

“THE MECHANICK’S ADVISER”

For August 25 – 31

Apothecary – “Sharon was asked to give a presentation on her research on women’s health issues to a number of Character Interpreters. It originally started out to be for a couple of people, and due to interest, more people showed up.”

Armoury:

Blacksmith – “Fire may warm
And water may chill
But it’s from the wind
That I get my thrill

Up on the church
I’m blown to and fro
Til the breeze gets too strong
And downward I go”

- My Time as a Weathervane, by a local kook

“Ken has returned to the vane that he spurned, bedecking the banner in an elegant manner. Fine blades abound when Mark is around, a duplicate of a sword from Hunter’s ironworks, on the Rappahannock. Aislinn too has the weathervane flu, and the only cure is forging more scrolls. Recycling old mistakes (most of them rakes) is what Alex has been up to. That recycled bar should be up to par for gridirons in the Kitchen. Owen, meanwhile, with his jovial smile, has found something rather amiss. He has returned from his time away to a bench with no files, only the handles left behind. Presumably, this jape was conducted by the ghosts of blacksmiths-gone-before that haunt the shop. Last of all Tim, with typical vim, is finishing up some dividers. In a change of tack, he’s given hammers a whack, and forged a couple to his liking. Whether rhyme or in prose, everyone knows that all’s well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.”

Colonial Garden – “The Gardeners were thrilled to receive a delivery of small pots for our seedlings this week. These arrived just in time - the first of our fall seedlings germinated! We have started to pot them up and move them to our cold frame, where we can keep them partially shaded while we wait for cooler weather. Other tasks around the Garden this week include weeding, turning the compost, removing the old glazing from our hotbed windows, and re-stacking our firewood. Thank you to Paul in the Wheelwright Shop for repairing and repainting one of our wheelbarrows! Flowers in bloom in the Garden this week include the spider lily (*Lycoris radiata*), cypress vine (*Ipomea quamoclit*), safflower (*Carthamus tinctorius*), and heliotrope (*Heliotropium aborescens*).”



Cabinetmaker – “Hello from the Hay Shop! This time of the year always brings signs of change. The mornings have a chill in the air while in the shop we start working on the ‘Winter Woodworking Symposium’ project, A Frederick County High Chest of Drawers, ca. 1795.



“From the Ludwell-Paradise Stables, we’ve brought in a stack of cherry. As for working out process, we needed some 12/4 thick poplar stock for the ball and claw feet as well as the swan neck pediment. We spent some time on Thursday going through our supply with some sad results. As you can see below, the powder post beetles got to it first. Perhaps we can find some useable material, but before we bring it into the shop, we’ll need to spray it. We don’t want the bugs to develop a taste for our cherry.”



Milliner and Mantua-Maker – “I wish to extend my readers my sincerest apologies for the lapse in correspondence. I found myself travelling to the areas north of Williamsburg with some tailors of this city and had no access to reliable post for conveying the news to be published. While travelling, I was sure to make note of the fashions in that region. I found them fascinating but overall inferior to that of this place, with at least one instance of a woman binding her stays with the skin of a house cat.

“In other news of fashion, a passerby near Mistress H---'s Millinery noticed a very well dressed Frenchman attending to some purchases (visible in the window was a blue and gold wrapping gown of impeccable taste.)

“With Millinery in mind, it is rumoured that a certain Milliners apprentice of this city has left of her shop and gone west. I'm certain her Mistress and fellow apprentices feel her absence and await her safe return. This author will also be travelling in the coming weeks, but I have requested that an agent of mine provide the most interesting and current happenings in this city in my stead. All correspondence should continue to be left in the usual manner.”

Music – “The Governor’s Musick has been providing music at the Geddy and Wythe Houses this summer, including patriotic music and music selections from Bickham’s Musical Entertainer. Our volunteer, Bill Owen, has continued to play spinets at these two houses and at the Cabinetmaker Shop.

“Our Capitol Concerts have included programs on music of composers whose parents wanted them to go into the field of law, but who ended up in music instead, and of music from five members of the Bach family. The Governor’s Musick is finishing out the summer with a special program entitled, ‘Everyday Life: Music Available

at the Post Office.’ An advertisement in an issue of the Virginia Gazette lists various pieces and composers that were available for sale at the Post Office on the Duke of Gloucester Street. Brady Lanier gathered all of the music listed, gathered research on all composers, ran two diagnostic rehearsals, tallied up the results, and chose the most popular selections among the ensemble members. He also wrote the contextualization at the beginning of the program. With the help of Karol Steadman, Danny Corneliussen, and Jenny Edenborn, he has put together a new version of this program that goes a step further than we have taken this idea before. This program happens on Tuesday nights through August 27. Upon entering the Capitol Hall of Burgesses, guests will also get to view an oversized copy of the page from the Virginia Gazette on which this ad appears.

“We are in rehearsals for our upcoming ‘Palace Concert: Instruments From the Collection’ series with the help of the curators in the Collections Building, and we are already developing and reading through music for our next ‘Monsters, Mayhem, and Musick: Halloween with the Governor’s Musick’ series in October.”

Public Leather Works – "The bed leathers have been installed at Ferry Farm, and they are very pleased with them! (See the photo below.) Jay has begun work on a new pair of leather breeches, while Andrew is repairing a pair of the same belonging to Mark in the Blacksmith. Jan has begun work on a soft saddle valise."



Photo credit: Nat Faulkner with Ferry Farm

Silversmith – “Bobbie continues chasing the tankard lid, and her finial arrived from the Foundry a day or two ago, so she is now filing and fitting it to the second caster. Chris is raising the body and lid of her teapot, as well as flat

chasing a series of bottle tickets (see photo below). Lynn is still waiting to heal before she begins engraving again, and everyone seems anxious for that to be soon, seeing as multiple orders have arrived this week. Preston is nearly finished planishing the body of the tankard. George is still refurbishing chasing tools, as well as working on spoons. Parker has completed the two copper hemispheres and has begun preparations for soldering them together. William's first copper tumbler is nearly complete, and he has started raising a second tumbler of a different style.



Chris measuring and cleaning the current bottle tickets from our display case