***Invention: A Life***

By Sir James Dyson

***Invention: A Life*** is James Dyson’s story, illustrated by many failures but defined by the many products and technologies he has developed. It is not a book about business, rather the importance of education, mentorship, and self-reliance, and the critical importance to society of engineers and scientists. It explores his constant desire to learn, fearlessness to step into the unknown, and an unflagging spirit of entrepreneurialism. Ultimately, it is a celebration of the role that young minds play in solving the world’s biggest problems, regardless of experience,

James Dyson said,

*“The first Dyson undergraduates graduate from our university this summer and begin what I hope will be a life of invention and discovery. This caused me to reflect on what I felt on the same occasion, graduating from the Royal College of Art, as well as everything that has happened since. I hope that I might encourage more young people to become engineers, since the world desperately needs their ingenuity.*

*“Young people have brilliant ideas and are unafraid to pursue them. I have witnessed what miracles they can achieve, from improving the environment to finding cures for life-threatening diseases. I also believe that it is when design, engineering and science are combined with new, different, or even naïve thinking, that intractable problems become solvable. This is why I believe that scientists and engineers – and young people generally – are best placed to solve the world’s biggest problems. They have more than words, they have solutions.*

*“I've reflected that my life has been defined by learning through doing. I believe in the importance of education and the need to be both practical and cerebral – unafraid to get your hands dirty to test something empirically to understand it properly. Also, since everything changes all the time, experience is of little use – far more valuable is a mindset of constantly wanting to improve things and not letting the fear of failure get in the way.*

*“When I graduated from the Royal College of Art, I assumed it would become easier over time, fifty-two years later I can assure Dyson graduates that I am no better for my experience. The big change for me is that I now have a team of the best engineers and scientists around me. We share the same belief in pioneering our own way, harnessing radical technology to make better products; we have the same determination to overcome problems. It is their ideas that have built Dyson into a global technology company and working with them is a very fulfilling way to spend one’s days.”*

The book tells how a Norfolk schoolboy with a love of art and long-distance running spent the 1960’s in London at the Royal College of Art surrounded by the great design influences of the time. It follows James’ early experiences of learning by doing with the inventor and entrepreneur Jeremy Fry, developing an innovative high-speed “Sea Truck”, and then the challenges of striking-out on his own to create a host of other inventions including the cyclonic vacuum cleaner, Supersonic hairdryer and scores of radical new technologies since.

James cites the engineers, inventors and designers who inspire him, among them Sir Alec Issigonis of Mini fame, Frank Whittle, to whom we owe the jet engine, and Buckminster Fuller, the American architect and inventor. He reveals the story of his childhood and that of his own family - his artist wife, Deirdre, and their three creative children. He explains how Dyson rose from its modest rural beginnings to become a global company headquartered in Singapore. He discusses the difficulties British manufacturing has faced while dealing with the EU and its machinations. He shows how commercial food production can be a successful marriage of technological innovation and conservation and why his passion for innovation is matched only by his love of renovation.

As Dyson, the company, has entered new fields and demand for its technology around the world has spiralled, its story has been a roller-coaster of invention, of commercial successes, failures, leaps of faith and, ultimately, global expansion. Today, Dyson products and technologies - including high speed electric digital motors which power vacuum cleaners, robots, hair dryers and stylers, air purifiers - are in homes all around the world and represent the fusion of revolutionary technology, design and innovation, meanwhile research endeavors gain increasing momentum.

While the book’s stories of engineering and commercial progress are compelling, perhaps the most revealing are the innovative technologies that failed commercially, such as the Contrarotator washing machine, the Diesel Trap, the Dyson EV (electric car), and the Covid Ventilator. The book also explores James' work applying his approach to other fields, as diverse as education, philanthropy, and farming.

Most of all, though, ***Invention: A Life*** is a clarion call for the education of schoolchildren and university students who will become the innovators and inventors of the future. Refusing to rest on his laurels, James Dyson is constantly seeking out new challenges and opportunities. “We must keep inventing, questioning and disrupting. Like any engineer looking at their latest product, we should never be satisfied.”

