



ELY CATHEDRAL

GRADUATE ORGAN SCHOLAR KING'S ELY & ELY CATHEDRAL



INFORMATION AND FURTHER PARTICULARS



Photos © Sarah MacDonald

INTRODUCTION

King's Ely and Ely Cathedral seek to appoint a Graduate Organ Scholar from September 2027. This is a one-year post; extension to a second and final year is possible by mutual agreement. The cathedral music department is in the process of establishing full parity between boy and girl choristers, jointly supported and funded by the school and the cathedral. The girls and boys now sing equal numbers of services, and the age range of the girls (currently 7-16) is gradually being reduced to match that of the boys (7-13). This position offers the opportunity to work with the music departments of both King's Ely and Ely Cathedral, and to be fully involved in the exciting new pattern for choristership at the cathedral. The post-holder will be an employee of King's Ely.

King's Ely and Ely Cathedral offer a unique environment for organists to develop their skills. There is a vibrant choral tradition in the school, and the cathedral choir, which sings evensong nearly every day, has an outstanding international reputation. Cambridge, with its unparalleled organ and choral tradition, is only 15 miles away and its links with Ely are strong. The post-holder will have access to a wealth of music-making in a highly professional framework, and to tuition and guidance from several respected and experienced professional organists and choir directors.

HISTORY

King's Ely was first established to educate the boy choristers of the worshipping community of Ely over 1,000 years ago. In the 11th century, King Edward the Confessor was educated here and throughout our history we have maintained strong links with Ely Cathedral. In 1541, King Henry VIII founded a College of Canons at Ely Cathedral to replace the monks, whose monastery had been dissolved in 1539, and the school received its Royal Charter. For much of the School's history, the King's Scholars constituted the entire school. Over the centuries, the school has grown to number more than 1,000 pupils, ranging in age from nursery to sixth form, with children of all faiths and none and from every corner of the globe. In 1970, King's Ely became co-educational and in 1973, the late Queen Elizabeth II visited the school and instituted the first Queen's Scholars. Despite being one of the oldest schools in the world, King's Ely is at the forefront of educational discourse nationally. Although we cherish our history, schools are about the todays and tomorrows of our pupils, and while we learn from the past, we look to the future. Today, King's Ely is a vibrant community that offers all you would expect of a 21st-century school and a great deal more.



Ely Cathedral is the mother church of the Diocese of Ely, which serves the people of Cambridgeshire, a small part of West Norfolk, and the edge of Peterborough. It is the seat of the Bishop of Ely and a centre of worship and mission. The double monastery for men and women, founded in 673 by St Etheldreda, was destroyed by the Danes in 870 and re-founded as a Benedictine community in 970 by Dunstan and Ethelwold. Over the centuries it grew into one of the three most important pilgrimage centres in medieval England. Work began on the present building in the 1080s under Abbot Simeon and in 1109, with the appointment of Bishop

Hervey, it became a cathedral. For more than 400 years, it was both the church of the Benedictine monastery and a cathedral, but after Henry VIII dissolved the monastery in 1539 it continued to exist as a cathedral only. The octagon and the Lady Chapel were built in the 14th century and are masterpieces of medieval architecture; the building underwent a major restoration between 1980 and 2000. Ely continues to be a significant destination for tourists and pilgrims.

The School Music Departments maintain thriving schedules, with a particular strength in choral music: Ely Cathedral is the school chapel, and the Senior School's fine choirs attract large numbers of pupils, including the sixth form choral scholars, the Y9 to Y11 cathedral girl choristers, and the many former boy choristers from both Ely and other cathedral/collegiate choirs who are pupils in King's Ely Senior. The school's Chapel Choir and the *Schola Cantorum*, a new, smaller, group consisting principally of former choristers, sing regularly at services in the cathedral, covering a wide and adventurous repertoire, and the Graduate Organ Scholar can expect to be involved in its work. The Prep School Music Department runs several ensembles, both vocal and instrumental, including the auditioned chamber choir King's Voices, with which the cathedral choristers often sing for special services and concerts.

The Cathedral Choir consists of boy and girl choristers, professional lay clerks, and sixth form choral scholars. In addition, there is an adult voluntary choir (Ely Cathedral Octagon Singers, or ECOS) and a children's choir (The Ely Imps). There are places for up to 24 boy choristers (years 3-8) and 24 girl choristers (currently years 3-11). Choristers may be day pupils or boarders, and they receive a generous award of 40% off the school day fee (with further means-tested support available), as well as free singing and theory tuition. Choristers rehearse separately every morning before school (M/Tu/Th/F), with occasional joint rehearsals.

