

Newsletter

BABA
British Artist Blacksmiths Association

November 2026



Kitt Garnett next to his creation "Divergion 2"



Welcome to the November newsletter from the British Artist Blacksmiths Association.

October started with a bang: a great masterclass at Ratho Byres Forge. Two days of working on a design created by Kit Garnett (in my case) or a design by Jacob Edwards. Two completely different designs, both having their own challenges. But the smiles on the faces of the participants were (most of the time) the same. I can say I truly enjoyed myself, and have the impression that was the case for everyone. As usual, Shona and Pete took the hospitality part to a great level.

Intermission: the house story. Last week the UPVC door (and frame) were removed and replaced by the old storm doors that we found stowed away besides the forge (garage). They were good enough to be re-used and look stunning already, even though they need to get their final coat of paint.
Lesser though is the heating system. That is not working. In trying to figure out the working an electric board inside the boiler has been blown. Getting spare parts is challenging, resulting in a temperature around 11°C inside. With an electric fan on. The caravan was easier to heat...

At the moment storm Austen is raging and showering us royally, to be followed by storm Boleo tomorrow, who is promising to blowdry everthing. So a great time to finish off the November edition of the newsletter. So back to blacksmithing.

The next BABA Practical Skills Workshop is going to be "Forge welding". Registration has closed, the interest has been overwhelming. So much that there are four dates needed on which this workshop is going to be offered. You'll find the dates in the "Blacksmithing events" section of the newsletter.

Besides that I heard through the grapevine that three blacksmiths are thinking about organising a forge-in next year. That's great news, but please register your date in time so the other BABA members know when not to organise one.

That's me for now, there is some space left for last minute news!

And here it is:
- BOC (gas supplier) has a special offer for BABA members
- Several job opportunities available
- Several blacksmiths looking for jobs / work experience

newsletter@baba.org.uk

What is BABA and why join?

For 48 years, BABA has developed and promoted the work of the modern artist blacksmith. BABA has united thousands of professional and amateur smiths (and interested many others) across Britain and the rest of the world in a spirit of friendship and collaboration, to learn about, enjoy and advance the extraordinary craft of creative blacksmithing.

To this end, we:

Organise Forge-Ins and hold an annual conference
Hold masterclasses, where members can get involved and ask the tricky questions
Publish a for members magazine (usually 4 issues per annum) and a monthly newsletter
The members website, with member galleries and useful resources
Offer a competitive discounted forge insurance scheme
Organise the production of large public sculptures to display the talents of the members
Organise talks from leading experts from around the globe
Organise gallery exhibitions, competitions, meetups, digital events and much much more

For full details and to become a member click on the button below

www.baba.org.uk



The team realising the designs by Kit Garnett and Jacob Edwards during the Ratho Byres Forge Masterclass

Forging a business

River Soar Forge: Month two

Well, I'm officially in. The move from an alleyway with a gas pipe to an actual industrial floor is done, and River Soar Forge finally has a home.

Getting the space fire-safe and functional was the first priority, and I've spent the last month settling into the 12ft x 20ft unit. It's small, but compared to dodging AstroTurf and house walls, it feels like a palace.



The biggest upgrade this month was moving on from the sledgehammer head on a tree stump. I managed to pick up a brand new 66lb Vevor cast steel anvil. I know it's not a 200lb London-pattern heirloom, but on my budget, it's a massive step up. Having an actual horn and a hardy hole to work with has completely changed how I hit metal.

One unexpected bonus of the new workshop is access to the scrap steel skip. I've struck a deal with my landlord to pay an extra £20 a month on top of my rent for unlimited access to whatever I can find in there. So far, I've pulled out a decent collection of 16mm round bar, some 8mm rebar and even a small steel cylinder that I'm hoping to turn into another forge. At this stage, having a supply of free, or almost free, steel to experiment with is a huge help. It's also becoming quite difficult to walk past the skip without having a rummage!



I've spent most of my time taking fire to steel, getting a feel for the setup and forging practice pieces. I've made a handful of basic tools for myself, including punches and chisels out of a scrap suspension coil, a snake handling hook to help me train my rather enthusiastic boa, and some J-hooks to get the muscle memory down.

The cold reality of month two, though? Zero sales.

It's one thing to stand in a cold workshop hammering out practice pieces; it's another thing entirely to figure out how to turn mild steel into actual rent money. Right now, I've got a small pile of forged hardware sitting on a workbench and a rent deadline fast approaching. Learning the physical craft is hard enough, but learning the business side on a shoestring budget is proving to be the real test.



Looking ahead, the little two-burner Devil Forge is doing the job for now, but it's small and eats gas. I've managed to pick up a few high-alumina firebricks, and I'm starting to sketch out plans to build a custom forge that fits my space better and runs a bit more efficiently.

