

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

June 10, 2023

The Summer will feature the following Historic Trades Workshops:

Sunday, Family Workshop: Cabinetmaker – Join us for an in-depth, hands-on tour and demonstration of hand planes—one of the traditional woodworker's most indispensable tools. When Williamsburg cabinetmaker Edmund Dickinson died in 1778, he was inventoried as having "81 planes of various sorts." Such a variety of tools would be suited for many tasks like making boards flat and smooth, creating precise structural joinery, and making shapely moldings. We will demonstrate the breadth of work done with these tools and give guests a chance to plane away some shavings themselves. *Limit of 16 participants.*

Monday, Beginner Workshop: Weaver – Try your hand at weaving in this two-hour class for all levels of experience. You will learn the history behind weaving in Williamsburg during the Revolution to spark your patriotic homespun spirit. Taught on pre-warped modern looms, on which you can pass the shuttle back and forth, this class will build a cotton tea towel to take home. This Workshop will provide all necessary supplies, including care instructions for your handwoven towel. *Limit of 6 participants. Not recommended for young children.*

THIS WORKSHOP WILL BE OFFERED TWICE ON MONDAYS: 10 am-12 pm AND 2-4 pm.

Saturday, Family Workshop: Apothecary – Do you have what it takes to be an Apprentice Apothecary? Participants will compound a medicine, identify medicinal ingredients, learn their uses, and practice applying bandages. *Limit of 8 participants.*

Apothecary – The past two weeks have been bittersweet at the Shop – while we're looking forward to the summer, we also bade farewell to Mark. The Apothecary staff are sad to see him leave but appreciate him endlessly for the hard work he's done and incredible strides he's made in his apprenticeship. We'll miss you, Mark! We're gearing up for Saturday Summer Workshops beginning next week.

The Apothecary is open Wednesday through Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).

Blacksmith – This week, the Blacksmiths have been hard at work making tools for the Carpenters. Broadus is making firmer chisels which have a tricky but very interesting process for forging the integral bolster. The historic precedent for this style comes from a pristine chisel in the CW Collection. This chisel was part of the Hewlett tool chest and was made in the 1770s. The object number is 1957-123,8 and is on the emuseum for anyone interested.

Alex has also been making chisels, but some of the socketed type. Rather than having a tang that inserts into a wooden handle, this type has a hollow cone that accepts a tapered wooden handle. In both cases, the handles are held on with only friction as a chisel is not used in a manner where the head would be struck from the handle. The rest of the Shop is continuing our normal course of work. Josh has been fitting up

gridirons, Ken is making building hardware, Aislinn is working on fireplace tongs, and Mark is getting close to finishing his lock for the Bray School.



The Blacksmith is open Daily.

Bookbinder – The Bookbinder is open Sunday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Cabinetmaker – The Shop bid farewell to two Shop icons this week. First was the desk and bookcase reproduction, which is on its way to its new home. It was a significant presence in the Shop. In its absence, more light has filled the Shop from the southeast window which has been obscured by the desk's presence for several months now.

The second departure is Jeremy, who has also spent several months obscured by the desk and bookcase. Jeremy has been working in the Shop for 3 ½ years, completing several furniture pieces including the desk portion of the desk and bookcase. Earlier this year, he and his wife welcomed another baby into their home, and after much consideration, Jeremy has chosen to become a full-time dad, a job he has hoped for long before ever picking up a chisel or plane. "I am grateful to all the talented artists and good people I have been able to work with and get to know throughout the Foundation. I will especially miss my Shop mates who have become like family to me. I look forward to bringing my kids around town to visit, and staying in touch with things that are going on. Thank you to all those who helped make my time here so memorable. It was fun."



The Cabinetmaker is open Sunday (11:30-5:00), Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Carpenter – This week, the Carpenters have completed the lath installation and started the shingling. We've got a few thousand shingles to put up, so we'll be on this step fit a while. Stop by and see the progress.



