

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *December 23, 2022*

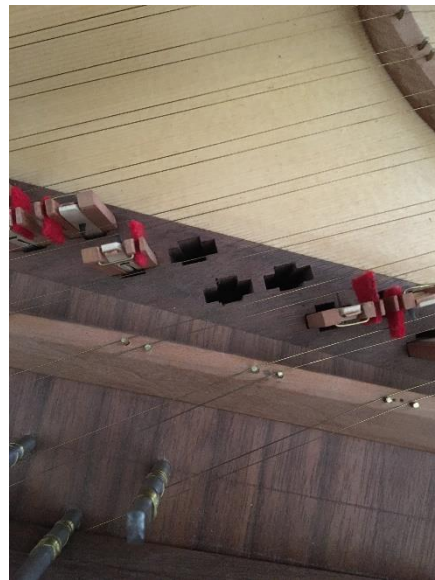
### *Anthony Hay Shop:*

*Cabinetmaker* – John and Bill continue with their preparations for January this week, carving and sculpting samples of work and devising the processes they want to demonstrate. Bill has started in on some mahogany shells like those on the bureau table, and John has fabricated a sample foot and base molding block, pictures below. With about one month left to prepare, we think we just might be ready on time. Jeremy has gotten the legs for his table turned out on the lathe and is now working toward making the rest of the frame for his drop leaf table. It'll be standing on its own before you know it!



*Harpsichordmaker* – Ed and Melanie have been continuing their work preparing the register for the start of their Harris 1764 Spinnet. The register is built by carefully cutting grooves into strips of walnut that are then cut into blocks glued together for the sleeves for the jacks. This serves as a guide system for the plucking mechanism to travel smoothly at the back of the key levers. We also had Brandon stop by to photograph the 2022 Spinnet. Ed is continuing his research work studying the Harris family. Melanie is studying soundboard decoration in her research time. We wish you all a very happy and healthy Holiday Season!





The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichordmaker are open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

*Apothecary* – The Apothecary Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

*Armoury:*

*Blacksmith* – The Blacksmith Shop will be open Daily.

*Tinsmith* – The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

*Brickmaker* – This week in the Brickyard, the crew steeled themselves to start breaking down the kiln. Layer by layer, the kiln is unstacked, and as more bricks are moved, a new stack is created near the kiln. This stack will be our casing for next year's kiln, so it needs to be close to the footprint of the structure without being too claustrophobic. Nothing quite puts you in the holiday spirit like unstacking and restacking bricks! Happy Holidays to one and all!



**The Brickyard will be open Monday through Thursday, weather permitting.**

***Carpenter*** – This week, the Carpenters are plugging away at the siding on the frame storage building. We built the new scaffolding to get to the gable ends, so now we can finish the front and back of the building’s siding before we move up the gables. We plan on installing a couple shuttered windows in the gable, too. That’s for another week, though.

**The Carpenters will be at the new Historic Farming site, Ewing Field, Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.**

***Colonial Garden*** – The Historic Garden saw the return of the divided lights for our third hot bed, freshly mended and painted. The covers will help keep the weather out and keep the heat in later in the winter. A big Thank You to Gentry and his team in the Paint Shop.



The freshly painted divided lights in place



Check out the sharpness of those lines!

The return of the divided lights were none too soon with frigid temperatures and gusting winds anticipated by the time of reading by the subscribers to the Adviser. The Gardeners have brought out extra bell glasses and hand lights to protect even more planting. Canvas has been secured over potted plants as well as broccoli and cauliflower (*Brassica oleracea*). Long straw has been packed about the exposed carrot greens and pine straw now covers several beds as well as our overwintering snap dragons (*Antirrhinum majus*). Some particularly cold-hardy plants will, of course, remain relatively unaffected.



Garden secured for winter weather



Secale cereale straw covering our *Daucus carota*



Cabbage (yet another *Brassica oleracea*) welcomes the cold!

When our bell glasses are exposed to sub-freezing temperatures on the outside and moisture on the inside, water vapor condenses as frost on the inside surface of the glass. Frost can produce patterns as ice crystal growth is affected by imperfections, scratches, and dirt on the glass.



