

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *August 8, 2022*

### *Anthony Hay Shop:*

***Cabinetmaker*** – This past week, Jeremy has gotten a good start on a small hanging cupboard. He has taken inspiration from a number of cupboards in various collections but has designed his own to his liking. John has gotten the legs of his tea table glued to the column and has finished out the table top. Now, all that remains is the attachment, which should not take long. Bill has turned his attention to working out the production of a small astragal molding for the Winchester High Chest that has long sat in the Ware Room - with some of these final touches, the upper case nears completion.

***Harpsichord-maker*** – Greetings from the Harpsichord Corner! We continue to make good progress on the remaining parts of the Spinnet. The lid has taken shape and been thickened. This coming week, we will start making the molding that will attach to the curved portion, which sits nicely around the instrument's case. Sara has finished preparing the music racks - they are lovely. Now, we just have to decide which to use! Melanie continues her work on the nameboard. The woodwork is complete; all that remains is cleaning up the surface to prepare for the calligraphy. Ed has started the task of preparing handles for all of our lovely new chisels.

**The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker are open Daily.**

***Apothecary*** – The Apothecary staff have been hard at work these past few weeks, with both Apprentices working through their curricula, and Sharon preparing material for our newest pharmacy student who will arrive in the fall. We're almost through our Summer Workshop schedule, displaying and interpreting the conserves of orange peel and tooth electuaries our participants have been compounding. Margaret would like to thank the Brickyard, Gardeners, and Carpenters for their contributions in making a new batch of cardialgic troches (pictured). While oyster shells are indeed a source of calcium carbonate, making them good material for 18th-century Tums-like antacids, they take significant effort to pulverize, and a multi-Trade collaboration made the process much easier. Thanks all!



The Apothecary Shop will be open Tuesday (11:30-5:00), Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

**Armoury:**

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

**Tinsmith** – The Tin Shop will be closed August 9-13.

**Brickmaker** – This week in the Brickyard, we utilized the recently completed paving under our drying shed to stack our newest sundried bricks. With that paving completed, and future paving to come, we will be able to stack the rest of our output. With much of our drying bed cleared out, we have our count resting presently at over ten thousand. This impressive number would not have been possible without the help of our summer hires, who have committed themselves to the task despite the heat, bugs, and stinky edge clay. As a reward for their efforts, before they will start to return to school or otherwise, we went on a field trip to the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown and the Jamestown Settlement. Meanwhile, Master Josh and Journeyman Kenneth valiantly held down the Brickyard. While on our field trip, we learned from their site interpreters and took in the history. Apprentices Nick and Madeleine lead the crew around the sites and excitedly pointed out brickwork, plaster, and the occasional catted chimney. Notably, Harri was able to process some flax with guidance from Annalin, a farmer at Yorktown.





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

***Carpenter*** – This week in the Carpenters Yard, we've completed the shingle lath on the Brickyard drying shed. Once the lath was fully installed, we covered the lath with some tarps to allow us to shift our attention to flooring. The floorboards need to be pushed flush to each other to create a tight floor. Thanks to the Blacksmiths, we've got five new flooring cleats to help with the task. Having tarps over the lath has also given the Brickyard the ability to use the drying house for its intended purpose. It's always nice to see our hard work be used as it's intended.

We would also like to introduce our newest Apprentice, Owen Kelsey. Many of you are already familiar with Owen; he joins us from the Blacksmith Shop. Please feel free to stop in and say hi to us all and welcome Owen.



**The Carpenter's Yard will be open Tuesday through Saturday, weather permitting.**

***Colonial Garden*** – Barbara from Foodways came by the Garden for a basket of vegetables suitable to be cooked up by the Military Program staff: potatoes, carrots, pepper, squash, field peas, okra, and parsley. We spend these hot days watering twice daily the flowerpots and anything that is small and might perish in the hot sun. On a day like today, in the nineties with a triple digit heat alert, the soil can reach 120F quickly. In 1737, John Custis uses dampened moss covered with fern leaves to protect plants from a drought. Unfortunately, he still loses a lot of his plants, notwithstanding all that was done. Stick frames were quickly built to hold straw over newly planted calendula, which was wilting in the heat.

Weeding continues in the shade, as does harvesting and processing seeds. One of our cisterns has been turned into a nursery for tadpoles. Boards, grass, and logs were added in and around the cistern to create an environment to support their growth. When the tadpoles turn into frogs and hop away, we will have hungry bug hunters help prey on the insect population.

