

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *April 1, 2022*

There is exciting news in Historic Trades & Skills: Our daily Workshops begin this Sunday!! They will be held everyday at 10:00am. All but one are one-hour long, and those Shops will open to the public at 11:30am. The Milliner's Workshop is an hour and a half, so this Shop will open at 12:00pm. For the next three weeks, all of the Workshops will be geared toward Families and will be \$20 per person. The Workshops will change by season. The schedule is:

**Sundays – Cabinetmaker: "Plane Talk."** Join us for an in-depth, hands-on tour and demonstration of hand planes – one of the traditional woodworker's most indispensable tools. When Williamsburg cabinetmaker Edmund Dickinson died in 1778, he was inventoried as having "81 planes of various sorts." Such a variety of tools would be suited for many tasks like making boards flat and smooth, creating precise structural joinery, and making shapely moldings. We'll demonstrate the breadth of work done with these tools and give guests a chance to plane away some shavings themselves. Limit of 16 participants. Minimum age is 7.

**Mondays – Weaver: "Weaver Explorer Experience."** During this workshop, we'll discuss the importance of local fabric production in the years leading up to the war. Many people were involved in this work: children were learning to spin yarn by 7 & 8 years old; enslaved men and women were growing and processing flax, cotton, and hemp to make cloth on plantations; indentured weavers travelled from Europe to find employment; and wealthy planters invested in manufactories to prepare to fight against the mother country. Through this immersive workshop, we'll use hands-on activities to understand the great lengths Virginians went in order to participate in the Revolutionary War – from organizing spinning bees to wartime weaving. Limit of 12 participants. Minimum age is 7.

**Tuesdays – Joiner: "Drawing and Designing With a Compass and Rule."** Throughout recorded History, craftsman have used math to create works of art. With a simple straight edge and compass, we will demonstrate exercises used to create simple geometric forms which, when combined, can be the basis for fashionable design as well as our tools. Limit of 8 participants. Minimum age is 7.

**Wednesday – Brickmaker: "Daub to Dough."** Families will have the opportunity to build a small earthen oven with the help of masonry trades staff. The necessary components of an oven are all around you and can be likely be found in your own backyard! It's dirty work building an oven from clay and sticks, but the end result will let you bake bread, cakes or even a pizza. We'll also explore how to safely light a fire with flint and steel; a survival skill that'll help you cook dinner! Limit of 8 participants. Minimum age is 7.

**Thursday – Milliner: "Simple Stitches for Sewing Success."** Hand-sewing was a basic 18th-century life skill. At least 40 Trades in the 18th century relied on hand-sewing as part of their trade work. Sewing tools can be organized and protected by a small wallet made up of pockets, usually called a sewing roll. Participants in this class will make a sewing role based on an original in the Colonial Williamsburg Collection. This handy

organizer can be used in a variety of modern ways. Limit of 8 participants. Minimum age is 7. **THIS WORKSHOP IS HELD AT THE WEAVER.**

**Friday – Tailor: "Every Child Taught to Sew."** Each participant receives a packet of printed illustrations from Diderot showing assorted stitching techniques. We provide pre-cut fabrics on which to practice the stitches, and appropriate instruction. The samples are then stitched or pinned to the pages, and the pages can be stitched/laced together or put into a binder. By selecting different groups of stitches, we can vary the skill level according to the age group, experience level, or individual need. Limit of 10 participants. Minimum age is 7. **THIS WORKSHOP IS HELD AT THE WEAVER.**

**Saturday – Cooper: "Introduction to Coopering."** Participants will have the opportunity to use drawknives to back and hollow staves, and to try their hand at raising the walls of a bucket (assembling the staves) using one of our take-apart buckets. Limit of 6 participants. Minimum age is 7.

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***Apothecary*** – The Apothecary Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday.

***Armoury:***

***Blacksmith*** – From the "Anderson Aquatic Correspondent," translated to English by A. Hinman: "Many glowing objects set our water to boil this week, laid there by the titans that circle above during daylight hours. The grey haired one was seen working on a spark-making bit with handsome curves, as well as some spikes to hold wood together. The bearded one has worked on parts of a large, pronged object, what we hear described as a "tiller", as well as grabbers with pointed ends. There has also been one in a white cap and blue jacket who has been at work on sliding bolts and a curvy shape we have seen before, for snatching and grabbing of hot embers. The giant with the largest apron has been making large blades for breaking up the earth, and long swinging bits for doors and shutters. The smooth-headed air breather has been working on tools for the dirt as well, for scratching and breaking. Last of all, the one with the pointy hat has been making C-shaped knives for wood, and a little spiky part to keep in his pocket in the evening." Whatever your perspective, all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.

