

James Thomas



Having received his initial organ tuition from Alfred Chidzey, Stephen Bell and David Gatehouse, James went on to read music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar, receiving organ tuition from Nicolas Kynaston and gaining the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists, winning the Dixon Prize for extemporisation.

Following a year at Homerton College studying for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education, James moved to Caen, Normandy, for two years, as assistant to Robert Weddle (ex-Coventry Cathedral), who was professor of choral singing at the Conservatoire. During this time

he studied the organ in Rouen with Louis Thiry, gaining a Premier Prix de Perfectionnement in 1988.

James was appointed Assistant Organist at Blackburn Cathedral in 1988. He was later also appointed Assistant Director of Music at St Wilfrid's High School. In 1991 he moved to Chichester Cathedral as Assistant Organist and Director of Music at the Prebendal School (the Cathedral's Choir School).

From September 1997 until February 2020, James was Director of Music at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, nurturing hundreds of singers and directing many thousands of choral services. Among his proudest achievements during this time was to have overseen the installation of the Harrison & Harrison Cathedral Organ in 2010 and to have organised ten overseas tours for the choir, each time returning with the same number of people that had originally departed.

James was, and may be again, a keen runner and took part in two London Marathons, raising several thousands of pounds for the local charities in 2009 and 2010. He also much enjoys watching Test cricket, is a great Francophile, an obedient gardener and a grand amateur of all things œnological.

James and Katharine were married in Chichester in 1993. Katharine is herself an extremely accomplished musician and experienced singing teacher. They have three grown-up daughters.

James is delighted to be giving this recital at Bacton Church and thanks David Chambers for facilitating this.