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Otis Tomas: Making Instruments & Tunes INTRODUCTION: This is an article of ideas. It has three aims. First, to display Otis Tomas' | work as a luthier, a maker of musical Instru? ments. Second, to share some of Otis' recent ideas in his approach to making instruments. Third, to offer some of his fiddle tunes. It is also an opportunity to display Carol Kenne? dy's photographs of Otis' instruments. Otis Tomas: Here (below) is a finished mandolin from the back. And these are the moulds that I use for building the body. The back is made of these 5 staves that are curved and joined together. And the mould (at the right) is made in 5 pieces--one for each of the staves. So as I make it, can bend the pieces around each of these mould pieces. And then that would hold it ii the right shape of the curve. And then by planing the edges across the angle there, it gives you a perfect bevel and a curve at the same time, where the pieces will fit right together. I bend it around a hot pipe. Wet the wood, and I kind of steam it. I put a propane torch inside a steel pipe, and then just work it around the hot pipe--keeping it damp and working it around the pipe. (At the left side of the picture?) That's the mould for the sides, for the basic outline of the body. (There's two circles Otis Tomas of the Meadow Road, Goose Cove, St. Ann's Bay on the mould. They cross each other at the points of.... What am I looking at here?) Well, that has to do with a design that I was working with in this set of instru? ments (mandolins)--kind of playing around with an idea.... The background to it is part of what it's all about\* Some of the traditions that I'm trying to express go back, really, to classical times. Some of the ideas of aes? thetics and music, and, actually, the sense of music that people had in those times--that", in a lot of ways, I think (has) been lost to a large degree now. The sense that music was something much larger than just something you do on instru? ments. (Today) you play for your enter? tainment or whatever. Nowadays, music has a very narrow kind of parameters--what it means to us or what we use it for. (What did it mean then?--the historical