



Martock and District Woodturning Club Newsletter

February 2026

From the Chair

Thank you to everyone who braved the weather and the floods to attend the AGM in January. One decision that may pass you by was that we change our name from Martock and District Woodturners to Martock and District Woodturning Club to emphasise that we are a club and not a group of individuals. This change might creep in slowly as old habits die hard! It was suggested that we could “modernise” our logo, so if anyone would like to exercise their artistic talents then please go ahead!

There was also some useful discussion about subscriptions. As the long-term future of the club is largely dependent on attracting new members, a compromise regarding an increase in subscription was made, that, depending on how successful the club is at attracting new members over the coming months the committee would decide nearer to September 2026 the need for increasing subscriptions. It therefore falls to each of us to think of ways to attract new members – the committee is open to any and every suggestion.



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61568477045030>

If anyone is willing to take on the maintenance of this page please let me know.



Website: <https://madturners.co.uk/>



If you would like to join the club's WhatsApp group, please follow this link:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/Ir6ZZSOyuRmLh3Mc3ajwFf>

Diary Dates

March 14 th	Hands-on – 10am, Yandles Training Room
March 31 st	Club night – 7pm, Ash Pavilion – Michael Parsons
April 11 th	Hands-on – 10am, Yandles Training Room
April 18 th	Masters of the Lathe III – Yandles tool shop 10am – 4pm
April 28 th	Club night – 7pm, Ash Pavilion – Jason Breach
May 9 th	Hands-on – 10am, Yandles Training Room

Competition Time



The next club competition will be in March, where the theme will be an egg (plain, decorated, hollow, coloured – whatever you like), or an egg cup (or even both!).

Following the AGM discussions here has been a few subtle changes to the rules:

Competitions will be held four times a year at our club meetings in March, June, September and December.

There may be a specific theme for entries which will be notified in advance.

Each member should decide their own skill level which will be noted when an entry is submitted, picked from the following list:

- a. Novice
- b. Intermediate
- c. Seasoned
- d. Expert

Members may be told to change it if the committee disagrees with their choice!

Entries will be displayed anonymously and should not show any maker's mark.

Entries may be made by proxy if the member cannot be present on the night.

Each competition entry will be judged by the members present on the night and given a score out of ten. There are no set criteria for scoring.

Members should not score their own entry!

Scores will be added up and divided by the number of votes to give a normalized score. Results will be published in the newsletter before the next club night.

The normalized scores will be averaged over the year and a weighting applied according to the skill level. A prize will be given at the AGM to the member with the highest weighted score. The Elliot Trophy will be awarded to the member with the highest score who has not won the trophy in the last four years.

Minutes of the AGM

12 members were present.

Chairman's welcome. The Chairman welcomed members to the AGM and thanked them for braving the weather and flooding. The agenda for this meeting and the minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated to the members earlier.

Apologies. Apologies were received.

Minutes of the 2025 AGM. These were approved.

Chairman's Report. This is my fourth year as Chairman. Reviewing the past year, the Tuesday evening meetings had been well attended, but attendance at the all-day demonstrations had been patchy and the club had made a financial loss. Poor attendance may have been because of the time of year. The programme for 2026 does not include any all-day demonstrations. The Saturday morning 'hands on' were generally well supported, however they were suspended over the summer months due to a fall in attendance.

Dave thanked Dave P for organising the 2025 programme, Ray Fraser for organising the 2026 programme and Colin C for organising the 'hands on'.

Dave also thanked all those who supported the club at the Yandles Craft Fairs (stall and car parking) and the 'Masters of the Lathe' events.

The small demonstration lathe kept at Yandles was replaced, the cost being partly offset by the sale of the old lathe.

Finally, I would like to thank the committee for keeping the club running smoothly and the members for supporting the club throughout the year.

Treasurers Report. A summary of accounts for 2025 were sent out to members a couple of weeks ago, and I hope you have all had the opportunity to look through them. I would like to go through them and pick out some to the highlights.

Overall, we made a small loss of £xxxx over a total income of £xxxx. Several contributory factors have led to this loss, principally reduced number of subscriptions, increased Tuesday night demonstration costs and poor attendance at all-day demonstrations.

