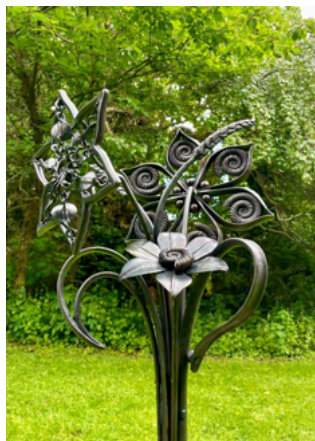


Newsletter



August 2026



Fossils Inflorescence

Designed by Katie Ventress and Kelly Burton.

Realised by Katie Ventress, Kelly Burton and Clare Collier.

See page 6 for more pictures and info.



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

The last month I was quick with the July BABA newsletter. This month not so. It is now July 26th, 18:30 and I'm just starting.

We have been on holiday in The Netherlands for two weeks. To visit family and friends (among which the Belgian blacksmith Tim Roosen. We bought a beautiful sidetable from him that can be seen a couple of pages down). While it is always nice to visit people, doing so in a heatwave, where the temperature in our cabin was still over 30°C at midnight, was a bit less fun. I was jealously looking at the temperatures in Falkirk, hovering between 17°C and 20°C. Temperatures which shot up when we arrived home...

Then the mandatory part of the building works. There was work planned while we were abroad. I think it won't surprise you if I tell you that work wasn't completed when we got back. Buy me a drink at the AGM and I will bore you to death with details. With pictures.

When we got back I had a week to get our paddock ready for a charity event: the 10th anniversary of Geordie Bullies Springboard Rescue, division Scotland. That meant mowing 1/3 of an acre of long grass and getting rid of the clippings (which took me two days), build obstacles for an agility course and set up several gazebo's and one big tent (8m x 4m). Luckily there was help for the last part. But it was a great day, around 35 English bulldogs with their owners and good weather in between two rainy and windy days. But now:

The 2026 AGM is happening!

I hope to see many of you from the 21st to the 23rd of August at the Milton Keynes Museum. It promises to be an interesting event with things going on for everyone. From inspiring the next generation with the Childrens' Forging, to working together in teams to realise a stunning panel designed by Katie Ventress and Kelly Burton. Of course there is also the possibility learn new skills, maybe from old forging techniques as demonstrated by the "Saxon Smiths". As if that's not enough there will be inspirational talks too, mainly in the evening. Check out the program on page 5. Don't forget to bring the tools and other items you don't use anymore for the tailgate sale!

And if that is not enough: Katie Ventress, Kelly Burton and Clare Collier created a piece called "Fossils Inflorescence", based on the design of the fence panel. You can see this piece on the cover, and a couple of pages down. It will be part of the always interesting Sunday auction!

newsletter@baba.org.uk



BABA Conference & AGM 2026



Milton Keynes
Museum

Event tickets are now live!

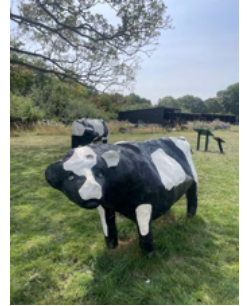
Book tickets, meals and t-shirts at

WWW.BABA.ORG.UK

BABA AGM 2026 at Milton Keynes Museum



This year's BABA AGM heads to the urban centre of Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire at the Milton Keynes Museum, famous for its concrete cows! Milton Keynes is a unique venue that perfectly blends heritage, craftsmanship and practical space for an unforgettable blacksmithing event.



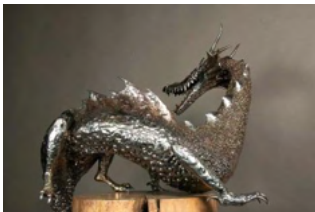
The venue promises an immersive experience, with live demonstrations, presentations and hands-on forging in a traditional industrial hamlet environment.

This year's AGM centres around a collaborative BABA forging project, spearheaded by Kelly Burton and Katie Ventress. Delegates are invited to bring hammers at hand (Don't forget your safety specs) to help create a legacy ironwork piece for the museum. Whether you're a student, hobbyist, professional or retiree, there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved.

Katie and Kelly have drawn inspiration from the museum's collection, while expert team leaders and master blacksmiths will guide forging activities and skill sharing throughout the weekend.

Kelly Burton and Katie Ventress

Alongside the forging, visitors can enjoy the 'Saxon Smiths' project from Joe Tyler and Tom Tribe, showcasing the reconstruction of over 350 early Anglo-Saxon metal objects through talks and demonstrations.



Work by David Hyde



Sam Sherborne

Exclusive BABA presentations from renowned artist blacksmiths David Hyde and Sam Sherborne will offer insight into their creative journeys, while Tim Puddephatt and Jen Hawley



Joe Tyler and Tom Tribe

will deliver a specialist seminar on physical health and longevity in blacksmithing.

