



DESIGN TECHNOLOGY
AT QUEENS

RICHARD BROWNING



Photos:

- Richard Browning in his jet suit (picture from Evening Standard)
- Richard Browning flying over the Queen's sports fields. (picture from Somerset County Gazette)
- Richard's book 'Taking on Gravity' cover (image from Penguin Books)

Richard Browning (OQ 1987-97), invented a jet suit and if not yet a household name, is often in the news. His extraordinary invention is widely reported in newspapers, television and online. His profile was enhanced recently with the publication of his book, 'Taking on Gravity.'

This tells how Richard transformed his fascination with flight into reality effectively emulating the fictional Iron Man, Tony Stark. He describes the sensation of flight as 'euphoric', 'incredibly liberating' and 'a blissful sensation'. The fulfilment of his dream was the result of much experimentation, lateral thinking, perseverance, self-belief and resilience in the face of setbacks.

Richard was a boarder at Queen's College. He explains his time with us as 'character building' which taught him 'how to be robust and self-reliant'. Richard studied Physics, Maths and Design Technology A Levels at Queen's and went on to take a course in Exploration Geology at Cardiff University.

After university, he spent several years as a Royal Marine Reservist and this experience convinced him that man could push beyond what is believed possible.

Richard began investigating the ways to achieve his dream of flying when he was an oil trader in the City.

Initial experiments in 2016 were confined to his spare bedroom, then to a makeshift workshop, and local fields and disused sites where he achieved lift-off and, in October 2016, his first controlled flight, rising a few feet off the ground, which he describes as his 'breakthrough moment'.

In March 2017, he established his company, Gravity Industries. The select team of enthusiasts who work for him spur each other on, eager to solve every challenge they meet. Gravity Industries has become, in Richard's words, 'a profitable business with the potential to expand to a scale I never imagined'.

The jet suit has applications for emergency rescue, military operations and public transport, opportunities Richard explores in his book. He also emphasises the entertainment value of the jet suit and only weeks before Covid closed the world he was set to launch his Gravity Race Series. During lockdown, R&D have continued apace, especially on the introduction of wings to the current suit and an electric version, but the company also produced face visors on their 3D printer for local healthcare workers.

In January 2020 Richard demonstrated his jet suit at Queen's and inspired the audience – especially the pupils who realised that whatever their dreams are – the sky is, literally, the limit.

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