As last year, Yandles have given the club £xxx in vouchers for our car parking efforts on the Craft Fair Days – many thanks to all those who gave up their time to support this.

I would like to thank Dave A for going through and verifying these accounts.

Are there any questions? There were no questions raised at this point.

Secretary's Report. Membership cards and programmes for 2026 are printed and available to members. The club has 41 – 42 members, including honorary members.

Although I am happy to continue providing refreshments at Tuesday evening demonstrations, the club will need to find someone else to organise the 2027 programme of events.

Adoption of Officer's Reports. These were all accepted.

Dave P thanked Ray for his efforts at organising the 2026 Programme of Events.

Discussion Items.

Saturday afternoon 'hands-on'. Dave H suggested that the afternoons should be used to explore more advanced turning topics, such as decoration, pewter work, use of the skew chisel, ebonising etc. This was generally thought to be a good idea, although the practicalities of some topics (e.g. pewter) would need to be looked at carefully and someone would need to organise and coordinate.

As a topic for the morning sessions. Dave P suggested making 'smokers'.

Dave Horner agreed to plan some ideas for the afternoon sessions.

Subscriptions. At the previous committee meeting Andy R had presented a budget for 2026 which indicated that finances would break even. This was however with a very small contingency and it was considered likely another loss would be generated. Although there is enough in reserves to cover these losses, he thought it was unhealthy to be continually losing money, and proposed a small increase in subscriptions (£5) for September 2026. This was proposed at the AGM and seconded by Dave P, however before a vote was taken there was some discussion as to whether a £70 subscription was a deterrent to new members joining. As the long-term future of the club is largely dependent on attracting new members, a compromise regarding the increased subscription was made, that, depending on how successful the club is at attracting new members over the coming months the committee would decide nearer to September 2026 the need for increasing subscriptions. This was agreed as a way forward.

Membership. As of the 31st December 2025, there were 35 paying members, and 3 honorary members. Since then, there has been 1 new member. In the past the club used to have 50+ members! New members are vital to the long-term future of the club.

There was some discussion as to how to attract new members: -

The club has a Facebook page which needs to be managed, kept up to date etc. Steven A volunteered to take on this role. It was suggested that the club could promote itself at e.g. presence at craft fairs (not just Yandles) e.g. local National Trust events, having an Open Day, posters at Yandles, libraries, Men's sheds, local free magazines (Pinnacle/Leveller) etc. As with everything this requires time and effort. Any volunteers?

Martock and District Woodturning Club. Dave Horner suggested that we change our name from Martock and District Woodturners to Martock and District Woodturning Club to emphasise that we are a club and not a group of individuals. This was agreed. Andy R said that the name on the bank account would remain the same.

Election of Officers and Committee. The committee and officers are as follows: -

Chairman Dave H

Treasurer Andy R

Membership Secretary Ray F

Steven A

David P has volunteered to be on the committee.

It was suggested that the committee and officers be voted in 'as one' this was proposed by Charlie and seconded by Dave P and agreed by the rest of the members.

Presentation of Awards and Trophies. Dave Horner thanked Dave Perryman for his role as President for 2025, and Dave A agreed to take on the role of President for 2026, this was proposed by Charlie Watts, seconded by Dave P, and agreed by the members.

Club competition. This was won by Tony R who will receive a £20 Yandles voucher.

The Bill Elliot Trophy. This was presented to Rod P.

The Presidents Trophy. This was presented to Colin C for his role as hands on coordinator.

Any Other Business.

Competition. Dave H invited members comments regarding the competition/voting etc. He thought it had been well supported, although the various skill levels could better be represented by a handicap system. The competition had encouraged members to try different things, although it was difficult to make a comparative assessment of pieces.

All day demonstrations. Dave P thought there might be better support if they were held over the winter months rather than the height of summer. Also maybe explore the possibility of joint ventures with other clubs. Not just inviting other clubs, but to arrange joint meetings where the loss/profit is shared equally.