For month three, the goal is simple but daunting: I need to make my first sales. I think I'll focus on getting J-hooks and simple door pulls ready to sell, and hopefully start making back some of my investment.

I'm just under £1,500 in now and counting, without a penny coming back the other way. I'm definitely feeling the pressure, but I've come too far to stop swinging the hammer now.



2021



2022



2023



2024



No. 177 2025



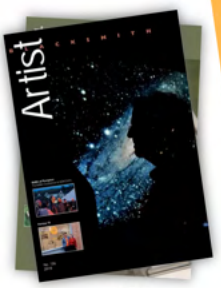
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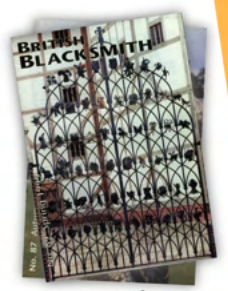
2020



2010s



2000s



1990s



1980s



1979

THE BABA MAGAZINE ONLINE ARCHIVE

Have you had a chance to search through the BABA magazine archive yet?

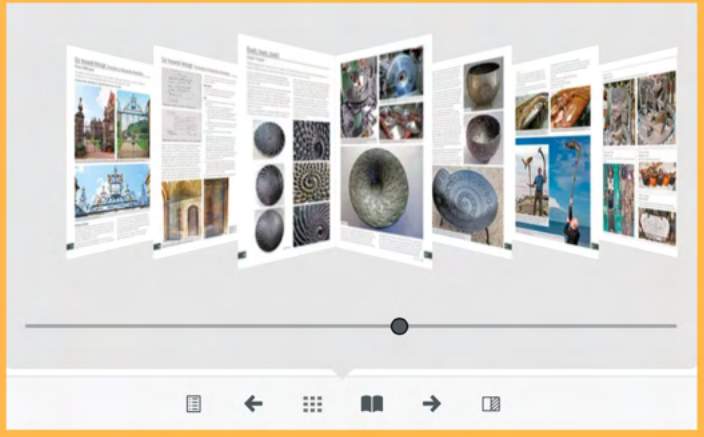
If not go to the members area of the BABA website and click on the “Magazine Archive” link.

This tremendous resource, spanning 47 years, gives all BABA members access to every BABA magazine from the very first one, British Blacksmith, published in November 1979 right up to the latest publication.

The archive is very visual, you can read through each magazine online as if you were reading the printed copy. If you are interested in researching a specific subject or name, type that word or name into the search box and every magazine with that word printed will come up with a direct link to the relevant page.

Join BABA to access the full magazine archive, recieve four printed magazines via post each year, a monthly digital newsletter via email, the opportunity to attend blacksmithing related workshops, Forge-Ins and an annual conference, plus much, much more!

To become a member, vist the BABA website www.baba.org.uk



From the archive, Issue 107 - 2003
The archive is free accesible for BABA members

Techniques and Ideas

Peter Parkinson



This was written at the request of Doug Adelman (Editor of the Northern Rockies Newsletter, USA) who had read Peter's report on the 2002 ABANA Conference in Wisconsin published in Artist Blacksmith No 102.

After going to the 2002 ABANA Conference in LaCrosse, Wisconsin in June, I wrote a report which was published in the BABA magazine 'Artist Blacksmith'. I talked about the balance of amateur and professional membership in ABANA and BABA, and made the point that "the LaCrosse programme followed an essentially how-do-you-do-it format. Nothing wrong with that, but sadly alongside this, there was no slide lecture programme at all. The featured demonstrators did their stuff at the anvil, but never had an opportunity to show the range of their work. So it was very easy to leave at the end of the Conference little the wiser about what people did, even if I knew somewhat more about how they did it. I discussed this 'technique rather than ideas' emphasis with a professional American smith, who agreed, and looking across the area of trade stands and tool dealers, added "I guess we are still having a love affair with technology ".

Having read the magazine, Doug Adelmann e-mailed to ask me to "respond in depth about the 'Ideas rather than Technique' approach that we seem to be lacking". I should start by saying that my comments were written for an audience used to events in Britain and were intended as an observation rather than a criticism. But since you ask.....

Having taken part in four ABANA Conferences, my impression is - rightly or wrongly - that the ABANA audience is more concerned to see demonstrations of processes and equipment, than people showing examples of their work and talking about their ideas. In San Luis Obispo in 1992, I was invited to lecture, and discovered I was showing slides to four people. (Despite sharing the sentiments of Jim Wallace who, faced with a similar audience, cancelled his lecture; having come all that way at the invitation of ABANA - I went ahead anyway). At Flagstaff in 2000, one evening was scheduled for slide lectures by demonstrators. At LaCrosse in 2002, there was no organised lecture programme at all.

