

Professor Edward (Ted) Milton, AFRSPSoc

Citation: for services to Remote Sensing



Ted Milton is Professor of Geography in the School of Geography and Environment at the University of Southampton. He read Geography at the University of Exeter and completed a PhD in remote Sensing at the University of Reading in 1982. After short spells as lecturer at the Universities of Reading and Durham he was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Southampton and this year celebrates three decades of service to the University.

Ted is an internationally recognized authority on field spectroscopy, the science of measuring the spectral reflectance properties of man-made and natural surfaces in the field environment. These measurements are fundamental for the calibration and validation of airborne and satellite imagery and Ted has been highly influential in driving forward quantitative approaches to image analysis over the last three decades.

Ted could be regarded as the Bill Gates of UK Earth Observation (can you see the resemblance?) with his original and innovative approach to research; in the late 1970s his first major contribution was to design and build a small portable four-band radiometer, the Milton Multiband Radiometer, designed to provide measurements in the same wavebands of the then state-of-the-art Landsat MSS. This instrument provided many researchers with their first taste of field spectroscopy and although it did not sell as well as a Bill Gates' Microsoft products there are still Milton Radiometers in use around the world today.

In 1984 Ted established the NERC Equipment Pool for Field Spectroscopy, based at Southampton, which allowed UK researchers access to hyperspectral remote sensing measurements for the first time, and which operated successfully under Ted's directorship for over 20 years. The present healthy state of terrestrial, marine and fresh water spectroscopy in the UK, and across Europe, is due in no small part to Ted's consistent efforts to promote and support this area of research.

Ted was Chair of the NERC Airborne Remote Sensing Steering Committee from 1991-94, a co-founder of the GeoData Institute at the University of Southampton, and from 2004-2007 was the Co-ordinator of NCAVEO, a Knowledge Exchange Network for Calibration and Validation in Earth Observation which subsequently contributed to the development of QA4EO, a quality assurance framework for Earth Observation now supported by the international Committee of Earth Observing Satellites.

Ted's style is careful, measured and meticulous and his publications reflect this approach; reading his work is always illuminating (no pun intended) and his attention to detail is rare amongst scientists in our community. Ted Milton is a distinguished and highly regarded member of our Society and a deserving recipient of the Society's highest award.

Professor Mark Danson