

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

September 8, 2023

Apothecary – The Apothecary is open Sunday through Thursday.

Blacksmith – The Blacksmith shop is open Thursday through Tuesday.

Bookbinder – I am happy to report that Volunteer Bookbinder Bob Lyon is an enormous blessing! Bob has jumped right in and fits seamlessly into the flow of our little bindery. Dale Dippre describes Bob as one of the most knowledgeable people he has ever known on the subject of 18th-century bookbinding, and we are happily basking in the lessons he gives. He also has a wicked sense of humor, and you can often hear peals of laughter coming from upstairs when he is around!



Bob Lyon trims paper for the Homeschool Program presented twice in September.

The Bookbinder is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Cabinetmaker –At long last, Bill completed his copy of an 18th-century English writing table based on an original displayed in the Randolph House. This table looks simple, but that is very deceptive. With multiple adjusting mechanisms and a complex writing drawer, it can be used by one person sitting or standing, or by two people - each with their own adjustable writing surface. The drawer space also includes two secret drawers and a flip-out quadrant drawer for storing quills and ink wells. Meanwhile, John continues to progress on his cellaret as he finished framing in the spaces and guide systems for its drawers.

Clockwise from top left:

The completed mahogany writing table.

With the top angled back and the writing drawer open, the table is now set for two people, each with their own work surface.

The table with its rising top for the sitter to read, write, or draw in comfort.

The table with its double rising top becomes a standing desk.



The Cabinetmaker is open Thursday through Monday.

Carpenter – The Carpenter is open, weather permitting, Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Cook – The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Cooper – We continue to work on tubs to complete orders for two other museums. We also presented workshops for home schoolers these past two Tuesdays.



A tub under construction.

The Cooper is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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Engraver – The Engraving shop is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Farming – The Farming Trade is open at Ewing Field Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Fifes and Drums – The Fifes and Drums will perform Wednesday through Friday at 4:40 pm in Market Square, Saturday at 12:30 pm starting at the Capitol and marching to the Palace, and Saturday at 1 pm on the Play House Stage.

Founder – As usual, the Founders have been trucking along with our CW seals. With their impending due date, the pewter spoons Apprentice Drew has been working on have taken a back seat. Apprentice Leanne cast several brass bobeche: four for our "shell" candlestick and one for our candelabra. Journeyman Mike has begun cleaning those up and says they're looking great.



Rough cast bobeche for the candelabra.

Rough cast bobeches for the shell sticks.

The Foundry is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Gardener – The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmiths are open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Harpichordmaker – The Harpichordmakers are open Sunday and Monday, Thursday through Saturday.

Joiner – The Joiner is open Sunday and Wednesday through Saturday.

Leather Breeches Maker – The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Mason – This week in the Brickyard the crew is starting to work on the site of the kiln to reclaim what Mother Nature has covered. While we wait for the last bricks of the season to dry, ever so slowly it seems, the kiln takes priority. You'll find us meticulously stacking the Clampe over the next few weeks.



Work on the kiln begins!

The Brickyard is open Wednesday through Sunday, weather permitting.

Military Programs – Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – This week, we welcomed our fall semester NIAHD intern, Rachel, to the shop. Rachel has already made impressive progress on her first project - a sewing roll - and is beginning to learn the shop's interpretation as she informally responds to questions from guests as she works. Janea continues experimental work on a new "undress" style of jacket and petticoat, which is based on an image from the CW collection. Rebecca's stays have been fit-checked by Master Tailor Mark and, after just a couple of tweaks, will be ready for boning in a day or two. Kate has nearly finished the 1793 stays for the Lanah Sawyer presentation; she has also been researching shawls from the late 1780s and early 1790s as she looks towards the next phase of that project.



It's the week of the stays! Kate's 1793 stays on the left and Rebecca's early 1770 stay on the right.

The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Musket Range – We recently had the lead removed from the berm at the Musket Range for the first time. MT2 the company we chose to do the work, came out and performed the reclamation project. They removed 4845 pounds of lead for recycling. They then replaced the berm. We will continue adding lead until our next reclamation project, which is slated for 2030.



New face on the berm and a barrel full of musket and fowler balls.

The Musket Range is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

The Printing Office – The Printer is open Sundays through Thursdays.

Shoemaker – The work continues as Victoria is nearly finished with a pair of slippers for Josh Graml, and Nicole is nearly halfway through a pair of channel pumps with overshoes for Mark Hutter. Val has nearly completed a pair of common shoes for himself. Val has also been in correspondence with the curator at the Carroll County Farm Museum in Westminster Maryland regarding a cache of concealed shoes that was recently donated to their institution.



Val looking for an instep leather to get a last up to the proper width.

The Shoemaker is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

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Silversmith – Megan is engraving her fish trowel and working on her tray. Chris is continuing work on her tray and has started to chase a bottle ticket. Bobbie has been making wire for the homeschool classes and making more medallions. Preston is working on a fleet of bowls and polishing jewelry. George continues to hammer ingots and draw wire.



Megan's Fish trowel.

Chris' Bottle ticket.

Bobbie's Medallions.

Preston's Bowls



The Silversmith Shop is open Sunday through Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Tailor – The Tailor is open Sunday through Thursday.

Tin Plate Worker – “For by Hammer and Hand all arts do stand”, having traditional Blacksmiths as neighbors is an immeasurable asset for the tin shop. Master Ken Schwarz has finished work on a sinking hammer and started on a swaging tool for the Tin Shop. The polished hammerhead is ready for hafting, something that will be done in the Tin Shop as the handles’ styles follow the preferences of the users. It is bimetal in that the iron body and the welded steel faces are different metals, as it should be for the 18th century. The "swage" will be copied from one in our collection that was given to the Foundation by Judy and Bill McMillen. We did not yet have this specific tool in the shop, and both its style and the swaging pattern it will form in the tinplate is appropriate for the shop’s period of activity and the 18th century in general. This tool became necessary to fill out an order for a set of plate covers for Mount Vernon. The small two-bead swage pattern will add rigidity and impart a touch of style to the otherwise plain covers.



Above: Hammer head ready for hafting.

To the right: Ken drawing the swaging tool from the original in the collection.



The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – The Weaver is open Sunday through Wednesday and Saturday.

Wheelwright –After a long absence, our Junior Wheelwright Liam has returned. This week, he set forth on making dowels for upcoming jobs.



Young Liam dowelling away.

The Wheelwright is open Sunday through Friday.

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Wigmaker – Greetings! Our new Intern, Elias, started last week and has already begun to practice the art of weaving hair. He will be working with Edith on a long term project to produce his own wig. Benton has begun to work on a new wig for himself as well. Debbie continues to weave human hair for Apprentice Leather Breeches Maker Wilson and Edith has started an outline for a display wig. As always, please reach out to us with any hair related needs or questions.



Elias's practice weaving.

Benton hand knotting.

The Wigmakers are open Sunday through Thursday.

Director – Ted will have open office hours: Tuesday 10-12, Thursday 11-1, Friday 12-1:30
As a reminder, my office is above the Weaver's Shop.

The Mechanick's Adviser is a Colonial Williamsburg Department of Historic Trades & Skills publication.