The event begins Friday 21st August, with free camping available from Thursday evening. Friday night includes a hog roast social, guest speaker presentation and plenty of time to connect with fellow members.



Children's forging, led by Tom Quinnell, returns to inspire the next generation, while the National Heritage Ironwork Group will showcase conservation skills to members and the public alike. And of course, the popular tailgate sale will be back; bring tools, equipment, or workshop treasures to sell, swap or give away.

We're looking forward to welcoming old friends and new faces alike. Tickets, meals, camping and event merchandise will be available via the BABA website. If you'd like to join the forging project, be sure to select this option when booking!

Program for the 2026 BABA AGM

Friday					Saturday					Sunday						
8:00am					8:00am					8:00am						
8:30am					8:30am					8:30am						
9:00am	Sign in	Warm up for Katie & Kelly	Children's Forging - Public	Lunch	9:00am	AGM	Children's Forging - Public	Breakfast	8:00am	9:00am	Children's Forging	Panel forging	8:00am	Breakfast		
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2:00pm					2:00pm	Saxon talk - Public				2:00pm	Auction					
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7:00pm					7:00pm	Physical Health Talk	Overflow if required	Evening food		7:00pm						
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Fossils Inflorescence

This stunning piece, designed by Katie Ventress and Kelly Burton and made by Katie Ventress, Kelly Burton and Clare Collier is based on design elements for the panel that will be made at the 2026 AGM in Milton Keynes. It measures 76cm high by 45cm wide and 45cm deep. It will be part of the Sunday auction at the AGM.

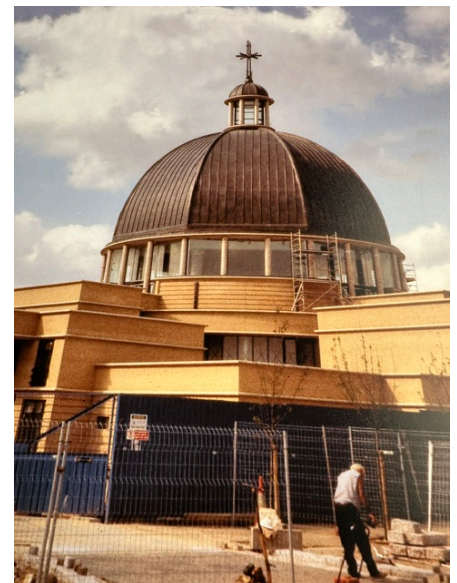
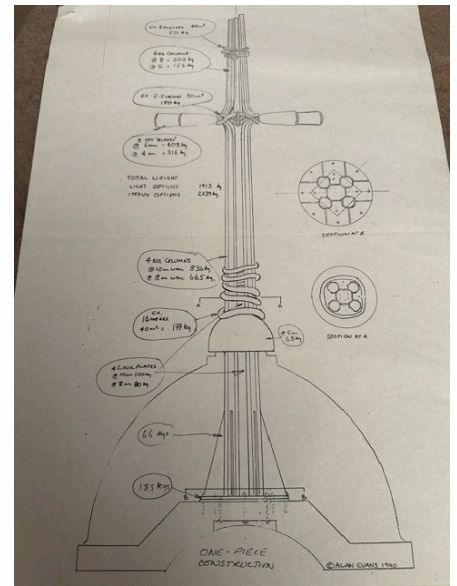
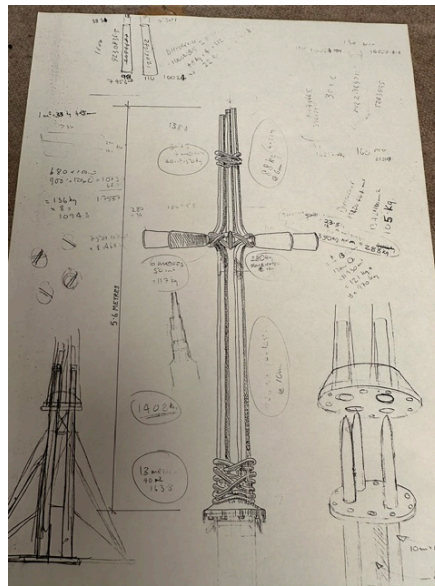
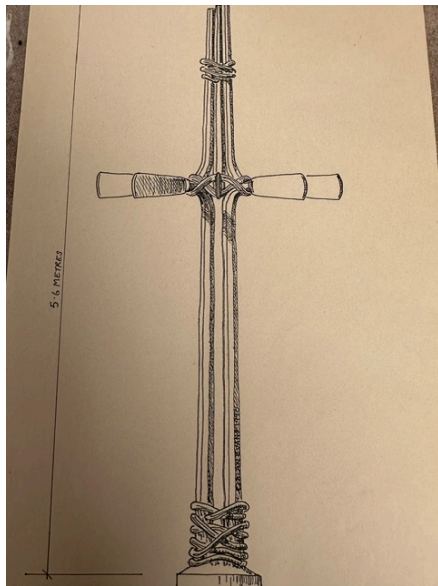


I received the following information from Lesley Greene. A beautiful forged piece by Alan Evans in Milton Keynes. Unfortunately a trip to see this work in real life couldn't be planned in the busy AGM schedule. But if you have time before or after the AGM, it is worth visiting!

