

THE Mardler

August 2025 Newsletter

The North Norfolk
Talking Newspaper
Association



Mardler Marketing

Some of us have been out and about spreading the word about The Mardler and what we do

Sheringham

On Saturday the 10th of May a small group of Mardlers travelled to Sheringham to promote our service. As part of the Sheringham Muzillac Twinning Association's 10th anniversary The Mardler was invited to attend a charity showcase held in the Oddfellows Hall. Mardlers Chris Wilson, Richard Preston and Lorna Wilson went along with posters, flyers, a rolling laptop presentation and listener equipment. There was a steady flow of visitors and Lorna made sure that all the other stall holders knew what we were about!



Richard and Chris at the Sheringham Event

Aylsham (Times Two)

Community Fayre

Following on from the success of the Aylsham Healthy Town event at the start of April a group of Mardlers attended the The Aylsham Community Fayre on Saturday the 7th of June in the town hall. Volunteering organisations from around Aylsham

packed the hall. Once again the town hall attracted plenty of visitors and the Mardler had a prime place right in front of the door. Mardlers Beverley Hopkins, Chris and Lorna Wilson took turns explaining to visitors what we do. There were people who were interested in volunteering as well as those who knew of someone who would benefit from our service. And there has been a confirmed new listener as a result of us being there.

Aylsham Blind Club

The Aylsham Blind Club is one of the last of its kind. It meets once a month and offers local visually impaired people the chance to meet, chat, have a drink and a cake, have a go in the raffle and listen to a visiting speaker.

On Tuesday the 8th of July a double act from The Mardler, Chris and Lorna Wilson, provided a short talk and played a few entertaining sound clips from past editions of our magazine. This was The Mardler's second visit and most already knew about us. Mardler flyers were taken by some prospective new listeners, one of whom has already requested a visit from our Listener Liaison team.

Mardler listener and bee keeper Arthur Barwick was on his first visit after hearing about the meeting on the Mardler noticeboard. Arthur provided a most interesting interview to Roving Reporter Beverley Hopkins which was aired in a Mardler Magazine some months ago.

The club kindly donated £50 to The Mardler.

Looking Forward

We have been invited to attend a Healthy Town event in Blofield on the 18th of September and the North Norfolk Stroke Support Group have invited us to talk about The Mardler on the 26th of November.

Aylsham High School and The Duke of Edinburgh Award

Some of our longer serving volunteers may recall a project where The Mardler worked with students from Aylsham High School. In the past year that arrangement has been resurrected and, surprisingly, the same staff member, Tanya Wiseman, has been our contact.

As part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteering commitment we have received a number of poems recorded by year 9 students Amelia Goodliffe, Clover Booker and Mimi Andrews. Feedback from listeners suggests they were pleased to hear younger voices! And one of the English teachers couldn't resist providing a couple of recitals too.

Sixth form and Gold Award student Amelia Parkes is now working with us to provide more material for our magazine section.

This is a wonderful way to provide a new twist to our traditional magazine content, it fosters a better understanding of the visually impaired community and it is a splendid opportunity to promote volunteering to a younger audience.

Focus On ... Roving Reporters

It's not a secret but few of you will know that we have a team of Roving Reporters. Founder member Beverley Hopkins has been joined by Sharon White and mother and daughter Emma and Bea Clark. Together they have provided the following interviews:

- Listener Kay and husband Peter's romantic story
- Jane Stockings, Manager of The Aylsham Heritage Centre
- Scott Eltringham, Manager of Langham Dome
- The Burwell Mill visitor experience
- Mike Goldwater from Poppyland Radio
- Listener Arthur Barwick the beekeeper
- Listener Michael White's story of his singing sister
- Mardler Mary Beatty's swimming challenge
- Mardler Margaret Phillips' recollections of the early days
- Bob Hawkins, Chairman of The Shantymen
- David Hitcham, Event Coordinator for The Aylsham Show
- Nobby Clark, V.E. Day special
- Mark Rosen, a teacher abroad
- Mark Stuckey, electrical wizard from The Repair Shop
- Debbie Thompson, Director at the Sheringham Little Theatre

Using no more than a mobile phone our intrepid reporters have been seeking out and recording interesting stories to enhance our magazine supplement. Thank you ladies.

AGM 2025

Our 2025 AGM took place on Saturday the 28th of June, the minutes of which have now been circulated to members. There was a positive and friendly vibe to the gathering with the usual reports from our officers. A little extra time was taken this year to clarify and confirm the membership of our management committee. If you would like to take a more active role in The Mardler then please free to speak to one of our officers.