***Invention: A Life*** by James Dyson is published by Simon & Schuster and released on 2nd September 2021.

James Dyson is donating his proceeds from the book to the charities chosen by Dyson people around the world. In the UK it is Alzheimer’s UK [www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/](http://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/)

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**Notes to Editors**

**James Dyson**

James Dyson is the Chief Engineer and Founder of Dyson. Working with Dyson’s engineers and scientists he develops products which solve problems ignored by others through investment in science and technology. Dyson is focused in a growing range of fundamental technologies such as batteries, motors, robotic vision systems, machine learning and material science. Dyson products, available in 82 countries, now span autonomous household vacuums, connected air purifiers and humidifiers, lighting, hand dryers and hair care. The latest addition to the hair care category is the Dyson Corrale straightener, which launched in March 2020. James was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 2015, and in the 2016 New Year Honours was appointed to the Order of Merit.  James was awarded a CBE in 1996 and a Knight Bachelor in the 2007.

**Dyson**

Dyson is a global research and technology company with engineering, research, development, manufacturing and testing operations in Singapore, the UK, Mexico, Malaysia and the Philippines. Having started in a coach house in the UK, Dyson has consistently grown since it was established in 1993. Dyson remains family-owned and employs over 14,000 people globally including 6,000 engineers and scientists. Dyson is investing £2.75bn to conceive revolutionary products and technologies. Dyson has global teams of engineers, scientists and software developers focused on the development of solid-state battery cells, high-speed electric digital motors, sensing and vision systems, robotics, machine learning technologies and A.I. investment. Since inventing the first cyclonic bagless vacuum cleaner - DC01- in 1993, Dyson has created problem solving technologies for haircare, air purification, robotics, lighting and hand drying.

[**The Dyson Institute of Engineering and Technology**](https://www.dysoninstitute.com/)

The Dyson Institute of Engineering and Technology is a new model for engineering education combining the academic rigour of a traditional university with hands-on and real-world experience of working on real products and technologies inside a global technology company. Dyson undergraduates are paid a salary from Day One and pay no Tuition Fees. The first cohort graduate in September 2021, having completed their four-year engineering degree, they are free to pursue their careers as they wish but all are opting to remain at Dyson.

[**Dyson Farming**](http://www.dysonfarming.com)

Dyson Farming is a family-owned commercial farming business, with a vision to benefit future generations through a commercially viable and environmentally sustainable food production at scale. It strives to be an industry leader in efficient, carbon neutral, high technology agriculture, employing highly skilled, pioneering people and supported by research and development in ever-closer partnership with its sister company, Dyson.  It sees the future of agriculture as an exciting opportunity to improve the nation’s food security, health, and economic growth.

Dyson Farming farms 36,000 acres in Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Somerset, grows wheat, barley, peas, onions, potatoes and sugar beet as well as rearing sheep and cattle. Its 15 acre glasshouse grows 750 tonnes of out-of-season strawberries each year, extending the main British strawberry growing season by using heat generated from its renewable energy operation.  Its two anaerobic digestion plants power the equivalent of 10,000 homes with renewable energy.  An integral part of its operations is the management of 1,300ha of environmental stewardship features, 200ha of voluntary environmental features, 550ha of woodland management, 390km of hedgerows, 11,700 standalone trees, 250km of ditches, rivers and streams.

[**The James Dyson Foundation**](http://www.jamesdysonfoundation.com)

The James Dyson Foundation was founded in 2002 and works internationally to empower aspiring engineers,  and support medical research. [The James Dyson Award](https://www.jamesdysonaward.org/) is the Foundation’s annual international design competition and is open to current and recent design and engineering students. Since starting in 2005, the Award has supported nearly 250 inventions, providing funds to support their commercialisation. 65% of international winners have successfully commercialised their projects, against a backdrop where 90% of start-ups fail.