

David Hardman, PhD

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I'm a Henslow Research Fellow in robotics at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge. I also hold an EPSRC Doctoral Prize Fellowship, working in Cambridge's Bio-Inspired Robotics Lab. I have a significant background bringing complex mechatronics projects to reality; in addition to my hands-on research building tactile skins for soft robots, I've previously developed and fabricated numerous physical prototypes for commercial, startup, academic, stage, and personal projects.

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS & PRIZES

Junior Research Fellowship (Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge, current)	2024 – 2027
EPSRC Doctoral Prize Fellowship (Department of Engineering, Cambridge, current)	2024 – 2025
Georges Giralt Award for best European PhD in Robotics: Finalist	2025
Best Poster Award: RoboSoft Conference Manipulation Workshop	2025
Excellence Award: IEEE RAS Technical Committee on Soft Robotics	2024
CSAR Award for “ <i>outstanding research with real world application.</i> ”	2023
IET Diamond Jubilee Scholarship	2016 – 2020
David Maull Prize for engineering	2019
Dewhurst Award for academic achievement	2019
Langdon Dowsett Scholarship	2019
Dewhurst Award for academic achievement	2018
Craythorne Scholarship	2017 – 2018
Latymer Award for academic achievement	2017
Arkwright Scholarship for “ <i>outstanding potential as a future leader in engineering.</i> ”	2014 – 2016
Harvard Book Award	2016

KEY PREVIOUS POSITIONS

- Visiting Researcher, CREATE Lab, EPFL Lausanne** June 2024 – September 2024
- Conceptualised & led a project on automated mechanisms for multimaterial soft fingertips (first author publication in Advanced Science).
 - Acted as an external examiner for EPFL's Masters theses in robotics.
- Engineering PhD, Bio-Inspired Robotics Laboratory, University of Cambridge** October 2020 – June 2024
- My thesis on soft robotic skins was based upon 18 peer-reviewed publications, which are listed [here](#). Many gained significant attention in the press, including first author works ([link](#), [link](#)) & talented students who I directly supervised ([link](#)).
 - Over 300 hours of undergraduate teaching during PhD, including mechanical engineering, structural mechanics, 3D printing, machine tools, and Python.
- Consultant (Health Tech), The Technology Partnership** March 2023 – June 2023
- Added value to multidisciplinary engineering teams bringing skills in prototyping, data generation & analysis, product development, and laboratory work.
 - Developed solutions to highly technical surgical and medical imaging issues faced by clients.
- Undergraduate Researcher, Bio-Inspired Robotics Laboratory** July 2019 – September 2019
- Developed an open-source MATLAB simulator to be used in the teaching of robotics.
 - First author conference paper in 10 weeks: using motion capture to optimise robotic gaits.
- Engineering Intern, Densitron Technologies Ltd** July 2017 – September 2017, December 2017
- Created graphical interfaces using Qt software, C++ haptics, and single-board computers.
 - Created a bespoke automated platform for the International Broadcasting Convention.

EDUCATION

Engineering M.Eng. , Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge First Class , with Master's thesis exploring applications of high-resolution 3D printing. Specialisation in mechanics, materials and design.	2019 – 2020
Engineering B.A.(Hons) , Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge First Class , specialisation in mechanics, materials and design. Logistics Officer for 'Corpus May Ball': a 1000-guest overnight event.	2016 – 2019
The Judd School, Tonbridge 5 A Level A*s in Mathematics, Further Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Product Design. 11 GCSE A*s including Mathematics, Further Mathematics, English.	2009 – 2016

SELECTED TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talk, International Flexible Electronics Technology Conference (IFETC), Vancouver, August 2025.
Invited Talk, Hamlyn Symposium on Medical Robotics, London, June 2025.
Presentation at UK Parliament as part of annual [STEM for Britain](#) event, March 2024.
East of England Runner-Up in [FameLab Science Communication](#) Competition 2025.
Keynote Talk, STEM Summer Internship Conference, Institute for Manufacturing Cambridge, August 2025.
Invited lecture, UCL Department of Computer Science, February 2025.
Invited talk, Cambridge Society for Application of Research, June 2024: "[Sensorised Skins for Soft Robots](#)".
Invited talk at International Conference on Soft Robotics (RoboSoft) workshop, Singapore, April 2023.
Conference presentations/demonstrations at TAROS 2020 & 2023 Embodied Intelligence 2021, 2022, 2024 & 2025, RoboSoft 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025 ([Best poster award](#) in functional materials), OHMC workshop 2022, Soft Robotics for Mixed Reality 2022, Soft Robotics for Food and Home Applications 2023, Embodied Artificial Intelligence and Evolutionary Soft Robotics 2024, UK Manipulation Workshop 2025.
Invited talks at St Catharine's [John Ray Society](#), March 2023 & Fitzwilliam College, November 2024.
Invited talk at MathWorks Cambridge: "Towards Growing Robots," November 2019.
Led & hosted research public livestreams: UK-RAS Robot Lab Live, [2021](#), [2022](#).
Podcast interview: "Bioinspired Robots: learning from nature," UK-RAS [Robot Talk Episode 17](#), 2022.
Outreach panel member at [EI Workshop](#), April 2021 & Fitz+, November 2024, February 2025.
Subject masterclasses for prospective students, numerous from March 2022, various Cambridge colleges.

INTERESTS & SKILLS

Outside of engineering, my motivated personality shines through: I'm a member of the world-famous Magic Circle, where I have won multiple awards for stage magic performances, and I hold a British Record in long course finswimming. I'm also a keen badminton & tennis player, and regularly play in local leagues as part of my club's team.

References are available upon request.