There are six **lay clerks** who make up the 'back row'. They sing on their own with the trebles during the week, and on Sundays and larger occasions they are supplemented by four to six extra singers. The pool of extra singers, known as the expanded choir, is about 30 strong. Both the lay clerks and expanded choir include male and female singers.

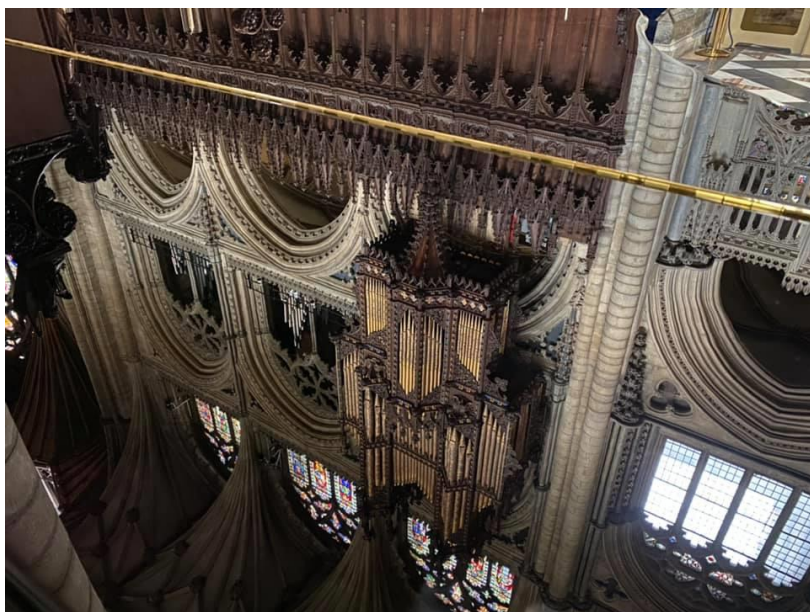
There are currently up to six **choral scholars** who are pupils at King's Ely in Years 12-13. They sing in the back row with the lay clerks in one or two services per week. There is also a **sixth form organ scholar**, who plays or observes at one or two services each week.

Ely Cathedral Octagon Singers (ECOS), numbers around 60 singers, who sing on a sign-up basis. Jeremy Lloyd is the director of ECOS. Andrew Parnell is the choir's Assistant Director.

The Ely Imps is the Cathedral's children's choir, open to all local singers (from any school) aged 7-13. They perform concerts in their own right in the local area, as well as joining the Cathedral's other choirs for larger events. They are directed by Rebecca Duckworth.



THE ORGAN AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS



The four-manual Harrison and Harrison instrument was first installed in 1908, and completely rebuilt in 1975 and again in 2001. It is due to be completely overhauled between Easter 2027 and the end of 2028, during which time an electronic alternative will be in place, but the successful applicant can expect to end a second year in post on a vastly improved instrument, and to be involved in an exciting series of events for its reopening. There is also a three-stop chamber organ in the Cathedral, while the school boasts a two manual, 8-stop mechanical action practice organ and two electronic practice organs (including one in the girls' song school), to which the

Graduate Organ Scholar will have frequent access. There are a number of excellent grand pianos in the school and the cathedral, including the one pictured here, in which the reflection of the Harrison organ can be seen.

PERSONNEL

Edmund Aldhouse – Director of Music

Edmund has been Director of Music at Ely Cathedral in the UK since April 2019, having been Assistant Director of Music for five years before that. He has performed widely in the UK and abroad, and is regularly invited to teach and give masterclasses on repertoire and improvisation. After taking a first class degree in Modern Languages at Oxford, where he was Organ Scholar of Pembroke College, he pursued post-graduate study in France with Frédéric Blanc and François-Henri Houbart, obtaining a unanimous Premier Prix from the Conservatoire de Rueil-Malmaison. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

Sarah MacDonald – Director of the Girl Choristers

Sarah was educated in her native Canada and at Robinson College, Cambridge, where she was Organ Scholar and took a degree in Music. Her teachers were Leon Fleisher, Marek Jablonski, John Tuttle, and David Sanger. She is Director of Music at Selwyn College, Cambridge, a post she holds concurrently with her role in Ely. Sarah has recorded over 40 CDs and is well-known as a composer, performer, and educator. She is a Fellow and Examiner of the Royal College of Organists, and served as President from 2024-26.

