

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

September 1, 2023

Apothecary – The Apothecary is open Sunday through Thursday.

Blacksmith – This past week, with the Master and Journeymen away, the Apprentices were left to play. All three worked on HL hinges in preparation for the many upcoming building projects. HL hinges are a staple of 18th-century English hardware. Apart from hinges, Josh worked on the gridiron. Alex worked on a cleaver. And Broadus on a cooking fork. As always, all's well that falls well at the base of the anvil.



The work of the Apprentices.

The Blacksmith shop is open Thursday through Tuesday.

Bookbinder – Dutch Gilt Paper, as it is known now, was not Dutch but most likely imported from Italy and Germany and popular in English children's books in the 18th century. It was either imported from the Netherlands or 'Dutch' was a corruption of Deutsch. At the time, it was called 'Dutch Floral Boards,' 'emboss'd paper,' or 'gilt and flowered paper,' among other names. The Gilt was made from "a very malleable alloy of 11 parts copper and 2 of zinc, beaten into thin leaves, and used as a cheap imitation of gold leaf. Not common in the world now, our Volunteer Bob Lyon found a place that keeps the craft alive in the Orkney Islands, U.S. It has been informative and fun to see what a new book done in Gilt looks like, compared to its older one. We have found several examples of the paper not only on children's books but also on a 1771 Almanac printed by Williamsburg Printers Purdie and Dixon belonging to St. George Tucker. The older book in the picture shows a children's book, circa 1775, with the Dutch Gilt faded, and what it would have looked like when it was new. We will be exploring how it was made and will keep you posted.



A children's book circa 1775 covered in Gilt sits next to a modern incarnation.



1771 Almanac by Purdie and Dixon covered in gilt.

The Bookbinder is open Tuesday through Saturday.

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Cabinetmaker – Things don't look too different in the Hay Shop this week, but projects are progressing nicely. Bill is in the middle of varnishing his mahogany writing table with all its moving parts disassembled to make that long process a little easier. John, meanwhile, is making parts to support the drawers and guide their movements in his walnut cellarette. He has also been teaching our volunteer, Chris, the ins, and outs of mortise and tenon joinery.



The mahogany writing table was scattered around the shop, with the cellarette rising in the background.

John instructs Chris in chopping a mortise.

The Cabinetmaker is open Thursday through Monday.

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

Cook – We have been playing with Deceits over in the Palace Kitchen this week. An 18th century Deceit is the equivalent of today's "Is it cake?" viral videos: a dish meant to look like something other than what it really is. Beef In The Sausage Fashion, which are flattened beef steaks filled with sausage stuffing, rolled and stewed to look like sausages, as well as Pigeon au Poire (pigeon to look like a pear), have both made their way to the table. Pigeon au Poire is always a treat when guests come in and think it's a "pear" when really it is a whole stuffed pigeon wrapped in breadcrumbs, pear-like, with its leg sticking out of the top as a stem. During a three-hour 18th-century dinner, it's nice to have some edible whimsy on the table for the guests of the Governor to enjoy.



Pigeon au Poire made by Dom.

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

Cooper – The Coopers have been busy of late working on items to fill a number of orders for other museums. A photo of some of the tubs we made for one of the orders is included.



Tubs made of Atlantic White Cedar with iron hoops.

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

Engraver – This week, the Engravers have been busy with apprenticeship projects. William has been working on cutting brass rings with mourning designs. Emma is well into her required drawing. As well as working with some brass and practicing on pewter. Lynn is working on two special projects. One project is for the Wheelwrights, and one regarding the Brafferton School. Photos will be presented when they are done.



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 – The Founders spent their Professional Development Day rearranging and cleaning the Foundry last week. Our back room has again been turned into a usable interpretive space, so come check it out! Many thanks to Apprentice Engraver William and Journeyman Joiner Scott for some of the heavy lifting. As for our work, we've continued working on the CW seals and, to give our muscles a break, started on some pewter spoons, too. Most excitingly, Lob has returned! We're very happy to have him back.



The newly refreshed molding room.



Mike is back!

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

Gardener – This week saw the Gardeners identifying caterpillars. While all these juvenile visitors will eat and damage plants, some species are important as pollinators (once they metamorphize into butterflies), while others are heavy feeders that must be eliminated. Black swallowtail caterpillars (*Papilio polyxenes*) and monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) caterpillars are left unmolested as much as possible-though sometimes, it is necessary to move these larvae to protected locations. Southern armyworm moth (*Spodoptera eridania*) caterpillars do damage to such a wide range of vegetables in the garden that they are squished when encountered.



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1 *Papilio polyxenes* caterpillars are also known as parsnip worms.

2 *Danaus plexippus* caterpillar on milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*).

3 An ill-fated *Spodoptera eridania* caterpillar.

The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Gunsmith – Richard is wrapping up the rifle build with the carving and engraving complete. Next is bluing the barrel and finishing the stock. Darrin's pistol barrels are ready for reaming, and then the outside will be filed and polished. Brad is building his first flintlock, which is quite a project when it's the first one.

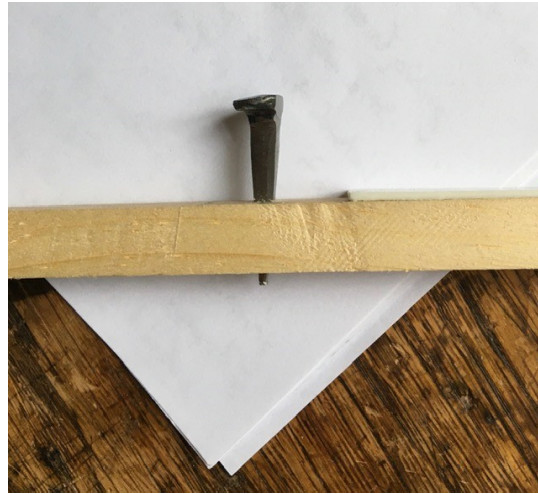


The carving behind the cheekpiece and behind the tang.

