

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *May 5, 2023*

*This week's Trades Talks at 4:30 pm in the Hennage Auditorium:*

On Monday, May 8th, Masonry Trades will present, "Who Designed This Place?" Join Master Bricklayer Josh Graml as he explores how 18th-century buildings were designed and built as gentlemen architects plied their trade in Virginia. Where did they get their design inspirations, and how did they translate English architectural forms to Virginia-born tradesmen?

On Wednesday, May 10th, 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.

On Saturday, May 13th, the Founders will present "Casting a Bronze Mortar." Join Apprentice Founder Drew to learn about the production of an 18th-century artillery mortar.

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*Apothecary* – This week has been busy as always despite Spring Break mellowing out our visitor numbers. Margaret put together the finishing touches on a Hennage Talk about mental healthcare and the Public Hospital, which she'll give each Wednesday at 10:30 am through the end of May. Sharon participated in more filming at the Shop on Tuesday, talking to actors about medicine and getting plenty of B-roll of the Shop. Mark is having an Edgar Allan Poe moment with rheumatology ("I see gout everywhere") but is excited for the Talk on Saturday morning.

**The Apothecary is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.**

*Blacksmith* – **The Blacksmith is open Daily.**

*Bookbinder* – Good day from the Bookbindery. Barbara has recently completed two 1749 Almanacs in calf, with extra pages added for notes, for two longtime friends of Colonial Williamsburg and the Bookbindery. The books were modeled on three examples of Almanacs in Special Collections at the Rockefeller Library, one of which belonged to their ancestor, Thomas Bolling.

I was talking to a group of people one day at the Bookbindery about this fun project, and the Bolling family, who just happened to be visiting, was so excited to hear what I was doing! Sometimes, our work is cool like that. The family requested pictures of the books, as well as one where I am holding them, so here they are.



**The Bookbinder is open Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

*Cabinetmaker* – Bill and John are busy with their respective projects this week. John has gotten his four side chairs dry fit and will be doing the final glue-up soon. Bill has been sawing and planing away on some oak to make the bottom of his writing table drawer – an important part of a drawer, you might agree. Our Intern, Sarah, is rounding the bases on her slide-top box and will have a finished project soon enough.



**The Cabinetmaker is open Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.**

**Carpenter** – This week in the Carpenters Yard, we are finishing up the rafter collars and cutting rafter feet. We hope to have a couple rafter pairs standing by the end of Wednesday for studs to be installed on Saturday.



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

**Cook** – This week, we were able to defy the rainy weather for the “Garden Symposium” to participate in the “pick and prepare” lunch that took place over at the Taste Studio. Frank brought over and demonstrated cabbage and onion cakes, a staff favorite at the Palace Kitchen. Each attendee was able to try Frank’s dish as a part of one of the courses presented, atop a lovely seasonal salad. From all reports, the cakes were a massive hit, with folks saying they would love to see the cabbage and onion cakes added to a CW Tavern menu in the future.

We had another successful Workshop, with folks making more fun creations out of marzipan. Following the Workshop, we hosted this month’s “Secrets of the Chocolate Maker” program. The Kitchen has been full of familiar faces this week, with regulars from all over the country seeming to be in town spending time with us all at once. There is little more that makes us smile in the Kitchen than seeing so many of our friends coming back to see us every time they come into town, and making multiple stops each trip to see what we’ve been cooking up. Special thanks to Ken from down at the Blacksmith Shop for coming up to give our Clock Jack another round of TLC. Thanks to his attention, our Jack is running more smoothly than it has in quite some time, and we were able to roast a lovely bird the following afternoon.

