

# AUGUST

**STANLEY POTTS** has a surprising – yet pleasing – encounter when he visits the Pratts Bottom Antique Tool Fair

## 05 FRIDAY

I can't find my favourite scraper! Toby must have borrowed it and left it somewhere. I wasted a quarter of an hour today looking for it. What's the point of having an assistant if you end up spending half your time searching for things in the workshop?!

Milroy's order finally arrived. About time too... I very nearly ran out! I've been looking forward to trying the 15-year-old Bruichladdich, and the Laphroaig is an old favourite.

I spent most of the day working on one of those violins with an 'Improved by...' label stuck right beside the maker's name. These so-called 'repairers' never improve anything much... they just end up taking the blame for all the other bad repair work that ever gets done to the instrument. Much safer to stay anonymous.

## 06 SATURDAY

Robert B\_\_ came in with a tricky retouching job on his cello – there was a long bare streak down the varnish on the belly. He'd obviously spilt some strong alcohol down it, though he claims to have no idea how it happened. What is it about musicians? They don't seem to be able to get through the day without a drink!

Still no sign of my scraper – can't think what Toby's done with it.

## 07 SUNDAY

Well... what an interesting day! Went to the Antique Tool Fair at Pratts Bottom. I was standing at a stall of old planes looking at a very fine Norris no.51 smoother (and wondering how I could possibly justify it to Rose), when I got talking to the chap next to me. We ended up having a very interesting debate – I always thought Norris had invented the dovetailed method of jointing plates, but he told me it was actually Spiers. And he insisted that their early planes were better than Norris's. We were both enjoying our discussion so much that we decided to adjourn to the pub to continue in more comfort.

The amazing thing is that, when we finally got around to introducing ourselves, I discovered that my new acquaintance was actually Jenkins! The violin maker from Reigate!! He's really a very nice chap. I told him I had long been an admirer of his work and he said the same about me.

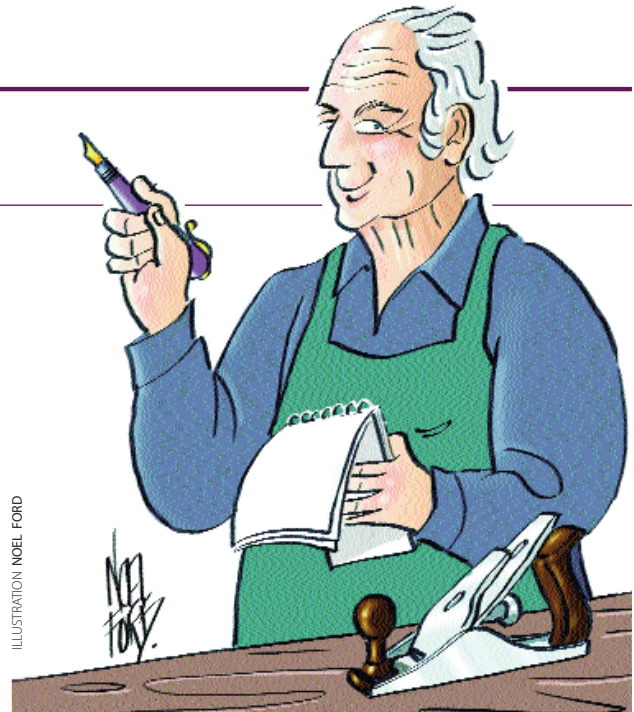
We spent the afternoon swapping shop stories and having a good chuckle about various people. Apparently that new teacher John T\_\_ also came into his shop last month asking about commissions. Jenkins sent him packing... much less politely than me, too. Good man!

I noticed that there were some single malts tucked away on a shelf behind the bar, and we ended up trying quite a few. Jenkins said he didn't know much about whisky so I felt it was my duty to educate him.

Arrived home late and a bit the worse for wear – Rose not pleased.

## 08 MONDAY

Haven't managed to achieve very much today... feeling a bit slow. I think I might give the whisky a miss



## What is it about musicians? They don't seem to be able to get through the day without a drink

this evening – I'll head off early and have a sherry with Rose instead. Anyway, at least I found my scraper. It was under the glue pot on my desk. I'm quite sure I didn't put it there.

## 18 THURSDAY

Received a nice card from Beth Hurley in the post – she'd drawn a picture of a violin on the front with a big coloured 'Thank You' around the edge. She'll be starting lessons with her new teacher at the music college next month.

Peter K\_\_ visited today in a bit of a panic, desperately wanting to see Toby. He'd just found out the orchestra is doing Elgar's First Symphony (the one with the solo passage for the last desk) – he thinks he should try some different strings and was also wondering if that new woven tailgut might do anything to improve his sound (apparently the section leader had one fitted last week to good effect, so now everyone has to try it). Toby managed to calm him down. He's really quite good with the customers... he certainly has more patience than me (I wonder how long that will last).

## 06 FRIDAY

No time for my usual whisky... I'm meeting Jenkins at the Spotted Dog. We thought we might make it a regular event and get together every few weeks for a chat. I mentioned to Rose before I left this morning that I might be getting home a bit late.

**To find out more about Stanley Potts and his world, visit [stanleypotts.co.uk](http://stanleypotts.co.uk)**