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

***Tinsmith*** – On Thursday, the Tin Shop held a hands-on workshop for William & Mary students in the NIAHD program. The students made cellar sticks, just like the ones the shop is offering for the Workshop program this spring. Production for Prentis Store has continued: Steve is making porringers, and Joel is making gill cups and tinderboxes. Jenny has been working on chocolate pots as part of the apprenticeship curriculum. Steve also constructed coffeepots from parts he had cut out for filming a STEM video for an upcoming Livestream. On the research front, Joel's research has been about the convict servants who were employed at the Armoury. Jenny is continuing to research for her apprenticeship paper by digging through Merchant inventories and receipts for tinware.

On this April Fool's Day, the Tin Shop would like to offer a brief history of the funnel as a symbol of folly. Tin funnels appear on the heads of subjects in satirical paintings by Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel the Elder in the 16th century. Allegorical paintings from the 18th century include tin people sporting tin funnels on their heads, as well. In the 20th century, one of the most famous allegorical depictions of industry is the Tin Woodsman from *The Wizard of Oz*, with his funnel hat. Today, many visitors to the Armoury Tin Shop spy the funnel on display and ask if we made the Tin Man in the Shop. Funnels are a common 18th-century item used in households and something we see in the Armoury records as a production item for the military, but not as hats.

**The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

**Anthony Hay Shop** – The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker Shop will be open Sunday (11:30-5:00), and Monday through Saturday.

**Brickmaker** – This week in the soon-to-be Brickyard saw the crew taking in the new Yard and taking the first steps towards having some sort of structure. We were successful in putting up one tent, before the wind necessitated its collapse, with the help of our pal Owen from the Blacksmith Shop. We would prefer two tents, but alas, it was not to be. We later paid the Blacksmith Shop a visit as we had to pick up an order of nails for our molding table, which will soon be built. While there, Master Josh admired how masterfully Apprentice Owen crafted a rake. It seems he quite enjoys the task.

In days past, we have been helping our pals the Carpenters with some heavy lifting as they have started laying out our new drying shed. We are hopeful that it will be up soon so that we may proceed with brickmaking.

**The Brickyard will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Wednesday (11:30-5:00), and Thursday, weather permitting.**

**Carpenter** – This week, we are starting to work on laying out and cutting joints for the new Brickyard drying house. With a shout out to Jennifer Wilkoski (our architect), we have blueprints to start work with. We've got the front and back walls organized, so now we can lay out the various joints and cut them to fit. The last few days, we rearranged the Yard to better suit our needs and the needs of the Guests. The Guests can now move through most of the Yard and access the Brickyard via the new path laid during the site work.

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

**Colonial Garden** – Spring planting continues in the Historic Garden. With the continued threat of freezing nights, the second hot bed has been filled with a variety of seeds and even sweet potatoes. An alternative to directly sowing the seeds into the hot bed soil is germinating in pots. This allows the seedlings to be moved easily before being transplanted into the Garden.



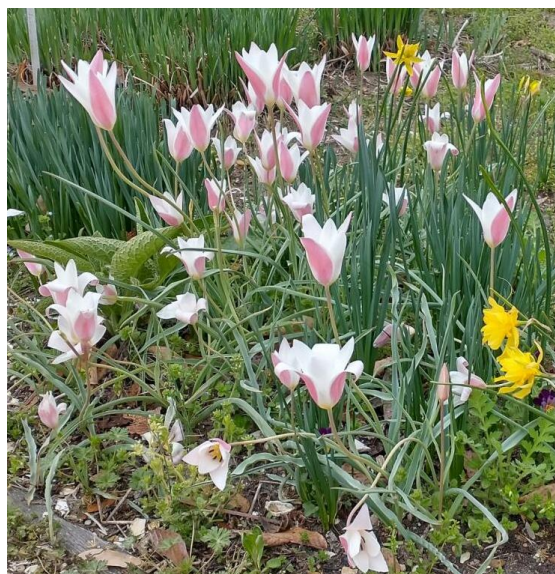
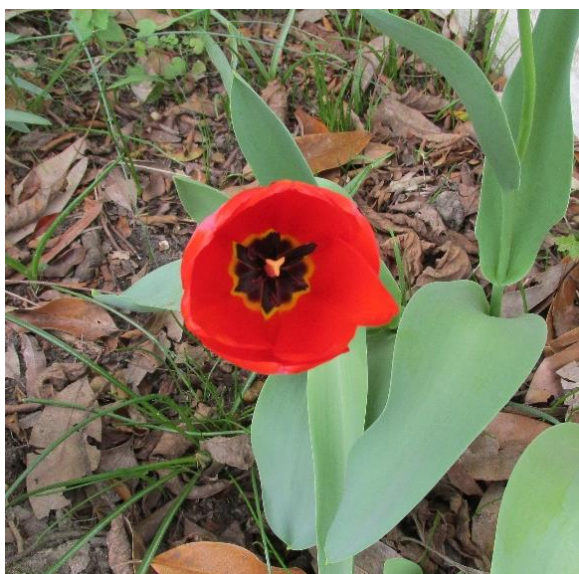
Tomato (*Solanum*), eggplants (also *Solanum*), and a variety of peppers (*Capsicum*)

