

Colin Furze, Hon DSc

Thursday 17 July 2025

Orator: Professor Duncan Billson, Department of Engineering

Chancellor,

Our honorary graduand today is the award-winning inventor, engineer and YouTube star: COLIN FURZE. We are delighted to welcome him to Warwick.

Colin's interest in engineering manifested itself at an early age – at primary school, he was building underground dens. As an adult, he moved on to a multitude of ambitious and entertaining projects which he films for his unique you-tube channels, most recently constructing an underground garage (Thunderbirds style) underneath his garden.

Colin's other inventions, originally created in his garden shed, demand a sound understanding of engineering together with excellent practical skills and a refusal to accept that something can't be done; This is the same approach that we follow in the School of Engineering, and is what makes our graduates so desirable in industry.

Many of Colin's projects are simply stunning, for example, he has built a mobility scooter that can reach 71 mph, fitted a pram with an engine enabling it to travel at over 53 mph (both of which are Guinness World Records); and created the world's fastest bumper car by fitting a dodgem with a 600cc motorbike engine. He has taken the trebuchet – the medieval war machine that lobbed stones at enemy fortifications – and made it capable of throwing an object the size and weight of a washing machine. There are many other equally incredible inventions such as a homemade hover-bike; the world's longest motorcycle (also a Guinness world record), and his famous conversion of a BMW into a driveable spa complete with a Jacuzzi, fake grass and a barbecue. A personal favourite of mine is the cake-o-matic, a petrol-powered wheel of rotating spoons that flings pieces of cake into the users' mouth at ridiculous speeds!

Colin documents his projects on his YouTube channel. He is a highly engaging presenter who clearly enjoys sharing his enthusiasm with his audience and is happy to admit to the odd mistake and to explain how he has fixed it. It isn't surprising that his YouTube channel has 13.2 million subscribers and over 1.8 billion views.

Colin's award-winning videos, showing his remarkable, record-breaking inventions, and his appearances in print and on television have introduced a large proportion of the nation to both the challenges and the fun that engineering can bring, in an informative and highly entertaining manner; in his book, intriguingly titled *This Book Isn't Safe*, he has produced a collection of projects for both adults and children, also designed to stimulate an interest in engineering.

Most of Colin's projects have no practical value whatsoever – they are pure, unadulterated, unapologetic fun, but Colin uses them to entertain and engage with his audience, and in doing so he inspires them to believe that with a little knowledge, a little imagination and the right attitude, they

too can make things. This has fostered the self-confidence in many young people to believe that they can be engineers and has inspired many to pursue a professional engineering path at a time when we really need to increase interest in the STEM subjects among young people. For these reasons, those of us in the School of Engineering see Colin's work as being extremely valuable.

We look forward to introducing him to our School of Engineering and, especially, to showing him our Engineering Build Space – a creative space equipped with all the necessary equipment, from hand tools to robotics, enabling users to bring their ideas to life. We think he'll like it!

Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, COLIN FURZE.