

A photograph of a large pipe organ in a church. The organ is made of dark wood and has many tall, light-colored pipes with decorative patterns. The organ is set on a raised wooden platform. In the foreground, there is a wooden bench with a red cushion and a patterned fabric. The background shows the interior of a church with wooden beams and a white wall.

# The Journal

Spring 2023

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Norfolk Organists' Association

# Norfolk Organists' Association

## The art of music as related to the organ

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Front Cover

1899 W C Mack organ at All Saints Catfield

Back Cover

Details from the Catfield organ

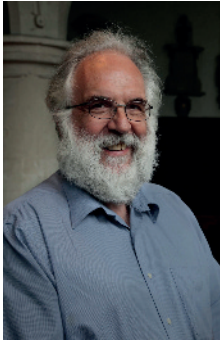
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## Notes from the Editor

Moving on! The Norfolk Organists' Association is the third such organisation that I have been involved with over the years. The first was the Leicestershire Association where I saw many interesting historic organs and wrote a little book (now long out of print) about them. The second was the Kent Association where regular meetings took us all over a large county. It is perhaps appropriate that the third should bring me to a large county with many interesting and historic organs. But, hopefully, this is where I will be for the duration now that retirement has become a reality.

Linda and I have no prior connections with Norfolk other than 'discovering' it on a family camping holiday about 18 years ago. We should have been going to France that year but a minor heart attack following a Sunday

Evensong put paid to that (the perils perhaps of being called to the organ bench from the back row of the choir at short notice!). Following a summer recovery a 'staycation' was called for and Kelling Heath fitted the bill exactly.

The gentle pace of life in Norfolk combined with a love of being on the water set us off on a search for a retirement place which brought us to West Somerton.

It is a daunting prospect, moving into the editorial seat of a well-established *Journal* but I have some prior 'form' having edited the *BIOS Reporter* for five years. Any editor relies upon a steady flow of contributions, so I look forward to learning about the organs and organists of Norfolk - so keep the articles coming in!

For my own part I have had a long-standing interest in small organs in churches and Norfolk seems particularly rich in transplanted chamber organs from nearby country houses. I plan an occasional series on some of these organs and their history.

It is my privilege to play regularly a truly home-grown Norfolk organ - the 1899 W C Mack organ at All Saints Catfield - which is why it is on the front cover of this issue.

David Shuker

## PROPOSED NOA TOUR TO GRONINGEN AND OSTFRIESLAND

Monday 23-Friday 27 October 2023

### AN UPDATE

Good news! We are almost in a position to send out application forms by email to NOA members for the tour with full details of the itinerary and associated costs.

We have been able to secure accommodation at the **Martini Hotel** in the centre of Groningen at the following prices per room, per night and including breakfast and 3 course evening meal for each person:

Small twin room:

1 person € 135.00

2 persons € 177.50

Standard twin room:

1 person € 150.00

2 persons € 192.50

In addition each person will have to pay a City tax of € 4.00 per night. This is pretty standard practice on the continent. These room prices inclusive of breakfast and evening meals compare very favourably with current UK hotel charges.

Whichever option you choose you should find the room to be perfectly comfortable and satisfactory. All rooms are *en-suite*. Do take a look at the options on the hotel's website:  
<https://martinihotel.nl/rooms/?lang=en>



At the time of writing we are still awaiting confirmation of our chosen venues for Thursday 26th October but, subject to last minute unavailability, we can confirm we are now booked to hear and play the following organs:

*Monday 23rd October:*

10.00-12.00 Edam, Nicolaaskerk: 1662/63 organ by Barent Smit, later 'Father' Smith, extended 1716 by Matthijs Verhofstadt (II/P 20).

13.15-15.00 Oosthuizen, Grote Kerk: 15th/16th/17th century organ (II/ 7). One of the very oldest playable organs in the Netherlands.

*Tuesday 24th October:*

09.30-12.00 Groningen, Lutherse Kerk: 2017 Schnitger-style organ by Bernhardt Edskes (II/P 25). The church also houses an 1896 Van Oeckelen organ (II/P 22).

