

# *THE MECHANICK'S ADVISER*

## *May 13, 2022*

*Apothecary* – At the Apothecary, we have successfully completed our second practice Workshop with the help of several colleagues. We'd like to thank them for their time. We now feel ready for our Guests this summer. We continue to collect roses from the garden. We have an abundance of roses this year, so we should get a good batch of vinegar of roses later this year. Sharon has helped Adrian Costigan with some research she is doing on George Washington's health, and Mark and Margaret are diligently working through their apprenticeship.

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

### *Armoury:*

*Blacksmith* – Unusual orders are the topic of the week at the Publick Armoury. A knee walker in urgent need of new bolts was brought in by a Guest, and Mark rushed into the task, aided by Alex and Broadus. After half an hour of work, the Guest scooted away happy with the repair. An even rarer customer than a Guest in distress, the denizens of the Magazine Guardhouse have emerged from a long incubation, finally ready to ask for new equipment from the Blacksmiths. The whole Shop is now involved in seeing to their needs. Ken made some drive hooks for hanging their gear, and from that fateful visit, more and more was added to the list: A ladle from Mark is forged and ready for filing, and a saber is currently under his hammer. Alex's flesh fork is fully finished and finely filed. Owen and Broadus have tasting spoons for use, and Broadus has begun forging fascine knives. Aislinn looks to make further contributions to the kitchen set. Ken's been repairing some of their artillery hardware, as well.

Other projects in the Shop are as varied as the customers: Mark has been repairing the Blacksmith bellows at one of the forges and working on tyres for the Wheelwrights. Aislinn has been seeing to buckles for the Leatherworkers and fire tongs, as well. Ken has been at work on hinges for the Cabinetmakers' drop leaf table and a claw hammer for Ed. Broadus and Alex have finished their hooks and hinges and have returned to draw knives and hoes, respectively. Owen continues his work on flesh forks, to round the group out. Though cloudy and dreary, there's a well-regarded theory that all's well that falls well at the foot of the anvil.

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

*Tinsmith* – This week in the Tin Shop, Steve has been continuing his work on two sets of small and large watering cans for outside museums, as well as leading the successful *Small Cellar Stick* Workshop on Wednesday. Jenny has been working on domed top coffee pots and looking at merchant store daybooks for tinware prices. Joel has been making gill cups for Prentis and researching Armoury workers.

**The Tin Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday (11:30am-5:00pm), Friday, and Saturday.**

### *Anthony Hay Shop* –

*Cabinetmaker* – The Cabinetmakers are continuing on with their assorted projects. We just received some small, specialty locks fabricated by our Blacksmiths, which John is now installing on the apothecary chest he and Jeremy built. Pretty soon, that will be assembled and ready for finishing. John is also progressing rapidly on his dining table.

Recently, Jeremy, Bill, and Apprentice Harpsichord-maker Sara, had the opportunity to attend a symposium up at the Winterthur Museum. The symposium focused on early forms of marquetry from the 17th-19th centuries, from Europe to the Americas. Jeremy is now hoping to find opportunities to practice some marquetry in its various forms in the near future.

These three were also able to visit the library at Winterthur where they viewed a few 18th-century pattern and drawing books from the rare book collection. In this photo, Sara and Jeremy are looking at designs in Lock and Copland's *New Book of Ornaments*. Over the past couple years, Jeremy has developed a strong interest in 18th-century pattern books, and especially books with a focus on teaching the art of drawing ornaments.



**The Cabinetmaker and Harpsichord-maker are open Sunday (11:30am-5:00pm) and Monday through Saturday.**

**Brickmaker** – This week in the Brickyard saw more of our favorite activity at present.....paving! And what a glorious task it is. We finished the treading pit and continued work on extending the paving back to our drying bed. This should serve us well in the Brickmaking days to come, which should be shortly at hand. Otherwise, this week, Apprentice Nick put the finishing touches on our new molding table. This entailed the application of a plane here and there to even out the surface. While this went smoothly for Nick, Apprentice Madeleine did not find it as agreeable. With the addition of our sand box and extra molds, the molding area is shaping up quite nicely.

In other tool-related news, Master Josh received the last of his set of engraved tools, consisting of a protractor, square, and compass. He is quite pleased and excited to use them or show them off to any interested onlookers.







**The Brickyard will be open Sunday through Thursday, weather permitting.**

**Carpenter** – This week, we finished up the back wall of the Brickyard drying house. The joinery is all cut and numbered for eventual raising. We also finished hewing the last piece of pine for the end joists. Starting early next week, we will be sawing that to the final size we need in order to assemble the end walls of the drying house.

