

# JANUARY

**The surprise appearance of a Strad needing repairs makes STANLEY POTTS's week – which is more than can be said for the arrival of his Milroy's bill**

## IO MONDAY

Mick D\_\_ came in with his violin today. I've seen him at the Irish sessions – great fiddler. His violin used to be a Perry... it's more Patches than Perry now. Amazing that he can play it at all, let alone make it sound the way it does. Soundpost crack has reopened – well, to be precise, one of the three soundpost cracks. There's not a square inch on the fiddle that doesn't have some sort of repair work... mostly badly done. It's a ticking time bomb and I don't want to touch it, but Phil has apparently recommended me (I do wish he'd check with me first). I told Mick I would take the top off and let him know what I thought (well... I won't tell him my ideas about roasting chestnuts). He wanted a quote of course, but where do you start?

Oh yes... and he's got an important gig on Friday night so could I possibly... etc etc.

## II TUESDAY

Another car load from St Mark's – two cellos, three violins, a viola and some bows. Mary was particularly concerned about one of the cellos – thought the neck must be twisting because the string heights were all over the place. I turned the bridge around and she was able to take it away again.

Spent three painstaking hours opening up Mick's violin and managed to avoid it self-destructing... the inside looked like a patchwork quilt. The crack seemed to go back together cleanly enough, so with a bit of luck it might not be too big a job after all.

Account from Milroy's – rather alarming! May have to think about trying some blended whiskies.

## I2 WEDNESDAY

What a day!! Jack came in with an old friend from Stuttgart who needed a minor repair on his fiddle. When I opened the case I found it was a STRAD!! Had to try and look casual... pretend that I see Strads every other day (Jack was thoroughly enjoying himself – he could have warned me!). It had an open seam on the top bout, so they had to leave it with me overnight.

I'm sitting here with it in front of me now – watching the glue dry. Was about to get my usual whisky, but changed my mind – what if I spilt it? I hope it's fully insured. I'd better take it home with me tonight. Too risky to leave it here... imagine if you had a Strad stolen from your shop! That would have to be the end of your career.

## I3 THURSDAY

Had a phone call from Herman Z\_\_ about his violin. I told him that I'd made a start, but was actually quite busy at the moment doing some urgent work on a Strad. He apologised for interrupting me and got off the phone straight away! (I should use that one more often.)

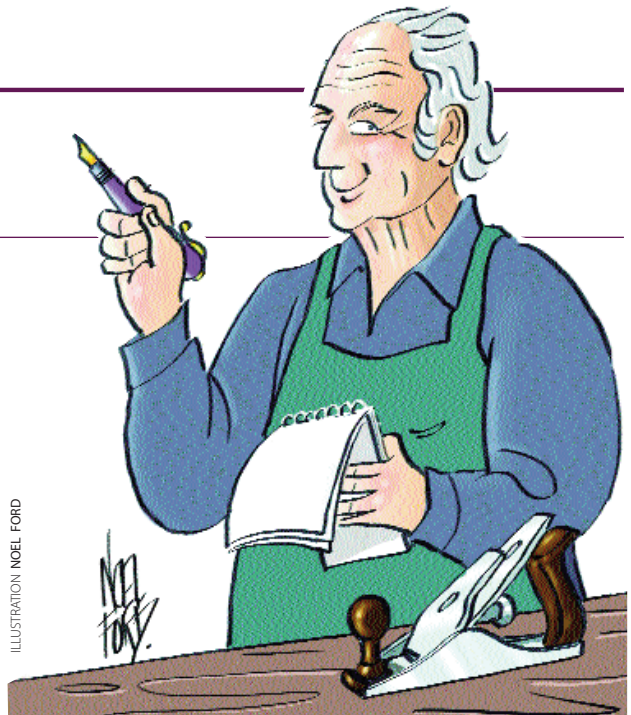


ILLUSTRATION NOEL FORD

**I told Mick I would take the top off and let him know what I thought (well... I won't tell him my ideas about roasting chestnuts)**

While I had it here I took the opportunity to try it out. I must say it was really rather average-sounding – the G string was very dull. Perhaps it's better in a big hall. Jack's friend collected it late morning... something of a relief to see it safely on its way.

Mary also picked up the St Mark's instruments. I helped her carry them out to the car and watched while she hurled them all into the boot – so much for all my careful setting up. Don't know why I bother really. Had an extra whisky after closing to make up for last night.

## I4 FRIDAY

Mick came for his fiddle. Paid cash. He didn't even look at my repair work (which I thought was really rather good) – just played it and seemed perfectly happy. It really has a wonderful sound... clear and warm and powerful – pity it's on the verge of terminal collapse. I gently suggested that he should perhaps start looking out for another instrument, but he seemed horrified, muttered something about 'old and faithful friend' and left, clutching it to his chest. Must remember to tell Phil to recommend Jenkins next time it needs some work.

Milroy's order arrived – two bottles of Islay Mist 'Deluxe Blend' – worth a try, I suppose... quite a bit cheaper anyway.

Albert L\_\_ phoned to tell me he had sold that violin he bought at auction... one of his students took a liking to it. He made himself a nice profit of course. I didn't ask if he'd sold it as a Gagliano or a Voller.

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