

Fritz Steiniger Prize

GDT honours Stephen Dalton for pioneering work in the field of high-speed flash photography

Last weekend the GDT honoured British photographer Stephen Dalton with the Fritz Steiniger Prize for his contribution to nature photography. The results of his experiments in high-speed flash photography and his subsequent publications were landmark events in the world of photography and caused a great stir worldwide.

Stephen Dalton (GB)

Stephen Dalton (born in 1937) has been enthusiastic about nature and photography already at a young age. After his degree he set out to combine these two passions in his professional life. In 1970 he started something completely new: photographing insects on the wing with absolute clarity. At this time digital photography was decades away, film speeds (for quality results) were limited to ISO 25 - 32, flash units were restricted to about 1/1000 second - far too slow for stopping insects, or birds for that matter. It was the solution of these problems that became his overriding obsession. Two years of experimentation resulted in perfecting techniques and highly specialised equipment, allowing him to capture movements that were far too rapid to be seen by the human eye, and ones never observed in such detail before. Stephen Dalton's images are much more than mere documentation; his work of fascinating intensity and striking beauty has set visual and artistic standards that are still valid today.

Apart from his photographs being published in many books and exhibitions at home and abroad, one of his insect images was chosen to board NASA's Voyager 1 and 2, which have been travelling through and out of our solar system since 1977. By now Voyager 1 is some 20 billion kilometres away from Earth and carries the image, which is expected to last one billion years, as part of records conveying something of the science and culture of mankind to possible extra-terrestrial beings.

Stephen Dalton lives with his wife in southwest England and still works in nature photography.

www.stephdalton.co.uk

Professor Fritz Steiniger

Professor Fritz Steiniger was one of the founding fathers of the GDT, whose visions of a society for wildlife photography had significant influence during the formative years. It is in his memory that the GDT awards their most important prize for special contribution to nature photography at irregular intervals. It was first awarded to Herbert Erich Maas in 1986, who, in the course of years, was followed by Heinz Sielmann, Fritz Pölking, Horst Niesters, Frans Lanting, Klaus Nigge, Dietmar Nill, Winfried Wisniewski and Hannu Hautala.