

THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER

April 8, 2023



Photo credit: Fred Blystone

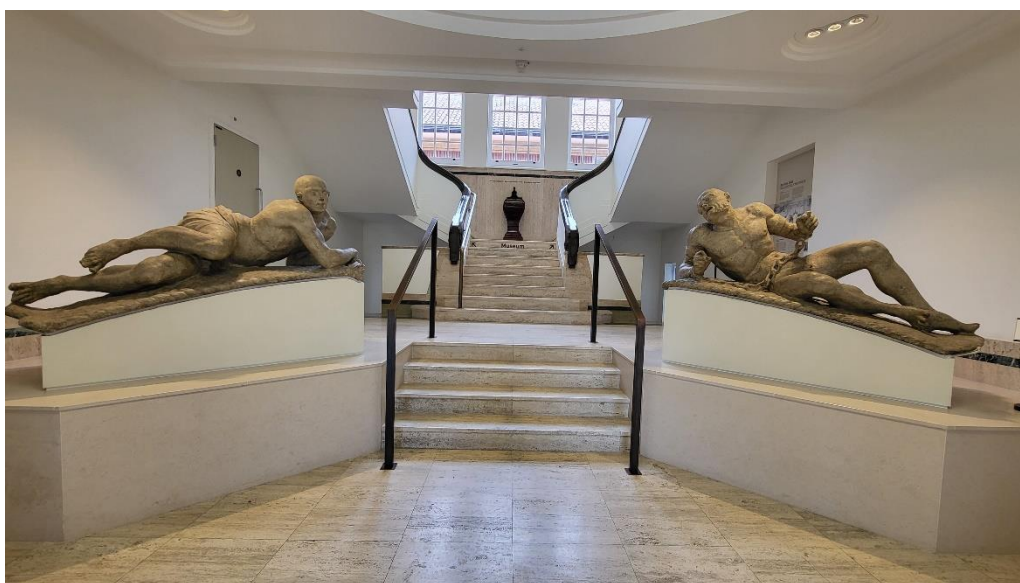
It is with heavy hearts that we announce the untimely passing of Jan Tilley, Journeyman Leather Breeches Maker. Jan was a remarkably gifted interpreter, and we all were impressed with how valiantly he fought his last illness. He leaves a proud legacy, and he will be missed by all.

Jan's career at Colonial Williamsburg began in 2008 as a first-person character interpreter in the Taverns. He first joined Historic Trades as a Volunteer, working with Jay Howlett. He later joined the Site Interpreters in Historic Interpretation. In 2016, he was loaned to Jay as an Intern. He was hired as an Apprentice Military Artificer in 2017. Jan worked with Jay to transform the Shop's focus into its current one as Leather Breeches Makers. He completed his apprenticeship in 2019. Jan is the first person in the Department of Historic Trades to receive two sets of Journeyman Papers, one as a Journeyman Military Artificer, and the other as a Journeyman Leather Breeches Maker.