We are still plagued by rabbits, and we are amused at the antics of the squirrels smuggling out huge ears of millet. In the American Indian Garden, Chris and Martin harvested a good amount of corn before rot could set in or the decimation from squirrels.



Corn from the American Indian Garden



Calico Lima beans



Tadpoles and developing eggs in the cistern





It was so hot today, three Gardeners melted on the sidewalk.

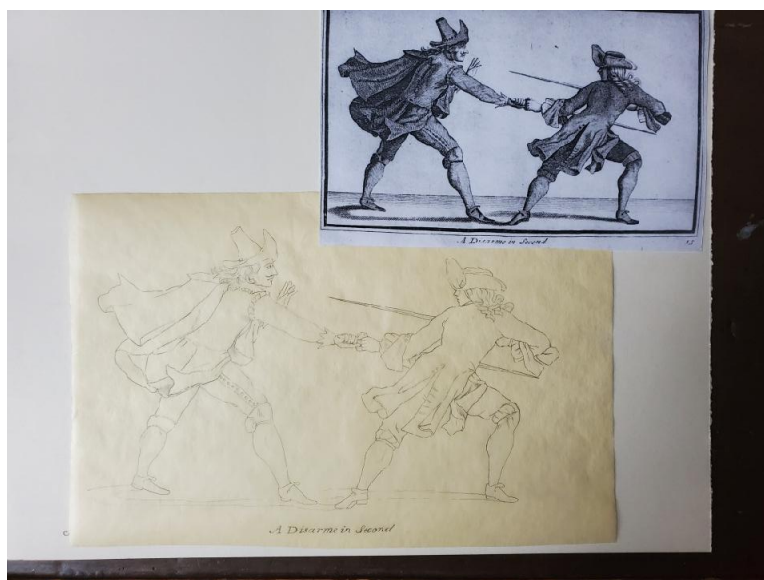
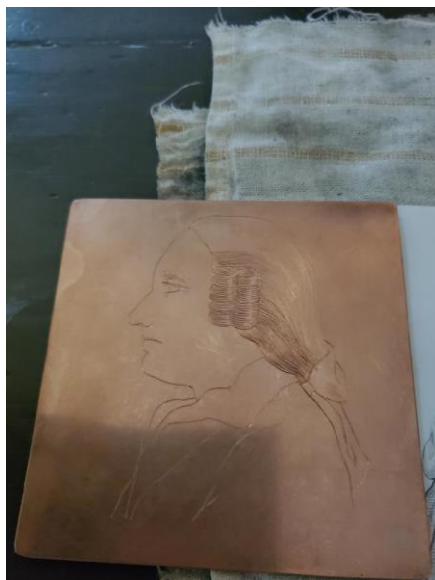
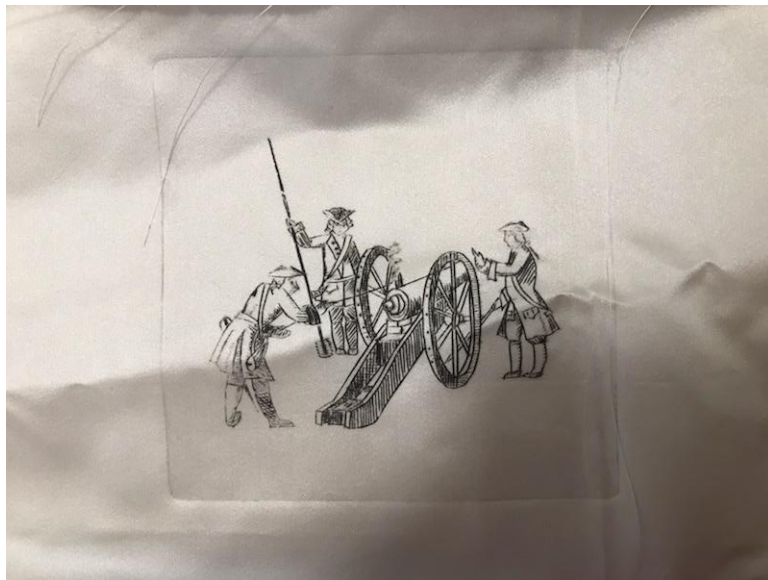
**The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.**

**Cooper – The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.**

**Engraver** – This week, while Apprentice Fleming is taking a much-needed break, Lynn, Erica, and Danni are holding the fort down. We have been finishing up several small prints, getting some printing time in, and having lots of discussions on interpretation and our goals. Lynn has been catching up on work from last weeks' vacation. Erica did lots of printing on our Research Day.

