



Welcome to the 1st March newsletter.

It was great seeing everyone at the Cross Barn last Thursday. We meet next on Thursday, **26th March at 7:30** at the Cross Barn, Odiham as usual. Our guest will be Marco Angelo from Hampshire Rustic Furniture. More detail on that nearer the time.

Firstly, though, thanks and congratulations (and in one way commiserations) to member Malcolm MacAdam, for stepping into the breach and delivering a wonderful presentation, on both his superb table and font, and his slight mishap with a table saw.

Malcolm's presentation is available to view on the SFWW YouTube channel [here](#).

The tool and timber sale raised **£982** for our fellowship to help fund other events, which is outstanding. Our thanks and appreciation to everyone who donated or purchased tools and timber. The surplus unsold items were donated to the Hook Shed to help them get started.

Osmo Polyx vs Rubio Monocoat vs Odie's Oil

It was a pity that Rubio Monocoat had to cry off last Thursday, but it couldn't be helped. And this was after Julian Gall had done some background prep, having had the brilliant idea of asking AI to analyse the safety sheets for the three products above and give a comparison of their approaches, distinguishing between genuine chemistry and "marketing speak".

Here is the conclusion. It would have been great to have been able to use in it conversation with the Rubio Monocoat team, but actually it gives invaluable insight anyway. (NB That this isn't intended to be a qualitative review, so there is no 'winner'. Those wanting a view could always ask the editor, if you want your ears ringing afterwards and to learn some new words.)

*These three products are far more different than their marketing — which positions all of them as "natural oil finishes" — suggests. Rubio Monocoat is functionally a **thin-film 2K polyurethane** disguised as an oil finish, using industrial isocyanate chemistry to create covalent bonds with wood. Odie's Oil is the closest to a **traditional drying oil finish**, relying on heat-bodied tung oil's natural reactivity and wax for protection, with no synthetic chemistry involved. Osmo Polyx-Oil is a **solvent-borne hard wax coating** that uses semi-drying vegetable oils for penetration and crystallized plant waxes for surface hardness.*

The practical implications follow directly from the chemistry. Rubio offers the fastest full cure (5 days), genuine chemical bonding to wood, and zero VOC — but at the highest cost, with limited pot life and a very flat appearance that some find lifeless. Odie's offers the simplest application (one component, no mixing) and the most "natural" formulation — but with the longest cure time and the least scientific transparency about its ingredients. Osmo delivers the best optical clarity, least yellowing, and most consistent independent test results — but requires two coats, significant solvent exposure, and produces the highest VOC emissions of the three.

*No single product is chemically superior. The choice depends on whether you prioritise cure speed and chemical durability (Rubio), simplicity and natural ingredients (Odie's), or optical quality and proven long-term performance (Osmo). What woodworkers should understand is that the differences between these products are not incremental variations on a theme — they are **fundamentally different chemical systems** that happen to produce superficially similar results on wood.*

If anyone would like to see the full analysis, you can find it here <https://claude.ai/public/artifacts/41b7ef8b-aca9-4f9d-a18e-404daac005ff>. If you have some finishing to do – particularly for external timber - you will be aware that nowadays all finishes are very expensive. A bit of research is always handy to make sure your money isn't wasted, and this piece is a beneficial addition to that research.



Experience Day Opportunities To Improve your Skills

There are some Experience Days looming up, with a few spaces left. These courses *never* get less than 90% positive feedback, and are priced to be something like a quarter of what the equivalent commercial courses would cost. Many members say that they are a key benefit of SFWW membership, so take advantage!

A bit of detail:

Marquetry Experience Days: 7th– 8th March; 3 Spaces available

Join Aidan McEvoy at the Farnham School of Furniture Making (see below, too!) on this exclusive course to learn how to create remarkable images in marquetry. In two days over this weekend, you will become proficient in the discipline, creating two fine items for your home.

Dovetail Bookends Experience Day: 10th March; 3 Spaces available

Adrian Dee leads this practical day to make two attractive bookends in Oak using dovetail joints to create an excellent and useful resource for your home or family. First-rate if you need coaching in dovetail joints!

Adrian was formerly Head of Design and Technology at Alton Sixth Form College and is an accomplished teacher and course leader.

Restoration Experience Day – 24th March; 3 Spaces available

SFWW Fellow and former Chairman Roger Hardwick will help you restore an older piece of furniture that is in need of some TLC (Tender Loving Care).

Always popular, this course enables you to learn restoration techniques first-hand from an expert. And at the same time, you can restore a piece of your furniture from the family heritage that needs help.

To enrol on any of these courses please go to www.sfww.org.uk/experience-day-tickets.

Royal Visitor to Farnham School of Furniture Making

We are thrilled to report that Aidan and Laura hosted HRH Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh on his recent visit to Farnham in its guise of a Craft Town.



Whilst at the workshop, the Duke met students and tutors participating in the professional furniture-making courses run by FSFM.

Renowned for excellence in wood-based crafts, FSFM is attracting international attention for its reputation providing outstanding leadership in a wide range of carpentry skills.



When you join our Marquetry Experience Days on 7-8 March at FSFM and learn a new woodworking competence, you will be at the same exceptional facility, and led by the same Aidan McEvoy, the Principal of FSFM. A great opportunity.

To enrol on this course please go to www.sfww.org.uk/experience-day-tickets.

WhatsApp

If you are reading this, we assume that you have access to the internet, and therefore (in theory at least) to WhatsApp. The SFWW WhatsApp group gives a forum for members to discuss woodworking, opportunities for cheap stuff on ebay/facebook marketplace etc, and anything else that may be interesting. The Special Interest sub-groups allow discussion of more specific topics.

But also, the group is our primary means of communicating with the membership, and it's a valuable resource for everyone. There's no cost, it isn't intrusive and it's confined to members. So if you haven't joined the group, could we urge you to do so? If you don't have the app, the downloader for Windows is [here](#). For your phone, you can get it from whichever appstore you have access to.

That's it for this week. Bring on spring!