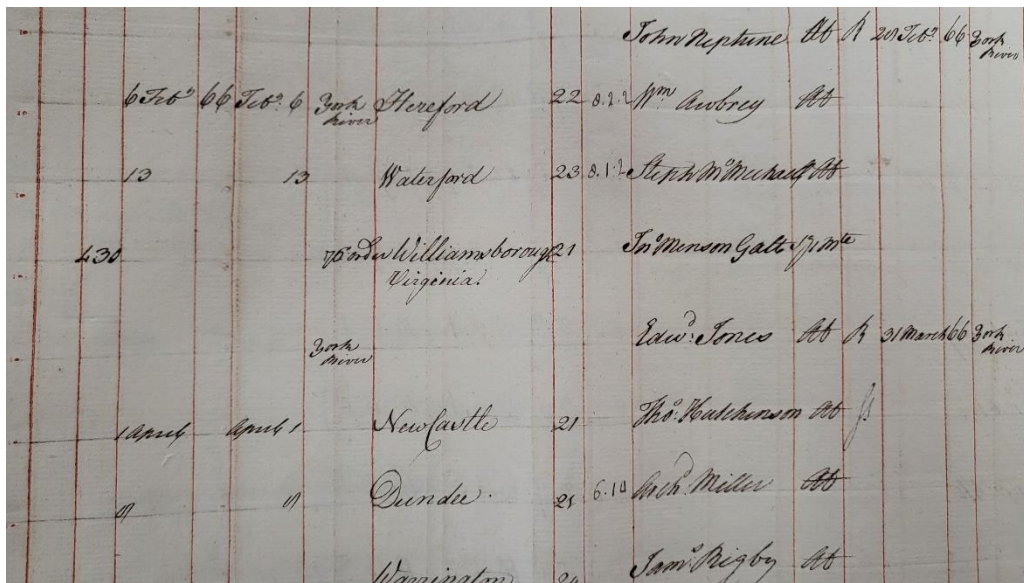
Apothecary – Mark and Margaret are back from London! While they were there, they visited a variety of museums, collections, and sites of interest that pertained to the history of medicine. They started out with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, St. Bartholomew’s Hospital Museum, and The Royal College of Physicians, looking at their collections of apothecary delft and pharmacy/surgery materials. They had a chance encounter with an RCP Fellow who showed them his personal favorite jars in their collection.



After that, they paid a visit to Bethlem Hospital’s Museum of the Mind. In 1793, Dr. Galt’s son Alexander toured Bethlem to gain insight into treatment for mental illnesses, neurological conditions, and intellectual disabilities before he would begin practicing at Williamsburg’s Public Hospital in 1799. Here, they saw not only tools of physical and chemical restraint, medicinal treatment, and environmental care, but also art and anecdotes by people who’ve used modern mental health services.



On Saturday, Margaret bothered the fine folks at the National Archives for almost six hours, looking into Dr. Galt’s 1766 voyage – finding that Galt was indeed a surgeon’s mate on the HMS Rainbow to pay for the medical courses he would later take in London once the ship arrived.



On the same day, Mark visited the Foundling Museum and contemplated the history of family, childcare, and institutions.

They spent time in the “Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries” wing of the Science Museum, which housed some original 18th-century medical texts and surgical artifacts and walked through Kew Gardens to find living examples of plants described in the 18th century. (Pictured below right: *Quassia amara*, named for Graman Quassi/Kwasimukamba, who publicized its antiparasitic use in Dutch Suriname.)



On their final day, they were fortunate to tour Apothecaries’ Hall with Janet Payne, Archives Officer, and saw the extensive collection of jars, ceremonial items, and records that the livery company stewards today. They would like to put an order in for a chair like this (below):



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

Blacksmith – We have been busy as ever at the Armoury, with many projects underway. Ken and Josh work on hinges for our new gate, Ken lengthening a set of left-over straps, and Josh making the hooks. Josh has also been working on some tile molds for the Brickmakers and the Magazine project. Aislinn has been making some pipe tomahawks, which get more file work than an ordinary axe. Mark has begun on a rim lock for the Bray School. You can see in the included photo an original lock he is copying and the lock parts in progress. Alex has also been contributing to the clay tile endeavor, making some hoes which are used to process the clay. He is also working on some small cooking ladles. Broadus is working on larger ladles and "egg slices", or spatulas, as well as a pouring shank for the Founders. As always, all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.





The Blacksmith is open Daily.

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

Cabinetmaker – The multitudes of Spring Break Guests have witnessed a good variety of ongoing Shop projects this week. Bill has the complex writing drawer of his writing table framed up, but there's plenty of work to come. After all, this is a drawer with legs and three drawers of its own. The original that our reproduction is based on is on display down the street in the Randolph House, so Guests have a nice opportunity to connect living Trades work with a celebrated antique. John has been hard at work creating the many mortise and tenon joints for the front leg assemblies of his walnut side chairs. Angled joints like these are expected to look neat and have the structural integrity to support the full weight of one sitter after another for generations - so the stakes are high, and the work proceeds with great care. NIAHD Intern Sarah has been making the walnut parts for her candle box and should be ready to start dovetailing that together in the coming days.