Both Danni and Erica have started new images. This weekend, it's all about the wigs! They are studying and doing some small copperplates of wig-style images provided by our Wigmakers. Next week, we will show some off.









**The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.**

**Foodways – The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen Sunday through Thursday.**

**Foundry** – With the arrival of our pewter order late last week, we can officially announce that musket ball production has resumed. After our Workshop last Saturday, we spent the remainder of the day casting musket balls, until we poured that entire box of pewter. The balls have since been cut off their gates, which resupplied us with pewter, and we are now in the process of filing each one. We were also able to clean out and organize one of our two storage privies this week. It's now ready to receive our order of coal. Research continues on sundial construction for the upcoming Hennage program – to which we need to make a correction from last week. The program will be held on August 30th instead of September 30th.



**The Foundry will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).**

**Gunsmith – The Gunsmith Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.**

**Historic Farming** – We are still cutting tobacco seventeen days after the first one was cut. It takes judgement to know when to cut. Below are some photos that say to the farmer that the plant is ready to be cut.



Ready to cut



The mottled coloring, curling over, and pulpiness of the leaf are sure signs.

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

**Joinery** – Good day, everyone! The Joinery Shop is in full swing with our next projects. Scott Krogh continues work on his final apprentice project of an Eastern Shore corner cupboard:



He's finished planning and truing four of the seven shelves. The assembly of the cupboard will start with these pieces and nailing the vertical boards at the proper height. It's a different process than we usually use. In most case construction, we build a box and then add the shelves inside. Here, Scott will be constructing the piece from the inside starting with the shelves and building the frame around them.





Peter Hudson is checking off items on his To Do List. He's wrapping up work on his walnut hanging cupboard. He has applied two coats of Linseed Oil to bring out the grain and is now applying Shellac. It's a tricky process, especially in a dusty shop. Stop by and take a look. He's doing a great job, and the picture doesn't do it justice.



Laura Hollowood is working on cutting mortise and tenon joints. Her next project will be to cut four of these and make a frame and panel.



Tool of the week: For last year's Woodworking Symposium, Brian Weldy made a set of Trammel Points for laying out the eastern Bruton Parish window. He based them on a pair found in the Matthew's Tool chest. This is a beautiful, nearly complete tool chest purchased by Colonial Williamsburg in the 1950's. We hope to see it on display in the Museum sometime soon.



The Matthew's Trammel Points. On the far right one, the two rings are probably to hold a pencil.



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

**Military Programs** – Many of the staff members have begun work on the market wallets and knapsacks. Ren placed the buttons onto their 17<sup>th</sup> Dragoons jacket and has continued to work on their research for the Professional Development Grant trip at the end of the month. Alex went this past Thursday to join our friends in Foodways at the Armoury and made delicious rabbit stew, ash cakes, and johnny cakes. All appeared to be well-enjoyed by those who partook. John has been working on the orderly books again, with this week focusing on Captain Benjamin Taliaferro's orders for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virginia Detachment in 1780. Some of the staff have also begun to learn the manual of arms for the Steuben Manual. The hope is to use this for our mid-to-late-war American impressions. The staff is continuing to work towards a skills ladder.

**Military Interpretation at the Guardhouse is open Daily. Our "Military Activities" at 10 a.m. will consist of either a public drill or our new recruiting program. At 2 p.m. each day, we will have our "Discussion of Military Topics", where one of our staff members will be discussing a subject of military history and answer questions from the Guests. Musket demonstrations are generally dependent on staff numbers of that day, but typically between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, we will be doing an infantry demonstration at 4:20 p.m. for our "Necessity of Order in Battle" program. We are not doing cannon demonstration at the present time.**





Portrait of an officer of the 71st Regiment displayed in our Art Museum. This is part of Ren's Grant trip research.



Sewing notions for Ren's Grant trip



Finished market wallet from Ren



The new buttons of the 17th Dragoon's jacket

**Milliner and Mantua-maker** – The Milliner and Mantua-maker will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

**Music** – Greetings from The Governor’s Musick! Our Summer is winding down, and we are looking to Fall and Holiday programming. In addition to returning to our regular season concerts in the Governor’s Palace, we will continue to present programs in the Hennage Auditorium, and we’ll return to the Raleigh Tavern this Fall.