Clearly if nobody is interested, you don't put an item in the programme. But I think people should be interested. If they are not, they are missing something. After all, what is blacksmithing all about ? Is it simply to do with hammering a piece of hot metal or is it about creating a piece of work ? Surely what someone makes is at least as interesting as how they go about making it. The finished piece is crucial. It is still going to be there after they put down the hammer (In many cases, it will be there long after they have put it down for the last time). Having seen someone work at the anvil, the opportunity to see more of their work and hear them talk about it, is a valuable experience.

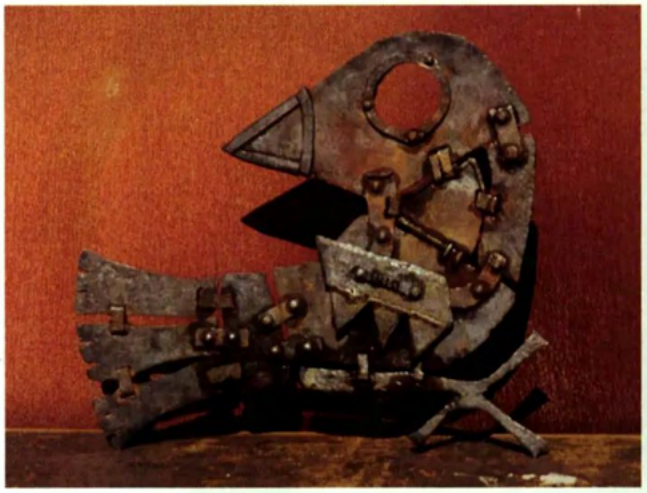
What I am talking about is, I think, essentially an attitude of mind. If blacksmithing is seen as a large catalogue of things to make and ways to make them - then by all means go down the list. But if you see it as a creative craft with as much opportunity for self-expression as, say, jewellery, ceramics or textiles, then considering how things look, understanding new ideas and appreciating when the boundaries are being pushed, is vital. This, surely, is what justifies the word 'Artist' in the Association's title. If you want to create something which is really your own, it helps to look at other people's work and appreciate their thinking.

I started to write this before the Anvil's Ring arrived. It contains a transcript of Elizabeth Brim's excellent address at the beginning of the LaCrosse Conference (which I missed on the day, due to the arrival time of the Chicago train). I would urge people to read it carefully. It goes a long way towards identifying my concerns, and I am fighting the urge to quote from it extensively. She asks "what is it to be an artist?", and having explained that she uses simple techniques and equipment, she says "I realised that if blacksmiths were interested in my work, it was not about the technical aspect. It would be the ideas and images that made it different".

Years ago, a silversmith friend of mine studied at a College of Art in London. One of his introductory projects as a young student was to raise a copper bowl using a large, smooth pebble as a hammer and another as a stake, both selected from the College car park. The point of the project was to say ' it's not the tools that make the work - it's you. Don't worry about the equipment - just make a beautiful bowl'. And that is an attitude of mind.

When I drive my car, I am far more interested in where I am going, than the process of steering, operating the pedals or changing gear (it's a European car). The car is a means to an end. In the same way I am - and maybe this is just me - more interested in seeing what people make in their own workshops, than examining their tools and special equipment and watching them forging. So what people design and make, the ideas that drive them, how they go about designing

Shown here are pictures of the work of inexperienced people on weekend or five-day courses I teach occasionally at West Dean College in Sussex and at Fire & Iron School of Blacksmithing, Leatherhead, Surrey.











and where the ideas come from are all crucial, and a Conference provides a rare opportunity to see and discuss these things.

Forging is a means to an end. It is constantly challenging and satisfying as an activity. You are given some wonderful toys and encouraged to play with fire - which your Mum told you not to - and I love it. But when I design and make something for a client, they see a piece of metalwork, and make judgements about it which are more to do with its appearance, quality, finish, feel and usefulness, than how it is made. Crudely, If they don't like the look of it, they don't buy it.

So I feel there is a whole other side to blacksmithing which needs to be looked at. Indeed it is mostly about looking. There is a set of values, judgements and considerations which are to do with design and aesthetics, and are at least as important to blacksmithing as the shape of the hammer or the kind of steel you use to make punches. It is not that American smiths are not making interesting and beautiful work. They are. It is just that for some reason, considering these qualities doesn't seem to be on the Conference agenda.

Elizabeth mentions the discussion of work (including her 'Rust Blooms 185') by some of the visiting demonstrators at the San Luis Obispo Conference in California. I was one of those people. It was a pioneering attempt - which Elizabeth arranged - to begin some public discussion of ideas and aesthetics. Not easy to do. But a very familiar activity to anyone who has been to an Art College.

