previous versions, meaning the energy in the system is more precisely controlled and thus a better time keeper. However, you need not be a trained horologist to appreciate the craftsmanship that the watch exudes. As a whole, and in its detail, the watch balances a very British substance with almost incredibly fine detail and finish. Whilst the images here are perfectly accurate, they are no substitute for seeing the watch itself.

While Smith's watches are craft first and foremost, he is content to use technology when it is needed (the studio team includes an ex-aerospace machinist) and it is this creative but disciplined approach to manufacturing that adds that extra dimension to his place on the GREAT Britain campaign.

ROGER W SMITH

www.rwsmithwatches.com



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