

James Richard Fountain

31st August 1974 - 6th December 2025

Obituary by David Melling

James Richard Fountain, a dedicated and highly respected revision hip and knee surgeon, passed away suddenly, leaving behind a legacy of exceptional clinical skill, compassion, and unwavering commitment to his patients.

James initially pursued an architecture degree for 18 months before realising his real passion, graduating as a doctor in 2000 from Sheffield Medical School. He went on to build a distinguished surgical career. Junior surgical training was on the Sheffield rotation before he moved to Merseyside for Higher Surgical Training. His pursuit of excellence led him back to Yorkshire to complete the prestigious Cavendish Fellowship in Sheffield, further refining his abilities in complex hip surgery. He was appointed a Consultant at Liverpool University Hospitals Foundation Trust from 2012, where he became known not only for his technical expertise but also for his calm, thoughtful approach and his generosity with colleagues and trainees.

He was particularly interested in periprosthetic joint infection and established the Cheshire and Mersey hip and knee revision network, one of the first in the country years before it was stipulated by national guidance. His collaborative approach and example continues to make this network unique in terms of its collegiality.

Throughout his career, James touched countless lives – restoring mobility, relieving pain, and offering reassurance to those facing daunting operations. Equally, he was admired for his warmth, humour, humility, and dedication to the profession he loved.

James passed away suddenly during his 201st Park Run in Delamere Forrest on Saturday 6th December 2025 aged 51.

James's greatest joy was his family. He leaves behind his beloved wife, Eleanor, and their three children – Aimee, Harry, and Isla – who were his constant pride and source of happiness. His devotion to them was evident in every part of his life.

James will be deeply missed by his family, friends, colleagues, patients, and all who had the privilege of knowing him. His impact, both professionally and personally, will endure for many years to come. ■



CLMH 'Max' Gibbons

21st April 1957 - 7th November 2025

Obituary by Duncan Whitwell

Professor CLMH 'Max' Gibbons worked as a Consultant Orthopaedic Arthroplasty and Oncology Surgeon at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, University of Oxford. Max oversaw the development of the Oxford Sarcoma Service with the introduction of National Sarcoma Guidelines in 2004, to become a fully comprehensive sarcoma service with site specific support and national recognition as a supra-regional sarcoma centre covering a population of over twelve million in the south and southwest of England. He ultimately became President of the British Orthopaedic Oncology Society.

Max was unique as a passionate educator and has lectured around the world in arthroplasty and sarcoma surgery. He has provided crucial education in less developed countries such as Ecuador, Guyana, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Zambia. He undertook the first distal femur tumour prosthesis in Ethiopia in 2016. However, he particularly encouraged novel biological reconstructions to support limb salvage rather than amputation, as implants are just not affordable in this region.

Max has had a long-term association with the island of Malta, a nation of half a million people. He set up and developed an outreach of the Oxford Sarcoma Service in partnership with NHS England

Highly Specialised Commissioning, the Health Ministry and the Mater Dei University Hospital.

Max's energy and enthusiasm were legendary particularly for sarcoma work where he was great thinker and innovator. He had an eclectic range of research interests from implant design to anthropology. A highlight for him was being able to handle and study 'Lucy's' actual bones in a museum in Addis Ababa. He authored over 100 papers and was always encouraging to his trainees on research projects. He was particularly instrumental in the use of custom and modular endoprosthetic replacement, including growing prostheses in children and this, combined with innovative orthoplastic surgery, such as the use of the free fibular graft and versatile biological reconstruction has facilitated limb salvage in many hundreds of patients, who would have otherwise had to have an amputation.

He is survived by his wife Sarah and three children Max Jr, Flora and Daisy. ■