One of the first things you have to learn as an art student is to sit there as part of a group and listen to criticism of your work by tutors and fellow students. The lesson is that they are criticising the work - not you. Each person introduces a piece of their work, which is examined and reviewed in turn. The aim is to discuss what is good, what is bad, what might be improved and importantly to give reasons for the opinions. In doing this, each individual has to make honest judgements and try to analyse and put into words what they really think. Being obliged to look and make reasoned judgements is a very important way of developing your aesthetic judgement, and helps you to look at your own work objectively and critically.

Looking critically at contemporary (and historic) work is important. As the saying goes, taking ideas from one person is plagiarism; taking them from many is research. But that research, done properly, requires just as much hard work and concentrated effort as hammering.The growth of a 'Movement' - call it 'Contemporary Blacksmithing' - only happens because artists and craftspeople take the opportunity to look at each other's work, the ripples spread, and a new language begins to develop, complete with a vocabulary of ideas, forms and details.

Some things you see may be just plain awful, in which case you can do better. Others may be so superb that they provide a standard to aspire to. But before you dismiss the poor piece, because you actually could do better, and the superb piece because you'll never be that good, it is worth asking yourself in each case - what is the idea of this piece of work? What is it about?

What the piece is about is the crucial question. What are the ideas behind the appearance? What is the maker trying to do? What is the maker trying to say? We are used to a novel, song, or piece of poetry being about something, but we are less used to asking the same question of a piece of craftwork. Is the poor piece in fact a good idea, let down by poor craftsmanship? Or does the dazzling quality of making in the superb piece obscure a pretty banal idea? Would you prefer a good idea poorly made, or a poor idea well made? Once you have begun to find answers to the questions, you will discover ideas worth making your own.

Listen to a final quote from Elizabeth Brim - "The challenge is to process the information you gather, internalize it, and make something that no one has ever seen before."

It is this aspect which I feel is missing from Conferences - the sense that blacksmithing is a creative activity. The work is there but the discussion isn't. And before someone says - 'but we haven't all been to Art School, or learnt to draw', let me add that neither have most of the people I have taught on short courses, whose work illustrates this article. I have been teaching both full-time, degree level students and short-course 'amateurs' for long enough to be convinced that there is a remarkable level of creativity in people, if they are just encouraged to look for it and use it. And it is that creative approach which has fired up smiths all over the world and led to the contemporary blacksmithing phenomenon. We should celebrate it and nurture it.

Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths
Tonypandy Award 2027
Call for Entries

The application deadline for the 2027 award is 31st December 2026

The Tonypandy Award may be awarded annually for a piece which is considered to be an outstanding example of the skill of a blacksmith or blacksmiths.

The Company welcomes suggestions from any source for work, which meets the criteria of "outstanding".

We would welcome applications from British blacksmiths.

All work should be in Great Britain or Northern Ireland.

Work should preferably be accessible to the general public but this is not an overriding criteria.

Modern and traditional techniques are equally acceptable. Work in any metal using a range of processes and design styles is acceptable. The age of the piece should not exceed five years from completion.

Nominations/applications incorporating as much information as possible on the submission should be sent to the Chair of the Tonypandy Committee (details below) along with a digital portfolio of past commissions.
Please limit your images to no more than 45.

The assessment panel is made up of established craft practitioners with a wide knowledge of blacksmithing and artistic practices.

As the committee will be meeting online, the initial assessment will be via digital photos that show the piece overall and in detail. **It is essential to your presentation that the images are sharp and well focused to show your work at its best.**

All shortlisted submissions will be visited and assessed on site.

Please email images using WeTransfer, https://wetransfer.com to the email address below, or by posting a memory stick to:

Steve Rook, Two Ravens Forge, Unit 1, Dunmore Street, Balfron,
Glasgow, G63 0TU

If you have any questions please contact me: 07908 544776.
Email tonypandyaward@icloud.com

The application deadline for the 2027 award is 31st December 2026

Blacksmithing events

5th - 7th November: Denkmal - Leipzig, Germany

5th - 7th November: Iron Notes - Tallinn, Estonia

21st November: St. Clement's day - Sticklepath, United Kingdom

27th - 28th November: BABA practical skills workshop Forge Welding - Ratho, United Kingdom

2027

5th - 6th February: BABA practical skills workshop Forge Welding - Ratho, United Kingdom

9th - 10th April: BABA practical skills workshop Forge Welding - Ratho, United Kingdom

5th - 6th June: Forge-in at John's - Falkirk, United Kingdom

2nd - 3rd July: BABA practical skills workshop Forge Welding - Ratho, United Kingdom

3rd - 6th September: Biennale Europea d'Arte Fabbrile di Stia - Stia, Italy

2028

3rd - 4th June: Forge-in at David Cooper's forge - Burton Agnes, United Kingdom
More information to follow

9th - 13th September: BABA's 50th anniversary celebration, Margam Castle, Port Talbot, United Kingdom
More information to follow

B.M.A.S.W. B.M.A.S.W.

