

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *June 17, 2023*

**Apothecary** – The Apothecary is open Monday, Wednesday through Friday, and Saturday (11:30-5:00).

**Blacksmith** – This week in the Anderson Shop, a variety of different pieces took shape. Mark has continued his work on the Bray School lock and installed new brackets on the anvil stump. Chains, which hold the anvil down firmly and prevent ringing, are fastened to those brackets. Our ears are very grateful. Broadus, Aislinn, and Josh beat out a smattering of staples. Broadus and Alex continued their chisel making (firmer and socket respectively). Josh is finishing his second grid iron and looks forward to starting a third. As ever, all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.

**The Blacksmith is open Sunday through Tuesday and Thursday through Saturday.**

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

**Cabinetmaker** – The Cabinetmaker is open Sunday (11:30-5:00), Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

**Carpenter** – The Carpenters will be working at Ewing Field Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, weather permitting.

**Cook** – The Palace Kitchen is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.

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

**Engraver** – This week in the Engraving Shop, we would like to welcome Ms. Emily, our Youth Interpreter! On her first day, we jumped right in on basic parts of lettering. She will be starting off with what a lot of 18th- century students learn, Penmanship. Today, we started off with script writing (cursive). It may not be used as much these days, but it's a wonderful skill to have and to be able to read it on primary source documents. We will keep you updated on her progress. William and Lynn have been steady on ongoing projects and adjusting to a new schedule and workflow in the Shop. Many projects are going on right now.





**The Engraver is open Tuesday through Saturday.**

***Farmer*** – The crops are doing pretty well at Ewing Field. The corn is about waist high, and the barley has formed heads and is standing well. Tobacco is doing okay. The soil brought in is low in nitrogen, so it has struggled some. Also, the soil has a fair amount of clay, which requires us to keep it loose with both hoe and plow. We are so grateful to the Carpenters who are building the “wagon shed” for us. Shade!!!



Keeping the soil loose with a hoe plow



The blade of a hoe, the Farmer's friend

**The Farmer will be at Ewing Field Wednesday, 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*** – The Founders have been keeping busy the last couple of weeks. Apprentice Drew has nearly finished filling the next order of musket balls for the Musket Range, and Apprentice Leanne has been carrying on with finishing work on some of the bronze pieces we've mentioned in past updates. Last week, we decided to start casting pieces of a brass candelabra. Starting with a couple of the bobeches, the molds came out well,

but unfortunately, the castings didn't follow. Both ended up with holes and cold-shut casting flaws. But as is the case in Foundry work, we'll melt them down and try again soon! It was not all lost, though. This casting was Drew's first-time pouring brass into an actual mold (rather than ingots), so at least he's got that under his belt. Speaking of new skills being gained, we're both anticipating completing our first iron pours on Saturday. We shall update next week on how those turn out!

Also, this week we got to enjoy the fruits of our office move labor: Leanne started compiling a list of Shop FAQs and their answers, if ever needed as a reference, while Drew has been reading some modern Foundry texts and comparing them to our techniques in the Shop (all in our air-conditioned office).

**The Foundry is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

*Gardener* – The Garden has been very dry. Currently, we are below our normal rain totals. Many a watering can has been poured out onto the dry earth, and filling the cistern is a daily activity. Like anxious expectant parents, we are happy to announce that our Venus Fly Trap has finally bloomed. A small spider has quickly taken up residence in the blooms, rendering the plant even more deadly to unwary insects.



Venus Fly Trap in bloom

With a cool spring, plants are undersized, but that is soon to change. A few days of good heat, and the crops will double in size in short order. The front bed has been reorganized and decorated with Tuberoses and dwarf pomegranates after the endive was dug and moved to another quarter. Symmetry won over, and a few days of shade for the endive has assured us that they have survived their move. When the endive blooms, they will be six feet in height and covered in blue flowers. A sight worth waiting for.



Waiting for an unsuspecting insect





Intern Will cleaning out the cistern



Marc and Andrew fitting up the tuberose with plant supports.

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

**Gunsmith – The Gunsmith is open Sunday and Monday.**

**Harpichordmaker – The Harpichordmaker is open Sunday (11:30-5:00), Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

**Joiner** – Greetings from the Joiner Shop! As we move into the summer season, the Joiners are busy with various projects. Brian finished a dovetailed box this week for the Wigmakers to hold interpretive items for a program. He is continuing to work on a treadle lathe for the Shop. Laura completed construction on a crate-style step stool for the Tin Plate Workers and is beginning to draft a drawing of a tool chest for the Engraver Apprentice. The step stool is nailed together, including clinching the nails for attaching the handles. Peter is continuing to work on his arched doorway from Menokin. Scott is building a twelve-light door for the corner cupboard he's been constructing. He is busy chopping mortises, cutting tenons and coping the muntins.