Comings and Goings

Our listener numbers are slowly creeping up with one hundred and seventeen at last count and we are seeing a number of online listeners too. Our volunteer numbers remain steady at around sixty-six.

The significant good news since our last newsletter is that we now have five fully trained editors with another in training. Having extra editors gives us the resilience to cope with five-week-months, illness and holidays.

Over the last four months we have said goodbye to volunteer readers Diana Piccolo, David Parker and Eleanor Faulkner. We have welcomed on board Sheila Denny (C&D), Amelia Parkes (DofE Contributor), Sharon White (Roving Reporter), Emma & Beatrice Clark (Roving Reporters), Astrid Welfare (Editor) and Gavin Flynn (C&D).

On the listener front five have left us, for various reasons, and we have welcomed eight as follows – Sheila (High Kelling), Martin (Beeston Regis), Jean (West Runton), Penelope (Westwick), Thomas (Wroxham), Karen (Norwich), Helen (Holt) and Janet (North Walsham)).

As always our thanks must go to Imogen Waterson and Beverley Hopkins who work so hard to visit and support our listeners.

Ruby Anniversary Meal

To celebrate our 40th anniversary a group of Mardlers attended the New Forge restaurant on the edge of Aylsham. It was a great opportunity to socialise with volunteers from other teams who we would not normally meet. The food was excellent and the staff took good care of us.



The meal was followed by a, thankfully, brief speech by the Chair who played a selection of interesting and amusing clips from past editions of The Mardler magazine. We also had the opportunity to go around the table and introduce ourselves. Friendly, fun and undoubtedly fattening!

Gavin's Story

Gavin Flynn, one of our newer volunteers, relates his first impressions of and early experiences with The Mardler

When I first started volunteering at The Mardler earlier this year, I was impressed by how well organised it was. Chris, the Chairman and his wife Lorna, who's in charge of Copy and Dispatch, were very nice and welcoming. The process in the Copy and Dispatch Department was neatly explained, and once I was shown how the clearing and copying stations worked, I was set to task.

A team of us formed a conveyor belt, each playing our part. The USB sticks, which had been returned by our listeners, needed to be cleared ready for the recording of the new week's edition. Each stick had to be checked, just to make sure that the recording had been added correctly. We all made sure the address labels were showing our listener's details and the little information-packed USB sticks were popped into the plastic envelopes, sealed and put in the post bag.

One hundred and eight sticks later, it was all completed within an hour. I was amazed at how the time had flown and I had really enjoyed myself.

Afterwards Chris offered to show me around the recording studio. I imagined it was going to be a large room, stacked full of speakers at one end, with stand-alone microphones the other side and a separate editors and producers' room where the magic happens on the mixing decks, with a myriad of sliders, buttons, lights and other wonderful gadgetry.

That's what I had in my head. The room was laid out so four people could sit at two desks opposite each other, with the correctly positioned chairs and easels with microphones. The other two adjoining desks at the end would be attended by the editor and the sound engineer. And yes, there was a small mixing desk with slider controls. And a few other gadgets.

My story really starts a couple of months earlier, when I saw the advert for a volunteer Copy and Dispatch person at the Mardler. I was (and still am) unemployed and have been for some time. I

searched on the internet for more information, wading past the websites for the Norfolk Mardler Cheeses and came to the Mardler website. Realising that their listeners come first and foremost, I applied for the post straight-away.

My background is in customer service spanning the past thirty-three years. I thoroughly enjoyed customer interactions, either face to face, over the phone or email, so with an opportunity to help others, I applied. To be honest, I was feeling quite despondent after going to a series of interviews, only to be told that the golden ticket had gone to someone with more experience.

What the Mardler has done is given me a sense of belonging and with the office environment to concentrate on, it has given me my work ethic back. I have now worked at all four stations of the Copy and Dispatch process – Clearing, Copying, Checking and Packing.

Last week there was a “whoops!” moment when I was listening and checking what I had cleared and copied a few minutes earlier, only to find that an edition from **two** weeks back was still on the stick. Needless to say the offending article was put to one side. (The stick – not me).

Here at The Mardler Talking Newspaper we're quietly getting on with it and supplying our listeners with their much-needed weekly audible news bulletins. I can't imagine what it would be like to lose my sight. But I do know that I would love it if I could listen to the news and local stories from around North Norfolk every week.

I for one, am proud to be part of this charity and offer my thanks for giving me a sense of purpose.

Gavin

Week 1 Copy & Dispatch Volunteer