Away from our respective benchwork, we (along with our Harpsichord-making colleagues) welcomed a sold-out crowd for our first hands-on "Plane Talk" Workshop of the season. In addition to the standard puns implied by the title, the program gives participants a behind-the-scenes opportunity to learn about the vast world of hand planes through using the tools themselves.

We also took some time this week to celebrate our Master Harpsichordmaker, Ed Wright, who marked his 40th year in the Shop on April 1st. Thank you, Ed, for all you have done for your colleagues, our Guests, and our Trades over the years. We look forward to the years ahead and offer our congratulations on reaching that milestone!



The Cabinetmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday. Their Workshop will be held on Tuesday.

Carpenter – This week in the Carpenters Yard, we've started to organize and lay out materials for the wagon shed for the Farm site. This project shouldn't entail much framing. We'll be starting it in our Yard and then raising and covering it at the Ewing Field site later this spring. Stay tuned for more on this project.

The Carpenters Yard is open Sunday through Wednesday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

Cook – We have had a jam packed few weeks over at the Palace Kitchen! The team has fully launched into our Spring Brewing Season. Two weeks ago, we did a demo run of a new Orange Ale that we are hoping to turn into our next collaboration with AleWorks Brewing. The beer drinkers of the 18th century were into aromatics in their beverage, just as those dining at the Governor's table enjoyed aromatics in their food. When it comes to the orange kick to the new ale, it absolutely hits the 18th-century preference on the head. It has a lovely orange hue and a delicate orange aroma. For modern beer drinkers, who much prefer to taste the fruit that is billed as starring in the ale, Frank had determined that the recipe needs some adjustment before being sent to AleWorks. We are going to work to really punch up the orange flavor. Last Sunday, we worked on a Keeping Brown Strong Ale. Rich and chocolaty in color, this Keeping Brown may have very well fermented for up to a year in the 18th century, hence the name. It should also pack a punch at between 9-12% ABV, as the name suggests. There is little possibility ours will last to ferment for an entire year. We will want to crack into one and see how we did in our second brew of the season. We will still have to wait a month or two.

As of Monday, we are also now in full swing for our series of Spring Workshops. "Play With Your Food the 18th-century Way" had a full group of ten for our first day. Two families and one teenaged gal, who were Department of Historic Trades and Skills

all very excited to come and work with us in a way they are normally not able to when visiting us in the Kitchen. Two stations were available for them to get their hands on 18th-century garnishes. We had them first play with marzipan, which is like an almond fudge paste, and we lovingly call it “edible Playdoh.” Although there were pewter molds available to help them create things, we were all very pleased and excited to see both groups of five really going for it and making creations out of their own minds with their own hands. With a little gentle guidance from Abbey, we saw roses, daffodils, a gnome couple, lady bugs, a Georgia peach, a very hungry caterpillar, a butterfly, a peacock, and a mouse. Both groups really knocked it out of the park. We also had a station for them to candy flowers, which is when you paint the front and back of the petals with egg whites, roll them in sugar that has been powdered in a mortar and pestle, and lay them to dry. They turn into lovely floral bursts of sweetness that could be eaten for dessert or used as a cake topper. As our new friends left the Workshop to venture around town, one family informed us that “they had four generations of their family” at the Workshop and that with us, they had “made memories together that would stay with them the rest of their lives.”

After the Workshop on Monday, we rolled up our sleeves and got right into our “Secrets of the Chocolate Maker” program that will be running the first Monday of the month. As usually happens with chocolate, the Kitchen saw a packed room all afternoon, and several families were determined to experience as much of the process as they could from start to finish, with them staying in the Kitchen for large chunks of time. We were also able to use the program as a platform for discussing the institution of Slavery in the 18th century and how every part of the chocolate process was touched by enslaved hands, from the growing of the cacao all the way to the chocolatiers making the chocolate discs by hand in wealthy kitchens. For modern consumers, this is probably not something they typically think about when nibbling on a chocolate bar today. However, these same topics affect modern chocolate production, and it was important for us to make sure our Guests understand the weight and history of chocolate production while enjoying their time with us as we made chocolate in the Kitchen.

