

# Sotheby's

## NEWSFLASH

### WORLD AUCTION RECORD FOR AN ENGLISH WATCH

**GEORGE DANIELS' LEGENDARY "SPACE TRAVELLER I"  
Rockets to a sky-high £3.6m (\$4.6m) at Sotheby's London**

**Conceived to Honour the Astronauts that the Great Watchmaker so Admired,  
This is One of the Most Technically Accomplished Watches of All Time**

*"The kind of watch you would need on your package tour to Mars"  
- George Daniels*



London, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2019 – Moments ago in London, Sotheby's set a **world auction record for an English watch**, when George Daniels' legendary "[Space Traveller I](#)" rocketed to a sky-high **£3,615,000 (\$4,561,407)** - over 30 times the price set by the watch 31 years ago, and the first and only time the watch had appeared at auction until today\*. The result is also a **record for a timepiece by an independent watchmaker and the highest price achieved for a watch at auction this year**. The watch had been estimated at £700,000-1,000,000 / \$905,000-1,300,000.

**Daryn Schnipper, Chairman of the International Watch Division**, said: *"George Daniels was a revolutionary – a visionary who enabled today's independent watchmakers to rise and thrive. The*

*record price achieved by the 'Space Traveller I' is both a tribute to his genius and the supreme quality of this watch. One of finest timepieces of the 20th century, the 'Space Traveller I' was also of huge significance to George, as it was conceived to honour the astronauts he so admired. Having worked closely with him during my first decade at Sotheby's, I can't help thinking that he would have been amused to see his watch resurface on the market and achieve such a great price, half a century after Apollo 11's moon landing. To me, this sale is testament to George's unparalleled contribution to the field: 'one giant leap' for watchmaking."*

A world-renowned horologist and the most important of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, George Daniels (1926 – 2011) made a mere 23 pocket watches during his life time, and of them all it is the Space Traveller that is the most revered. Described as 'the most important English watch of modern times', the Space Traveller I is not only one of the most technically accomplished watches of all time, it was also of enormous personal significance to Daniels, who treasured it and often wore it as a showpiece. In 1982, over dinner with a collector, he was persuaded to part with it – a decision he quickly regretted.

Daniels completed the Space Traveller I in 1982 to commemorate the 1969 American moon landing - an event that left a great impression on his life. Thereafter described by Daniels as "the kind of watch you would need on your package tour to Mars", the Space Traveller was built with both solar and sidereal time, equation of time, and phases of the moon, as well as utilising Daniels' famous independent double wheel escapement, which has captivated collectors since its inception in 1974.

George Daniels (19 August 1926 – 21 October 2011) was a world-renowned horologist and the most important of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He was the only watchmaker ever to have received a CBE and a MBE for his services to horology, and was the inventor of the Daniels revolutionary 'Co-Axial' escapement developed during the 1970s, designed to run unaffected by the deterioration of its lubricant.

The watch was offered in the first of four auctions dedicated to the "**Masterwork of Time**" Collection, one of the most important collections of timepieces remaining in private hands.

***A full press release will follow tomorrow, after the London Treasures sale which includes seven exceptional pieces from the collection. Meanwhile, images of the Space traveller are available for download [here](#) and I am at your disposal for any further information.***

With kind regards  
Marie-Béatrice

\* The Space Traveller I sold for CHF 220,000 / \$151,000 at Sotheby's in Geneva in November 1988.

\*\* The previous record for an English watch was set by George Daniels' "Space Traveller II", a second version of the watch, which sold at Sotheby's London in September 2017 for £3.2m/\$4.3m.