We also want to welcome the newest Apprentice to our crew, Mary Herbert. She joins us from the Department of Historical Interpretation. Stop in and say hi!



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

**Colonial Garden** – Cool weather, rain, squirrels, and rabbits all hindered the efforts of the Gardeners in some way this week. The potatoes have already begun to flower and look good. The lima beans and pole beans have germinated, with only a few extra seeds needed to mend the hills where, for some reason, we lost a plant. Radishes are almost done and will be replaced by sweet potatoes, and lettuce season is almost over, soon to be replaced by parsley. Scurvy grass (a type of cress) has germinated, and when it is fully grown, will be harvested and sent to Foodways to be included in a batch of beer.

Our colleague Chris, from the American Indian Initiative, helped us hoe up the hills in the Garden so we can plant corn, beans, and squash. Sunflowers will be sown across the back of the hills. Pumpkins will be across in the work yard and allowed to run freely and cover the earth. A nice collaboration that features the foods and growing techniques used by our native peoples. The Sankofa Heritage Garden is planted except for sweet potatoes, which require warmer weather. In the meantime, plants are popping up out of the ground and eventually will create that wonderful clash of greenery that is a characteristic of enslaved peoples' gardens. Both Gardens give us another opportunity to speak about other peoples and their foods that were here in 18th-century Williamsburg.

We have another Volunteer who has joined us in the fight against weeds. A hearty welcome to Ory. No weed stands a chance against her trowel, and a huge thank you to all our Volunteers who help us out: Chip, Audrey, and Tracey.

As for the rabbits: rabbits-1, Gardeners-0.





Chris forming hills in the American Indian Garden



Her hat says it all. Welcome, Ory!



Northeast quarter and those beautiful potato plants

**The Colonial Garden will be open Daily, weather permitting.**

**Cooper** – Work continues on gunpowder half barrels for the Powder Magazine. Harry has been looking for information on shipyards in Virginia, including the state shipyard on the Chickahominy, in hopes of finding information about the supply of cooperage related to outfitting ships.

**The Cooper Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday (11:30am-5:00pm).**

**Engraver** – The Engraving Shop welcomes Danni Hillegas back to Colonial Williamsburg. Formerly our portrait artist, Danni is now the Engraving and the Foundry's Intern for the summer. While Mr. Fleming is on a much needed break this week (lucky Apprentice!), we have been getting Danni up to speed on Engraving interpreting and the basics, with a dose of getting back to those amazing drawing skills. Thank you to the Foundry for doing a stellar job helping me cover the shop this Tuesday and Wednesday, and a thank you to the Silversmiths for helping out on Friday and Saturday.

Here is the complete set of tools the Foundry / Engraving did for the Brickmakers and a quick sketch by Danni.





The Engraving Shop will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. On Wednesday, May 18th, at 4:30pm in the Hennage Auditorium, the Engravers will present, "Engravings on 18th-century Silver." Take a look at the styles, trends, and purpose in engraving on such valuable items during this period.

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

*Foundry* – The Foundry will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

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

*Historic Farming* – Chris Custalow of the American Indian Initiative planted the North American variety of tobacco at Prentis Field this week. This was the tobacco grown and used in Virginia by Indians upon European contact. Seeking an export product, the English grew it and sent it back home. The consumers found it to be too strong. This was likely because the tobacco known to Europeans in the 16th and early-17th centuries came through the Spanish. This South American variety was known to be milder, and this is what they knew tobacco to be. In turn, the English grew this type for the European market. The comparison of these two tobacco varieties - one grown and used by North American Indians and the other by the English - will allow us to tell the story of Virginia more inclusively.



Chris Custalow plants tobacco at Prentis Field

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

*Joinery* – The Joinery will be open Tuesday (11:30am-5:00pm), and Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

*Milliner and Mantua-maker* – Greetings from the Milliners and Mantua-Makers! We're deep into plans for the return of our "Gown in a Day" program on June 28th! This year, we'll be exploring the concept of sustainability in fashion, demonstrating how a mid-1770s gown could be picked apart and re-assembled into a gown for the 1810s. We'll be making up one 1770s gown beforehand; this will be disassembled during the

program and updated to the 1810s style by one team. Simultaneously, the second team will create a second 1770s gown, identical to the first version, so that by the conclusion of the program, visitors will be able to see both styles side by side to visually understand how fabric transitioned from season to season, generation to generation, and body to body. When fashions change, don't go out and buy new fabric! Just buy a new fashion for the fabric you already own!