Three artichokes and three cardoons have been transplanted from the hot beds into their new mounded earth homes. Both members of the *Cynara* family were found in the wealthiest gardens and thence, dinner tables.



Artichokes and cardoons under bell glasses

“Tulips, various Colours, dwarfs and tall, in Size; the early Kinds flower in February, March, and April; the late ones about May...” *The Gardener’s Pocket-Book; or Country Gentlemen’s Recreation*. (London, c. 1755).





The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.

Cooper – The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday through Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00)

Engraver – The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

Foodways – The Foodways Staff will be at the Palace Kitchen Monday, and Thursday through Saturday. They will be at the Palace Scullery on Sunday for “Arts and Mysteries of Brewing.”

Foundry – Leanne has been helping out the Milliners for *Women's History Month*. Drew and Leanne have both finished their level one apprenticeship skills. And, we have produced twelve *Drummer's Call* Badges for Fifes and Drums.



The Foundry will be open Sunday through Thursday.

**Gunsmith** – The Gunsmith Shop will be open Sunday, Wednesday through Saturday.

**Historic Farming** – Historic Farming conducted a plowing workshop last week for staff from Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation- an 18th-century living history farm. They are very interested in our reproduction barshare plow that was made by Steve Chabra in 2007. Our plow is based on an original in the Landis Valley Farm and Museum in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. They also visited the Wheelwright Shop on how to make the wooden parts of the plow and the Blacksmiths for the metal parts.



Lead Farmer Kevin Tobias plowing



Eva Mergen learning some chiseling techniques

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

**Joinery** – The Joinery will be open Tuesday through Saturday.

**Milliner and Mantua-maker** – The Shop will be closed April 3 - 8 for annual maintenance, and open on Saturday.

***Music*** – Greetings from The Governor’s Musick! We wrapped up our *Women in Early Music* series at the Raleigh Tavern, which we enjoyed immensely. After a week off, we go back to our regular Apollo Room interpretations on music in the life of 18-century Williamsburg. It’s a wonderful opportunity to present the sound of Williamsburg as Guests enjoy the sights.

Our new Harpsichordist, Kyle Collins, is learning about the process of finding and understanding amateurs’ manuscript books and making use of our library with a book that catalogued all the known music published/circulating in the colonies in the 18th century.

Brady is continuing to research Carl Friedrich Abel and Ann Ford, the last two English virtuosi on the viola da gamba, in preparation for his Hennage presentation, which has been postponed to Friday, May 13th at 4:30. Interestingly, both artists had their portraits painted by Thomas Gainsborough, who traveled in the same social circles as Abel.

Jenny continues work on our upcoming program focusing on the pleasure gardens of England and their influence on musical tastes here in Virginia. This will be another outdoor venture for us, again using the Palace Stage.

Karol continues to work on the use of music as a political tool, and conversely, the effort to keep politics out of music, or at least to walk the line of least offense.

Our first concert series of the year at the Palace begins April 5th (this Tuesday!), and of course, we are hard at work preparing for that. Our best wishes to all—

### ***Printer and Bookbinder:***

***Printing Office*** – Chad Jones showing one of his two color certificates for an inhouse customer.



**The Printing Office will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

***Bindery*** – Good Day to all from the Bookbindery!

The Bookbinders have recently received encouraging and happy news! Our friend Dorothy, from New Hampshire, will finally be making a return visit this April, as we move into a more manageable incarnation of the Pandemic. When Dorothy was last here, she made paste paper and a stitch-book with us and learned enough that she felt comfortable to interpret to a school group that came in! She is fabulous. I have the book she made and will be presenting it to her upon her return. I look forward to seeing her again, and I will tell you all about it. Keep an eye out for this special person - I have a feeling that she just may join our ranks someday. And Friends - these are the days we will remember. Cheers!