Amy is in the planning stages for our daytime appearances in the houses, at the Raleigh, and in the Museums. As an experimental new feature, at some point, we will be advertising our presence in the Palace as part of a special daytime tour once a week. We hope to be back in the houses soon. We are just waiting for clearance. We miss it!

Kyle has been exploring Special Collections at the John D. Rockefeller Library and has obtained scans of the lessons for harpsichord by James Nares, for use in the Palace during our daytime stints there. He also found a chamber sonata for harpsichord obbligato and strings, for possible future repertory. He is also researching a work called *The Bardic Museum* compiled by Edward Jones, published in London in 1802. The book forms “*the Second Volume of the Musical, Poetical, and Historical Relicks of The Welsh Bards and Druids.*” It mentions harpsichord on the title page, without fortepiano, which is quite rare for the early-19th century, and the music mostly consists of songs and variations for harp/harpsichord or a melody instrument plus continuo. Kyle is also reading Jones’ *A Dissertation on the Instruments of the Welsh*. He hopes to use Jones’ works as the basis for an upcoming Hennage program, since the material was published in London in 1784 and continued circulating until at least 1820.

Jenny has been reading about the life of John Montague, 4th Earl of Sandwich - continuing her Catch and Glee culture in England research – in two interesting books, *The Insatiable Earl*, by N.A.M. Rodger, and *The Men Who Lost America*, by Andrew O’Shaughnessy. She’s also been pursuing clues to the sounds of enslaved peoples’ music by reading books that seem to have them – the latest is *World of a Slave: Encyclopedia of the Material Life of Slaves in the United States, vols 1 and 2*, Martha Katz-Hyman and Kym Rice, eds.

Karol is finishing up her upcoming presentation at the Hennage on new, overly political, lyrics to old songs (August 9th at 4:30 p.m.). There are so many interesting aspects to what one author called the “poetry wars” of pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary America, it’s hard to know what to leave out! The work on this project will continue to reap benefits in the future, especially in The Governor’s Musick patriot-themed concerts.

**On Tuesday, August 9th, 4:30 p.m. in the Hennage Auditorium, the Music staff will present, “Mind the Music and the Step”. What do “Yankee Doodle” and a cow have in common? More than you might think! Patriotic and Loyalist song lyrics, published in single-sheet broadsides or in newspapers, were meant to be sung to familiar tunes. They were a popular way of commemorating, condemning, and satirizing the events surrounding the American Revolution. Join members of The Governor’s Musick to hear some of these songs and their Revolutionary variations.**

### **Printer and Bookbinder:**

**Printing Office** – Work continues at the press with Alexander Purdie’s *Virginia Gazette POSTSCRIPT* containing *The Virginia Declaration of RIGHTS*.

This advertisement is from *Story and Humphreys’s Pennsylvania Mercury* on April 7, 1775. This is one of the few times where we know where a Williamsburg printer has gotten his equipment. The troubles with the mother country has given these tradesmen an opportunity to branch out into areas formerly dominated by British suppliers.



**T**HE Subscribers take this method to inform their Friends and the Public; that they propose (in addition to their other business) to execute any orders they may be favoured with for making Printing Presses, Cases, Frames, Screws, Chases, Composing Sticks, &c. with any other materials in that way, which they engage to have done with punctuality and dispatch, and completed in the neatest and best manner, agreeable to the directions they may receive, and at the lowest prices. The Cabinet and Chair-making business, with that of the White and Black-Smith, carried on in all its branches.

Any orders from city, or country, will be thankfully received, and punctually attended to by

**JOHN WILLIS**, Cabinet and Chair-Maker.

**HENRY VOIGT**, White and Black-Smith.

N. B. Specimens of our work may be seen at the printing offices of Alexander Purdie, Esq; Williamsburgh, Virginia; Mr. Aitken; Mr. Bell; and the Printers of this paper, &c. in Philadelphia. 3 w.

**The Printing Office will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.**

**Bindery** – Hello again, it's Bindery Intern Mary Hannah with your weekly dispatch from the Shop!

While Barbie has been doing some finishing work on a few books, and Don is beginning to stitch a few new books this week, I've been working on research connected to my time as a Student Thought Partner at the Bray School Lab. I am mostly focusing on finishing up some exciting projects that I started while still a student that should hopefully be released to the public in a few months, but I've also been looking into the ways in which the Bray School was connected to the Post Office and the print trades in the 1760s.