Jeremy Lloyd – Cathedral Assistant Director of Music and School Organist

Jeremy joined Ely in September 2024 from Rochester Cathedral, having spent six years there as Assistant Director of Music. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music, and previously held positions at Peterborough Cathedral and York Minster. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists.

Neil Porter-Thaw – Director of Music, King's Ely

Neil Porter-Thaw was a chorister at Windsor under Christopher Robinson and studied singing and viola at Trinity College of Music. He was Housemaster to the boy choristers for 20 years.

Christopher Finch – Head of Vocal Music, King's Ely

Chris is a vocal coach, conductor, and accompanist, and director of King's Ely's new *Schola Cantorum*. He is responsible for all singing activity in the school. Chris spent over 10 years at Wells Cathedral School as Head of Vocal and Choral Music before coming to King's in 2025.

Chris Parsons – Director of Performance Music, King’s Ely Prep

Chris is a community musician, conductor, trumpeter, and teacher. He read Music at the University of York before completing a Masters in Historical Performance Practice at the Royal College of Music. He is also Director of the Ely Arts Festival.

The music staff also includes **Andrew Parnell**, formerly Assistant Master of the Music at St Albans Cathedral and now Assistant Director of Ely Cathedral Octagon Singers; and **Rebecca Duckworth**, a professional singer and animateur who directs the Ely Imps.

GRADUATE ORGAN SCHOLAR – DUTIES

The Graduate Organ Scholar will regularly accompany the Cathedral Choir and the Senior School’s *Schola Cantorum*. Exact playing duties will be agreed with the Director of Music and the Director of the Girl Choristers based on the post-holder’s qualifications and experience, though they can expect at least to accompany at least two services per week. The Graduate Organ Scholar will also share the playing for the three school services per week with the School Organist (a post held *ex officio* by the Cathedral’s Assistant Director of Music).

There will also be morning and afternoon commitments to undertake, including attending chorister rehearsals, rehearsing with sixth form choral scholars, assisting with probationer training, and helping with administrative tasks. In addition, the Graduate Organ Scholar is a key part of the team of musicians who teach weekly individual theory and musicianship lessons to every chorister in the choir. Subject to experience, they can also expect to conduct the Cathedral Choir on a regular basis. The post-holder will also hold the post of Music Librarian for the girl choristers. The



Cathedral’s Music Department day off is normally Wednesday, although the *Schola Cantorum* typically sings on this day, and in these weeks another day off will be arranged.

Regular Weekly Schedule

The Cathedral’s current service routine is as follows:	Week 1	Week 2
Monday Evensong	Girls and Lay Clerks	Girls and Lay Clerks
Tuesday Evensong	Boys (Girls rehearse)	Girls (Boys rehearse)
Wednesday	<i>Music Department day off – Schola Cantorum Evensong in some weeks</i>	
Thursday Evensong	Boys and Lay Clerks	Boys and Lay Clerks
Friday Evensong	Girls and Lay Clerks	Boys and Lay Clerks
Saturday Evensong	Boys and Lay Clerks	Girls and Lay Clerks
Sunday Eucharist	Boys, Lay Clerks, and extras	Girls, Lay Clerks, and extras
Sunday Evensong	Girls, Lay Clerks, and extras	Boys, Lay Clerks, and extras

JOB DESCRIPTION – GRADUATE ORGAN SCHOLAR

Responsible to

The post-holder will report to the Director of the Girl Choristers, Sarah MacDonald, and through her, to the Principal of King's Ely, John Attwater. Final responsibility for all matters relating to music in the Cathedral falls to the Canon Precentor, the Revd Canon James Reveley, and to the Cathedral's Director of Music, Edmund Aldhouse.

Responsibilities and Duties

To accompany the Cathedral Choirs as agreed by the Director of Music and Director of the Girl Choristers, and to assist with the musical education and training of the choristers, and the Sixth Form Choral and Organ Scholars, in the context of their function within Cathedral worship. Specifically, the appointee will be expected to:

- accompany cathedral services;
- play for school services in the cathedral or other school venues;
- accompany rehearsals of the choristers and the sixth form choral scholars;
- assist in the training of probationers;
- teach music theory to the choristers;
- prepare the sixth form choral scholars for services;
- maintain the girl choristers' library;
- assist with the organisation of concerts, tours, broadcasts, and recordings;
- attend cathedral and school music department meetings as required;
- accompany school music department events (e.g., rehearsals, concerts, recitals, exams).