The Carpenters will be working at Ewing Field Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cook – As we close in on the last few weeks of the spring season, over at the Palace Kitchen, the team has been buckling down to knock out the remaining projects of the Spring. After wrapping up the latest recipe for Trend and Tradition, we have been asked to get together what we would like to see as the recipe for the next issue. The secret ingredient is peanuts, not something that would be found on the Governor’s table. Much like the corn native to North America, these local Native plants were seen as beneath the English gentry, but readily used by common Virginians, Free, Enslaved, or Native. With a few different recipes to choose from, Frank experimented this week with a “new-to-us” dish of “Groundnut Cheesecakes.” The result was very akin to a southern pecan pie, but with the switch in nuts. Frank felt the original recipe needs a little more tweaking to get just right, so it is likely we will experiment with it a few more times before the next photoshoot. We also completed our last Brew of the spring, where we did a nice English Porter. We have also wrapped up our final spring Chocolate Program and the Spring Workshops as we launch into summer. Enjoy some pictures from our last Workshop and Brewing days.





The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Cooper – The Coopers recently produced an artillery bucket with copper hoops and bronze hardware as an experiment in how such a container will hold up with exposure to black powder residue compared to existing buckets that we have supplied with iron hardware. We were assisted in the project by our colleagues at the Foundry, who cast the bronze ears and handle for this experiment. We have very little information on artillery buckets from this period, although we do know that the use of iron hardware was often avoided in the manufacture of gunpowder casks and other items that came in close contact with gunpowder in this period.



The Cooper is open Sunday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Engraver – The Engravers would like to introduce Emma Alldrice as our Summer Intern. She is currently working with the folks over in Coach and Livestock. We are glad to have her here in the Shop, and we will be looking closely at her artwork. There will be lots of drawing, and I’m sure her love of horses and livestock will show up in her future work.

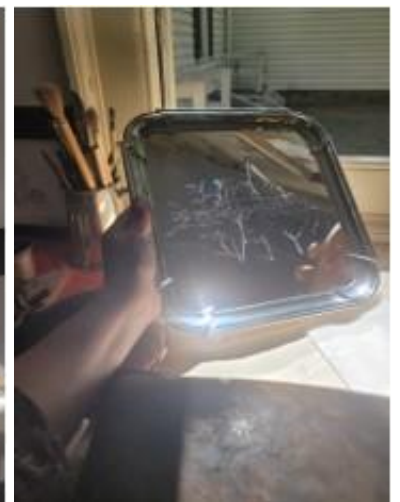


William has finished the last of the cartouche drawing and has started cutting. Photos to come shortly. This copper plate is nearly finished. He has also cut several Masonic square and compass designs on Foundry-made pewter plates. Some are for custom orders he is filling. Now, he is diving into his repair requirements for his apprenticeship. Repair or removal of engraving involves the removal of metal. He will be scraping, filing, stoning, burnishing, and using several polishing compounds. Repairs generally take much longer to do than the original carvings. A good repair or removal takes patience.





Lynn has finished up the Sterling silver tray that the Silversmiths had brought down and is now beginning the re-working of an 18th-century watercolor that will become a copperplate for the Wheelwrights. They will be presenting this to the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights when they visit this fall. The watercolor needs to be redrawn to a pen-and-ink style to the size needed, then it will be reversed. The reversed image will be cut on the desired-size plate then engraved. We are anticipating a good twenty-plus hours for this one.





The Engraver is open Tuesday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Farmer – The Farmer will be at Ewing Field Wednesday, Thursday (10:00-5:00), Friday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Fifes and Drums – The Fifes and Drums will be performing 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 Foundry is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Gardener – The Historic Garden was full of activity this week. The bed formerly occupied by corn poppies (*Papaver rhoeas*) was quickly turned, and two varieties of sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*) were planted alongside two rows of parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) and a few China asters (*Callistephus chinensis*). Broad beans (*Vicia faba*) and marrowfat pease (*Pisum sativum*) were harvested and sent off with the Historic Cooks. Hard neck garlic (*Allium sativum*) – planted way back in October! – was also harvested, bundled, and hung to dry. Most of the garlic will, no doubt, find its way to the Cooks as well, but several heads will be retained for this fall's planting. Into the cleared bed went cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus*), pole beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*), and a row of cockscomb (*Celosia cristata*), mirroring an existing planting of these three varieties at the other end of the bed. This mixing of vegetables alongside decorative flowers is one of the cornerstones of 18th-century English gardening.



Intern Will raises mounds for sweet potato planting.



Intern Andrew divides up sweet potato chunks for planting.



Apprentice Marc hangs garlic to dry.



Andrew and Marc assemble trellises for beans and cucumbers to climb.

The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.