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

**Cooper** – **The Cooper is open Sunday, Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.**

**Engraver** – This week, we have finished up a tray full of trade silver for the Silversmiths, and William is working on some custom bottle tickets for them. Journeyman Chris from the Silversmith Shop has delivered a stunning silver tray that I will begin working on this week. It will carry a Frenchman’s Map on the face of the tray. William has also been steadily cutting on his Ships plate and will be finishing soon! Next step is to design and cut a cartouche to frame the inscription on the bottom, so he has been researching cartouche elements and layout ideas. William and I also concluded our interviews for our Intern position, and we have made a decision. We will be welcoming in Emma Allerdice! She is currently a Groom with Coach and Livestock. We



hope to see her in the Shop in a couple of weeks. The Engravers have also found out that we will be hosting a Junior Interpreter. We will be seeing young Ms. Emily in the Shop, hopefully soon. She will be doing lots of drawing exercises, watercoloring, and learning some dry point for printing, and we plan to do some field drawing around town. We are looking forward to having both of these folks in the Engraving Shop.

**The Engraver is open Sunday through Tuesday, and Thursday.**

**Farmer** – The Farmer will be at Ewing Field 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** – In the Geddy Foundry this week, Drew has been working on cleaning up handles for the Coopers, making patterns, and teaching the folks from Military Programs some musket ball making. Leanne is away on a needed vacation until next week. We hope she is having a fantastic time. Some of you may have heard Mike is not feeling too well. He will be out for a little bit, and we wish him a speedy recovery. We miss you, Mike! Over the weekend and next week, you may see William and Lynn from Engraving and possibly a Silversmith or two in the Foundry helping out.

**The Foundry is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

**Gardener** – The Garden was visited by our Arborists this week to remove the dead branches from the Sweet Gum. It is now much safer to walk into the back of the Garden. Planting commenced of the American Indian Food Plot with a visit from our colleagues from the American Indian Initiative. The ground had been turned and readied beforehand, so the work was mostly raising up the hills and seeding. Vegetables planted were Nanticoke Squash (*Cucurbita maxima*), Scarlet Runner Bean (*Phaseolus coccineus*), and Abenaki Corn (*Zea mays*). Sunflower seeds were sown on the outer edges of the Garden to complete the chosen crops for this year.





Seeding the Sankofa Heritage Garden has begun. Peanuts, okra, sesame, millet, sorghum, and cymlin squash have been sown, so far. Sweet potatoes will be planted at the end of the month when the days are much warmer.

Lots of weeding keeps everything looking tidy. Lima beans are up, as well as the fennel, cucumbers, carrots, and beets. Rainfall arrived at just the right time, as it has been dry. One downpour which occurred overnight, netted over 1 ½ inches of rain. The Gardeners also planted out French marigolds and celosia and divided the Venus Fly Trap. All are great additions to a gentry Garden.

When the rye dries out a bit more, we will make new straw mats to replace the older mats. In the meantime, we continue to move the bundles of rye in and out from under our tent to keep them dry from rain.

Many thanks to the Landscape Department for hosting the 76th Annual “Garden Symposium” this last weekend. A variety of guest speakers were presenting as well as breakout sessions on various topics and tours. There was something for every level of gardener and plant enthusiast.

**The Historic Garden is open Daily, weather permitting.**

**Gunsmith – The Gunsmith is open Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).**

**Harpsichordmaker** – We are frequently asked what we do with our wood shavings; frequently, the answer is that we simply give them to other Trades to use as a fire starter. Occasionally, though, we put them to use. When applying veneer, we use a strong hide glue on both faces of the veneer. We then hammer them on with a veneer hammer (it looks like the squeegee with which you clean the windshield off at the gas station) and cover the glued-down veneer with damp cloth and a handful of wood shavings, which insulates and slows the drying time and allows everything to dry uniformly, preventing the veneer from peeling back up.

After preparing a lot of veneer for banding, we have started applying it to parts of the new spinet! The walnut banding on the spine will hide the yellow pine and create a decorative pattern that will instead be seen when the lid is open. Other preparations continue. More veneer is still needed. The case of the spinet is coming together bit by bit. We're soon to veneer and install the cheeks that flank the keyboard area. The oak



bentside will begin soaking soon so we can band it on the form that will give the spinet its distinct curve on the front side. More good things to come.