Hours, remuneration, and starting date

This is a full-time post, with an expectation that the post-holder will work 32 hours per week during term time. Christmas and Holy Week duties occur every year, in which the post-holder would be expected to take an active role. The successful candidate will be expected to work to a flexible schedule, including early mornings, evenings, and weekends, which is required of anyone who plays a full part in the life of a cathedral and school. The post-holder will also be encouraged to develop their playing by accepting opportunities to play recitals in other venues as long as they do not conflict with duties in Ely, and by completing RCO diplomas (if relevant).

The salary is £16,631.60 per year. Single accommodation will be provided free of charge with no charge for utilities and council tax; school meals will be provided free of charge during term time. There are opportunities for further remuneration by taking on limited extra musical work at both the school and cathedral, as well as beyond Ely, within clearly defined hours and subject to the agreement of the post holder's line manager. The post-holder will be expected to have one organ lesson per month, with a teacher of his/her choice, chosen in consultation with the Director of the Girl Choristers and the Cathedral's Director of Music. The cost of these lessons will be paid for by the school up to a total of £550 per year. It is expected that the successful applicant will remain in post for one year, with an option of renewal for one further year by mutual agreement. The school will also provide assistance towards the cost of RCO diploma examinations. The post becomes available on 31 August 2027.

Disclosure

Acceptance of the post is conditional on successful enhanced DBS disclosure and satisfactory references. Please note that King's Ely is unable to provide visa sponsorship, and that you must already hold and be able to provide proof of the right to work in the UK at the time of application.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

For this **early-career post**, we seek a musician of proven ability and skill who will relish the opportunity to enhance cathedral worship in Ely, and who will immerse themselves in the vibrant musical community of King's Ely and the cathedral. The successful candidate will have completed an undergraduate degree (as of 1 September 2027), and should be of at least ARCO standard, with demonstrable experience of choral accompaniment, choir training, and an understanding of good vocal technique. The possession of a good sense of humour, a love of teaching and working with young people, the ability to be patient with children and young teenagers, and excellent organisational and communication skills are also necessary. The post-holder must be in sympathy with the ethos and mission of the Church of England.

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications	• good honours degree	• ARCO or equivalent
Specialist skills and experience	• previous experience working within a college chapel, university or cathedral or greater parish church music department • proven competence as an organist, accompanist • experience as a choral conductor • knowledge and understanding of liturgical repertoire • administrative skills and familiarity with standard IT programmes, including Sibelius, Finale, and/or Dorico music-notation software • thorough understanding of Safeguarding and Child Protection Issues • ability to empathise and relate positively to young people	• previous university and/or cathedral organ scholarship holder
Personal Qualities	• passion for cathedral music, and for teaching • sense of humour, and a willingness to share ideas and inspire young people • ability to work in a fast-moving environment • good team player • high expectations of self and others • willingness to work flexible hours, including early mornings, evenings, and weekends • commitment to ongoing professional musical development • commitment to maintaining high standards • pro-active and self-motivated	

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this role, please apply through MyNewTerm.com:

Further information can be requested here:

HumanResources@kingsely.org
The King's School
Ely, Cambridgeshire
CB7 4EW

Your application should include the following:

- the completed application form;
- a covering letter of between 500 and 750 words explaining your suitability for the post;
- a copy of your CV;
- contact details for two referees, one of whom should be your current organ teacher.

The closing date for applications is **Wednesday 30 September at 12 noon**.

Shortlisted candidates will be notified by **Monday 5 October**.

Initial interviews may be held remotely; auditions for shortlisted candidates will be held in person in Ely on **Monday 19 October** (with the possibility of arriving in Ely on the evening of **Sunday 18 October**).

The audition and interview process will include the following elements (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Organ-playing audition to include two solo pieces (a major work by J. S. Bach and a contrasting piece of the candidate's choice, totalling no more than 12 minutes)
- Keyboard skills tests to include sight-reading, transposition, score-reading and improvisation
- A short choral accompaniment
- A short choir practice
- A panel interview

If you wish to know more about King's Ely, or about Ely Cathedral, please see the websites:
www.kingsely.org | www.elycathedral.org

For an informal chat about the post itself, please feel free to contact either the Director of Music or the Director of the Girl Choristers:

Edmund.Aldhouse@elycathedral.org
Sarah.MacDonald@elycathedral.org