**The Joiner is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

***Leather Breeches Maker* – The Leather Breeches Maker is open Sunday, Monday, and Thursday through Saturday.**

***Masonry*** – This week in the Brickyard, the Summer Crew is hitting their stride as they become more comfortable with the process. Currently, we have just above two thousand bricks in the drying shed, of which around eighteen hundred are for the First Baptist Church project.

Otherwise, this week, work on the tile making process continues. Apprentice Nick has created some shelving in the drying shed to increase our storage and drying capacity. On the tile front, we always enjoy a collaborative project, and this has become just that. We would like to extend our thanks to Apprentice Alex from the Blacksmith Shop and Master Farmer Ed for their help in our ongoing experimentation. Alex has created a hoe from historic illustrations, which should help us process the clay, and Ed is generously providing a handle.





**The Brickyard is open Daily, weather permitting.**

***Military Programs*** – Military Programs has a new Supervisor! We will make the formal announcement soon but are very happy to be at the end of our search and eager to move on to bigger and better things. We look forward to a bright future in the next few years. Military Programs has also recently received new buckets from the Cooper Shop to help in our ongoing artillery programs, which will be of a great help. Along those lines, MP also owes a big thank you to the Blacksmiths and Mark Sperry, specifically, for creating new plugs for our barrier around the perimeter of the Magazine Site. If you happen to see any of our plugs out and about, they keep migrating to other places, so we'd love the help in getting them back. In addition to more plugs, we have also installed more stanchion sleeves in the ground, both to fix some that had become filled, but also to create a new smaller barrier area for “The Necessity of Order in Battle”, enabling audiences to get closer to the action as we demonstrate military technology. Finally, we have returned to demonstrating Light Infantry as part of our regular rotation of Military Topics normally covered during the week. We hope to see you there sometime!

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

*Milliner and Mantua-maker* – The Milliner and Mantua-maker is open Sunday, Wednesday (8:00 am-6:00 pm) and Thursday through Saturday.

*Musket Range* – The Musket Range is open Sunday through Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday with sessions at 9:30am, 11am, 1:30pm, and 3pm.

*Printer* – The Printer is open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

*Shoemaker* – The Shoemaker is open Sunday through Thursday.

*Silversmith* – The Silversmith is open Sunday through Friday.

*Tailor* – The Tailor is open Monday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

*Tin Plate Worker* – The Tin Plate Worker is open Sunday, and Wednesday through Saturday.

*Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer* – This week in the Shop, we had the first Beginner Workshop of the year. Our six modern looms were loaded up with white cotton warps for folks to come and try their hand at weaving. Each person makes a standard-size dish towel in two hours that they may take home and show off to all their friends. The Workshops went quite well, and we enjoyed getting to share our Trade with passionate people.

In other news, the upholstery fabric is off the loom! Next, it will get hemmed, washed, and sent off to the proper people here at the Museum. We have already begun setting up the next project: tartan for Military Programs. This first warp is thirty yards, so this will keep us busy for the next few weeks. Pictured is the finished upholstery and the tartan being beamed off the warping mill.



**The Weaver is open Sunday, and Thursday through Saturday. It will be open on Monday for two Workshops ONLY.**



*Wheelwright* – We've been busy, busy at the Wheel and Wagonworks on Prince George Street! The Carpenter's cart has been completed and delivered by Paul, with new wheels and axle! Paul has also completed new seam rubbers for the Leather Breeches Makers! Newly minted Journeyman Murphy continues to work on the Velocipede, bending elm for the wheel well. Intern Ralph has finished and delivered a new wheelbarrow for the Carpenters. Paul is beginning an extensive repair of what Colonial Williamsburg calls "the Virginia wagon," with a new set of wheels, lighter running gear, and repair of the body. She'll also get a new paint job! More to come!







**The Wheelwright is open Sunday through Thursday.**

***Wigmaker*** – Greetings! This past week, we have concentrated on getting hair ready for some of our Nation Builders. Edith has begun a new wig for Mr. Wythe and will be assisted in her endeavor by our Junior Interpreter, Alexa, this summer. Benton continues to work on his netting. Intern Stella has begun weaving hair to match her own and will be making a set of curls. Debbie also continues to work on a netting project for future use. Maintenance continues as usual, so please bring in your hair for some TLC as the heat rises. Also, please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any hair-related needs or questions.

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

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

**Editor:** Shari Monaco

**Contributors:** Blacksmith – Alex Hinman; Engraver – Lynn Zelesnikar; Farmer – Ed Schultz; Founder – Leanne Bellouny; Gardener – Eve Otmar; Joiner – Scott Krogh; Masonry – Madeleine Bolton; Military Programs – Justin Chapman; Weaver, Spinner, and Dyer – Pamela Russo; Wheelwright – Paul Zelesnikar; Wigmaker – Debbie Turpin