A Yandles Masters of the Lathe event is planned for 2026, at which M&D Woodturning Club is expected to be invited.

Ray T encouraged members to bring their membership cards to meetings. This will help members, especially new members to get to know us better

The Axminster Woodturning Club of which a number of our members are also members, meets on the 1st Saturday of the month. Perhaps there ought to be closer collaboration, or at least see how another woodturning club is run.

There being no other business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 21:30 hrs.

Andy R

Gallery

Here is where we display any items made by club members in recent weeks.



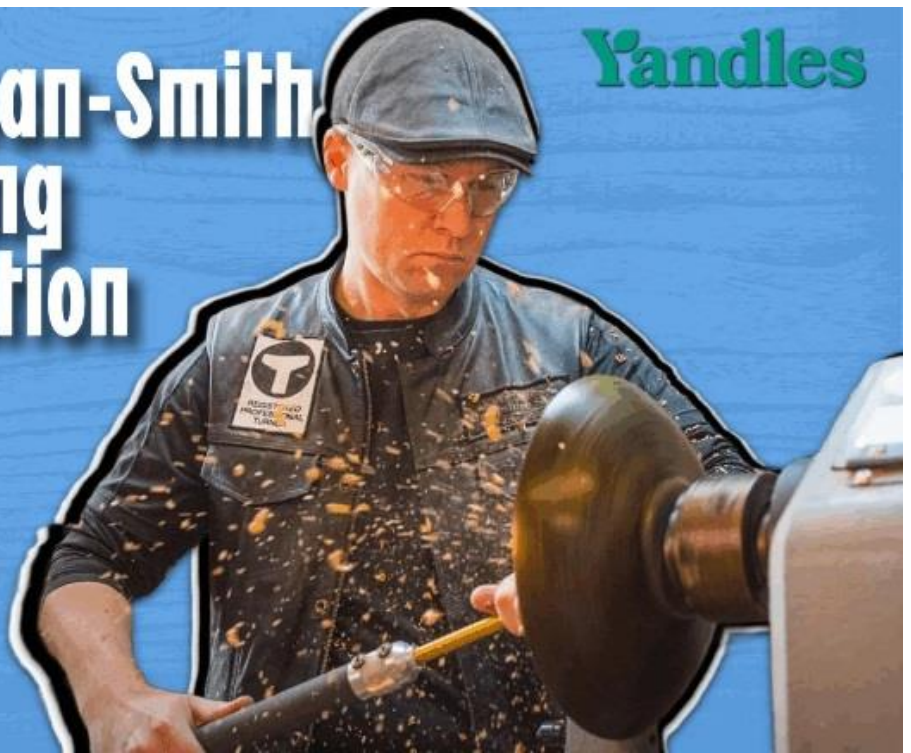
Just one item this month – a Lizard Eye bowl made by Steve A.

Please send photographs of anything you have made to newsletter@madturners.co.uk, or better still bring them along on a club night to put on the inspiration table for all to admire.

Martin Saban-Smith Woodturning Demonstration

Free Parking
Feb 27th
4-6pm

Yandles



MASTERS OF THE LATHE III

THE WOODTURNING EVENT OF THE YEAR!



18/04/2026

Timber of the Month - Alder



Alders are trees of the genus *Alnus* in the birch family. The genus includes about 35 species of trees and shrubs, a few reaching a large size, distributed throughout the north temperate zone with a few species extending into Central America, as well as the northern and southern Andes.

The common alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) is native to most of Europe, southwest Asia and northern Africa. It is a medium-sized, short-lived tree growing to a height of up to 98ft (30m) with a trunk diameter of about 1-2 ft (.3-.6 m). It has short-stalked rounded leaves and separate male and female flowers in the form of catkins. The small, rounded fruits are cone-like and the seeds are dispersed by

wind and water. It is also known as black alder, European alder, European black alder, or just alder. Alder's natural habitat is in moist ground near rivers, ponds and lakes but it can also grow in drier locations and sometimes occurs in mixed woodland and on forest edges. The tree can tolerate a range of soil types and has a specific association with the nitrogen-fixing bacterium *Frankia alni*, which allows it to grow in nutrient-poor soils where few other trees thrive. Alder is used as a pioneer species and to stabilise river banks, to assist in flood control, to purify water in waterlogged soils and to moderate the temperature and nutrient status of water bodies. On marshy ground it is important as coppice-wood, being cut near the base to encourage the production of straight poles. It is capable of enduring clipping as well as marine climatic conditions and may be cultivated as a fast-growing windbreak or as a specimen tree in parks and gardens.