Cockscomb displaying its elegant bloom.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmith is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Harpsichordmaker – The Harpsichordmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

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

Leather Breeches Maker – The Leather Breeches Maker is open Sunday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Masonry – This week in the Brickyard, production continues in full swing with our Summer Hires becoming more confident with their molding prowess. While more bricks populate the drying bed, Apprentice Nick continues working on the clay for tile making. Protecting this process is a key part of production for this summer.

Otherwise, this week, the dream team of Apprentices Nick and Madeleine, Journeyman Kenneth, and Dale "Daley" Trowbridge charged the lime kiln in preparation to fire. The new team of eager Brickmakers joined us on a fun field trip to see the sights, and most importantly, historic brick houses.



The Brickyard is open daily, weather permitting.

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

Milliner and Mantua-maker – Preparations are well underway for our upcoming “Gown in a Day” program on the 21st of June. This year, we'll be making a gown for Ann Wager and are thrilled to have the lady herself joining us for the day. In addition to discussing summer clothing for adults and children more

generally, we'll also be talking more specifically about the kinds of garments that might have been worn by the students attending the Bray School. Ishbel, our Intern, is making impressive progress on a new child's gown that's being made of striped cotton fabric woven by the Weavers. This will be left on the counter during the program, along with the linen gown and apron made last fall by two of our NIAHD Interns, to visibly demonstrate the very young age at which these students were being sent to the School. Janea and Rebecca have also made up some sewing samples for the team at HC&D, many of whom will be joining us for part of the day of the project.

Summer clothing has been on our minds in another way as well: it's been a week of finishing and beginning a handful of new bedgowns for our fellow Tradeswomen. Aislinn now has a new green linen bedgown, and a blue checked one is well underway for Mary. Kate continues to work on the flounce for her new cotton petticoat and has been investing her research hours in beginning an exciting new collaborative project. After some mending, Rebecca is now back to stitching channels on her stays, which had been put on the back burner in favor of more pressing priorities for several months. She's also working on a proposal for the upcoming *Contested Freedoms* Conference. When not buried in paperwork, Janea is back to working on the experimental jacket. Our Shop-wide summer project of completely reorganizing and rearranging our upstairs space is also well underway, and anticipation is building to enjoy the end result of a new, more functional layout.

The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Sunday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Musket Range – This week at the Musket Range, Jeff began making replacement ramrods for our Fowling pieces. The process is fairly involved and time consuming. Luckily, we started with a fairly straight piece of hickory. Jeff straightened, tapered, fitted, sanded, and stained the wood to become a very nicely finished ramrod.





The Musket Range is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm, and 3pm.

Printer – The Printer is open Sunday through Thursday.

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers have moved back to the Armoury and are open Sunday, and Tuesday through Thursday.

Silversmith – The Silversmith is open Sunday through Friday.

Tailor – The Tailor is open Tuesday, and Thursday through Saturday.

Tin Plate Worker – The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – The end of the blue upholstery fabric is in sight! For us, this means that we can see the very end of the warp and are busy behind the scenes preparing for the next one, which will also be wool. We work with a lot of wool in the Shop and for good reason: we've got so many sheep! Our Leicester Longwool is a special breed in the sheep world: they were the first to have a breed standard, are a dual-purpose breed (we get wool and meat from them), and they produce a long staple length that is high on the luster scale. Shiny long wool is great for hand spinning and takes dye very well. While the yarn we spin on our wheels hardly ever ends up on our looms, the act of spinning allows us to talk about many aspects of everyday life in 18th-century Virginia. From illegal sheep to busy work, our spinning wheels help us roll through topics and hypnotize Guests in the process. More than once, we have caught children and adults alike entranced by the mechanisms of a spinning wheel.

The Weaver is open Sunday, and Thursday through Saturday. It will be open on Monday for two Workshops ONLY.

Wheelwright – The Wheelwright Shop is open Sunday through Thursday.

Wigmaker – Greetings! This week, we will be working on our netting projects, and Edith has nearly completed a linen netting to be utilized for a new wig for Robert W. as Mr. Wythe. She is adding some additional rows to the nape section of the netting, to better ensure coverage of his natural hairline. Two new wigs will be built for him in the coming months. Benton's silk netting is coming along well, and he is building it for future use. Debbie has been concentrating on maintenance. We have two new Shop members, as well! Stella is our Summer Intern and is already weaving up a storm of hair. Alexa is a new Junior Interpreter and is gearing up to start interpreting soon. Please stop by to meet them if you haven't already and say hello! As always, feel free to stop by or send us an email for any hair-related questions or requests.

The Wig Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

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