

Time to watch

BY DUNCAN FOULKES

Roger Smith launches video channel on YouTube and many folk are tuning in to see the gifted island horologist at work

THOUSANDS are watching island watchmaker Roger Smith at work after he launched a dedicated video channel on the internet.

Roger, 41, makes luxury timepieces at his workshop in the north of the island which are then exported around the world.

His company makes hand-crafted products that are the watchmaking equivalent of an Aston Martin or Bentley.

His 'series two' timepieces cost between £72,000 and £120,000 and only 10 are made in one year. There is an 18 month waiting list. The average price is £80,000 to £85,000.

Now having spent the best part of a decade teaching himself the necessary skills involved in the creation of a completely handmade pocket watch, Roger has decided to embrace the wonders of the worldwide web. He believes that setting up his own dedicated video channel will be of benefit and perhaps be a useful educational tool for current and future students of horology.

Wider audience

Business Examiner interviewed Roger just four days after the channel's launch and already there have been more than 5,000 channel uploads with more taking place all the time.

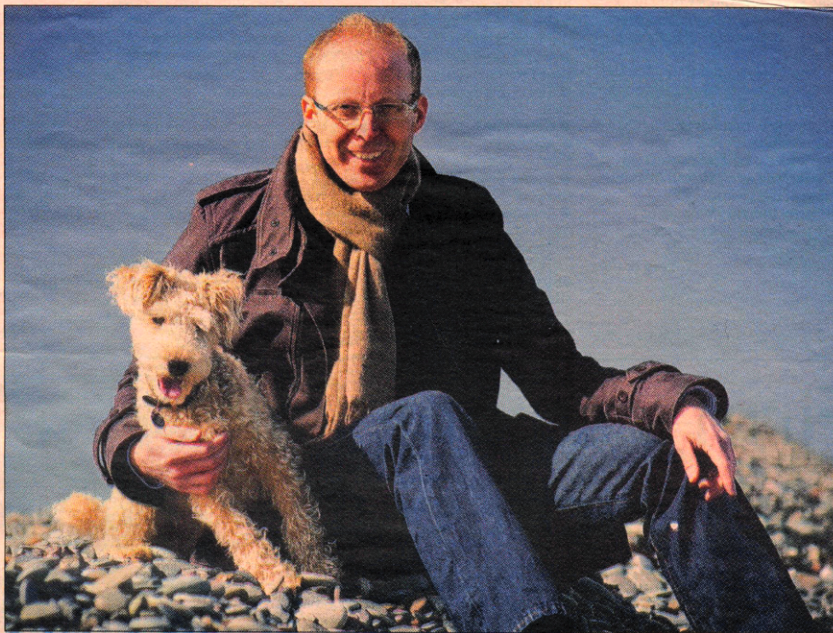
This might indicate his videos are of interest to a wider audience than just students of watchmaking.

Currently there are five playlists which can be found by clicking on each of the links.

- Watchmaking techniques - Finishing a set of hands. In this, the first of his watchmaking technique videos, Roger describes the process of finishing a set of hands for one of his Series 2 wristwatches in a series of 10 consecutive and detailed videos. Over time, Roger intends to create videos explaining bespoke case making, dial making and many other of the hand finishing techniques.

- An Introduction in which Roger gives a short summary of his history and philosophy.
- Series 2 movement. In a series of three videos Roger discusses his Series 2 movement and his reasons for designing and making it, with an interesting insight into the co-axial escapement.

- Watches. This section contains footage of Roger personally discussing individual watches and so far it includes the special new Series 2 Open Dial, and the unique Grand Date Flying Tourbillon. There is



TIME FOR A BREAK: Roger Smith and his Lakeland terrier Mac enjoy a walk

also a short clip of his No. 2 pocket watch which was filmed by an individual at the National Watch and Clock Museum (USA) where it featured in the Grand Complications Exhibition.

- General information. Paul Moulton from Granada TV interviews Roger about his Grand Date Flying Tourbillon commission.

Viewers can create their own account on YouTube by going to the RWSmithwatches channel. They can receive email reminders when new videos are uploaded.

Roger explained that for most of the filming his wife Caroline operated the camera which they bought one afternoon from a shop in Douglas.

Roger receives inquiries from all over the world and has noted an increase in interest from fast-growing China.

It was while studying at the Manchester School of Horology that

Roger first met George Daniels, a watchmaker widely regarded as the greatest horologist of modern times.

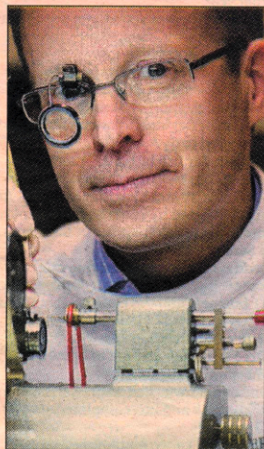
Mr Smith was inspired by a lecture given by Mr Daniels, who lives in Ramsey, and spent the next seven years perfecting the 30 or so different disciplines involved in creating a truly handmade pocket watch.

An invitation followed to work with him in the Isle of Man on the now legendary Daniels Millennium series of 50 watches.

The experience was priceless and Mr Smith describes his time with Mr Daniels as 'the finest finishing school any aspiring watchmaker could wish for'.

Ultimately this led to Roger setting up his own company at Ballaugh. His wife Caroline is general business manager and he has a small team working with him on the unique timepieces.

The dedicated video channel can be found at <http://www.youtube>.



EYE FOR DETAIL: Roger Smith at work