14.00-16.30 Groningen, Martinikerk: the finest jewel in the Groningen crown! The glorious Schnitger/Ahrend organ (III/P 52) contains pipework spanning six centuries.

*Wednesday 25th October:*

09.45-11.00 Westerhusen, Ev.-Ref Kirche: 1643 organ by Jost Sieburg (I/P 7).

11.15-12.30 Uttum, Ev.-Ref. Kirche: Immaculately restored (2020/21) organ of c1660 by an unknown master using pipework from the 16th or early 17th century (I/ 9). The Trumpet stops at both Uttum and Westerhusen are amongst the oldest surviving such ranks in the world.

14.00-16.00 Norden, Ludgerikirche: the wondrous 1686/92 Arp Schnitger organ (III/P 46) superbly restored by Jürgen Ahrend, 1981-85. The finest jewel in the Ostfriesland organ crown!

*Thursday 26th (subject to confirmation):*

09.15-11.15 Stapelmoor, Ev.-Ref. Kirche: 1997 Immer, Jaccard, and

Klein copy of the 1734 Clicquot organ in Houdan, Normandy (III/P 24).

11.25-13.00 Weener, Georgskirche: 1710 Arp Schnitger/ 1782 Johann Friedrich Wenthin organ (II/P 29).

14.30-17.00 Leer, Großen Kirche: 2018 organ by Hendrik Ahrend (III/P 48)

*Friday 27th October:*

09.30-12.00 Leens, Petruskerk: newly restored 1734 organ by Albertus Antonius Hinsz (II/P 27)

14.30-16.30 Bolsward, Martinikerk: 1781 organ by Hinsz (III/P 42)

**Sietze de Vries** will be our organist/guide for the whole tour, introducing each organ and giving an improvised demonstration of the full range of available colours in a musical style appropriate to the date of the instrument before overseeing our own playing efforts. He is an astonishingly gifted musician and very agreeable company.

The cost for the organ part of the tour includes Sietze de Vries's professional fees, an admin fee (Bert Veening of the Stichting Groningen Orgeland has done a sterling amount of work to secure the booking of our venues), and a



Sitze de Vries at the Hinsz organ, Leens

fee for each of the churches we visit. The more people who come on the tour the cheaper this cost will be per person. At the time of writing we can't say exactly what this will be but if 10 people come it is likely to be approx € 300 (roughly £ 267) per person, or € 200 (roughly £ 178) person if 15 people take part. Sadly costs have risen sharply in this post-covid, inflation ridden world but these prices still represent good value, especially when compared to many of the study days and courses offered by the likes of the RCO. The organs we shall be enjoying are, of course, unlike anything you can encounter in England.

Travel will be by car and overnight Stena Line ferry between Harwich and the Hook of Holland. Petrol and ferry costs will be shared between the occupants of each car. Overnight crossings require each person to book a cabin. This adds to the cost but the cabins are *en suite* and comfortable and various price options are available. For example, at the time of writing cabins cost (from) £22 per trip for a 'standard' single, inside cabin, up to (from) £43 for a 2-berth 'comfort class' cabin with window.

Having now seen a more detailed breakdown of the itinerary and a reasonable estimate of the costs involved we hope those of you who have already expressed an interest in coming will be eager to commit yourselves when the application forms are sent out. Those who've not yet expressed an interest are very much encouraged to join the tour too, as are friends and associates you may wish to invite who are not NOA members. NOA members will be given priority if it proves necessary (e.g because of time/space restraints) to restrict the number of those wishing to play the instruments.

Michael Flatman (Events Secretary)

## CONTRASTING STUDIES IN CHARACTER

In my recent series on playing the French Romantic organ repertoire I quoted several times from the personal memoirs of Louis Vierne (1870-1937) and Charles Tournemire (1870-1939), not least in regard to their experience of Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) as their teacher. Both Vierne and Tournemire were students (all too briefly) in César Franck's last organ classes at the Paris Conservatoire before their maître's untimely death in November 1890. Each was devoted to a man they regarded almost as a second father and both were devastated by his passing. It was then, with a certain amount of trepidation and suspicion that they greeted the news of Widor's appointment as Franck's successor. Whilst both came to acknowledge Widor's transforming effect on their organ playing technique their contrasting personal recollections of the man himself provide illuminating insights not only into his character but their own too. I hope, therefore, you will find their recollections of interest...