The National Trust invites you to celebrate St. Clement the patron saint of blacksmiths & metalworkers with displays by the Blacksmiths and Metalworkers Association of the South West (BMASW).

ST. CLEMENT'S DAY

AT FINCH FOUNDRY, STICKLEPATH,

OKEHAMPTON IN DEVON

Saturday 21st November 2026 10 am - 4 pm

Everybody Welcome - Free Entry



·Static professional and student competitions (Open class) ·

·Live professional and student competitions (Open class)·

·Including the famous Snail Race·

Traditional firing of the Anvil during the Day

·See one of the last working water powered forges in England·

·Email — wpf.courses@gmail.com to RSPV·

Health to the jolly blacksmith, the best of all fellows who works at his anvil while the boy blows the bellows!

COGS AND WHEELS

BABA Practical Skills Workshops

Forge welding - Friday the 27th and Saturday the 28th November 2026

Venue - Ratho Byres Forge, Ratho, Edinburgh EH28 8NW.



The workshop will begin at 2 pm Friday 27th November and finish at 6pm Saturday 28th . Given the hands-on nature of this workshop, spaces will be limited to 6 individuals.

To apply for a place on the workshop, please submit a brief email and please be sure to include your contact details. Please email applications to design@baba.org.uk

The closing date for applications is the 30th September 2026.

Successful applicants will receive payment information and will need to pay the fee promptly to secure their place. If there is sufficient interest and enough applications we will schedule an additional workshop to repeat the topic.

BABA is subsiding these workshops to enable the participant fee to be only £25.00, with attendance open only to BABA members, so make the most of your membership and apply.

A sandwich lunch on the Saturday is included in the cost, and folk will be welcome to join us for a meal on the Friday evening.

Unfortunately we are unable to provide accommodation for these classes. However, there are various options close by. There is a camp site within 4 miles of the forge, offering space for camper vans and providing lodges, there are various budget hotels even nearer, camping pods or chalets at the "Lost Shore, surf resort" just outside the village and several other, more luxurious, options. Edinburgh is accessible by air at relatively low cost if booked in advance, and we are less than 3 miles from the airport, there is also a train station nearby and we would be happy to collect and drop folk at either of these if needed. Please feel free to get in touch if you want advice on accommodation or travel.

Friday from 2 pm
- Theory of process
- Fire management, heat sources and induction.
- Discussion of situations where welding is appropriate and feasible, how it can be used efficiently and effectively.
- Types of scarf, appropriate for different welds or approaches.
- Setting the weld, working by hand or under the power hammer
- Demos and start practical exercises



Saturday from 9am
- Continue working on exercises with supervision and advice
- Working at anvil
- Working at hammer
- Branch welding
- Welding of larger material, different sections, flat and round

All participants to have opportunity to try welding in different manners on both anvil and under hammer.

FORGE-IN AT JOHN'S

FALKIRK, 5-6 JUNE 2027



-Arrivals welcome from noon on Friday
-Camping spaces available
-Forging competition on Saturday (theme to be announced)
-Catering will be provided on Saturday evening and Sunday morning for £10 p.p.
-Please bring something to share for Saturday lunch

RSPV to john@prikkebeen.net

We were told there is an interesting exhibition opening at the National Museums of Scotland. Not directly blacksmithing / iron related, but with many metal objects, making it interesting enough to mention here.

Entrance to the museum and the exhibition is free.

National Museums Scotland



Who were Scotland's First Warriors?

This exhibition reveals the origins and impact of conflict in prehistoric Scotland.

Explore the first signs of organised warfare, from the Neolithic (late Stone Age) to the Romans, through over 250 objects.

Scotland's First Warriors explores how and why people fought, the impact of war, and the legacy of prehistoric conflict.

Internationally significant archaeological discoveries from Scotland will be on display for the first time.

Visitors will see the Carnoustie Hoard - which was deliberately and thoughtfully placed near a Bronze Age round structure. It includes a spearhead decorated with gold, and a bronze sword in a wooden scabbard. An exceptionally rare find, it dates from around 1120-920 BC.

The exhibition maps the journey from the sword - a Bronze Age invention - through to the Roman concept of a professional soldier.

Scotland's First Warriors is a unique exhibition that engages visitors with the very nature of war.



Objects from the Carnoustie Hoard: a disk-headed pin, sword in wooden scabbard and spearhead

JOBS, TRAINING AND OPPORTUNITIES

Work experience and new opportunities

If you are looking for a new job, or for some vital work experience, why not send in a few words about yourself and your experience and the part of the UK that you are looking to work in and we'll include it here for you.