The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday, Monday (11:30-5:00), Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

Cooper – The Cooper is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday. On Monday, April 15th, at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Coopers will present, “Tracing Adam Waterford”. Adam Waterford was a free Black man who worked as a cooper in Williamsburg around the time of the American Revolution. This program explores how we know that, and what else we know and don’t know about him, in a discussion of the documentary evidence that allows us to glimpse who Adam Waterford was.

Engraver – The Engraver is open Sunday through Thursday.

Farmer – On March 24th, CW President Cliff Fleet struck out on the first furrow at Ewing Field, and he finished most of the field before Eli the Horse needed a break. The first furrow is called “striking out”. The plowman fixes their eye on a point at the end of the field and drives the horse to that. The keys are to never take your eye off the goal, correct with the plow intuitively as you go along, and don’t overthink it. Never look back till it’s over. This is plowman’s wisdom, as well.

The Farmers will be at Ewing Field Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.

Department of Historic Trades and Skills



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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 Founders have been hard at work this week, working on the Colonial Williamsburg seals. As mentioned in an earlier *Adviser*, we are making one each in pewter, bronze, and sterling silver. We learned this past Wednesday that we need to make a fourth one in cast iron and have it and the pewter seal finished by this coming Sunday. The mold was made that same day, and Apprentices Leanne and Drew experienced their first cast iron pour on Thursday. With some help from the Engravers, the metal work on the pewter seal has been completed. In other news, Journeyman Mike finished work on the pewter patterns of the drumhead tensioner hooks and wingnuts for the Fifes and Drums.



The Foundry is open Sunday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

Gardener – The Historic Garden hosted three guests this week. Fallon Burner, Indigenous Historian, American Indian Initiative, began the turning of the 2023 iteration of the American Indian Food Plot. The Landscaping Department was kind enough to drop off a dragon arum for the edification of both Guests and Gardeners. Known in the 21st century as a Voodoo Lily, the bloom produces a rotting meat smell to attract

flies for pollination. And Wednesday morning saw an eastern black swallowtail butterfly emerge from its chrysalis and spend some time drying its wings before flying away. Welcome guests, all!



Fallon Burner experiencing the Zen of bed turning



Dracunculus vulgaris smelled like rotten ground beef while first blooming (left). *Papilio polyxenes* allows its wings to dry (right).

Apprentice Marc continued gaining experience in his quest to reach the next level of the Historic Gardener Apprenticeship. The crimson clover was mowed using a scythe – only the second opportunity to use that tool. More wattle fencing, in this case a corner to protect the edge of the American Indian Food Plot, was constructed. Intern Andrew then assisted Marc in the splitting and repotting of tuberose (*Agave amica*). Stay tuned for the second attempt at making circular trellises, once these plants get taller.



Apprentice Marc CAREFULLY sharpens the Garden scythe. A wattle corner made from pollarded sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*)



Andrew adds fresh compost to a tuberose pot.

And finally, the Cooks of the Palace Kitchen were gifted the largest cabbage from our cabbage patch while also taking away asparagus and two types of broccolis.



An impressive *Brassica oleracea* completely fills out the basket.



Two more varieties of *Brassica oleracea* join *Asparagus officinalis* on a trip to the Palace Kitchen.



It wasn't just vegetables collected this week. Much effort was expended weeding the Garden.

The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.

Gunsmith – The Gunsmith is open Sunday, Wednesday through Saturday.

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

Joiner – The Joiner is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).

Leather Breeches Maker – The Leather Breeches Maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Masonry – This week, the Brickyard crew continued work on the piers for our tool shed and completed the first of three Spring Workshops for “Daub to Dough”. With the help of some savvy and potentially fire-obsessed kids, the basket weave of the structure was completed, then covered with a clay and straw mixture.

Finally, they got to work on their fire-starting skills using flint and steel to create a small fire within. This type of structure would be used for small-scale cooking outside and can last quite a while if maintained.