First up, those of **Louis Vierne**:

*'When replacing a deceased professor, it is customary to let some*



Louis Vierne

*time elapse before choosing the new incumbent. But before the official announcement of the appointment, predictions are made based on hearsay. In the present case three candidates were mentioned, three members of the jury with well-established reputations: Guilmant, Gigout, and Dallier. Who would it be?*

*It was Widor. We did not know of him. We knew only that he was organist of Saint-Sulpice, composer of the ballet, La Korrigane, and organ Symphonies of which I, myself, had played the Minuetto from the Third at my last competition at the Jeunes Aveugles. His nomination appeared in the Official for Monday, December 1, 1890, and we were informed that he would begin his duties on Thursday, the eleventh, at two*

o'clock. We looked forward to that moment not without some wary hostility. We were young.

On the eleventh we were all in our places right on time, and Réty, the general secretary, presented to us our professor. Widor was still a young man and looked younger than his actual age, rather tall, well-built, with a somewhat military bearing; navy blue suit, felt hat, polka-dot tie loosely knotted in a bow, well-poised, distinguished looking, rather cold. In measured terms, in chosen words, he spoke of his predecessor [Franck], whom he described as an 'Improvisor of genius.' Then he immediately made a declaration, a sort of statement of general principles, which may be summarised as follows:

"In France we have neglected performance in favour of improvisation. This is not only wrong, it is nonsense. To improvise in the artistic sense of the word, one must have ideas, certainly; but that is not sufficient. In order not to be false to one's thoughts, in order to translate them exactly with all the variety, complexity, and flexibility required for their development, the organist must possess an instrumental technique capable of playing any figuration at any tempo... Furthermore, I do not see why organists should be the only artists exempt from having to know the entire literature of their instrument. What would be said of



Charles-Marie Widor in 1890

such a pianist or violinist? He would be compared to King Midas, and not wrongly. If, numerically speaking, organ literature is less abundant in masterpieces than that of the piano or of the voice, it comes immediately after; and what it lacks in quantity it makes up, perhaps, in quality. I shall cite only that incomparable miracle, the organ works of Bach, the greatest musician of all time. To interpret Bach's works in their absolute integrity, it is necessary to have the technique of which I speak. It must be scientific and methodical, not empirical...

... I hesitated a long time before accepting the position that falls to



me today. I finally decided to take it with the determination to restore the level of organ playing in general, and, in particular, to revive the authentic tradition of the interpretation of the works of Bach. It was bequeathed to me by my teacher, Lemmens, who had it from Hesse of Breslau, who received it from Forkel, pupil and biographer of the old Cantor [Widor (or Vierne's recollection?) was, of course, mistaken here; Forkel was just one year old when Bach died!]."

This declaration made, he continued, "We shall proceed in order. I choose at random from my list. Monsieur Burgat, play something for me." And the poor fellow, more dead than alive, was kept on the bench for nearly an hour and a half. He played the Allegro from the Vivaldi Concerto in G Major, transcribed by Bach, a piece supposed not to be difficult, but which became extremely so when it had to pass all this teacher's requirements. Widor made him begin each measure twenty times, explaining everything with relentless logic, passing to the next one only after an absolutely perfect rendition 'to the hair,' as would be said nowadays. Strict legato in all parts, precise articulation of repeated notes, tying of common notes, punctuation, breathing, phrasing, shading by degrees, all was discussed, explained, and justified with marvellous clarity. We were astounded, dumbfounded, and discouraged, clearly discovering

our complete ignorance of all these technical details, relying upon luck to lead us, and our ears as our only guide. For him luck did not exist, and he considered the ears unreliable, for, being under the brain's control, they were not capable of infallible listening.

To end that first class, Widor sat down at the organ and played the piece he had just criticised so harshly. We were overwhelmed. Our classroom's antique 'bagpipe' was transformed. Seeing our astonishment, the Maître said, "To be sure, willpower can't make a poor instrument better, but it can take the maximum advantage of the few available resources and give it the illusion of something artistic all the same. Isn't that true?"