I know a few of the more established players will be looking for some extra help in the new year for those upcoming projects in the pipeline so feel free to send us an email.

You can also check out the BABA directory for a full list of Blacksmiths offering "work experience".

Looking for help in the forge? Why not send in the details? The newsletter is now reaching a much wider audience of talented smiths who might be just the person you were looking for to join the team.

newsletter@baba.org.uk

Hi, my name is Zach, I'm 16 and I live in Bridgewater, Somerset.



I started blacksmithing around two years ago, initially as a hobby, and I have mainly taught myself. I've also completed two experience days with professional smiths and have been selling my work at local markets for around six months. I can also weld.

I'm now looking to develop my skills further and gain experience working alongside an experienced blacksmith. In particular, I'd like to improve my forging and welding skills.
I'm willing to travel for the right opportunity, as long as it's within a reasonable distance.

I'm currently looking for either an apprenticeship or part-time work in a blacksmith's workshop. I'm hardworking, keen to learn and happy to get stuck into whatever work is needed in the workshop.

You can see more of my work on Instagram:
@zachetheridgeblacksmithing

If you think you may be able to offer an apprenticeship, part-time work, or would simply be interested in having a chat, I'd be very grateful to hear from you.

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Ivan Kadochnikov



Artist - blacksmith, designer

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About me:

I am an artist, blacksmith, and metal designer with over 15 years of experience creating architectural and decorative metalwork. My work combines traditional blacksmithing with engineering design, from concept sketches to CAD models, technical drawings, and finished metal pieces. Throughout my career, I've designed custom staircases, gates, railings, furniture, lighting and other projects for private homes and public spaces. I have extensive experience with AutoCAD and SolidWorks, and I understand both the design process and the practical aspects of metal fabrication.

Because of everything that has happened over the last few years, I am now looking for an opportunity to move to another country and continue my career abroad. I was wondering if you might have any advice or perhaps know someone who could be interested in someone with my background.
Please contact me for a full cv and portfolio.















HAWKWOOD

centre for future thinking

"Earth Fire Iron" Legacy: Hawkwood Residency 2027

Open Selection: This residency is designed to provide the opportunity for a period of reflective practice for an artist - blacksmith(s) to focus on their own practice and creative development.

The brief is being developed currently but we know that working makers with projects, families etc need time to plan their time carefully well ahead, hence flagging this potential opportunity now.

The artist-blacksmith(s) will receive a fee, expenses, accommodation and meals

If you think you will be interested and the time is possible do not contact us now but make a note and watch out in the next edition of BABA's Artist Blacksmith for the details of contact, brief, partners and outcome that will take place at Hawkwood College Stroud, a place of beauty and serenity.

https://www.hawkwoodcollege.co.uk, on dates to be confirmed between 23rd-30th April 2027.

With much valued support from the team at Hereford College of Art who can offer mentoring if appropriate.



Hawkwood seen from the air

Sandwell Valley Country Park

Sandwell Valley Country Park is seeking expressions of interest from experienced blacksmiths interested in establishing a working forge within one of the West Midlands' most popular visitor destinations.

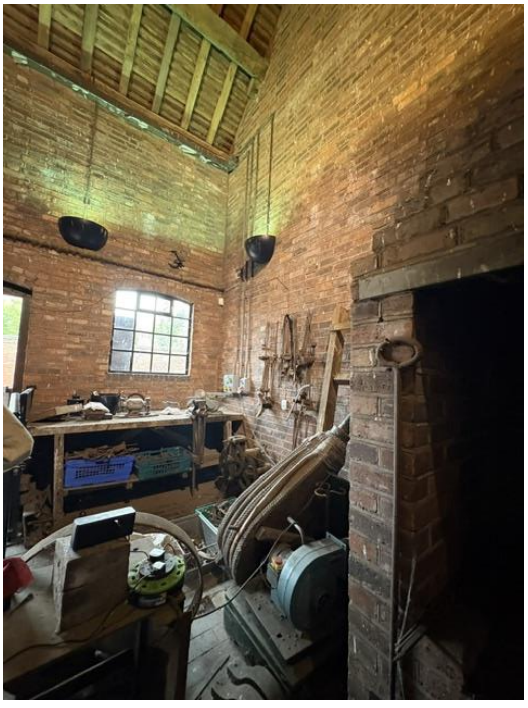
This unique opportunity is centred on a collaborative partnership rather than a traditional lease arrangement. Our vision is to establish a working blacksmith's forge that supports a viable and sustainable business while contributing to the heritage offer of Sandwell Valley.



We are keen to work with a practitioner who is looking for a long-term base from which to operate their business, whilst having the opportunity to collaborate with our Visitor Services Team on events, demonstrations, workshops and educational activities where appropriate.