CROSS BY ALAN EVANS FOR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST THE CORNERSTONE , MILTON KEYNES 1990-91

The then new ecumenical cathedral for Milton Keynes was a significant building project. It included a programme of commissions for several artists. Alan Evans was one of those artists, chosen for the quality of his previous work and his almost instinctive appreciation of scale and proportion, combined with sensitivity to site and place. The flowing and interconnected rings on three levels of the cross represent the interconnectedness of belief in local and global communities and the 'wings' represent major faiths across the world.

The cross was positioned on March 29th 1991 in an event marked by celebrations and huge public appreciation.



Dear BABA Members,

With our AGM fast approaching, I would like to ask for your support in considering joining your fellow blacksmiths on the BABA Council.

With BABA's 50th anniversary on the horizon, what better way to celebrate than by ensuring that the future of our wonderful organisation is in safe hands as we move forward? BABA's success to date is down to the dedication of our volunteer Council members, who have maintained the objectives and values set out by the founding members while progressing with the times and ensuring that the organisation remains relevant today.

It cannot be stressed enough how reliant we are on the goodwill and dedication of our Council members. We are a team that pulls together, drawing on the varied skills and expertise of each individual, while also supporting and encouraging less experienced members as they find their own way. There have been some truly inspirational people who have steered our Association in the past, without whom we would not be where we are today. Their experience has developed character, enhanced skills, and built lasting friendships and mutual respect.

Now is your chance to bring your fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the organisation. It is an opportunity to be part of a dedicated group of like-minded people who want to ensure that BABA continues to grow and succeed.

You do not have to be a blacksmith producing the biggest or best work to join the Council and to make a valued contribution. Many of our practising members are supported by dedicated partners who bring their own skills and experience to the table – skills that could be invaluable to the future running of our organisation.

We are appealing to each and every one of you.

The tasks are, for the most part, not onerous, but being able to see them through in a timely manner once committed is greatly appreciated.

The roles are varied and may include administration, social media, archives, planning, event organisation, education and training, to name but a few. There are also practical responsibilities such as serving as Forgemaster, setting up workspaces at events, and ensuring that we comply with health and safety requirements for both our members and the viewing public.

Your role on the Council can be what you make it, and new ideas are always welcome. If you can commit some time and bring experience in a particular field – or simply enthusiasm – we would love to hear from you.

Are you organised? There is a much-needed opportunity for an Events Coordinator to inject new energy into our events programme, which we would like to expand for the benefit of the blacksmithing community.





What is BABA and why join?

For 47 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



A sidetable designed by the Belgian blacksmith Tim Roosen.
Metalwork by Tim Roosen, woodwork by Eddy Roosen.



THE BABA MAGAZINE ONLINE ARCHIVE

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

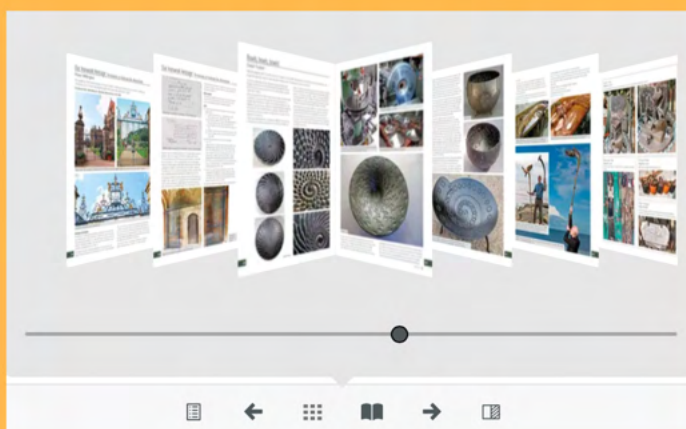
If not go to the members area of the BABA website
and click on the “Magazine Archive” link.

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, receive 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, visit the BABA website
www.baba.org.uk**



Interesting Internet.

Here we go again. I found some interesting posts on the social media I follow that I would like to share with you. But, as usual, I am asking you to share interesting things you found in the world wide web with all of us.



Blacksmith Toel Tarr posted an interesting question on Facebook:

I wonder with all this AI technology if there'll be some way to posthumously geolocate / tag your work, like a database of some sort. I think I have only remembered once to stamp my name into a piece of work.