After what we had just heard we could only agree.'

Vierne goes on at some length to describe in illuminating detail (some of which I quoted in Part 3 of my series) the full range of what he learnt from Widor, in the realms of improvisation as well as technique and performance. In addition he writes; '... When I say that Widor, in order to make his necessarily complex instruction more intelligible, frequently used comparisons with painting, architecture, and even literature, to make concrete in our minds the

*forms we should know, I shall have summed up as thoroughly as possible the content of our courses in which he expended an extraordinary mental activity and intense physical vitality. In spite of the difficulty of the task imposed on us, we were won over. Less than others, youth cannot resist a leader who gives constantly of himself, and we had become determined to live up to what our patron expected of us.'*

**Charles Tournemire** held a somewhat different view of Widor(!):



CharlesTournemire

*'Two months after this event [Franck's death], which was a catastrophe for me, Ambroise Thomas -musician on the borderline of music- had the idea of choosing Sir Charles-Marie Widor over Alexandre*

*Guilmant as successor to the 'musician of angels.' I shall never forget the new professor's arrival on tiptoe, like a ballerina in a tutu. His offhand air, his sloping forehead, his long neck, everything resembling an 'egg in an egg cup,' a gaudy-coloured jacket made by the first tailor on hand, waistcoat and trousers to match, immediately rendered the personage intolerable to me. I had just left the gravity of Franck's attire and [now beheld] the second-rate cut of Widor's well-worn clothes... The author of Les Béatitudes had inherited as his successor the author of La Korrigane, a ballet for the depraved subscribers at the Opera.*

*What particularly shocked me about this man was the unawareness and the superficiality with which he took possession of this illustrious chair!*



A caricature of Widor

*We shall see by what follows that my first glance had been mathematically exact. Through the administration of the Conservatoire he had collected information about each of us. Thus he had learnt that I was at the head of the class and therefore was the 'whizz-kid' who could bring honour to him at the final exams at the end of the year.*

*The first contact between the new professor and myself was a disaster! The words "watery music" after my first free improvisation, sounded outrageous to my ears. I remember as if it was yesterday, my retort: "Watery music? Do you realise that what you have just heard is the reflection of the wonderful teaching of César Franck, my maître?"...*

*There followed a frigidity, which... degenerated on the side of Charles-Marie von Widor into a deep and absurdly long-lasting hatred toward me. For the next six months, incessant conflicts, always on the subject of Franck: intolerable criticism notably of the Trois Chorals: "The writing of these organ works is mediocre: the pedal part is nonexistent."*

*All that I must retain of the six months spent close to the organist of Saint-Sulpice was his formidable technique. We knew he was the most brilliant pupil of Lemmens. With his ability to teach, he rapidly*

*restored the standard of the class uniquely from the point of view of execution. It would be bad grace and essentially unjust not to recognise it.'*

*Tournemire never reconciled himself to Widor and even came to regard him as something of an enemy. Writing about his appointment in 1898 as organist at Sainte-Clotilde Tournemire declares, 'Charles-Marie von Widor launched a fierce campaign against me: he always had on his mind my courageous attitude towards him, an attitude I described earlier about our relationship in the organ class at the Conservatoire. He even went so far as to visit the priest of the Sainte-Clotilde Basilica, Monseigneur Gardey, an eminent man whom I remember with emotion, and informed him that if he took me as his organist he would be in for a difficult time: I was bad tempered, and the relationship would therefore be intolerable.*

*Monseigneur Gardey found this conduct undignified and tendentious. He paid no attention to it and appointed me without hesitation to the coveted post. For fifteen years we lived in the most perfect harmony. The death of this priest of grand style... ...caused me deep sorrow.'*

*By contrast, Widor could not have been more encouraging or helpful when it came to the*

development of Vierne's talent and the furtherance of his career, first appointing him as his assistant (*suppléant*) at Saint-Sulpice in 1892, entrusting him with teaching duties, and then securing his appointment as substitute for the ailing Eugène Sergent, organist at Notre Dame. Sergent died in February 1900 and Widor insisted Vierne put his name forward for the competition to become Sergent's successor, *'assuring me that my training was such that I had every chance of winning. He appealed to my artistic ambition... Pulled this way and that, I finally gave in to Widor - Ah, yes, as always!'*

Vierne duly emerged as the winner and the rest, as they say, is history!