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

*Public Leather Works* – Greetings all, from your friends at the Public Leather Works. With March going out like a Lion, we are grateful to be snug inside our Shop. This week has been spent primarily talking to Guests. We have seen quite the uptick in visitation and are happy to be seeing the school groups coming back. We are still looking for results from the jellybean wars. So far, only one response has been received. Two weeks remain to get your results in to [jtilley@cwf.org](mailto:jtilley@cwf.org).

“God Speed and Best Wishes to our dear friend Tom Redd, on his retirement. I'm sure for the next five years, we will be trying to figure out the million and two things you took care of for us. I hope you won't be a stranger and will let Nat Treasure and I buy you a well-deserved beer.” ~ Jay  
Until next time, keep your stick on the ice.

**The Public Leather Works will be open Sunday through Thursday.**

*Shoemaker* – **The Shoemakers will be at the Armoury Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

*Silversmith* – The Silversmiths are busy bees this week. Megan continues working on her ingot and saw piercing a mote spoon. Chris continues to work on the teapot and is making sure the hinges fit and move as intended. Her silver meat skewer is finished and was engraved by the Master Engraver. Bobbie created a lovely box for its presentation. Bobbie is also fitting more silver wire that will serve as a decorative rim to a large silver tray. Preston continues work on his small bowls and on polishing jewelry for the retail store. George continues his work on cups and filing castings, as well as rolling out silver sheet from our cast ingots. Work continues on researching enslaved silversmiths in Virginia.





The two halves of Megan's ingot



Chris' meat skewer and Bobbie's box, complete with Lynn's engraving, ready to go to their new home



**The Silversmith Shop will be open Tuesday through Saturday.**

**Tailor – The Tailor Shop will be open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday (11:30-5:00), and Saturday.**

**Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing** – We are thrilled to announce a new addition to our Shop! Pamela, pictured here at the quilling wheel, worked for the Academy of Natural Science in Philadelphia before joining the Foundation as an Orientation Interpreter in August of 2021, and joined our Shop in late March of 2022. Please join us in welcoming her to this new position!

In project news, Annie's first bed rug is finished, and Joe's second will be about halfway done by the end of our work week. We have also been researching when the term "rug" changed from a blanket to strictly a floor covering. So far, we've found that the first use of "hearth rug" was 1810, according to our copy of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but there are accounts of different types of blankets still called rugs into the early 1910s! Who knew Weaving would come with a side of etymology?



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

***Wheelwright*** – A good amount of dimensioning material and wheel work were done at the Deane this week. Master Wheelwright Paul is currently working on installing the fellies on their respective spokes for his second cannon wheel. Apprentice Murphy has two out of the four handles completed via the lathe for the Blacksmiths' socket chisels. He is currently planing components to proper dimensions for a Brickyard wheelbarrow. Apprentice Joel is wrapping up the last of his handcart fellies with the smoothing and compass plane. His project will be used eventually at the Market House.

Research conducted this week includes Paul and the Apprentices looking into *Microcosms* by William Henry Pyne, for both wagon and wheelbarrow designs, as inspiration for current and future projects; Joel starting to read Eric Bennett's *The Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights of the City of London 1670-1970*; and Murphy researching Carriage designs and construction, reading from both *English Pleasure Carriages* by William Bridges Smith, and M. T. Richardson's *Practical Carriage Building*.

**The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday through Thursday.**

***Wigmaker*** – This past week, we wrapped up styling wigs for “CW Lights”, and we look forward to seeing the wigs in action starting next week. Our Military hair dressing program has taken a hit the last couple weeks because of the rainy weather. No one wants to walk around all day with wet, sticky hair, after all. Edith and Debbie met with the always amazing Mrs. Washington, and we'll be working on a new style for her hairpiece in the coming days. Benton's secret project is coming along and may be done soon. As we catch our breath between wigs, we're always looking for new references concerning the importation of hair and powders, and Debbie is especially interested in finding references of colored ribbon used in men's hair styles. She hasn't found any, but if YOU do, please share! As always, feel free to reach out if you have tonsorial needs, or just need some black ribbon for tying your own hair back.

**The Wig Shop will be open on Sunday through Thursday.**

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

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