**Fomrhi Comm. 1970 Eric Franklin**

**Buffalo horn - a versatile, carbon-neutral material**

When searching the ‘net’ for ivory substitutes for lute fretnuts I came across The Highland Horn Company Ltd. who suggested two materials, camel bone and buffalo horn.

I bought samples of both and used horn in preference as it polished very well and allows gut strings to slide over it effectively. In this context it is more flexible than ivory or bone so there needs to be support behind it, perhaps a step in the pegbox or some other means of preventing it bending under strain.

More recently I was forced to re-bush a treble rider that was giving me consistent trouble with slipping pegs, however and whatever I made them with. I suspect that the timber or construction method I used for the rider was too flexible but, again, I resorted to horn, this time to rescue the situation.

Firstly, I drilled out the peg hole in the rider to about 2mm wider than the narrower end of the peg; then I turned a length of horn to fill this. Next, using the centre dimples, I drilled an axial hole, approximately 2mm wide, through the horn and cut slices to fit either side of the rider which I glued in place.

Refitting the peg involved drilling out the hole with progressively wider drills until I was able to insert the reamer and refit the peg. My standard treatment of the peg – an old dry soap bar followed by school chalk – allowed it to turn effectively without binding.

Eric Franklin, 19.2.’12

Source details:

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