Martin J. Cottam

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## **QUIZ & CHIPS** **7th January 2023**

Remember Pocahontas? Yes, but do you remember where she is remembered in Norfolk? An impressive number of this year's quiz and chips contestants did know (I didn't).

John Hanton, our new quizmaster for 2023, had the happy knack of selecting questions we thought we

knew the answers to until it came to writing them down, when all of a sudden we weren't so sure.

There were 16 of us at St Cuthbert's church hall Sprowston on Saturday 7th January and we organised ourselves into four teams. We started with excellent fish and chips from nearby Good Frydays before settling down to the quiz. The questions are below, but write down your answers before looking them up! We also had a page of famous faces, oddly enough none of them organists, they are such a self-effacing bunch. We also had some musical items in which carol tunes had been hidden. Since the Journal is not yet multimedia you will be spared listening to them.

The Diapasons team won, Michael and Pamela Flatman, Adrian Richards, Chris Marshall and Jane Baker. It was a fun evening. John Hanton was a genial host, there was enough competitiveness to make us rack our brains for the answers but not so much that we were tempted to consult Google in real time. Rumour has it that John will be invited back in 2024. We hope so and look forward to see lots of you there.

Jeremy Worth

## Quiz and Chips 2023 Questions

### Round 1 POT LUCK

- 1 In which Country was Mozart Born?
- 2 Who wrote the book "We didn't mean to go to sea"?
- 3 Who Painted "The Girl with the Pearl Earring"?
- 4 Who formed the Electric Suction Sweeper Company in 1908?
- 5 Who wrote O'Sole Mio which advertised Walls Cornetto?
- 6 In 1973 the Simon Park Orchestra reached No 1 in the UK Chart with which song?
- 7 Which US state is "Almost Heaven" according to John Denver?
- 8 Which Role has been played by Barry Humphries, Jonathan Pryce and Russ Abbott?
- 9 Who duetted with Sarah Brightman on the Single "Phantom of the Opera"?
- 10 In which City was Felix Mendelssohn born?

### Round 2 NORFOLK

- 1 There was a gate on every road into the old City of Norwich, how many were there?
- 2 Which Bishop of Lynn, a great supporter of Norwich City FC, was made a life President in 1979.
- 3 In which Norfolk Village did President Abraham Lincoln's ancestors live?
- 4 What is the real name of the Norwich Pub popularly known as the Murderers Arms?
- 5 Once a Sanitary Inspector for Swaffham Rural District Council, who wrote the adventure stories featuring Flying Ace Biggles?
- 6 Which Norfolk Town Claims to have the Biggest Parish Church covering 23,000sqft?
- 7 Which Village Church has a Marble Memorial to Princess Pocahontas?
- 8 On which Broad did Admiral Lord Nelson learn to sail?
- 9 At one time Norwich had three Railway Stations, name the other two
- 10 Norwich had the First Pedestrian Precinct in the Country when it closed a major shopping street, where was this?

### Round 3 UK GEOGRAPHY

- 1 Which Seaside Resort has "The lanes" and a Nudist Beach?
- 2 The Old Bailey is on the site of which former prison?
- 3 Which Somerset Town is said to be the Burial Place of King Arthur?
- 4 What is sold at Spitalfields Market?
- 5 Spagetti Junction is on what road?
- 6 What is the Former name of Sellafeld?
- 7 Which City has an Annual Goose Fair?
- 8 Holy Loch is an inlet of which River?
- 9 Which City has the Famous "Royal Mile"?
- 10 In which part of London is the Natural History Museum?

### Round 4 FOOD AND DRINK

- 1 Which has more Fat? Clotted Cream or Double Cream
- 2 Which Spirit is used in a Manhattan?
- 3 Which Pulses are used in Hummus?
- 4 Which Meat is used in Moussaka?
- 5 Everards Beers were based near which town?
- 6 In which Month does Beaujolais Nouveau arrive?
- 7 What Colour are Fully Ripened Olives?
- 8 Which Fruit is also known as the Chinese Gooseberry?
- 9 What colour is Cayenne Pepper?
- 10 What grain is Whisky made from?

