

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

For February 2 - 8, 2020

Armoury:

Blacksmith – “There now stands a vane on the Dewitt Wallace entrance, a form of unusual Blacksmithing penance. Through the forge’s hot blaze, and construction delays, the shop has completed its sentence. With that now aside, the Smiths took a ride to the east to see a collection. New friendships were made, and a lovely cascade of tools took on their attention. The other six days, in the most artful ways, they made other things that delighted and dazzled: a carpenter’s reamer, and hinges long as a femur left Ken’s strikers’ arms feeling frazzled. The Wheelwrights too had work ready to do, which fell upon Aislinn and Mark. ‘Mr. Boag demands bands, made by competent hands!’ and on this Miss Lewis did embark. A hook-ended screw, and the nut it goes through, were the project assigned Mr. Sperry. From one-inch wide bar, it’s made up to par, for Mark is not one to tarry. The Apprentices then, with some advice from Ken, continued their earlier projects: hammers and rings, dogs, and such things, are their latest attended-to objects. Tim’s at spoons for tasting, and no time is he wasting, for to do so would be quite a gamble. With such an array, it’s easy to say that all’s well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.”

Cabinetmaker – “Measuring Success! John has been hard at work measuring everything in the Shop since he took the time to make a new rule to have at his bench. (Now to convince him to make one for each of us). Jeremy is getting settled in and starting work on a small chest of drawers for some of his tools. Work on the high chest continues for Bill and John. Ed and Melanie had a chance to visit Collections earlier in the week and spend some time looking at the 1726 Cawton Aston spinet as work gets underway on the next instrument.”

Colonial Garden – “This week, the Gardeners collected a very valuable load of horse manure to start our spring hotbeds. Thank you to all who lent a hand: Farmer Ed, the Coach and Livestock Department staff, and a special thank you to the horses for their generous donation. Over the next week, this pile of manure will begin to generate heat and will be turned once before going into the hotbed pit. The Gardeners have also been busy pruning our fruit trees and shrubs. The coldest months in winter are ideal for pruning most plants because they are dormant and will not waste energy on leaves and branches that we intend to remove. This week, we pruned our pomegranates, peach tree, and several of our roses. The ingredients for a lovely salad including Aleppo lettuce, the last of our winter peas, black Spanish radishes, and edible borage flowers were sent to the Palace Kitchen.”



Farming – “The Farm-to-Table initiative started by the Historic Farming Trade in 2015 is thriving! The Historic Gardening Trade joined the initiative about two years ago and enhanced it even further. We will continue to provide vegetables as our land and time allow for use by Chefs Travis Brust and Matthias Mahoefer at the Colonial Williamsburg Inn. These 200-plus-year-old varieties of vegetables have unique color, texture, and flavor all their own. Along with these delicious aspects comes the experience of actually eating something that our 18th-century forebears consumed. What must be included as well is the sweat and attention paid to the nurturing of this vegetable by the Historic Trades Farmer and Gardeners. It is a taste of integrity.”



The first delivery of vegetables to the Inn in the summer of 2015

Foundry – “Glad to have the big hinges done, now for the small ones. We are chugging along on brass spinet harpsichord hardware now, as well as the rest of the 80th of Foot gear. Also, we've rearranged things a bit, so now we all

do bench work in the same room and visitors can see more of the shop. In addition, when we have demand for pewter objects, guests will be able to watch us doing that work using our second forge. Musket balls for the Musket Range are what we have going now.”



Gunsmith – The Gunsmiths have finished the matched pair of pistols, and they have been shipped to the customer. The photos and descriptions below are courtesy of Fred Blystone.



The pistols and the necessary items that come with them.



The pistols and other necessary items in the case.

Joinery - “The Joinery is awash in sawdust. Peter has been working on a door for the Brickyard, and in that process has dulled and re-sharpened his saw numerous times now. Scott is cutting and assembling the doors to his food safe. He has one leg to work on, and then he can re-assemble the piece. Amanda has carved two back splats for her post-and-rung chair and is ready to start carving a third. The finished chair will go to the Foundry. On his end of the Shop, Brian is carving all four claw-and-ball feet for the high chest of drawers at the same time, in order to maintain their homogeneity.”

Milliner and Mantua-maker – “Readers, I have excellent news from the Apprentices of the Margaret Hunter Millinery! Miss S--- has, with aid of the Taylors, found more references to capuchins, a style of cloak, which gave her insight into the elements of a capuchin that differentiate it from other cloaks. She has now cut two capuchins that she will be stitching on soon. Mrs. J--- finished a pair of pockets and retired her old pair with great ceremony. Miss H--- is still stitching on her blue and white striped jacket. Mrs. W--- has returned from her southern voyage and is stitching on a shift for a private costumer and also preparing for an embroidery workshop to be hosted between the Weavers and the Milliners next week. N.B. I wish to remind my readers that they may report any interesting sightings around town to one of my trustworthy agents!”

Public Leather Works – “The Public Leather Works performed various small repairs this week, amongst which are a cartridge pouch for Josh in Military Programs that Jay repaired, and the leather breeches belonging to Peter in the Joinery that Jan repaired. Andrew continues work on the straps for Coach & Livestock, but also had an enjoyable day working with the Shoemakers.”

Silversmith - “Bobbie has been working on a pewter pattern for the thumb lever of the tankard lid, as well as trade silver and a mote spoon. Lynn continues working through the backlog of engraving orders. Chris has delivered her spout pattern to the Foundry and is now working on the ferrules for the teapot handle. Preston has been working on the tankard body and several small bowls. George is polishing spoons and (re)setting up a new (old) polishing system that has been in storage for a while. Parker has started piercing the bottom of his silver punch strainer, while still working on the copper strainer piercing as well. William’s love tokens are prepped for design work, and he has started laying out script on copper to practice cutting letters.”



China white drying on Parker's silver punch strainer

Wheelwright – This week, we have bid Farewell to Master Wheelwright John Boag. He is retiring after 35 years at Colonial Williamsburg!! Please see the photos on the next page.



John's last job, a set of carriage wheels, completed on January 27, 2020 (photo credit: Paul Zelesnikar)



Fred's Colonial Williamsburg Photography - 2020

The four Wheelwrights – left to right, Michael, John, Joel, Paul (photo credit: Fred Blystone)