A great Variety of History and other Pretty Books for Children. Spelling Books of all Kinds. Church Bibles. —— Prayer Books. Family do. Pocket do. School Bibles. —— Testaments. —— Psalters. Morocco Pocket Books, of all Sizes. Pounce and Boxes. The Beggars Opera set to Musick.	Instructions for the Flute. Reading Glasses, for different A. Best Penknives. Pewter Ink Chests and Stands. Edinburgh Inkpots. Message Cards, plain, gilt, mourning. Broad and narrow red Tape. Ivory Memorandum Books. Ivory Folders. Best Wafers. Dutch Sealing Wax. Slates and Pencils.
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**T H E**  
**English INSTRUCTOR :**  
**O R, T H E**  
**ART of SPELLING Improved.**  
Being a more Plain, Easy, and Regular  
**METHOD of TEACHING Young Children,**  
than any extant.

[Left: An advertisement from a January 1771 edition of the *Virginia Gazette* that lists several types of school and children's books, from the "America's Historical Newspapers" Database. Right: part of the title page of Henry Dixon's *The English Instructor* from 1760, from the Gale ECCO database.]

One of my longer-term internship goals is to start working on some reproductions for various Lab and Bray School-related programs, which includes trying to track down whether any books that we know the school was issued were sent through the Post Office (or sold there to a wider audience). While I have not yet found definitive evidence of specific titles in either the 1760s Royle daybook or any relevant advertisements, there are multiple places where the Post Office lists selling "School Books...Prayer Books" and other items that children at the school would have used. On the school's side of things, I am looking into eventually reproducing copies or extracts of Dixon's *The English Instructor*, Bray's and Lewis's catechisms, and a few of Bacon's sermons, among other works. Ultimately, I hope that using these print materials may help us to better understand how the children at the Bray School were being taught to see the world and themselves, and how they might have pushed back against it to assert their own identities and perspectives.

**The Bookbindery will be open Sunday (11:30-5:00), Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.**

*Public Leather Works* – Greetings from The Public Leather Works! This week, we were fortunate to have our very own Apprentice Emma Cross present a program at the Hennage on leather breeches. Emma did an outstanding job! Her program was very well received, and her Audience had a lot of really great questions.

Keep an eye on this space for upcoming announcements!! In the meantime, enjoy this picture:



Stay cool, hydrate, and be kind to one another.

**The Public Leather Works will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

*Shoemaker* – Nicole is re-soleing a pair of shoes for William Fleming and adding new heel plates, as well. Nicole is also practicing sewing the domed square toe, leading up to a pair of that style for apprenticeship points. Victoria is working on the second of her first pair of slippers, which will contribute towards her apprenticeship, as well. Val just finished re-soleing/re-heeling a pair of shoes for Robert Weathers and is starting repairs on a pair of shoes for Tim Logue. Val also continues work on a new pair of common shoes for Steve Delisle.

Victoria's research has determined that balls of thread are most appropriate for shop use, and she is currently winding thread balls for the Shop to use. Nicole is exploring Colonial Williamsburg's subscription databases (especially the newest additions). Victoria also continues work on her September 14th Hennage talk, and research on infant shoes. Val is preparing for the Shop's next family program and is currently sewing together a pair of infant shoes.

**The Shoemakers will be at the Armoury on Sunday, Monday (11:30-5:00), Thursday, and Saturday.**

*Silversmith* – As always, the Silversmiths are busily working on their lists of projects. Tam is soldering more silver rings and piercing letter charms for the store. Megan is continuing to work on her two silver bowls, polishing spoons, and learning to draft patterns for holloware. Chris is working on chasing in the silver tray body before soldering the rim to the piece. Bobbie has been continuing to clean up the soldered tray and feet. Preston is continuing to teach Megan how to raise her bowls and working on his chased bowls. George is working on the gold mote spoon and drawing the silver ingots into wire for spoon blanks. Bobbie is still gathering information and notes concerning James Craig in preparation for a research trip in the fall.