Darrin's pistol barrels are still in one tube, ready for reaming.

The Gunsmith is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Harpsichordmaker – Greetings from the harpsichord corner... on the harpsichord, the keys pivot around a thin iron pin. We first drill the hole for this pin in both the key and the fulcrum rail. The hole in the lever must be opened so that the lever can pivot. Here's the secret trick: a shaped nail, gently hammered into the hole, crushes the soft pine fibers to form the hole into a V-shaped one. It doesn't take much work and requires little or no cleanup with cutting tools. Come see us as we fit up the new keyboard!



Balance Hole Nail Opener.



Balance Pins in New Key Pivot Holes.

The Harpsichordmakers are open Sunday and Monday, Thursday through Saturday.

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Joiner – This week, we are saying goodbye to our Journeyman Scott Krogh. After 11 years with the Foundation, the last seven in the Joinery, Scott will start a new chapter of his life with his family in Alabama. We will miss his hard work, humor, and knowledge, and we wish him the best in all his future endeavors. Thank you, Scott, for your excellent work and good company. Scott has labored hard this week to finish the construction of and glaze (add the glass panes to) the sash so he can hang both doors on the front of his corner cupboard, completing the main construction of the body of the piece.



Scott, with his food safe, reproduced from one in our museum gallery. Scott with his finished William Finnie House mantel in the St. George Tucker House.



Scott with fellow (then) apprentices Peter Hudson and Amanda Doggett.

Scott and Peter with corner cupboard carcass.

The Joiner is open Sunday and Wednesday through Saturday.
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Leather Breeches Maker – We would like to introduce our newest apprentice, Wilson! He started in the shop at the end of May and has been sailing along in his first level. Wilson is a recent Mary Washington College graduate with a historic preservation degree and a minor in museum studies. He is a wonderful addition and has helped the shop achieve great things. Watch a new video about our shop on the CWF YouTube channel and see him in action.



Wilson is working on his second pair of breeches.

The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

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Mason – The Brickyard is open Wednesday through Sunday, weather permitting.

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

Milliner and Mantua-maker – The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open

Musket Range –The Musket Range is open (Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday)

The Printing Office – The Press is working off copies of pages two and three of the most recent Virginia Gazette while our guests look on. David Wilson has made great progress distributing the types from page one and has two columns set for page five.



Newly set portion of page five.



Stitching of books going to William Prentiss for sale.

The Printer is open Sundays through Thursdays.

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

Silversmith – Megan has been planishing her matching set of mugs and working on her tray. Chris is chasing the bouge of her tray, and she and Bobbie are making templates for our fall jewelry class. Bobbie continues making the buttons for the medallions while Preston polishes them and works on his silver bowls. George has been hammering out ingots. The shop visited Collections and would like to thank Tina and Eric for allowing us to study their mace.



Studying the mace in Collection.



Megan's matching mugs.



Preston's bowls.

Chris' tray.

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

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Tailor – There is plenty of summer weather left here in the Tidewater! Journeyman McCarty has been mending some well-worn summer garments to make them last till cooler weather arrives. 18th-century tailors in Williamsburg would have been doing much the same at this time of year; it is too late in the season to have new summer garments made but too early to place orders for fall or winter garments.



Intern Percy Autera is working on a pair of lightweight summer breeches.

The Tailor is open Sunday through Thursday.

Tin Plate Worker – 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 – The Velocipede is almost complete! Murphy has finished the paint and varnish and has assembled it! A few more tweaks, and she's ready for the customer. The Wagon refit is moving along, with Ayinde removing the headboard and crates and Paul repairing the fore undercarriage.



Top: Velocipede varnished and assembled.
Bottom: Wagon repair in progress!

Front wheel in repair.

The Wheelwright is open Sunday through Friday.

Wigmaker – Greetings! Maintenance continues as the Summer winds down. Edith has nearly finished Mr. Wythe's latest wig. Debbie has pivoted on the base she has created, and it will now be worn by Apprentice Leather Breeches Maker Wilson if all goes well. Benton has been deciphering Alice M. Earle's *Two Centuries of Costume in America* (1903). We bid a fond farewell to Stella this past week, but we will be bringing on a new NIAHD Intern, Elias, for the next couple of semesters. On the unusual side of things, this week Edith had the opportunity to plastic wrap and tape the heads of both Mr. Washington's for better wig fittings. As always, please reach out to us with any related needs or questions.



Mr. Wythe's wig, nearly complete

New base for Apprentice Wilson

Edith wrapping Ron's head with plastic and tape

The Wigmakers are open Sunday through Thursday.

Director –

I am happy to announce the following HTS team members have achieved level increases in their 5-level curriculum for our department:

Tim Logue, Apprentice Tailor, is moving to level four.

Mary Lawrence Herbert, Apprentice Carpenter, is moving to level three.

Wilson LeCount, Apprentice Leather Breeches Maker, is moving to level two.

Please join me in congratulating them on these milestones.

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.

Editor: Ted Boscana

Contributors: Blacksmith – Broadus Thompson; Cabinetmaker – Bill Pavlak; Cooper – Jonathan Hallman; Cook – Abbey Shoaf; Engraver – Lynn Zelesnikar; Founder – Leanne Bellouny; Harpsichordmaker – Ed Wright; Gardener – Marc Nucup; Gunsmith – Darrin McDonal; Leather Breeches Maker – Emma Cross; Silversmith – Megan Cantwell; Wheelwright – Paul Zelesnikar; Wigmaker – Debbie Turpin