I identified which sensor is the MAP sensor on my car earlier by taking a picture of a sensor under the bonnet & did a reverse image search with it - a variation of that sort of thing would be quite nice so if in 100 years time someone wonders who made the gate in their garden, some sort of app on their phone tells them it was made by X blacksmith back in such & such year because there's a geo tagged database of whose work is where.



Firehound Forge came up with an interesting experimental question:

Today's experiment; can we use a cement mixer, 15kg of clinker & a positive attitude to clean forgework? Think giant stone tumbler...

For science!



I assume you professionals all have had to drill holes through thick material. This seems a very useful tip to me (as an amateur)!

The last couple of months I have been posting historical videos here. They can't get more historical than this!

This is one of the earliest surviving motion pictures ever made, titled Blacksmith Scene, filmed in 1893.

Also known as Blacksmithing Scene or The Blacksmith Shop, this short silent film was directed by William K.L. Dickson, one of the key pioneers behind Thomas Edison's early motion picture experiments. It was produced by the Edison Manufacturing Company and filmed at Edison's studio in West Orange, New Jersey, often described as America's first movie studio.

The film shows three men dressed as blacksmiths hammering at an anvil before pausing to share a drink, then returning to work. Although it looks like a simple glimpse of everyday labor, the men were not actual blacksmiths. They were Edison employees acting out a scene on a studio set, making this one of the earliest known examples of onscreen acting as well. In May 1893, Blacksmith Scene was publicly shown through Edison's Kinetoscope at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, making it one of the first films ever exhibited to a public audience. That same year, it also became the first known U.S. motion picture to be copyrighted.



Blacksmithing events

[6th - 8th August: San Marco Iron Fest - San Marco d'Alunzio, Sicily, Italy](#)

[6th - 9th August: Biennale der Schmiede in Kolbermoor - Kolbermoor, Germany](#)

[15th August: Inauguration of Sam Pearce's pedestrian gate - Bisley, United Kingdom](#)

[Till 16th of August: Iron and Clay - Falkirk, United Kingdom](#)

[21st - 23rd August: BABA AGM 2026 - Milton Keynes, United Kingdom](#)

[28th - 30th August: 44. Schmiedetreffen auf Burg Helfstyn - Helfstyn, Czech Republic](#)

[26th September: Messer-Feuer-Stahl - Laubuseschbach, Germany](#)

[26th - 27th September: BFBA Focus - Stoneleigh, United Kingdom](#)

[25th - 27th September: Gotha gluhet - Gotha, Germany](#)

[3rd - 4th October: The Phil Johnson Masterclass - Ratho Byres Forge, Ratho, United Kingdom](#)

[16th - 18th October: 2ième Rencontre de Forgerons - Celles-sur-Belle, France](#)

[Untill 31st October: An exhibition of contemporary forged metalwork - Pitlochry, United Kingdom](#)

[5th - 7th November: Denkmal - Leipzig, Germany](#)

[5th - 7th November: Iron Notes - Tallinn, Estonia](#)

2027

[3rd - 6th September: Biennale Europea d'Arte Fabbriile 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

Sam Pearce Celebration of New Pedestrian gate for Bisley Community Composting Scheme

<https://bisleycommunitycompostscheme.org.uk>

Sam Pearce won the BABA competition for BCCS's new Pedestrian Gate in the "Inspired" programme BABA AGM 2025

Sam's work will be celebrated and acknowledged on BCCS's 21st Birthday on 15 August

All WELCOMBE: Mid-day with an organic Allotment Lunch

Find us: Bisley Community Compost Scheme (At Bisley Allotments) Stroud Road Bisley
Gloucestershire GL6 7NH
///units.proclaims.chin





The Phil Johnson Masterclass
Ratho Byres Forge
3rd & 4th October 2026
Presenting Jacob Edwards and Kit Garnett
Words by Shona Johnson

My father, artist blacksmith Phil Johnson, founder of P. Johnson & Company at Ratho Byres Forge, passed away in December 2022 at the age of 80. Phil was passionate about forging, passionate about BABA and passionate about passing on skills. He believed in the importance of giving those new to smithing valuable experience in a vibrant, commercial, busy workshop, such as Ratho Byres Forge.

Myself and partner, Pete Hill, have this same passion for smithing, for BABA and for passing on viable, useful skills to the next generation of smiths who are creating and leaving their own legacy on the built environment. To this end we take on several smiths each year for work experience at Ratho Byres Forge.



Over the past year, alongside Steve Rook, a fellow smith and BABA stalwart, we have hosted a series of weekend skills workshops at Ratho Byres Forge. These have been well attended and alongside new skills being acquired, friendships have established and a level of creative excitement has been generated as these new skills are explored further.

We have hosted many and varied masterclass events at Ratho Byres Forge in the past, most recently Will Maguire from Australia, and in 2019, Ian James from Vancouver Island, Canada, both big names in the world of contemporary artist blacksmithing.

