

# JULY

**STANLEY POTTS clashes with a truculent teacher over secret commissions, and Toby's repair work continues to turn heads**

## 07 THURSDAY

Toby still rather subdued after the Herman Z\_\_ incident – perhaps I should have made more effort to give him the credit for the repair work he did. I cheered him up by offering to have one of his instruments in the shop to try and sell. Not that there's much chance really – no one's interested in new instruments these days (well... not unless the name on the label sounds like some sort of pasta).

Had a young student in looking for a violin. He took a great liking to an old French trade one – loved the varnish and was very impressed with the sound (perhaps I should have priced it a bit higher... too late now). He took it away to try out and to show his teacher – someone called John T\_\_. Haven't heard of him – must be new to this area.

## I2 TUESDAY

Oh dear... Herman Z\_\_ came back today with another violin for me to repair – nasty crack in the belly. He actually said to me, 'Do you think you could weave your magic on this one as well?' I had to admit to him that it was Toby who had done most of the work on his last job. He congratulated me on the quality of my training.

## I3 WEDNESDAY

I showed Toby the violin that Herman Z\_\_ brought in yesterday and asked him how he would go about repairing it. He went into a long, complicated explanation about supporting pieces and wedges and transverse clamps, etc etc – probably much the same way I would have done it myself, so I told him he could go ahead with the job.

He'd brought in one of his violins for me to put in the shop. Another Guarneri model with the overdone antiquing. He even puts 'fecit Goose Green, anno 2005' on the label. Ridiculous! What's wrong with the Queen's English? I suppose I really should have one of my own fiddles in the shop too – if only I could find some time to get on with it.

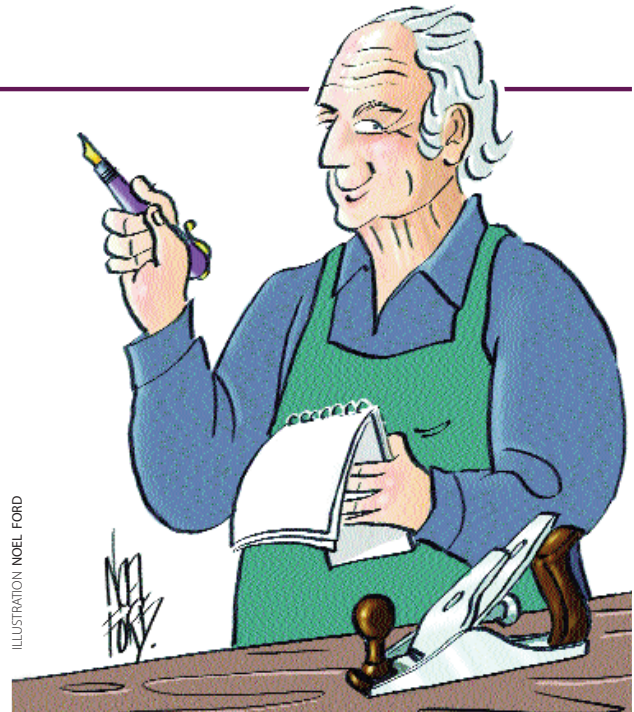
## I8 MONDAY

That student came back with the French trade violin – he's decided not to buy it. His teacher said it didn't project enough and the D was a bit weak in the higher positions (what was he expecting for that price – a Strad?). The lad seemed very disappointed.

## I9 TUESDAY

Well! That new teacher John T\_\_ turned up today to introduce himself. He mentioned that he'd just seen one of the violins that I had for sale and was quite impressed(!). He went on to tell me that he had a lot of students who would be looking for instruments and he could easily direct them my way. I knew where he was heading, of course, but let him hedge around for a while.

I honestly can't see how teachers can be trusted to give good advice to students if they are getting secret commissions from



**Toby even puts 'fecit Goose Green, anno 2005' on the label. Ridiculous! What's wrong with the Queen's English?**

the shops. I ended up saying to him: 'If I paid you anything I would also have to tell the buyer how much I've added to the price, and exactly where it would be going.' He didn't like that idea of course (they never do!) and walked out with the parting remark that I wouldn't be seeing him or any of his students again.

A very excited Beth Hurlley phoned this afternoon – she just heard that she had been awarded the violin scholarship. Good for her! I told her she might as well keep on using that French bow I loaned her. I toasted her success with a very nice ten-year-old Ardbeg. Decided to have a second toast to never seeing John T\_\_ again.

## 29 FRIDAY

Herman came in to collect that crack repair job – very impressed again. I made a point of mentioning that Toby had done this one as well.

Later in the day a chap called in wanting an E string. He stood there for a full ten minutes absolutely raving about Jenkins in Reigate... kept saying things like: 'He's brilliant... he has this extraordinary knack of improving the sound of any instrument... the soundpost setter is like a magic wand in his hands,' etc etc. Eventually I asked him why he didn't go to this genius for his E string, but apparently he doesn't stock that particular brand.

I wonder if Jenkins pays commissions to teachers? I expect it's the only way he can get any customers.

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