Whilst public engagement opportunities will be available, this is not intended to be a purely visitor-facing attraction. We recognise that a successful forge requires time and space to undertake commissioned work and develop commercial opportunities. Therefore, operators should feel able to run their own independent business from the site, with involvement in public events and demonstrations agreed collaboratively and programmed throughout the year.

The forge forms part of our wider ambition to establish a Heritage Skills Hub at Sandwell Valley, bringing traditional crafts and skills back into active use within the park. We believe there is an opportunity to create a unique destination that celebrates craftsmanship, supports heritage skills and provides engaging experiences for visitors, whilst allowing a blacksmithing business to flourish.



The workshop has access to power, lighting and water. There is currently no gas supply. Storage facilities are available on site, with the potential to discuss additional storage requirements if needed. Access to the forge is relatively limited and would not accommodate a forklift truck, however access with pallet trucks and similar equipment would be possible.

The forge is located within the wider country park estate, with no neighbouring craft businesses or commercial occupiers likely to be affected by noise or operational activity.

The only nearby residents are park staff living within the estate, meaning there are unlikely to be significant concerns regarding the sounds and smells typically associated with a working forge, subject to normal health and safety and environmental considerations.



We are particularly interested in hearing from blacksmiths who can help shape the future use of the forge. As part of your expression of interest, we would welcome information on:

- Your blacksmithing experience and current area of practice.
- The type of business you would seek to operate from the forge.
- Any equipment, utility or workspace requirements.
- Your thoughts on participating in demonstrations, events, workshops or educational activities.
- Opportunities to support apprenticeships, training or heritage skills development.
- Any additional requirements or considerations you believe would be necessary to create a successful operation.

This is an exciting opportunity to establish a working forge within a well-established visitor destination and help create the foundations of a wider Heritage Skills Hub for Sandwell. We welcome both informal discussions and expressions of interest from individuals, partnerships and established blacksmithing businesses interested in becoming part of this vision.





NHIG AWARD for Metalwork Conservation

We are delighted to reopen the NHIG Award for Metalwork Conservation in 2026-7. Please submit your projects for consideration between 1st August 2026 and 30th April 2027. The award will be presented at the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths Annual Awards Luncheon in October 2027. The NHIG Award seeks to recognise and celebrate excellence in metalwork conservation as an inspiration to all. Submitted work must have been carried out in the last 5 years in accordance with well-considered conservation principles.

The judges will be interested in:

- Appropriateness of materials and techniques used
- Extent to which loss of original fabric was minimised
- Quality of craftsmanship

To enter, click here.

You will need to:

provide a brief description of the metalwork
outline the work carried out
explain what approach was taken and why
send images (min. 3, max. 6) separately by file transfer

A panel of experienced judges drawn from members of the NHIG Council and the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths Craft Committee will assess the entries.

The judging panel will visit shorlisted projects so please ensure that access to the site is possible.

The NHIG will publicise competition entries and outcomes as examples of good practice to inspire others. Please ensure that all permissions have been sought prior to entry and that images have been cleared for use.

Who Can Enter?

Entries can be submitted by anyone connected with a project, although the award will be presented to craft practitioner(s) who carried out the work. Multi-disciplinary team entries are also acceptable, in which case the award will be presented to the practitioners and consultants or specifiers who jointly carried out the project. Members of the judging panel are NOT eligible to enter. A maximum of three submissions can be made per person/team.

Opening/Closing Date

The 2026-7 Award submission window will open on 1st August 2026 and close on 30th April 2027.

Final Decision

The decision of the judging panel is final. The panel will not enter into any correspondence regarding the decision.

College in the UK that offer Blacksmithing

Click on the logo to find out more information about their courses. Click on the date for information about taster events / open door days.

Brinsbury College

Coastland College

Holme Lacy College

17th April 2027

Myerscough College

WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP

EST. 1926 PLUMPTON COLLEGE

WEST DEAN

Blacksmithing education

Beside the colleges mentioned above, there are blacksmiths specialised in teaching blacksmithing. The ones I could find are mentioned below, in random order. Do you know of others? Are you specialised in teaching? Please let me know: newsletter@baba.org.uk

Click on the image to go to the website of the blacksmith.



Stockton-on-Tees TS18 3RH

FORGING FORWARDS

Unlocking creative potential through blacksmithing education.

Located between Exeter and Crediton

Parmenter forge - Mattingley

RG27 8LH

AW artist blacksmith - Northallerton DL6 2JE



Llanbrynmair SY19 7AA

THE QUINNELL SCHOOL OF BLACKSMITHING

ROWHURST FORGE - OXSHOTT ROAD - LEATHERHEAD - SURREY - KT22 0EN

- EST. 1932 -



Melissa Cole Artist Blacksmith

Wiltshire SN9 6LU



Trevaughan, SA31 3QL

Classifieds: toys for the toy shop



Toby Forbes Gower

The widest range of blacksmithing tools at sensible prices

Click here for Toby's webshop

BOC: A Legacy of Supporting Blacksmiths

This year, BOC is celebrating 140 years as a leading supplier of industrial gases. While much has changed in that time, one thing has remained the same: our connection with people who work with metal.