In preparation for the program, we spent our Research Day last week in Collections with Neal, looking at some 1810s gowns to study stylistic details, construction, and piecing patterns. We decided on our inspiration gown - a printed white cotton dress on loan to CW in the Mary Doering collection - and sourced the reproduction fabric, so we're ready to start puzzling out our game plan for the 1770s "first state" gown.

In other news, both of our Workshops have been progressing nicely. Janea spent the week preparing for the second of our three embroidery classes, inking the design and cutting out the backing pieces for the kits. She's also been working through some experimental archaeology on a French bedgown pattern, which she re-translated from the original 1769 source text. Rebecca had her second stays fitting with the tailors and is ready to begin stitching boning channels. In the meantime, she's finishing up the trim on a printed cotton sack jacket and matching petticoat, just in time for the warm weather to arrive! Mistress and Journeywoman also completed a new bedgown for Master Engraver Lynn. Following her travels to the Spanish territories out west, Apprentice Kate has been lending a hand in Workshop prep and other Shop projects, in addition to preparing to start some new apprenticeship pieces. And finally, we're also creating ribbon "settings" for the pewter badges that will be given to the visiting fife and drum corps who will be participating in this year's *Drummer's Call*. The badges were made by the Founders and engraved by the Engravers and are now with us to receive their decorative backing. Stay tuned for a picture of the finished piece in next week's issue!



**The Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Thursday (12:00-5:00pm), and Saturday.**

**Printer and Bookbinder:**

***Printing Office*** – The Printing Office will be open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

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



## *Public Leather Works* – BIG NEWS FROM THE PUBLIC LEATHER WORKS!!!!!!!!!!

We are very excited to introduce our new summer Intern Jamie McKnew!!!!!!



Jamie started with us on Tuesday and is already getting her feet wet with learning some basic stitching. If you have a chance to stop by, please come welcome her to the fold.

In other news, Apprentice Cross has begun to puzzle out the patterning of leather breeches.



Soon, she will have a pair of breeches for Joel Morris, Apprentice Wheelwright, underway.

Perhaps the most startling turn of events this week was Master Howlett unexpectedly turning into a potted plant for several hours.



Fortunately, this occurred during our research time and did not impair his ability to perform his administrative duties. It did, however, give the new Intern quite the turn.

Journeyman Tilley, not content to rest on the laurels of the Leprechaun Breeches, has patterned a pair of leather breeches to fit an 8 year old and is in the process of constructing them. Someday, he hopes to work his way up to Big Boy Breeches!



Until next time, friends and neighbors, stay safe, stay sane, and stay in touch.

**The Public Leather Works will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

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

**Silversmith** – Work continues in the Silversmith Shop on a variety of projects. Megan continues to work on her ingot, a large amount of trade silver items for the store and polishing her mote spoon. Chris' teapot is polished, and the ebony handle is coming along well. Bobbie's tray is taking shape as she chases in the design. Preston is working on his small bowls and on polishing jewelry for the retail store. George continues his work on forging out the long ingot for spoon blanks. Research on trade silver is also being conducted.





Chris' teapot



Bobbie's Tray

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

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

**Weaving, Spinning, and Dyeing** – The Dutch blankets are off the loom, cut into their panels, and soon they'll be sewn together with two panels side by side, hemmed, washed, and off for Interpreter use. We ended up with four panels, which will make two large blankets. Pamela's first project is loaded onto the back beam, and the first band has been threaded! We can't wait to show you all how this lovely linen will turn out.



Speaking of lovely, Joe's hard work on his tartan is paying off, and the pattern is able to shine. He's replicating the fabric from a dressing gown that's in our Collection. In fact, if you look at our online Collection, it's the wrapping gown used as the display image for the Costumes section! The full entry can be found here - <https://emuseum.history.org/objects/92065/wrapping-gown?ctx=f6e40734d96b505a595de2120c4e07f1e7410f11&idx=1>



### Wrapping Gown

Man's loose T-shaped gown of hard-surface worsted wool and silk, woven in plaid or tartan pattern in colors of red, yellow, grey-blue (crossing red to appear purple), ...

[emuseum.history.org](http://emuseum.history.org)

**The Weaving Shop will be open on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday.**

**Wheelwright** – It's business as usual at the Deane Shop, with Master Wheelwright Paul and Apprentice Joel working in tandem on a handled tongue for the carry-log axle. It is rapidly nearing completion for the Carpenters. Apprentice Murphy continues to plane material to the proper dimensions for his hand cart project, so the Shop is swimming in white oak shavings. A very good week for the Deane denizens.

**The Wheelwright Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

**Wigmaker** – **The Wig Shop will be open Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.**

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

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