Tam's jewelry





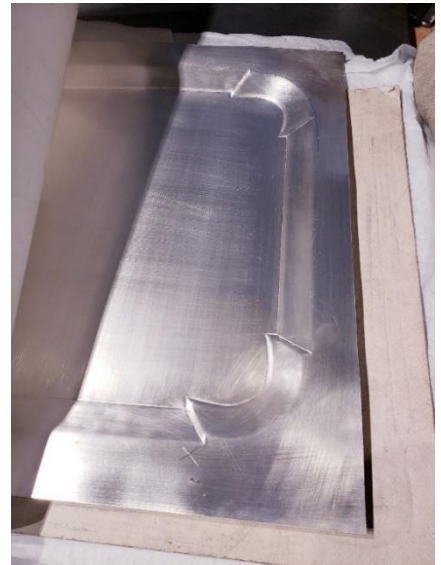
Megan's bowls, middle and left, Preston's bowl, right



Megan's tray of polished spoons



Bobbie's silver tray feet



Chris' tray



Preston's bowls and ladles

**The Silversmith Shop will be open Sunday through Wednesday, Thursday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.**

**Tailor** – In the Tailor Shop, Apprentice Logue has been working on two mid-18th-century waistcoats. These waistcoats will be worn for programming within the Historic Area and are giving Mr. Logue practice in patterning for the diverse range of body shapes that tailors were expected to clothe. His study began in the Colonial Williamsburg Costume Collection. Along with Master Hutter, he studied and patterned several waistcoats of the 1740-1760 period. One waistcoat (item number 2020-114) is of great interest because it was clearly made for a rather large and front-heavy man. Like today, human bodies varied in shape, size, and proportion, and being able to create patterns for all was among the “art and mysteries” of the tailoring trade.

Waistcoat 1760-1770, Colonial Williamsburg Collection, 2020-144



**The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

**Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing** – The Weaving Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

**Wheelwright** – Joinery galore happening at the Wheelwright Shop as of late. The Apprentices continue work on their cart collaboration with their respective joinery for wheels and cart body, and Master Wheelwright Paul is working on his joinery for his cart repair, as seen below. New research this week for the Wheelwrights includes lead poisoning in the 18th century (lead is a main component in Linseed oil paint). A round of huzzahs for Apprentice Apothecary Margaret Perry for the assist with the sources.



**The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.**

**Wigmaker** – Greetings from the Wig Shop! This past week, we concentrated on getting our maintenance up to date after a crazy July. We see the light at the end of the tunnel! Edith is making great headway in the



wig for Mr. Jefferson and is now weaving the topmost rows of hair for the crown of the wig. Benton began the blending of horse and human hair and has experimented with the best weaving pattern to incorporate the two types of hair for the right consistency. Lexie's switch is complete; she now must decide whether to make it into a crown braid or a set of curls.

Debbie's demo base is complete. This demo base has been a bit of a passion project for her. Many of the extant wigs that have been studied by the Shop members have had this circular, netted base. When producing a netting for a past project, Debbie discovered that, when trying to do an exact replica of an extant netted base, the base didn't fit any of the blockheads in the Shop! So, the solution at the time was to double the number of rows in order to expand the width of the netting. The end result was less than pleasing to the eye. Debbie figured there had to be a way to adjust the netting for different blockhead sizes, but no explanation was forthcoming. However, she discovered that in P.N. Sprengel's *Trades and Arts in Tables*, 1775, it's noted, "In its unused state, this net resembles a bag made of yarn, but it has in the middle or star several loops, which for strength must be of silk, ... A string is drawn through all these loops, by which he pulls them together in the star. ... the wig maker stretches the net across the block, attaches it with thread to the mounting band, and ties the string of the star together. The star, which is positioned along the part of the hair, gives him the advantage of being able to adjust the net wider or narrower depending on the size of the head." This technique made perfect sense, but implementing it was a challenge, as the knotted nets are time consuming to make. Historically, they were imported pre-made, then custom fit to the blockhead. So, in an endeavor to replace a knotted netting done years ago for demo purposes, Debbie set out to make an accurate, circular net for display. When the netting came together at the end, there were nearly tears of joy shed in front of the public! The technique worked! So much less netting is wasted in the end because it's considerably easier to simply fit the round netting to any blockhead, then pull the "drawstring" in the center as opposed to a woven flat fabric where excess fabric needs to be removed. The base, once stitched into place, will have taken approximately 35 hours to complete. The culmination of years of belief in the technique, and the time to actually try it, have produced amazing results.

Research continues into men's hairstyles and the hair market. As always, feel free to reach out to us for any tonsorial needs, desires, or questions.



Hand Knotted



Woven



Before pulling the string in the center



After pulling the string tight

**The Wig Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

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

**Editor:** Shari Monaco

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