Pete and I, as Phil did, feel that it is important to support the next generation of smiths to ensure that our craft continues to develop and we, as smiths, remain excited and passionate about the forging of metal.

We want to celebrate, enthuse and encourage the young smiths within our profession that are doing interesting creative work, pushing boundaries and taking the craft of the contemporary artist blacksmith forward in a healthy and positive direction.

Working together on a project, as we have seen on past masterclasses, drives this passion and deepens one's understanding of how we can manipulate steel with forging processes while working alongside other smiths who are sharing their knowledge.

We hope to make "The Phil Johnson Masterclass" an annual experience and for this, the initial event, we have invited Jacob Edwards and Kit Garnett as the designers and team leaders. Both are established young smiths, each having graduated with a degree in Artist Blacksmithing from Hereford College of Arts in 2019 and both are currently running their own successful forges where they are each working to commission.

Both of them have developed a design for a sculptural piece to be forged at Ratho Byres Forge. Jacob and Kit will each work with a team of 6 smiths to produce their individual sculptures. Jacob is influenced by traditional Japanese architecture, bold forms celebrating the forging process.

Kit's influence is the flowing lines and distortion from the Art Nouveau movement creating

intricate forms exploring the forging process and connections.

The two final designs are excitingly different and working on these two projects side by side is going to make for an extremely interesting weekends forging for those that attend.

Jacob Edwards

Title - 'Perspectives'

This sculpture is an exploration in my interest of structures and how we can perceive them as



such a massive thing, when in reality they pale in comparison to the vastness of the universe. Inspired by Thomas Telford and his Craigellachie Bridge, as well as the cast concrete pylons in Mallorca. The sculpture will stand 3 meters tall with the main supports being made from 100x20mm steel, with two shooting stars crossing the top.

Kit Garnett

Title - "Divergence II"

Originally inspired by early 1900s Art Nouveau jewellery, the design highlights forged processes and connections in a structured, intricate form.



We aim to have both Jacob and Kit, and their respective teams, create their design over two days. Ratho Byres Forge is well equipped with various power hammers, hydraulic presses and several forges, furnaces and induction heater, which will perhaps give those attending the opportunity to work in new and maybe different ways than they are familiar with.

The Phil Johnson Masterclass will be held on Saturday 3rd & Sunday 4th October 2026 at Ratho Byres Forge, Freelands Road, Ratho, Scotland, EH28 8NW

There are 12 places available and the cost per person is £130.00 which includes lunch both days. To reserve your place please email rathomasterclass@gmail.com and we will send details of how to make payment to confirm your place.

Unfortunately we are unable to provide accommodation, however, there are various options close by. There is room for camper vans at the workshop and there is a camp site within 4 miles of the forge, which also has 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 willing to collect and drop folk at either if the need arises. Please feel free to get in touch if you want advice on accommodation or travel.

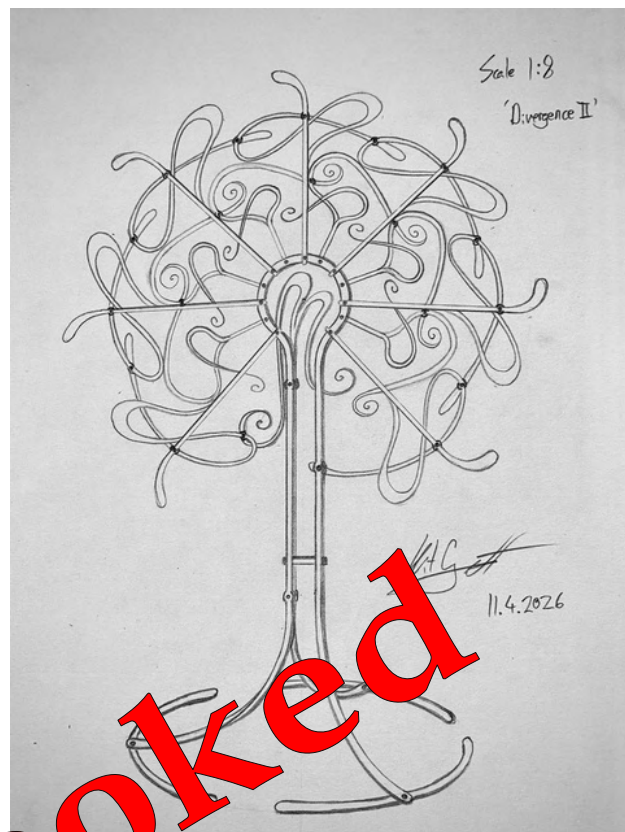
We look forward to welcoming you to Ratho Byres Forge in October!