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

**Joiner** – The Joiner is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

**Leather Breeches Maker** – Hello! This week, we were happy to issue a new pair of breeches to Josh, Master of Masonry Trades! We think he looks sharp. Apprentice Emma made up this pair. Master Jay also finished a pair recently, which will be used for Shop interpretation. Both pairs are deerskin and the fashionable buff color. Happy wearing Josh!



Josh is enjoying his new breeches!

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

**Masonry** – This week in the Brickyard, work continues as the Yard is being prepared for Brickmaking, and paving is underway for the drying shed. An important part of the Brickmaking process is getting sand to the site, and our sand has been delivered! This sand goes in the mold to ensure a smooth release and thus, a



better brick, making our bricks sand struck. As for Brickmaking, the treading pit has been filled and is ready to create the first bricks of the summer, which should be made soon.

In more fashionable news, Master Josh received a pair of leather breeches from the Leather Breeches Makers, in which he will be strutting around for the foreseeable future.



**The Brickyard is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday, weather permitting.**

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

**Milliner and Mantua-maker** – Work continues on several collaborative projects. Janea and Intern Rachel are stitching their way through the red, white, and blue silk ribbons that will adorn this year's medallions made by the Founders for "Drummer's Call". Both this week and last, we spent some research time in Collections studying some of the pieces from the Mary D. Doering Collection, which will be going on exhibit in the Museum when the new Textiles Gallery opens later this summer. We're making some millinery pieces to complement several of the antique gowns and have now collected all of the measurements we



need. With our Trades/Curatorial Historical Dress Conference next year, we're also documenting some pieces to make reproductions for a couple of special programs associated with that event.

Janea was interviewed on Wednesday by Next Door Neighbor Magazine; we're thrilled that the contributions she's made over her long tenure here are being shared outside of the Foundation. Congratulations! She's now on to the less exotic and enticing realm of mending...alas! Rebecca finally completed her blue cloak. This has been a pick-up-and-put-down filler project for months, but the calendar cleared enough to allow it to be finished last week. It's a reproduction of a red cloak with black silk trim that she studied at the Connecticut Historical Society, but the blue substitution reflects an advertised alternative. A "goose-turd" green cloak is now underway for Wigmaker Edith...unfortunately, just in time for the weather to make it unnecessary! Kate continues to work on her sleeve ruffles and is nearly done with her 40-inch-fabric linen jacket. Janea will be fitting the sleeves today, so we'll have the finished product to share next week.

And finally, a picture for the ages! This past Saturday was the first time since early March that we've had all five of us – Mistress, Journeywoman, Apprentice, paid Intern, and NIAHD Intern – in the Shop together. It was only for about an hour before the Interns swapped out, but it was a pretty special moment to have us all working side by side, just as our 18th-century mantua-making counterparts might have done. Rachel is soon headed to England for the summer to do research for her undergraduate thesis, but Ishbel will be back with us in a couple of weeks to begin her Brickman Internship.



**The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.**

***Musket Range*** – The Musket Range has been in training mode for a while now. We are happy to report that our numbers for May have been moved up to four shooters per session, thanks to the hard work of Alex



and Andy. They are both now fully trained and on their own. They have developed two new interpretations and have been wowing shooters. Alex recently instructed a fully blind shooter, with great success. As a reminder, we are fully committed to providing the best service for all shooters, no matter their abilities. We have facilities for wheelchair access and shooting benches. The Musket Range is designed for easy access for anyone to shoot. Can't wait to see everyone out there.

Also, we are currently looking for another Instructor to join our team.



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, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

*Silversmith* – Silversmith is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

*Tailor* – The Tailor is open Sunday (12:00-5:00), Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

*Tin Plate Worker* – The Tin Plate Worker is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.

*Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer* – The Weaver is open Monday through Thursday.

*Wheelwright* – Long time no see! We have been busy with Coach and Livestock 's new MARKET CART! The body is ready for painting, and the hubs are at the Blacksmith for banding. Come by for a chat!







The Wheelwright Shop is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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

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

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