The Brickyard is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Friday (12:00-5:00), and Saturday, weather permitting.

Military Programs – Things have been steadily heating up here at Military Programs, both in terms of Guest numbers and the temperature. We have been cleaning and reorganizing the Guardhouse in preparation for our two-week maintenance closure later this month, trying to make this Guardhouse into a “Guardhome”. We look forward to working with the Shoemakers to make some blackball to help maintain our shoes and cartridge boxes. Alex is gearing up for his Hennage Talks on the defenses of the Delaware River. Ren is working on a linen POW jacket for their 71st Regiment of Foot impression as part of their Professional Development Grant and goal completion for the year. As always when “In Defense of Our Liberty” is running, we are cleaning and maintaining about two dozen muskets a week to allow the Night Program to operate. Some much anticipated Osburg linen is on its way to us for a special group project, Hunting Shirts! We hope to work with the Weavers to dye them to 6th Virginia specifications, black with red collar and cuff. So chic.



Watercolor of a Virginia Rifleman wearing a Hunting shirt by Richard St. George, Harlan Crow Library, Dallas, Texas.

Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily.

Milliner and Mantua-maker – The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Musket Range – Today, we would like to take the time to extend a heartfelt thank you to some of the Historic Trade Shops in town that have supported us through these last seven years. The Printers have supported our efforts at the Range since before day one. They have made every paper we have used to make the ammunition for the Musket and Fowler. To date, that number is around 100,000. We would not be able to function without this crucial help the Printers provide us. Thank you. Next, we would like to thank the Founders. For the last few years, the Geddy Foundry has been casting .69 caliber pewter balls for us to distribute to shooters at the completion of their experience. These pewter Musket balls are cast and finished at the Foundry by hand. To date, they have done several thousand for us. The support we receive from these Shops enables us to make our Guest experience something truly special! It also opens up more opportunities for us to highlight the Historic Area by showcasing these two Shops and others in our interpretation.



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

Printer – The Printer is open Tuesday through Saturday.

Shoemaker – The Shoemakers are working at the Leather Breeches Maker Tuesday through Saturday.

Silversmith – All of the Silversmiths have been busy working on the list of projects, both commissions and apprenticeship pieces.

Megan is cutting the bottom out of a bowl that formed a crack. This will be turned into two new pieces. She also went down to the Engraver and engraved two trade silver medals.



Chris continues to polish her tray, and it is looking wonderful. Bobbie has soldered the rim of a new tray and is filing and cleaning it up. Preston is working on more bowls and is polishing more jewelry. George has rolled out more sheet from his ingots. This one will become one of Megan's apprenticeship holloware pieces.



The Silversmith is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

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

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

Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – The Weaver is open Sunday through Wednesday, and Thursday (11:30-5:00).

Wheelwright – The Wheelwright Shop is closed April 9-14 for annual maintenance. On Monday, April 10th, at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Wheelwrights will present, “A Primer on Paint”. Long before humanity created villages and towns, there was paint. Paint serves not only as an aesthetic enhancer but as a means of preservation of wood and metal objects. Come join a Colonial Williamsburg Wheelwright on a journey following the science and history of this often-ignored part of our lives.

On Wednesday, April 12th, at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Wheelwrights will present, “The Road MORE Travelled”. Williamsburg is known as a sleepy, quiet southern town, but what did it look like in its heyday? Join a Colonial Williamsburg Wheelwright as they take you onto the colonial Capitol's streets to discuss what was rolling and who was driving.

Wigmaker – 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.

Editor: Shari Monaco

Contributors: Apothecary – Margaret Perry; Blacksmith – Broadus Thompson; Cabinetmaker – Bill Pavlak; Carpenter – Matt Sanbury; Cook – Abbey Shoaf; Farmer – Ed Schultz; Founder – Drew Godzik; Gardener – Marc Nucup; Masonry – Madeleine Bolton; Military Programs – Ren Tolson; Musket Range – Jeffrey Thomas; Silversmith – Megan Cantwell