Website info

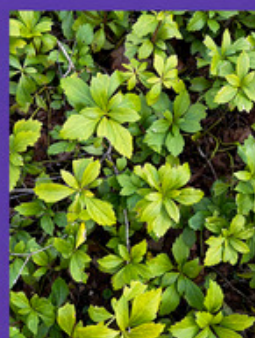
www.jermetaldesign.com

www.kermettdesign.com

www.rathobyresforge.co.uk



Forged by Ratho Byres Forge



An exhibition of contemporary forged metalwork is on display at the beautiful Explorers Garden, Pitlochry. The garden is open Tuesday - Sunday 10am - 5pm

Free to explore and there is a very good cafe at the Theatre!



**Explorers Garden
Open until 31 October**



**PITLOCHRY
FESTIVAL
THEATRE**

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.



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.

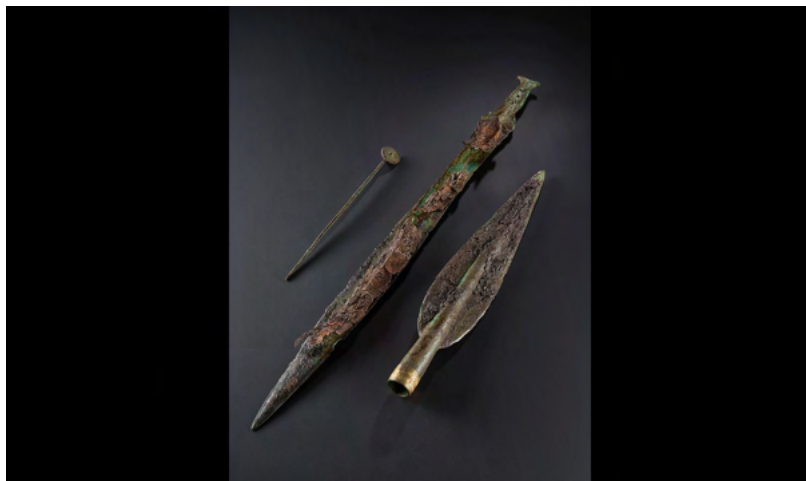
Scotland's First Warriors explores how and why people fought, the impact of war, and the legacy of prehistoric conflict.

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



2026 Competition Calendar

- **7th March:**
Annual Judging Seminar & First Round – Hereford, UK

- **4th May: North Somerset Show**

- **21st, 22nd & 23rd May: Devon Show**

- **4th, 5th & 6th June: Royal Cornwall Show**

- **12th, 13th & 14th June: Royal Three Counties Show**

- **20th, 21st, 22nd & 23rd July: Royal Welsh Show**

- **28th, 29th & 30th July: New Forest & Hampshire Show**

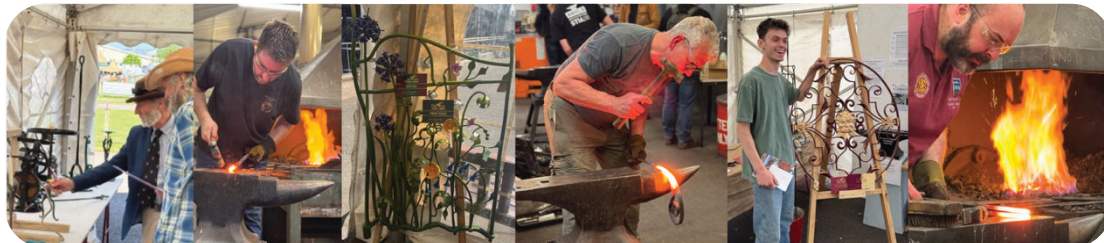
- **30th & 31st August: Edenbridge & Oxted Show**

- **5th & 6th September: Dorset County Show**

- **27th September: BFBA "International" Event**



championblacksmith.co.uk/events/



What is the NBCC?

The National Blacksmith Competitions Committee (NBCC) is the official organising body dedicated to promoting, overseeing, and scoring the premier UK blacksmithing competition circuit.

Our mission is to foster high standards of craftsmanship, support educational progression for students, and crown the National Blacksmith Champions each year. The circuit brings together traditional hand-forging techniques, modern design, and community judging to showcase the very best of British blacksmithing.

How the Championship Circuit Works

The road to the National Championship is a rigorous test of skill, consistency, and speed across two distinct styles of competition:

1. Live Forging Competitions

- **The Challenge:** Competitors are given a set time limit, sometimes based around a specific theme or a technical set piece.

2. Static (Show) Competitions

- **The Challenge:** Pre-made pieces are brought directly to the show for judging. Pieces must be predominantly of a forged nature and entirely the maker's own work.

The Scoring & Grand Finale

At each accredited round, 10 points are awarded to the Show Champion and 4 points to the Reserve Champion across both Live and Static categories.

At the end of the season in September, the points are tallied to determine four official National titles: Champion and Reserve Champion in both Static and Live Forging. Generous cash prizes (up to £1,000 for National Champions), certificates, and the silver challenge cup are awarded thanks to the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths (WCOB) and our industry sponsors.

How to Get Involved

Ready to step up to the block or show off your latest creation? We would love to see you there.

