



**THE
MECHANICK'S
ADVISOR**

1/20/24

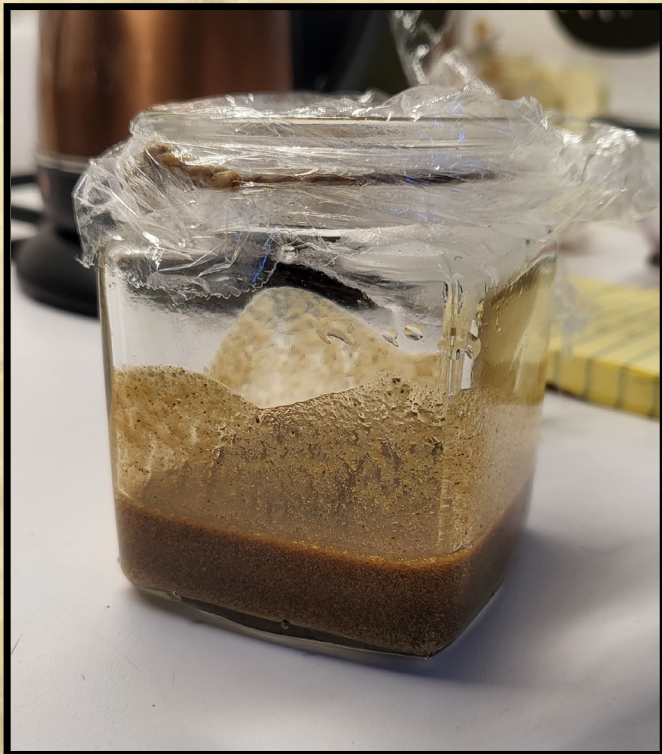
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Apothecary

Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

Firstly, major thanks to Paul and the wheelwrights for our new cutting boards - they'll be used in our upcoming workshop during the woodworking conference! New from the account books in 1796, Sharon found the first listing for Dover's powders (a diaphoretic/emetic patent medicine containing, among other things, ipecac and tartar emetic) that she's seen. Margaret, returning from the nineteenth century only to fall asleep on the train and miss the 1770s entirely, recreated a "pectorall surrup" from John Custis IV's early-century commonplace book that was intended to aid in chest/breathing conditions & contained licorice root and sulfur. Stephannie continues investigating the wide world of historical narcotics.

- Margaret Perry



*"Pectoral surrup" courtesy
of John Custis IV.*

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Blacksmith

Daily

At the James Anderson blacksmiths' shop, the quiet of January and February have given us a chance to get plenty of filework done. This is also easier to do than forging in the dark parts of the day, though we still have plenty of pieces under the hammer. Mark has been at work on a cage spit for Mt. Vernon, a side axe for the carpenters, and researching filet knives for the kitchen. Ken has been working on metal cutting shears for the tinsmiths. Aislinn has focused on brick hammers and chest handles. Alex has finished a bench hammer and he and Broadus both are working on compasses, with Broadus doing the lion's share, and both are progressing on their first lock.

- Alexander Hinman



Aislinn's bench

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Cook

Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, Saturday

We are all very happy to be back in the Palace Kitchen following the annual closing of the Palace for maintenance. Since we were out of the shop for so long, we had to clear the table and start fresh this past week. Slowly but surely, we have been filling the empty tablecloth with goodies fit for the Royal Governor. Our intern, Mo, from Bruton High School, has also been back with us and she worked with Barbra on a dish of curried rabbit (a first for her!). Also, a huge thank you goes out from us to our maintenance colleagues, who did some much-needed repair work on our brick oven while we were closed. We have been slowly warming the oven over the last week to get it ready to bake on Friday.

- Charlotte Shoaf



*Getting the table
back in action
after closing.*

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Carpenter

Sunday through Thursday

The carpenter's yard is busy working on shingles for the Bray and First Baptist projects. We have a few thousand done and many thousand to go. This step in the construction will take many weeks of work to get through. Lucky for us it's our favorite thing to do.

- Matthew Sanbury



Two crates of finished shingles tightly packed.



A finished shingle ready to go.

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Engraver

Sunday, Monday, Wednesday through Saturday

Master Engraver Lynn has been working on two printing plates for the upcoming woodworking conference. The larger plate is a reproduction of a Chippendale drawing, while the smaller plate is an enlarged detail from one of the chairs pictured k. The first. William has been practicing engraving rings and drawing an illuminated alphabet and assisted the Foundry with an iron pour this week. Emma continues to work on drawings and tool maintenance.

- William Fleming

*Leftover iron in the
Foundry crucible*



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Gardener

Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, Saturday

This is usually the coldest week of the year according to weather prognosticators. This week we have seen temperatures in the teens for three hours overnight and then only a few hours above freezing the next day. More extremes coming this weekend. The winter garden survived nicely thanks to bell glasses, hand lights, cold frame and hotbed. We used all of our tarps to cover and all five of our straw mats. Using the tools of the time period, one could still set the table with elegant vegetables.