## Round 5 ANIMALS AND FISH

- 1 What is the collective term for a group of Beavers?
- 2 What type of animal is an Ibex?
- 3 What is the only member of the Giraffe family other than the Giraffe?
- 4 Which was the first animal to be domesticated?
- 5 What is the North American equivalent of the Reindeer?
- 6 What do Oystercatchers eat?
- 7 How is a Goat Fish also known?
- 8 Which Fish is known as Rock Salmon?
- 9 What does Whitebait grow into?
- 10 Which Family do Prairie Dogs belong to?

## Round 6 LITERATURE

- 1 What is the name of the Reddleman in Thomas Hardy's novel 'Return of the Native'?
- 2 Where is Edmund Dantes wrongly imprisoned for 14 years in Alexandre Dumas's 'The Count of Monte Cristo'?
- 3 In Arthur Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons' what is Pemmican?
- 4 In which Year was 'Heart of Darkness' by Joseph Conrad written?
- 5 The story 'In the mountains of madness' by HP Lovecraft is set where?
- 6 In Patrick Suskind's story 'Perfume, the story of a murderer' what does lead character Grenouille make his ultimate scent from?
- 7 Who was the author of the novel 'Silas Marner'?
- 8 In 'A picture of Dorian Gray' by Oscar Wilde what happens to Dorian Gray's portrait?
- 9 In Hilary Mantel's 'Wolf Hall' which family actually lives in Wolf Hall?
- 10 Who wrote the short story 'The daughters of the Vicar' in 1911?

## 2023 Quiz and Chips Answers

### Round 1 POT LUCK

- 1 Austria
- 2 Arthur Ransome
- 3 Johannes Vermeer
- 4 William Hoover
- 5 Eduardo Di Capua
- 6 Eye Level
- 7 West Virginia
- 8 Fagin
- 9 Steve Harley
- 10 Hamburg

### Round 2 NORFOLK

- 1 12
- 2 Bishop Aubrey Aitken
- 3 Hingham
- 4 The Gardeners Arms
- 5 W E Johns
- 6 Gt Yarmouth, St Nicholas
- 7 Heacham, St Mary's
- 8 Barton
- 9 City and Victoria
- 10 London Street

### Round 3 UK GEOGRAPHY

- 1 Brighton
- 2 Newgate
- 3 Glastonbury
- 4 Fruit flowers vegetables
- 5 M6
- 6 Windscale
- 7 Nottingham
- 8 The Clyde
- 9 Edinburgh
- 10 South Kensington.

### Round 4 FOOD AND DRINK

- 1 Clotted Cream
- 2 Whisky or Bourbon
- 3 Chickpeas
- 4 Lamb
- 5 Leicester
- 6 November
- 7 Black
- 8 The Kiwi Fruit
- 9 Red
- 10 Malted Barley

### Round 5 ANIMALS AND FISH

- 1 Colony
- 2 Goat
- 3 Okapi or Forest Giraffe
- 4 Dog
- 5 Caribou
- 6 Shellfish (not Oysters) worms and Insects
- 7 Red Mullet
- 8 Dogfish....rock eel, flake or huss
- 9 Spratts
- 10 Squirrel

### Round 6 LITERATURE

- 1 Diggory Venn
- 2 Chateaux D'If
- 3 Corned Beef
- 4 1899
- 5 Antarctica / South Pole
- 6 Beautiful Virginal Women
- 7 George Eliot / Mary Anne Evans
- 8 His Portrait ages and reflects his sins
- 9 The Seymours
- 10 D H Lawrence



## OBITUARIES

### Sandy Bootman (1944-2022)

Although many of the current membership would not have known her, Sandy was an active member of what was then the Norfolk Guild of Organists in the 1980s and 90s, acting as Secretary and joint events co-ordinator with her husband Ralph.