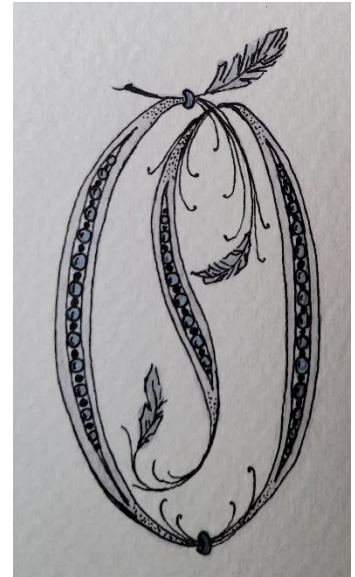
Frost can form crystal dendrites. Pretty!

**The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.**

**Cooper – The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

**Engraver** – This week has been pretty productive for the Engraving Shop. First off, thank you to the Silversmith for loaning Chris and Megan while William was away for a couple of days. I have been making some headway on the Bodleian plate engraving this week and continuing to draw up some ornate lettering. I have fit in a couple of custom orders and a retirement gift, as well. Looks like we will be assisting the Wheelwrights on marking a Paul Bunyan-sized protractor. We will be working with Wheelwright Apprentice Murphy on this one. We love it when the unusual stuff pops up! This will be a good one. William is working

on checking off heraldry. He has been designing a coat of arms and engraving it reversed on copper, so it can be printed. We will post photos soon. Today (Thursday) has been a bust, too rainy and too dark, so we are getting some sketching in.



**The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

*Foodways* – We have had a busy but exciting couple of weeks at the Palace Kitchen! Last Sunday, under the grand guidance of Barbara, we reinstated the butchering program that has been on hiatus the last few years. The weather was lovely, the Guests were thoroughly enthralled, and we had friends from all over CW come by to spend time, and participate in, the day’s activities. Four Ossabaw hogs were butchered down during the afternoon. Three of them have been packed in salt in our smoke house, where they will stay until we prepare to smoke them in March. The fourth we have kept fresh under modern refrigeration, so that we can use the cuts for recipes in the Kitchen. From all of us at Historic Foodways, we want to thank everyone involved in bringing back this program with such complete success. We could not have asked for a better day with friends, colleagues, and of course, our hogs.

Later in the week, Frank and Abbey undertook the creation of another coffin pasty for the Governor's table. This time, the coffin was styled to celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas, featuring holly leaves and berries, situated on a six-pointed star. It will try to stay out on the table until the New Year, if anyone would like to come take a gander.

Speaking of New Year's, just following the start of the new year, the Kitchen will be heading off to Jolly Ol' England to spend some time exploring and learning as much as possible about our 18th-century English sister-kitchens. Happy Holidays, from all of us over at the Palace Kitchen!



**The Historic Foodways staff will be in the Palace Kitchen Sunday through Thursday.**

***Foundry* – The Foundry will be open Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday.**

***Gunsmith* – The Gunsmith Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

***Historic Farming*** – The Farmers have been doing some basic woodworking this past week, and Apprentice Kevin Tobias has made his first ox goad. The goad is simply a long stick, preferably made from hickory, that is used in coordination with voice commands and body position to move the oxen where they are needed. The goad acts to cue them by where it is touched on their body. This includes the command to do nothing, which is the goad at rest as Kevin has it in the photo below.



Kevin Tobias shares how to use a goad while a Guest assumes the role of an ox.



Duke and Dan, one of the finest teams of oxen at CW that Farmer Ed has had the honor to work for nine years.

Photo by Fred Blystone

**Prentis Field will be open Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.**

***Joinery*** – The Joinery will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

***Military Programs*** – Following a busy Yule Log and Grand Illumination season, Military Programs has been very busy between drilling on cannon for our upcoming Christmas Guns program, to continuing to clean up the Guardhouse area. We would like to extend a hearty thanks to the members of “In Defense of Liberty”, who helped us bring those events to life! We would also like to thank HA Purchasing for helping us to get a load of wood to keep the Guardhouse warm through the winter season. Speaking of winter, we will be interpreting at the Guardhouse over the winter season; however, if the opportunity presents itself, we may slide into the Magazine if conditions allow. Currently, the Magazine is having its ceiling removed, but once that's done, we are hoping to be able to interpret the process of change and discovery. Military Programs has also begun the process of discussing cooperative programming for the future with the Virginia Frontier Culture Museum. We are excited for the prospect of being able to bring the eastern and western soldier perspectives during the Revolutionary War to our Guests in the coming years.

**Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.**

***Milliner and Mantua-maker*** – Our annual four-week wedding gown program concluded this Sunday with a completed sack gown and a very tasty surprise! We were quite pleased at how well we budgeted our time this year, successfully allocating it across all four weeks to ensure that we weren't in a rush at the end to get everything finished. The gown was complete just after 3:30pm, which gave Guests plenty of time to return at the end of the day to see the result. We estimate that it took about 45 to 50 hours total. Only about 15 hours of that was in the actual construction of the gown and the petticoat. The remaining time was in the detail work, which included adding the fringed edging and gathering, arranging, and stitching the trim into place. Based on a portrait from 1769, the gown is destined to appear again very soon as part of our March *Women's History Month* program, which will highlight fashion from that year. "Disaster Strikes!" will be held in the Hennage Auditorium March 11, 18, and 25, and April 1.

In the middle of the day, generous Friends of Trades Ray and Gina delivered a surprise cake to celebrate the completion of another year's gown. Our Mantua-makers' eyes very much appreciated the detail



that went into coordinating the color of the frosting to the color of our gown. And how did they guess we needed the dose of sugar at that very moment to get us through to the end? We are very touched by their thoughtfulness and very grateful, as ever, for their encouragement and support.



**The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Sunday through Thursday.**

***Musket Range*** – This week, Scott Bradford has restarted work on a new Rifle Workshop to potentially add to our repertoire on the site. We are hoping this will turn into a workshop day of the week, or special event down the road.

The Range continues to watch applicants come in to help bolster our ranks. We need two people to help bring us up to normal staff level, so if you know someone interested, now is the best time ever to get in! Finally, the Range is in what is typically our biggest couple of weeks of the year. We are pulling out the heater and the hot hands to help get us through this weekend! We really want to thank the folks of Military Programs for helping us pull through this time.

**The Musket Range is open Friday through Tuesday, with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm, and 3pm. On Christmas Day, there will be sessions at 11am and 1:30pm. The Range will continue to be open on its normal days throughout the Holiday season, and it will not close over the winter.**

### ***Printer and Bookbinder:***

***Printing Office*** – Kudos to Dave and Chad for their Livestream this past week. For those who missed it, you may find it both on Facebook and YouTube at “Colonial Williamsburg, Trades Tuesday: Printing a Newspaper.”

**The Printing Office will be open Sunday, Monday, Friday, and Saturday.**

***Bindery*** – Happy Christmas to All from the Bookbindery!

The new year promises to be an exciting one as we expand on research that was brought to light by our former Intern, Mary Hannah Grier. Mary uncovered an intriguing entry in the Hunter Daybook, which is housed at the University of Virginia. The passage revealed that Peyton Randolph bought a book called *Millenium Hall*, presumably for his wife. *Millenium Hall* explores the idea of a female utopia in which all women have access to education, a trade, or craft to better themselves by, while holding all property in common.

The author, Sarah Scott, was a member of the Bluestockings, a group of women who believed in female equality, education, and economic justice. They were also active in social issues such as prison and health care reform. An interesting blurb I came across about the Bluestockings is that they did not believe that women and men should retire to separate areas after dinner as was typical of the time, nor did they spend that time at frivolities such as playing cards. Instead, they read literature, and held engaging and illuminating conversations about politics, current events, art, and social issues of their time.

Can you see why it is interesting to me that Randolph bought this for his wife?



Yes, I did go and purchase a pair of clocked blue stockings from Tarpley's. And yes, I will continue to research this interesting subject and bring my findings to you. Cheers!

**The Bookbindery will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

**Public Leather Works** – The Public Leather Works staff will be working Sunday through Thursday.

**Shoemaker** – The Shoemakers will be working at the Public Leather Works Tuesday through Saturday.

**Silversmith** – Happy Holidays to all this winter season from the Silversmith Shop! Megan continues planishing her bowl and working on filing and chasing the handle to her fish trowel. Chris continues work on her tray and has been engraving some trade silver. Bobbie has been working on the rim to another tray and a miniature punch bowl. Preston has been busily working on multiple bowls and has prepared more silver for the retail stores. George is filing and forging out the ingots he cast and making more bracelets. Research continues on trade silver.