- Eve Otmar



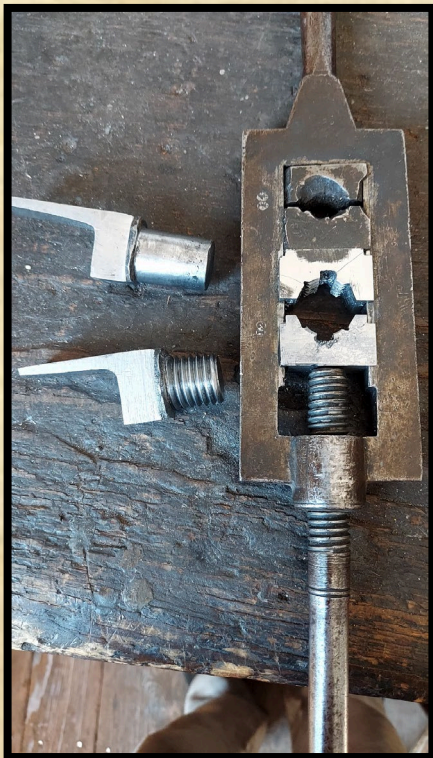
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Gunsmith

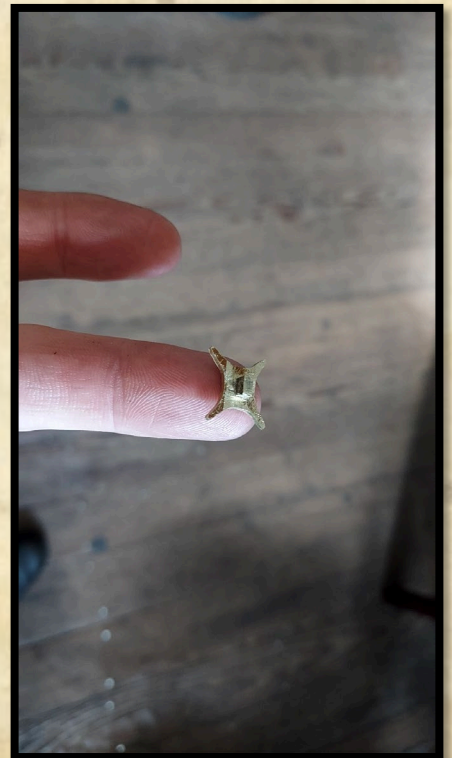
Sunday through Thursday

This last week has been filing and threading the breech pins, or plugs out of wrought iron. After the proper diameter has been obtained, which is 3/4", the pin is threaded with an adjustable die wrench and slowly turned and tightened. The threads are cut a little deeper each pass until they are full depth. Then the excess is cut off. Darrin has also made a tiny brass spider sight which will be inlet into the muzzle end of the barrel by tracing around it and digging out the iron before peening in place.

- Darrin McDonal



The adjustable wrench and the spider site, ready for install.



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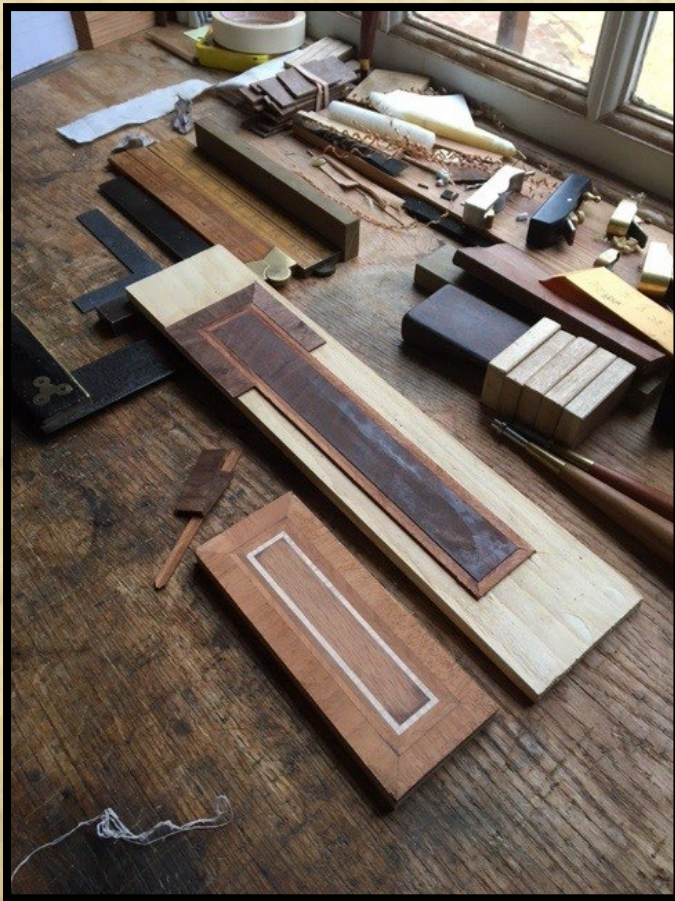
Harpsicord Maker

Sunday, Monday, Thursday through Saturday

We have glued in the soundboard into the new spinet! The sticks are clamps called go-bars that brace the board in place while the glue sets. They run from the work up to the ceiling. Yes, there is very much historical evidence for this method. Since our regular bench clamps cannot accommodate this assembly, this handy method successfully solves the problem.