Common alder tends to be light tan to reddish brown in colour but darkens and reddens with age. There is no visible distinction between heartwood and sapwood. Large aggregate rays appear as occasional small streaks on the face grain that can be mistaken for defects in the wood. The timber is not used where strength is required in the construction industry, but is used for paper-making, the manufacture of fibreboard, the production of charcoal for gunpowder, for smoking foodstuff, as well as for energy. Under water the wood is very durable and is used for deep foundations of buildings - The piles beneath the Rialto in Venice, and the foundations of several medieval cathedrals are made of alder and, according to the Roman architect Vitruvius, alder was used in the construction of the causeways across the Ravenna marshes. The timber is used in carpentry, both as solid timber and as veneer. It is also used in turnery, carving, furniture making, window frames, clogs, toys, blocks, pencils and bowls. Although the tree can live for up to 160 years, it is best felled for timber at 60 to 70 years before heart rot sets in.

Alder is very easy to work with both hand and machine tools; it sands especially easy. The wood is rather soft, however, and care must be taken to avoid denting it in some applications. European alder has excellent gluing, staining, and finishing properties; it also turns well. All this has made it a favourite of large factories mass producing instruments. Electric guitars, most notably those manufactured by the Fender Musical Instruments Corporation, have been built with alder bodies since the 1950s. Alder is appreciated for its tone that is claimed to be tight and evenly balanced, especially when compared to mahogany, and has been adopted by many electric guitar manufacturers.

The common alder provides food and shelter for wildlife, with a number of insects, lichens and fungi being completely dependent on the tree.

Alder has long been used in tanning and dyeing. Depending on the mordant and the methods used, various shades of brown, fawn, and yellowish-orange hues can be obtained. Alder bark can be used to create a black dye, whilst early in the year the shoots produce a yellowish or cinnamon-coloured dye. The catkins can yield a green colour and fresh-cut wood a pinkish-fawn colour. The bark and twigs contain up to 20% tannic acid but their usefulness in tanning is limited by the dyeing effect also produced.

Alder has many uses in traditional and folk medicine. The bark has been used as an astringent, a cathartic, and a tonic and a restorative (a substance able to restore normal health). A decoction of the bark has been used to treat swelling, inflammation and rheumatism, as an emetic, and to treat sore throats. Ground up bark has been used as an ingredient in toothpaste, and the inner bark can be boiled in vinegar to provide a skin wash for treating

dermatitis, lice and scabies. The leaves have been used to reduce breast discomfort in nursing mothers. Alpine farmers are said to use the leaves to alleviate rheumatism by placing a heated bag full of leaves on the affected areas. Alder leaves are consumed by cows, sheep, goats and horses though pigs refuse to eat them. According to some people, consumption of alder leaves causes blackening of the tongue and is harmful to horses.

In a research study, extracts from the seeds of the common alder have been found to be active against all the eight pathogenic bacteria against which they were tested, which included E coli and MRSA.

Don't Forget to Use Your Club Discounts

Just present your club membership card (it may be worth checking beforehand whether a discount will apply to your intended purchase).



10% off most items, except power tools.



10% off all timber and finishes

Your Committee

Dave H (*Chairman*)

chairman@madturners.co.uk

Andy R (*Treasurer*)

treasurer@madturners.co.uk

Ray F (*Communications Secretary*)

secretary@madturners.co.uk

Colin C (*Hands-On Co-ordinator*)

Steve A (*Committee member*)

David P (*Committee member*)

If you have anything you would like to share through this newsletter, or have any ideas of what you would like to see included, please let me know by emailing me at <mailto:newsletter@madturners.co.uk>.

Thanks, Dave H