

JANUARY

STANLEY POTTS finds his reputation on the line after agreeing to carry out an emergency bow rehair. Worse, he discovers an unexpected talent for public speaking

10 TUESDAY

Toby phoned this morning to tell me he'd sprained his wrist! – apparently he was skateboarding at the weekend and ran over a cat. He won't be able to come in to work at all this week. Very inconsiderate! I was planning on concentrating on my scroll for the next few days.

I'd got the neck block prepared and was just marking the outline when a chap came in wanting an urgent rehair on his Vuillaume bow (he said it was made by Peccatte... highly doubtful, but I didn't say anything). I tried to put him off till next week so Toby could look after it but he said he needed it for a concert tonight. It's hard to think about bow rehairing when your head is full of scrolls. Anyway, I got it done after lunch and he picked it up just before closing time.

11 WEDNESDAY

That chap with the bow was waiting at the door when I opened up this morning. He was very agitated – got the bow out and showed me a crack in the back of the head. He insisted that it was definitely not there when he brought it in yesterday! I explained that I had actually noticed it and it was an old repair that was quite stable (but unfortunately I forgot to make a note of it when I did his receipt).

He wasn't having any of that though – he got very worked up and shouted at me: 'This bow is very valuable and you've damaged it, you incompetent clod! I'm going to have to take it to a bow maker... someone who knows what they are doing! I'll be getting a quote for the repairs and devaluation... and I'll be seeing you in court!'

Had to have a couple of Glenkinchies after he'd gone to calm myself down. As if I haven't got enough to think about. Now I might have a legal battle on my hands.

13 FRIDAY

Rose reminded me at breakfast this morning that she'd put my name down to give a talk at her next meeting of the Dorking Seniors' Club – they want an hour on violin making next Tuesday. I'd forgotten all about it... complete waste of time, but I can't really say no.

Still trying to make some progress on my scroll but I'm not really in the mood – I managed to take a chip out of the middle turn and I don't think I'm going to be able to lose it. Pity I'm not doing one of Toby's antiqued jobs.

Just had a call from Brian. That chap with the 'Peccatte' brought it in to get his opinion and spent the first ten minutes abusing me. When Brian finally got a chance to look at it, he confirmed that the crack was definitely old and had been badly repaired some time ago. But the best part is that Brian also mentioned in passing that

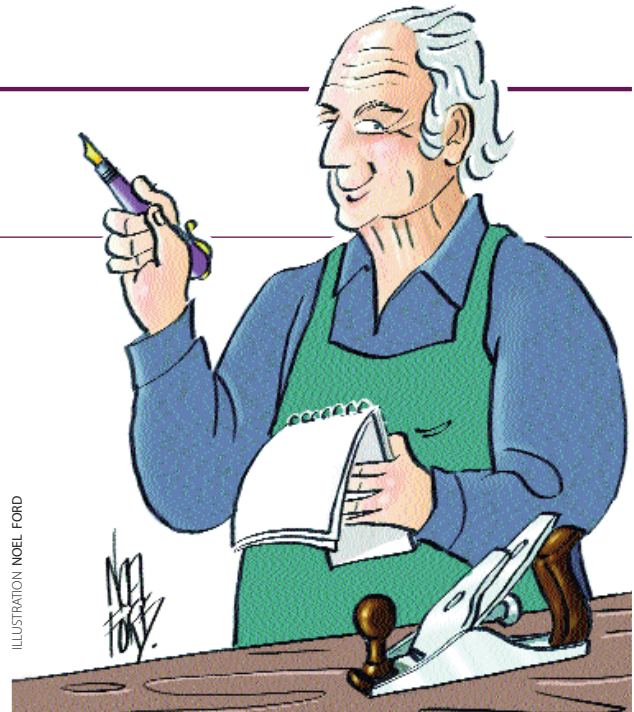


ILLUSTRATION NOEL FORD

He shouted at me: 'This bow is very valuable and you've damaged it, you incompetent clod!'

the bow was probably the work of Prosper Colas, definitely not a Peccatte. Ha!

It would be nice to get an apology but I don't expect I'll be hearing from him again. Brian said he was positively fuming when he left, and was muttering something about going round to sort out the dealer who sold him the bow.

It's very quiet in the workshop without Toby. I'll phone up Jenkins and see if he wants to go for a drink tonight.

17 TUESDAY

Toby is back!... though he's complaining that his wrist is still a bit sore. I got him on to fitting the new pegs on those German cellos. Nothing like a bit of exercise to loosen up aching muscles.

I did my talk for Rose's group this afternoon – most of them managed to stay awake. They raised my hopes at the end when they adjourned for drinks, but it was only tea and coffee.

18 WEDNESDAY

Got the scroll finished. Not one of my best – the ears have a definite droop. Still, it's better than a 'del Gesù' (... actually, if I ever got that bad I'd give up violin making).

Damn!... someone from that talk yesterday just phoned. Thought it was absolutely wonderful... could I possibly do a similar lecture next month for the Effingham Women's Educational Society?

To find out more about Stanley Potts and his world, visit stanleypotts.co.uk