

OCTOBER

STANLEY POTTS gets stuck into his violin making project this week while an overworked Toby finds his patience tested at the hands of an over-eager customer

03 MONDAY

Came into work early this morning so I could make a good start on my violin. What a joy to get stuck into rough arching again! I soon had chips flying all over the workshop. It's wonderful to feel the arching gouge digging into my palm – I didn't realise how much I'd missed it.

Phone rang a few times but I let the answering machine take the calls... it was lunchtime before I knew it. I'll have to arrange for customers to come in later in the week so Toby can look after them.

06 THURSDAY

Toby is starting to look a little flustered – he's got all that work to finish for St Mark's by next week, and there's the new Primavera instruments to set up and quite a few of those brazilwood bows need rehairing. He was just clearing his bench to make space for a Stentor cello when Peter K__ turned up – apparently he'd been fussing with his violin trying to improve the sound and had decided to try out another bridge (he has quite a collection of old ones from previous violins). It didn't work of course, and when he changed back to the original bridge he found he'd completely ruined the set-up. Toby actually glanced over to me and rolled his eyes!

I've got the archings fairly close now and the purfling platforms are done – should be able to start on the purfling channels tomorrow. I spent over an hour this afternoon trying to draw the line of the purfling on to the corners – still not completely happy with the result. I may end up shortening the corners slightly.

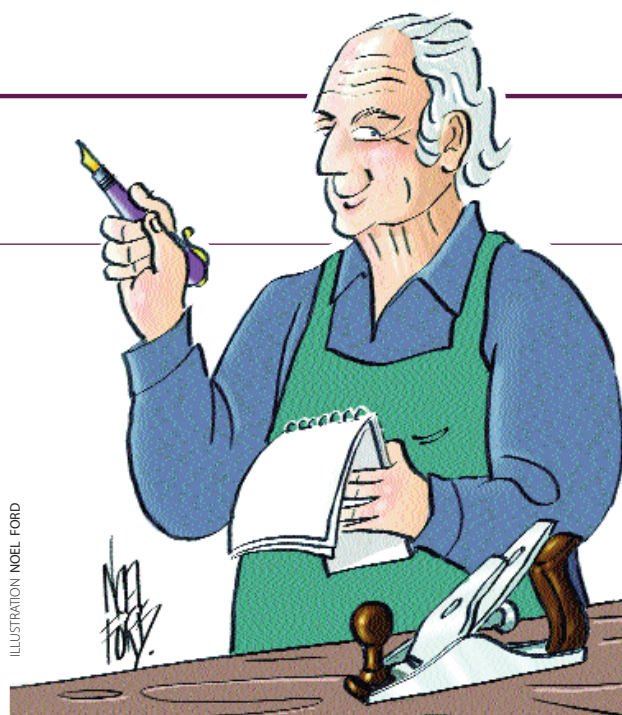
07 FRIDAY

I was carefully cutting the purfling channel today when Toby came and looked over my shoulder. He told me that he does his in half an hour with some power tool called a Dremel. He offered to bring it in for me to try out, but I said, 'No thank you... I want my violin to be completely handmade.' I always thought that Toby's purfling had a mechanical look about it.

Jack called in after his quartet rehearsal to see if I wanted to go for a drink at the Spotted Dog this evening. I decided I'd rather keep on working for a few more hours – I really want to get both purfling channels finished before I go home. We had a quick Glen Grant (just the one... have to keep a steady hand) and I showed him my progress, but of course the finer points are completely lost on a player. Really, I think the only reason violin makers take any trouble at all with their work is just to impress other violin makers.

08 SATURDAY

Finally finished the purfling channels and got both sets glued in this afternoon. I was a bit out of practice when it came to getting the purfling in quickly – ended up with hot glue all over the violin, the bench and almost up to my elbows!



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Some sections needed a good hammering to get them down into place (and after that I had glue all over my glasses as well).

11 TUESDAY

Made a start on the fluting around the purfling channel and was pleased to find that my purfling has come up very nicely indeed. Good to know I haven't lost the knack. I'll look forward to showing Toby how Strad-style purfling should be done (much nicer than anything in that big Guarneri book he's always carrying around). That's the good thing about making a Strad model – you aim for perfection. I really haven't got a clue what people aim for when they are making a Guarneri... how do you measure 'careless'?

While I was working I was listening to *The Pirates of Penzance* and singing along with the Major General's song at the top of my voice when I suddenly realised that a customer had come in... I've no idea how long he'd been standing there.

14 FRIDAY

Poor Toby! He'd just finished the last instrument for St Mark's when Mary came in with four more to do. Half an hour later Peter K__ came back wanting his set-up checked for the third time. When he finally left I could hear Toby muttering under his breath for the next 15 minutes. I asked him if he'd like to go to the pub this evening and he looked like he couldn't wait to get there.

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