Competitors: Check the competition calendar on our website, find a regional show near you, and download an entry form.

Students: Take advantage of our dedicated student classes—it is a fantastic way to build your confidence, test your skills, and earn CPD certificates for your CV.

Join the Community: Even if you aren't competing this year, come down to a show, introduce yourself, and watch the sparks fly. It is the perfect place to get inspired and meet the wider blacksmithing family.

Additional Competitions & Resources

- [National Blacksmithing Competitions Committee](http://www.championblacksmith.co.uk): www.championblacksmith.co.uk
- [The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths](http://www.blacksmithscompany.co.uk/): www.blacksmithscompany.co.uk/
- [The Neville Schulman Competition – Deadline: 1st August 2026](http://www.blacksmithscompany.co.uk/craft/awards): www.blacksmithscompany.co.uk/craft/awards



 
@nbcc_uk

The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths

First Recorded 1299. First Charter of Incorporation Queen Elizabeth I 1571



The Neville Shulman Prize Brief 2026

The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths (WCB) Neville Shulman Prize Competition for 2026 is now accepting entries.

This competition is open to all UK-based blacksmiths to design and make a new piece of decorative ironwork for use and display at WCB luncheons and dinners in the future.

2026 Prize Fund - £1000

- Entries may take any form but must weigh no more than 2.5 kilogrammes
- Entries must fit within a 200mm cube.

The WCB are looking for superlative examples of the blacksmith's craft, incorporating traditional techniques along with the usual high standards associated with the WCB awards system and the static entries judged at NBCC shows.

- Both functional and sculptural pieces are encouraged.
- Submissions should have a value of £1000 – consider this in your work.

This competition encourages and promotes the hot forging of iron, steel and other metals. Blacksmiths may use any method of construction, but the submission should primarily be designed and made using hot forging techniques. Gas, plasma and laser cut profiles are permitted but they must be worked as traditionally cut out profile.

2026 Competition Timing

1 August 2026 - Completed forms are to be sent to the Clerk of the Company (accompanied by 4 good quality photos showing).

1 September 2026 - A shortlist of pieces will be selected by the WCB and the applicants informed by the Clerk.

21 September 2026 – The shortlisted pieces will need to be delivered to the judging venue.

26-27 September 2026 – The shortlisted pieces will be judged in person over the weekend.

12 October 2026 - Non-winning work will need to be collected from the judging venue.

22 October 2026 - Winners will be announced at the WCB Michaelmas Awards Luncheon where the winning piece/s will be displayed.

Notes:

The Neville Shulman Prize competition will be run annually until a new collection of **10** finished pieces that show the very best of the craft of the blacksmith is completed. There may be more than one winner each year. The winning pieces will become the property of the WCB.

- A maximum of two pieces may be selected each year.
- If the criteria and standards are not met, no pieces will be selected.

Please complete an entry form available from <https://blacksmithscompany.co.uk/craft/awards>

TERMS & CONDITIONS – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

- Submissions are only to be made using the WCB Neville Shulman Prize entry form. This may be obtained from the WCB website.
- Any entry forms received after 1 August 2026 or not completed correctly will not be accepted.
- Work submitted must be original – copies of previously-made works are not permissible.
- Work submitted must be made by an individual smith.
- Work must meet the size and weight criteria.
- Discreet makers marks are permitted.
- Competitors may only enter one competition piece per year.
- Previously submitted pieces may not be re-submitted in subsequent years.
- Three WCB judges (Bronze or above Medal Holders) and a WCB guest will judge the competition.
- The Neville Shulman Prize entries may be included in the NBCC static competitions.
- Shortlisted entries must be received at the judging venue by 20 September 2026.
- Competitors are responsible for delivery and collection of their work to and from the judging venue.
- Artwork must be delivered to, and collected from, the judging venue on the dates listed. The WCB will dispose of any artwork not collected by 16 October 2026.
- The WCB will not pay any return postage costs.
- The WCB will be entitled to publish an image of or make use of any piece of work entered into the competition free of charge.
- Although every care will be taken, the WCB cannot accept responsibility for loss of, or damage to, any artwork.
- Proof of posting is not proof of delivery.
- The judge's decision is final.
- Any competitor wishing to lodge an objection must do so in writing with a £25 deposit. The WCB will consider each objection, and its decision shall be final.

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



Heritage crafts awards

Recognition for master craftspeople and emerging talent

We are open for nominations

Established in 2012, the annual Heritage Crafts Awards are a range of awards each year which shine a spotlight on those individuals who champion heritage crafts skills and trades. We are indebted to our partner organisations who provide funding for our unique suite of awards and bursaries specifically for traditional crafts, and who make this possible.

The Heritage Crafts Awards celebrate and highlight the traditional living crafts made in the UK that contribute to our national heritage, such as silversmithing, dressmaking and tailoring, upholstery, weaving, leatherworking, metalworking, stained glass, green woodworking, embroidery and similar crafts where there is a significant degree of hand skill at the point of manufacture.

