

SIXTH FORM CHORAL SCHOLARSHIPS



A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

King's Ely and Ely Cathedral offer a unique environment for young singers to develop their skills. There is a vibrant choral tradition in the school, and the Cathedral Choir, which sings Evensong daily, has an international reputation. Cambridge, with its unparalleled organ and choral tradition, is only 15 miles away and its links with Ely are strong. Choral Scholars will have access to a wealth of music-making in a highly professional framework, and to tuition and guidance from a large number of respected and experienced professional singing teachers and choir directors. Choral Scholars will sing beside professional lay clerks, who provide outstanding vocal and musical leadership. We are proud to be unique in providing this sort of mentorship to Sixth Form students. This outstanding opportunity is designed for young singers seeking to apply for university Choral Scholarships, and acts as preparation for a gap-year Cathedral post. Former Ely Choral Scholars have gone on to university Choral Scholarships at Cambridge, Durham, Royal Holloway, and St Andrews Universities, and to solo vocal study at major UK conservatoires.

FEE REMISSION

The Scholarship will be awarded to the value of 33% of boarding or day fees. Additional bursarial support is available on a means-tested basis.

WHAT IS INCLUDED:

- singing lessons
- membership of cathedral choir
- membership of school chapel choir
- membership school close harmony groups
- broadcast, recording, and touring opportunities

THE CATHEDRAL AND SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENTS

The Music Department at King's Ely Senior has a thriving and busy schedule. It has a particular strength in choral music: Ely Cathedral functions as the school chapel and the fine Chapel Choir attracts large numbers of senior pupils, including both current and former cathedral choristers. The Chapel Choir, which is conducted by the School's Director of Music, sings regularly at school services in the cathedral, and covers a wide and adventurous repertoire. It has toured in recent years to Barcelona and New York. Choral Scholars can expect to be heavily involved in its work, as well as singing with the school's two close-harmony groups, the award-winning Barbers, and the newly-formed Nightingales.

Choral Scholars will also be part of the musical life of Ely Cathedral. The structure of the music department there is unique. Alongside six professional Lay Clerks there are two sets of choristers: the boy choristers (years 3-8) typically sing at four or five services each week. They are conducted by the Cathedral's Director of Music. The girl choristers (years 7-11) sing for two or three services each week, and are unique in having their own director. Both directors have full-time assistants who play the organ for services and play a significant role in training the choirs. The choristers combine for major services at Christmas and Easter and many other high-profile events: recent and future highlights include a concert with the City of London Sinfonia broadcast live on Radio 3, an appearance in the Final of the BBC's *The Choir* with Gareth Malone, and a live BBC broadcast on Armistice Day 2020.

DUTIES

Choral Scholars will be expected to sing for at least one weekday service each week during term time. In addition, weekend duties will occur once or twice a month, and non-boarding Choral Scholars will also be expected to play a full musical role in the great festivals of Christmas and Easter.

The staff ensure that a careful balance is maintained between scholars' cathedral duties, academic commitments, and other extra-curricular activities. Choral Scholars are expected to sing in the school's Chapel Choir, in the

Barbers (boys) or Nightingales (girls), and they are encouraged to participate fully in the many sporting and musical opportunities available at King's Ely, as long as their academic and cathedral duties are not compromised.

TUITION

Choral Scholars will be entitled to weekly singing lessons free of charge from one of the school's outstanding singing teachers. They will also participate in weekly individual rehearsals (normally with the Assistant Organist to the Girl Choristers) who will help them to prepare for cathedral services, and teach the Scholars how to learn on their own, thus preparing them for university choral scholarships, where independent preparation is the norm.

The Scholars will come into regular contact with the following members of school and cathedral music staff:

Edmund Aldhouse – Director of Music, Ely Cathedral

Edmund Aldhouse was appointed Director of Music at Ely in 2018, after serving as Assistant Organist for five years. He was Organ Scholar of Pembroke College, Oxford and held posts at Chichester, Rochester, and Ripon Cathedrals before coming to Ely. Much of his organ study was pursued in France under Frédéric Blanc and François-Henri Houbart, resulting in a unanimous Premier Prix de Virtuosit  at the Conservatoire de Rueil-Malmaison.

Sarah MacDonald – Director, Ely Cathedral Girl Choristers

Sarah MacDonald was Organ Scholar of Robinson College, Cambridge, before taking up the position of Director of Music in Chapel at Selwyn College, Cambridge in 1999, a post she holds concurrently with her role in Ely. Sarah's teachers included Leon Fleisher and David Sanger. Her many published choral compositions are performed regularly in churches around the world, and she has recorded over 30 CDs.