Megan's fish trowel handle



Chris' trade silver



Bobbie's tray rim and some trade silver



Preston's bowls



George's bracelet blanks made from hand cast and drawn ingots

**The Silversmith Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

Department of Historic Trades and Skills

Volume 8, Issue 44

***Tailor*** – The Tailors celebrated the anniversary of a favorite reference this week! On December 18th, 1774, Mr. William Cocke lists 28 yards of Leopard Velvaret (Velvet) in his Williamsburg shop. The fashion for leopard spotted velvet in the 18th century began in the 1760s. While the origins of wearing spots begin with the great cat itself, man donning fabrics painted, printed, or woven in imitation of the leopard's pattern goes back at least to the ancient Egyptians. The 18th century viewed the pattern as historic and heroic, thus decidedly masculine.



It is no surprise to find it listed in a Williamsburg storehouse. Throughout the city, the very best of London's fashion was ever available. While Manchester's velvets would not be a choice for your summer clothing, they would be perfect for the upcoming Christmas ball.



This would be one of the busiest times of year for Tailor shops. With the approaching social season and coming cold, there was plenty of demand for London's newest fashion and warm clothing. Velvet was both a fashionable and durable choice for menswear. Wool, mohair, and cotton velvets are commonly seen in clothing descriptions of male servants. But for the man on the prowl this season, we recommend you swing by the Shop to see if we have any leopard spots left on the shelf.

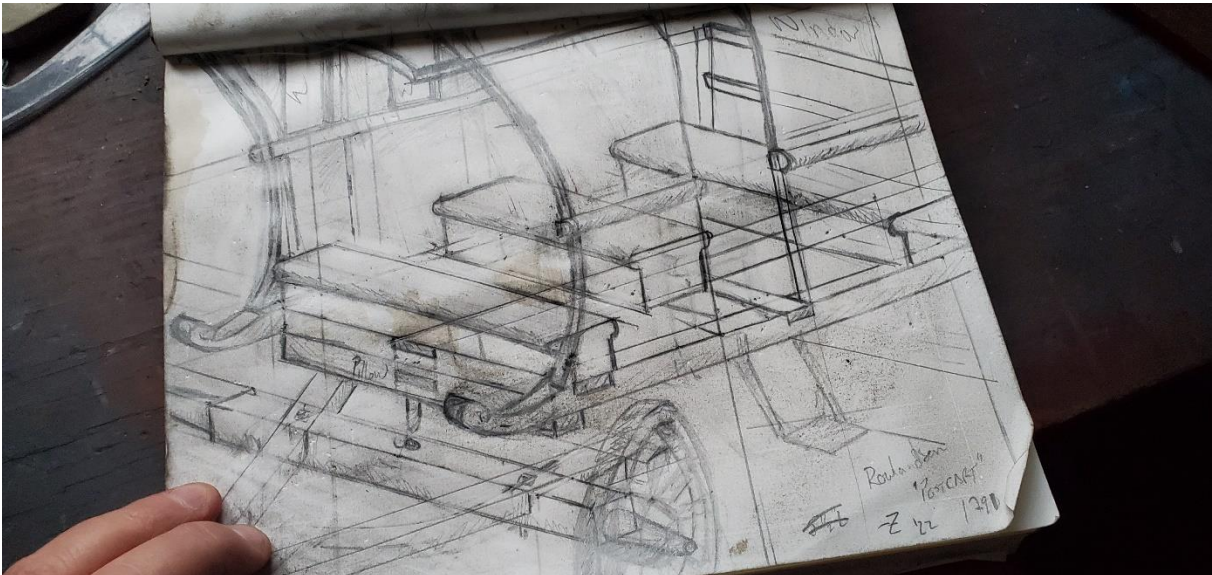
**The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday, and Wednesday through Saturday.**

*Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing* – Over the past few weeks, I have been working on spinning flax again. After my first foray into the fiber, I'm well and truly hooked. While each fiber has its own unique spinning requirements, there's just something about flax that sticks in my brain. Perhaps it's the challenge. Perhaps it's the knowledge that humans have been utilizing flax for nearly 50,000 years. Whatever the case may be, linen has quickly become my favorite fiber to spin. Once I have four full bobbins, I'll be testing out some dye recipes. Dyeing on cellulose fibers is one of the things we here in the Shop have focused on in recent months. The process and chemicals differ greatly when compared to protein fibers like wool. Pictured below is my hand spun linen.



**The Weaving Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

*Wheelwright* – Rounding out the year (pun intended) with drawing out a new wagon, plow, and truck work.



**The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.**

Wigmaker – The Wig Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.

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

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