2026 Awards are:

Patron's Award for Endangered Crafts
England Maker of the Year
Northern Ireland Maker of the Year
Scotland Maker of the Year
Wales Maker of the Year
Precious Metalworker of the Year
Fashion Textile Maker of the Year
Woodworker of the Year
Emerging Building Craftsperson of the Year
Emerging Leatherworker of the Year
Emerging Upholsterer of the Year
Emerging Weaver of the Year
Emerging Green Woodworker of the Year
Emerging Stained Glass Maker of the Year
Emerging Embroiderer of the Year
Emerging Metalworker of the Year
Trainer of the Year
Trainee of the Year
Community Catalyst of the Year
Lifetime Achievement Award

Deadline 21st August 2026

More information can be found on the Heritage Crafts website.

<https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/opportunities/awards/>

‘Surface Preparation & Coating’



How can we best protect vulnerable surfaces without damaging historic material? What are the approaches which cause least harm whilst promoting longevity? This one-day course will provide an overview of various methods of cleaning, treating and re-coating heritage ironwork, evaluating advantages & disadvantages, and illustrating how decisions are made in practice via a selection of case-studies. Sessions will cover:

- **Causes of coating failure**
- **Corrosion: types, rates & control**
- **Appropriate cleaning methods**
- **Surface preparation for best adherence**
- **Consolidate, overpaint or renew?**
- **Coating types & application methods**
- **Real-world examples**

This day is aimed at anyone wanting to get a better understanding of the ironwork in their care, including craftspeople, architects & surveyors, property managers & contractors.

Tickets: £40 - £120 including lunch and refreshments. Member discounts.

More information and booking can be found [HERE](#)



ANNOUNCING THE 2027 IRONWORK CONSERVATION AWARD

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 shortlisted 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.

Opportunities

Two positions at Avoncroft Museum

Instructor

Avoncroft Museum is proud to offer a range of blacksmith courses and hands-on experiences throughout the year, delivered from their historic working forge. They are currently looking to expand their team and would love to hear from skilled blacksmiths who are interested in getting involved.

They are interested in people who:

Are experienced in traditional blacksmithing techniques

Enjoy engaging with the public and sharing their skills

Are able to deliver courses and workshops to a range of abilities

Are based locally or able to travel to Bromsgrove

Forge Residency

Avoncroft would also be very interested in speaking with blacksmiths who may be interested in a longer-term residency within their historic forge. This arrangement could offer regular access to a fully equipped heritage workspace, opportunities for public engagement and demonstrations and a chance to combine studio practice with education and interpretation

A working forge is a key part of the Avoncroft visitor experience, and they are keen to develop partnerships that bring the space to life while supporting contemporary craft practice.

Please contact Michelle Hill at collections@avoncroft.org.uk

More information about the museum can be found at their website: <https://avoncroft.org.uk/>

Forge tenant wanted

The National Trust's Heritage & Rural Skills Centre in Swindon is looking for a tenant for the forge with an arrangement that the Centre would have use of the forge up to 20 days a year to hold courses.

Contact Ellie Westland at Ellie.Westland@nationaltrust.org.uk

[Heritage & Rural Skills Centre](#)

Buscot and Coleshill Estate

Swindon

Wiltshire, SN6 7PT

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**

[7th November 2026](#)

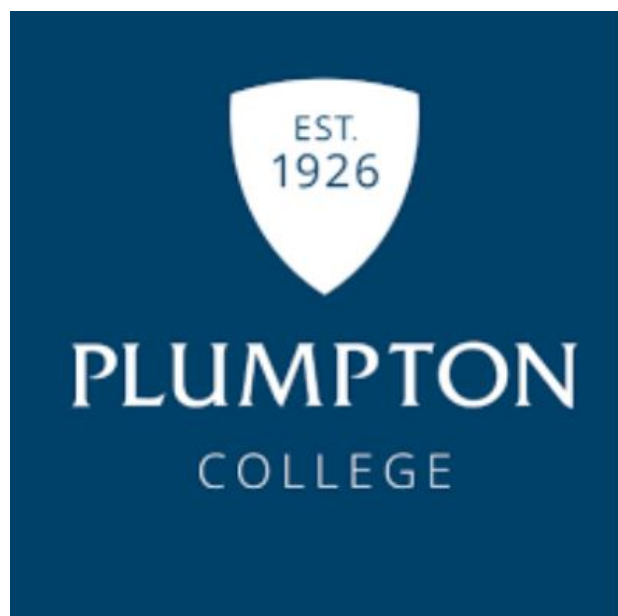
[17th April 2027](#)



**Myerscough
College**



**WARWICKSHIRE
COLLEGE
GROUP**



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



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](#)

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:

Stan Lawler, 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