Glen Dempsey – Assistant Director of Music, Ely Cathedral & School Organist, King's Ely

Prior to his appointment at Ely, Glen Dempsey was Organ Scholar of St John's College, Cambridge. He has held posts at St George's Chapel, Windsor, and St Nicholas's Basilica, Amsterdam, where he studied with the late Dutch pedagogue, Jacques van Oortmerssen. Glen has appeared on several recordings as organist and pianist, of which three have been 'Editor's Choice' in Gramophone Magazine.

Aaron Shilson – Assistant Organist, Ely Cathedral Girl Choristers

Aaron Shilson studied at Leeds Conservatoire and the Royal Northern College of Music, where he won several prizes. He has studied with Gordon Stewart, Darius Battiwalla, Simon Lindley, and Stephen Farr. He has held posts at the Cathedrals in Leeds, Manchester, and St Davids, and at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He has appeared on several recordings and broadcast as a singer and an accompanist.

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

Neil Porter-Thaw was a chorister at Windsor under Christopher Robinson and his father John Porter before winning a scholarships to Malvern College and Trinity College of Music. At Trinity he studied strings under Elizabeth Turnbull and vocal training under James Gaddarn. Prior to becoming Director of Music at King's Ely, he was Housemaster to the Choristers and taught at Winchester House School and Birkdale School.

Peter North – Head of Vocal Studies, King's Ely

Peter North has been at Ely for many years, first as tenor Lay Clerk at the cathedral, and now as Head of Vocal Studies for the school. He is an experienced trainer of changing voices, and is founding conductor of the King's Barbers, the close-harmony group for former boy choristers, which recently won the top prize in the international competition Voice Festival UK.

BOARDING

Although boarding is not compulsory, it provides students with the opportunity to develop independence, to get more out of being at school and to grow in self-confidence. Should they wish to board, the Choral Scholars will

have the opportunity to board in one of the senior boarding houses and enjoy access to the facilities of the Music School at evenings and weekends.

ELIGIBILITY

Awards are open to girls and boys, in all voice parts, though sopranos and mezzos will be asked to sing alto when singing in the cathedral choir's back row. Six awards are made every two years. The application deadline is in October, at the end of the first half of the Michaelmas Term. Auditions will be held in late winter or early spring.

Competitive candidates will have significant choral singing experience in a school, church, or cathedral choir as well as excellent GCSE predicted grades. The audition itself will take approximately 20 minutes and candidates will be asked to sing a classical solo piece of their own choosing at approximately ABRSM grade 6 or 7 standard. An accompanist will be provided. During the audition, candidates will also be required to undertake vocal exercises to test range, technique and maturity of voice, as well as sight-reading and aural tests.

AUDITIONS

Candidates will attend an audition in Ely. This will comprise:

1. Performance of prepared piece, in a classical style, of the candidate's own choice which should be at approximately grade 6-7 standard.
2. Sight-reading and aural tests.
3. Vocal exercises and range tests
4. Academic tests and interviews.

HOW TO APPLY

To find out more please contact the King's Ely Admissions team:

admissions@kingsely.org

+44 (0)1353 660707

We warmly invite parents of potential applicants to discuss the musical aspects of the Scholarship further with one of the Music Staff, whose contact details are available through the Admissions team.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

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 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. As a result of the Great Restoration of 1980-2000, the Cathedral and medieval college buildings are in the best state of general repair for several generations, though there is ongoing need for considerable expense on the fabric. The City of Ely has a population of approximately 20,000 (2011 Census) and enjoys excellent road and rail communications to all parts of the country. Some 3000 houses are due to be built on the north side of the City in the next ten years, so there is considerable population expansion anticipated which offers opportunity and challenge for the Cathedral and city.

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 nearly 1000 pupils, 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, Queen Elizabeth II visited the school and instituted the first Queen's Scholars.



The school has always been closely linked with the great Cathedral of Ely, and it continues to educate the cathedral choristers. All pupils attend a school service in the Cathedral at least once a week. Pupils who are not members of the Church of England are made welcome and almost all attend cathedral services. Several medieval monastic buildings are still in use by the school, including the splendid monastic barn, now the dining hall. Despite being over 1000 years old, King's Ely is at the forefront of educational discourse nationally, especially so over the past decade. 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.