Although born in Enfield, she was brought up in Norfolk with music always at the forefront of her interests. She went on to study at Trinity College of Music in London, then devoted her working life to teaching,

establishing woodwind groups, recorder consorts and choirs in the schools where she taught. The photograph is at Woodlands Junior School.

She played the organ in various churches in South Norfolk and this led to a brief role as an extra playing an organist in the Anglia Television 1989 mini-series *"Anything More Would Be Greedy"* written by Malcolm Bradbury and starring Tessa Peake-Jones and Steven Fry.

Their interest in France and especially French organs led her and her husband Ralph to make a move to live in France, settling in Tournes in the Ardennes region in 2002. Her latter years saw Sandy much involved in their local community.

I am indebted to her daughter Cath for both information and the photograph.

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**Dr. Barbara Knowles** died on 27 December 2022 at the age of 96. She was a member of NOA for many years and regularly attended events, until her health declined. She was also a great supporter of church and cathedral music generally.

## NEW ORGAN STAMPS



The Deutsches Post (German Post Office) has recently issued two commemorative stamps of interest to the organ world.

The €2.75 stamp issued on 5 January 2023 celebrates organ building and organ music. According to Mark Jameson the image shows 18 different items related to the theme - answers in the next issue!

On 1 March 2023 a €1.60 stamp marking the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of organist and composer Max Reger was issued. The style of the stamp is rather evocative of some of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century art movements in vogue when Reger was in his heyday.

The Royal Mail recently issued a commemorative stamp celebrating the heavy metal group Iron Maiden.

Perhaps we await some heavy metal in the form of organ pipes on British postage stamps in the future as organs have only featured in the background of some stamps in the past.

Many countries around the world have chosen to celebrate organs on their stamps with some of the most spectacular

examples coming from Poland.

For more information on organs on postage stamps there are a couple of very informative websites:

<https://pipeorganstamps.blogspot.com/>

<https://themusicstamps.com/category/organs/>



David Shuker, with thanks to Mark Jameson

## BOOK REVIEW

Crimes involving organs and organists do not feature often in fiction. At the recent BIOS research conference in Birmingham a number of examples that occurred in novels up to 1960 were reviewed by Melvin Hughes but, by and large, organs and organists had relatively minor 'walk on' parts. Perhaps authors felt unable to do justice to any meaningful description of organs or thought that organists were just too boring (!) to make interesting characters. Given the touchy-feely aspects of organ playing one might have thought that smearing a suitable poison onto keys or stop knobs might have suggested a suitable plot device to the likes of the ever-inventive Agatha Christie, but apparently not. Such hesitation is not to be found in the mind of David Baker, the author of *The Organ Loft Murders*. David will be known to many members of the Norfolk Association as a regular recitalist at King's Lynn and Thorpe St Andrew, amongst others and it will also be no surprise that this crime

novel is set in fictional Hartleydale - not unlike the Calder Valley, very much home territory to this proud Yorkshireman.

The events in the novel take place in October 1878 in the fictional industrial town of Hartley, not far from Halifax and Wakefield, with which it competes in aspiring to become a city by virtue of its parish church becoming a

### The Organ Loft Murders



## David Baker

cathedral. The high musical standards of the Hartley Parish Church are maintained by Thomas Augustus Burchill D. Mus., the demanding and talented organist and choirmaster. Burchill, or TAB as he is known to both admirers and enemies, is the first victim being found dead next to the water storage tanks for the hydraulic pump for the wind system, the first of many details about Victorian organs that are mentioned throughout the novel. From hereon in the plot thickens with several more murders taking place in the organ loft. The crimes are investigated by the newly-formed Hartley CID in the form of Detective Chief Inspector Wright Watson and Detective Sergeant Harry Makepeace who begin to follow the various threads involving rivalries in the choir, the organ committee, the local suffragettes and the speculative schemes of the local worthies. The vicar, Dr Percy G. Banks, tries to hold on to his cathedral project while strands of the murkier underbelly of Hartley emerge as the investigation proceeds. Readers with even a passing knowledge of the world of Victorian organs will delight in spotting allusions in character names of organists and references to the new organ technologies. The grey dampness of a northern industrial town in a Victorian late

autumn suffuses the novel but I warmed to the steadfast thoroughness of the two detectives as they dealt with clerical haughtiness and disdain of the local magnate in more or less equal measure. No spoilers here, so you will need to read the book to find out who did it.

