

NOVEMBER

There have been more late nights for **STANLEY POTTS**, who's busy agonising over his archings. Just when he thinks he's cracked it, Toby's example causes him to reconsider

02 WEDNESDAY

I'm finally happy with the archings on my violin. All I have to do now is stay back a few nights and do the final scraping in the dark under a low light. I think I've got enough whisky on hand to get me through that stage.

Toby finished the work for St Mark's, so I asked him to get on with that big repair job on the Collin-Mezin – it will need a button graft and new top block before he can do the neck reset. That cheered him up considerably... he's totally absorbed in it, and whistling happily to himself (and I noticed it was 'Little Buttercup' from *HMS Pinafore*!).

03 THURSDAY

Didn't get home until well after midnight last night... but at least I managed to get the outside of the belly scraped and finalised.

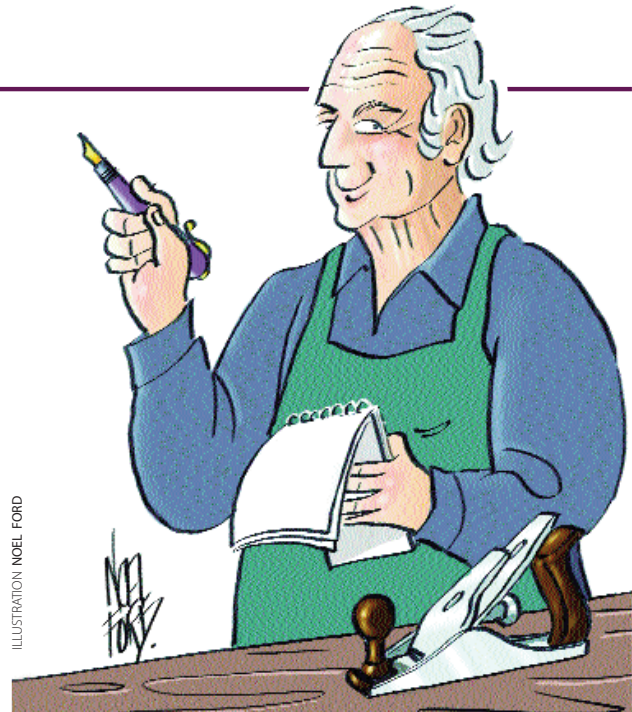
Simpkins came in to pick up his daughter's bow and spotted my violin plates and the ribs lying on the bench. He became terribly enthused and told me in great detail about all the woodworking he'd done himself (he makes bird feeders – hardly what I'd call woodworking!). He asked me all the standard questions – what type of wood do I use?; how long does it take to make a violin?; are the plates pressed to that shape using heat and steam?; and so on. I showed him some thumb planes and he went into the usual raptures of delight. Then he spotted a shiny new Stentor on Toby's bench and asked if I'd made that one as well.

He seemed very keen to try his hand at violin making and asked if I could help him get started... and then perhaps he might be able to drop in from time to time for some more guidance (why does every second person in this country want to make a violin?). I advised him to get a copy of Heron-Allen and read it thoroughly... he'll find everything he needs to know in there. I finally managed to steer him to the door, and as he was leaving I invited him to come back and show me his first violin when it was finished.

I've just been looking at my belly and wondering if it might be a bit too full. Beth is going to need a powerful violin and I don't want to end up making it too tubby. Yes... I've decided to take the arching height down a millimetre or so. Will do some more work on it again tonight.

08 TUESDAY

This morning I heard from Fiona that the chap who bought Toby's violin has been complaining about it!! – apparently he thinks that the sound has gone 'off' and he's worried that it might be a dud. I phoned him up immediately and he brought it in after lunch. Turns out that it had an open seam under the chin rest – I glued it up and sent him away an hour later a much happier man. It's typical, though... anyone with an old violin will spend a small fortune getting everything checked and adjusted (and rechecked and readjusted) in an effort to squeeze the best



People think that new violins should work brilliantly all the time, or else they're no good

possible sound out of it, but people think that new violins should work brilliantly all the time, or else they're no good.

Anyway, it was good to have it in the workshop – I was able to look at how Toby had done his archings... he's really got a good strong barrel shape in the middle section of the front. I think mine may be a bit too flat under the bridge... perhaps I should adjust that. More work tonight! But first I'll have to nip up to the Spotted Dog to replenish my supplies.

11 FRIDAY

Had trouble waking up this morning – I've been working late every night this week! At breakfast Rose suggested that I take a folding bed into the workshop, but I assured her that I am completely happy with the archings now.

Beth Hurley called into the shop unannounced this afternoon and very nearly caught me at work on her violin. Luckily I was sharpening a gouge at the time and I managed to throw an apron over the plates on my desk before she saw them. Don't want to spoil the surprise.

Toby was looking at my violin later and commented on the asymmetry of the cross-arch on the back. I said to him: 'You've been spending too much time looking at Guarneris, Toby!'... but after he'd gone home I had a closer look. He may actually have a point. Better sort that out tonight.

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