

# “THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

## for February 17 - 23

### Armoury:

**Blacksmith** – “Well, we spied the first crocus, and you know the saying: ‘February Spring makes the anvil ring.’ We have officially thrown open the windows and begun sweating again. In the works here are hammers and a hand vise, sword guards, slide bolts, door pulls, nails, bench dogs, nails, spoons, nails, and an encumbrance in the form of a ten-foot section of handrail. All’s well that falls well at the foot of the anvil. Unless it’s a commander for the Brickyard; that was like banding the anvil itself.”

**Tin Shop** – “What good are atoms if they cannot be quadrated by the will of a Tinsmith? This week, find such a brazen creation there: an Atomizer, for the Foundry! Better yet, atoms arranged to hold coffee and sauce; find coffee pots and sauce pans alike!”

**Cabinetmaker** – “Hello from the Anthony Hay Shop. It’s been a busy week with Training and wrapping up projects. Brian has finished turning ebony bell handles for the Silversmiths and continues to fit the legs for the two tripod tea tables. Bill has finished carving the top on the Walker reproduction and is now shaping the underside. John’s drawing for his tool chest is nearly complete, and he continues to refine his dovetailing. Ed and Melanie have roughed out the boards for the harpsichord lid and continue to tune and maintain instruments around town.”

**Carpenter** – “The Carpenters are making repairs to a building at the Brickyard, riving clapboards for repair of other buildings in the Historic Area, and making sheep hurdles for use at the Historic Trades Garden site.”

**Colonial Garden** – “The Gardeners are excited to announce that we have cauliflower that is heading up. A reward for our toil. This week, the first hotbed was filled with the composting manure that has been heating up in the back of our yard. Tomorrow, we make a run for a fresh batch of horse dung for the second hotbed. And while we are on the subject of hotbeds, Bill from the Brickyard has been working on laying up brick for the new hotbed. It is really taking shape and has been a difficult task working around old brickwork leftover from the 19th and 20th centuries.

“Thanks to Charles Gardener for pollarding the sycamore trees. We harvested enough sticks to remake our wattle fences and trellises. We worked on our espaliered fruit trees. They are now two years old, and we hope that the last of the top branches will form this year. We visited the Quarterpath nursery and fertilized our citrus trees that spend the winter in the greenhouse. Thanks to Scott Hemler for his help and collaboration running the modern day orangery! While at the nursery, we did pick up our grafted apple trees to bring back to the Garden. Next year, we hope to be able to begin training them.

“The daffodils are blooming, and our plum trees are budding out. We plant peas tomorrow. It must be spring.”

**Foundry** – “The Foundry is still making hinges for Carter’s Grove, though we’re almost finished with all of the moulding and pouring for the project. The toughest part of moulding a shape like this hinge is finding a way to arrange the patterns so their drafts allow them to fall out of the sand without pulling any sand away. This is called ‘breakout.’ Breakout adds to the amount of filing we have to do afterward. We have tried several arrangements, some working a little better than others, but so far we’ve been pleased with the castings. This image shows the trickiest spot on the patterns to mould.”



**Joiner** – “At the Joinery, the Apprentices are hoping to finish up their tables and hanging cupboards by the end of the week. With these projects behind them, they can tackle the next step of their apprenticeship: MORE tables and hanging cupboards! The Apprentices are all asking themselves whether Groundhog’s Day is over or not...”

**Milliner and Mantua-Maker** – “The Milliners and Mantua-Makers joined the Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers last weekend to present ‘Shuttle, Dye, Stitch.’ This workshop allowed participants to weave their own fabric, dye their yarns, and then use those yarns to embroider the outermost layer of a pocket. Participants ranged in skill from beginner to advanced, and while it seems as though much work was completed, we must admit that this fun-loving group had us in stitches (due to their fiber-loving but ‘warped’ sense of humor). We are dying to see pictures of their finished pockets. This group was a pleasure to work with, and to be truthful, we miss them already; our wheels are already spinning with ideas to make this experience even better next time.”



**Music** – “The Musicians will be performing ‘Music for a New Nation’ at the Palace on Saturday, February 16 as part of Presidents Weekend and are also in rehearsals for the Women’s History Month program, ‘Women in Early Music.’ We recently had a photo shoot at the Palace to include our newest members, Brady Lanier and Karol Steadman. We are planning repertoire now for our spring concert series, themed after the travels of Dr. Charles Burney. We plan to continue supporting the Wythe and Gedy Houses for free flow, and our volunteer, Bill Owen, continues to support the houses and the Cabinetmaker Shop, as well.”

**Silversmith** – “The Shop has been a bit empty this week as Winter Training has begun claiming the Silversmiths. As such, Preston, Chris, Bobbie, and William have all been out of the Shop for most of the week. Before that time, Bobbie finished the ferrule for the bell and got it polished, and Lynn has started to set up the engraving work. Chris has been working on rings and preparation work for a teapot. Preston has been working on several small bowls and a tankard. George has been raising a mug and working on spoons. Parker continues working on his silver beakers, and William continues to practice the engraving for his chatelaine.”

**Wigmaker** – “Greetings from the Wigmakers! Some of you may remember that we traveled to Boston last winter to study an original wig worn by a gentleman named Henry Bromfield, who was a merchant. Well, work has now begun on reproducing this wig! It is what we consider to be a ‘shop project,’ in that all of our staff members have a hand in the reconstruction. So far, Betty has constructed the outline of the wig, and Debbie created the hand knotted mesh base. Those layers have been stitched together, as well as covered with a linen fabric. Meanwhile, weaving has begun as well. The wig is made out of horsehair of several different lengths, and everyone is contributing to that. Sara has also taken on the task of frizzing the shorter lengths of hair at the top of the wig. Meanwhile, in the John Coke Office, spring has seemed to come early, with a variety of new requests and maintenance. While everyone is pitching in as always, Regina has been particularly busy keeping all of our interpreters looking their best, especially as we prepare for new programming.”