Additionally, for the Working Wood conference next week, we are preparing for our demonstration on historical veneering as it applies to harpsichords, combined with our study of two historical treatises and experiments with their techniques. A lot is happening right now. Cheers to you all.

- Edward Wright



*Veneer Assemblies for
Demonstration*

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Joiner

Sunday through Thursday

Next week is the big week! Working Wood in the 18th Century kicks off January 25, so we are deep in preparation for all our contributions to the conference- an architectural tour of the Palace with Journeyman Peter, a look in our special collections with Apprentice Laura and librarians Doug Mayo and Marianne Martin, and presentations during the main conference by Master Brian and Journeyman Peter. Also in the shop- this month we welcomed Ayinde Martin, Journeyman Carpenter, to our team and he has turned out two of the benches for the Bray School, getting us off to a great start with the set of furniture to be made this year for the school's restoration. We are excited to have him in the shop!

- Laura Hollowood



Our shop is full to the gills- here are both benches, the frame for the Conference blanket chest, and on the workbench in the foreground, some of the "star" panels for the chest.

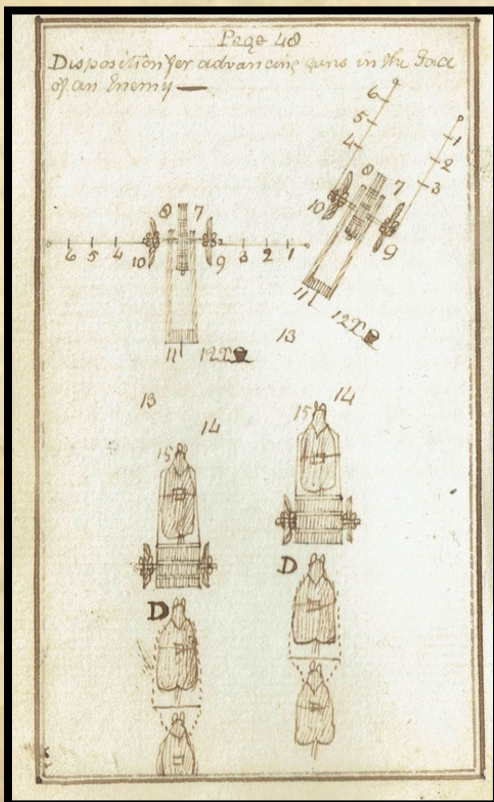
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Military Programs

Military Programs is using the winter period to conduct training and maintenance. Our core focus for January is refining our Von Steuben Manual of Arms drill and preparing to repaint the cannons. New research is being completed to verify correct cannon carriage paint color, recipes, and to test how the cannon paint changes under field use (allegedly, the carriage paint color changes due to reactions with fired gunpowder residue).

Additionally, Military Programs is working with Princeton University to begin digitization of their copy of William Congreve's 1778 manual, "Exercise for the Light 6 Pounder Gun". This manual is an exciting addition to Military Program's primary source collection and will greatly help in developing artillery mobility programs for late 2024/2025.

- Terence Christian



A page from Congreve's 1778 "Exercise for the Light 6 Pounder Gun" showing the "Disposition for advancing guns in the Face of an Enemy." (Image Credit: Nadeau's Auction Gallery)

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Tailor

Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

In the tailor shop we are working on a handsome suit for Mr. Logue, Apprentice tailor. It consists of a reddish-brown wool broadcloth coat and breeches, which with contrast nicely with a vibrant light blue silk and worsted blend waistcoat. This suit will be suitable for him in the cooler month of the year. As mentioned here many times before, summer clothes would be made out of linen, cotton, silk, and wool, but in their thinnest varieties and in light colors.

- Michael McCarty



The brown coat and breeches can be worn with many different waistcoats, but we believe this blue is very pleasing accompaniment.

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Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers

Sunday through Wednesday, Saturday

Recently, our intern, Lydia, has been working with natural dyes. She has been working to color match a madder root experiment completed by a former journeywoman. By following the notes left behind we have aided her in her quest to dye her handspun and handwoven materials. Madder root is sensitive to many factors, so the procedure is precise.

- Pamela Russo



Pictured is a pot of madder dye cooking behind the scenes and the color cards left by the former journeywoman.

Next Week, Look Forward to Updates From...

- **Bookbinder**
 - Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday
- **Cabinetmaker**
 - Sunday, Monday, Thursday through Saturday
- **Cooper**
 - Tuesday through Saturday
- **Farmer**
 - Closed for the Season
- **Fife and Drum**
- **Founder**
 - Tuesday through Saturday
- **Historic Masonry**
 - Sunday, Wednesday through Saturday
- **Milliner and Mantua-Maker**
 - Tuesday, Thursday through Saturday
- **Musket Ranger**
 - Ticket Event
- **Silversmith**
 - Sunday through Tuesday. Friday, Saturday
- **Shoemaker**
 - Daily
- **Tin Plate Worker**
 - Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday
- **Wheelwright**
 - Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Friday
- **Wigmaker**
 - Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

Editor.

Matthew Siepinski