David Baker's previous crime novel *A Month of Murder* published in 2021 also features a murder at an organ.

David Shuker

*The Organ Loft Murders*, David Baker (2022) 304pp, Author House UK, ISBN 978-1665597609. Available from Amazon and other booksellers in both hard- and paperback



Professor David Baker

KING'S LYNN  
MINSTER

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# Organ Recitals 2023

Tuesday Lunchtime, 12:30pm

Free admission with retiring collection

Café open from 10:30am

2 May	Adrian Richards	King's Lynn Minster
9 May	Pavlos Triantaris	Letchworth Traditional Church
16 May	Timara Easter	Harpenden
23 May	John Lyon	The Parish of Boston
30 May	John Carnelley	Aylsham

Most recitals will be accompanied by a big screen

For more information see: [www.kingslynnminster.org](http://www.kingslynnminster.org) our Facebook page and on [www.organrecitals.uk](http://www.organrecitals.uk)



# Norfolk Organists' Association

*The art of music as related to the organ*



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## **YOUNG ORGANISTS' PLATFORM CONCERT 2023**

Annual event jointly promoted by Aylsham Parish Church and Norfolk Organists' Association.

**Saturday August 5th : Aylsham Parish Church**

**11.00 Coffee Morning under the Tower**

**12.15 - c.13.00 Concert**

Each year, NOA gives young players a platform to perform. Given that the organ is generally not played in ensemble, such opportunities are important. We need to encourage young players and send the message to them that their efforts are valued. Each year our concert attracts about 80 people; let's exceed this in 2023.

Over the past few years, performers have been students of Julian Haggett (St Peter Mancroft) who does brilliant work through the RCO and its courses. We are not, however, limited to those. Performers could be relative beginners or more advanced. We hope to attract a range of players. Each player would be limited to about 10 minutes.

I emphasise that this is a platform concert for the enjoyment of the music; it is definitely not in any way competitive.

If you, or a colleague, has pupils for whom this would be appropriate please let me know as soon as possible.

Email by all means, but a chat by phone would probably be better!

Harry Macey

(Organist & Choir Director: Aylsham Parish Church)

(NOA Events sub-committee member)



# Norfolk Organists' Association

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## Events

### **Saturday 25th March 2023**

#### **Annual General Meeting and Visit to Heydon Church**

11:00 at St. Peter & St. Paul Church, Heydon, NR11 6RG.

11:00 2023 A.G.M.

11:45 - Charles Shippam will give a brief talk about the church and Walker's work on the organ.

Break for lunch - bring your own or visit Heydon Tea Rooms or the Earl Armes.

(It is advisable to book individually if you wish to eat at either venue for lunch).

After lunch open console on the newly restored organ.

### **April 2023 - no events**

### **Saturday 13th May 2023 - Desert Island Discs**

2:00 p.m. at the Lecture Room, Rosebery Road Methodist Church, Norwich, NR3 3AB

Our castaway this year is the Revd Canon Aidan Platten (Precentor of Norwich Cathedral) who will be interviewed by Ron Watson about his life and selection of music.

Refreshments will be available after the presentation. £2 per person.

### **Saturday 27th May 2023 - I.A.O. East of England Organ Day.**

#### **French Organ Music for the Liturgy and Chant.**

From 10.30 a.m. at Chelmsford Cathedral, New Street, Chelmsford, CMI 1TY

This will be a study day on the music at the time of Couperin and de Grigny and includes a masterclass and lecture demonstration with William Whitehead, ending with a service of Vespers. The artistic directors are Philip Prior and James Davy.

Tickets £35, or £30 for members of NOA, are available from [iao.org.uk/eeod](http://iao.org.uk/eeod).

### **Saturday 25th November 2023**

The opening recital of the refurbished organ at Norwich Cathedral will be by Thomas Trotter on Saturday November 25 at 7pm. Tickets available after Easter.

NOA is booked to go to Evensong on Wednesday Nov 22 at 1730 with demo/talk by one of the organists and play afterwards.