A Look to the Past

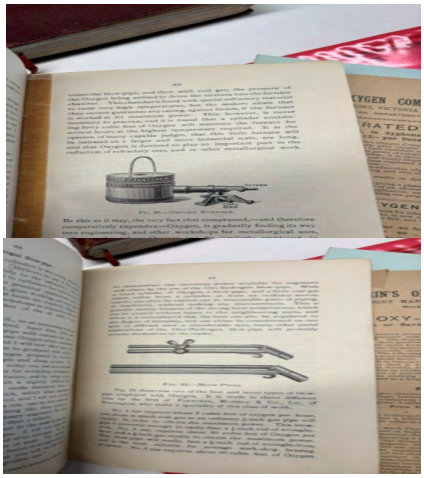


When BOC was founded in 1886, then known as Brin's Oxygen Company, it was a time when large-scale production of oxygen and other industrial gases was still in its infancy.

In fact, the main use of the company's oxygen at the time was powering limelight boxes to light theatres and lantern lectures in Victorian England.

But with demand limited, the company looked to develop ways to support more industries, which would lead BOC to become one of Britain's most recognised industrial gas businesses, supplying industries, workshops and craftspeople across the country.

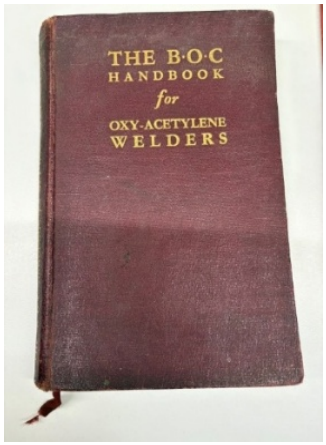
Forging Connections



BOC's earliest connection to welding comes from the *Handbook on the Use of Compressed Oxygen*, published by the company in 1894. It provided detailed descriptions of oxygen furnaces, welding systems, blowpipes and regulators at a time when these technologies were still new to British industry.

Less than 20 years later, the company was at the forefront of the development of oxy-acetylene technology, publishing technical guides to help metalworkers understand the possibilities of oxygen and oxy-acetylene equipment.

And that dedication to not just supplying gases but providing detailed information to help artisans and industries use them safely and efficiently has been central to BOC's approach.



Our early publications helped answer the many questions that metalworkers of the period were grappling with. By explaining the science behind the processes, the operation of blowpipes and regulators, and the many applications of oxygen in metalworking, BOC helped introduce generations of craftsmen to new ways of working with metal.

BOC Today

For modern blacksmiths, there is something familiar in this approach. BOC continues to support customers through the Welder's Toolkit and

share knowledge through demonstrations and hands-on experience at our Manufacturing Technology Centre in Wolverhampton.

BOC is proud to continue this long-standing relationship with the blacksmithing community today. This shared commitment to preserving and advancing the craft is why BOC supported BABA's AGM and Conference in August by supplying the gases used throughout the event.

140 years since BOC was founded, we remain committed to supporting the blacksmiths and metalworkers whose passion, expertise and dedication help keep this historic trade alive for future generations.

Exclusive offer for BABA members
As part of our ongoing support for the blacksmithing community, BOC is pleased to offer an exclusive discount for BABA members. To find out more, contact our Direct Sales Team on **0161 451 1161** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm) or email **directsalesuk@boc.com**. Simply **quote "BABA" when enquiring** to access your exclusive member discount.



ASSOCIATION NEWS

BABA Development Fund

The BABA Development Fund is specifically for seed funding
events and projects such as masterclasses, in the form of an interest free loan administered by the Council.
Candidates should submit a written application outlining why funding is required, and how much is needed, together with a proposal as to how and when the loan will be repaid.
Applications will be considered by the administrators of the fund.
For enquiries and applications regarding the Development Fund please contact the BABA Secretary:

Simon Pooley, secretary@baba.org.uk

BABA Event Fund

If you are planning on hosting an in person forging event, big or small, there are funds available to help with the costs of hosting an event. For further information get in touch with the BABA Treasurer:

Tony Ingarfield , treasurer@baba.org.uk



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Give up a little of your free time to help BABA grow, raise awareness and help organise events.

How long will it take?
How long is a piece of string? As much or as little as you can spare to help push the organisation forwards.

What benefits are there?
You get an orange t-shirt at the AGM, bragging rights and a seat on the Council!

Newsletter@baba.org.uk