

# Newsletter



July 2026



Pete Hill and Shona Johnson won the first prize at David Cooper's Forge-In: a special mug and the cover of this month's newsletter. The work they made will be featured further down the newsletter.



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

It's rainy outside, so time to work on this month's newsletter. The housing situation is not really improving as we are depending on trades people to be available to do work for us in between other planned jobs. At this moment an electrician is checking the work done by the original contractor and basically re-doing all the connections in sockets. And making sure the electrical work in the attic is no longer qualified as "fire hazard".

We have moved completely back in to the house and the caravan is sold. But we are not yet connected to cable television and depend on an old-fashioned antenna to receive the freeview channels. On the interesting positive side: this provided me with inspiration for the "And now for something completely different" section of the newsletter. Got curious? Good. Scroll down to find out more.

It's blacksmithing time! The Forge-In at David Cooper's forge was a great success. Great hosts, amazing hospitality, live music, beautiful weather, and plenty of time for blacksmithing. An ideal weekend. Well, besides the six hour drive from Scotland. Tip: avoid the A66! It's a misery to get on (from the M6) and there are roadworks on almost the complete length of it. What was a surprise for me was the judging. I thought it was "just fun". There were some great pieces made, but only one could win. A piece by Pete Hill and Shona Johnson. You can see it on the cover (part of the prize) but (better) on the next page. Another reason to scroll down. And if you need an even better reason: David Cooper has given me the date for the next forge-in at DC Blacksmiths. Check out the "Blacksmithing events" section and don't complain you didn't get enough warning!

Talking about dates: in 2028 we celebrate 50 years of BABA with a five day event / AGM. That date is now published. Again, see the "Blacksmithing events" section and book your holiday around those days!

The next event this year will be the 2026 AGM in Milton Keynes. There is a lot going on, as BABA members have been able to read in the latest edition of Artist Blacksmith. And the tickets went live on the 11th of June. Haven't booked yours yet? Check out the next page! One page further you will find the program as well.

If you are a blacksmith but looking for a location to work, there are three positions available! Check out the "Jobs, Training and Opportunities" section.

And, in general, BABA could use your expertise for the council. Yes, there is an article about that too, page 7. This was a challenging newsletter, with many topics deserving the first pages.

Lastminute.com: information about Sam Pearce's winning gate (last year's BABA competition) and a double forge free to pick up.

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](http://WWW.BABA.ORG.UK)

# BABA AGM 2026 at Milton Keynes Museum

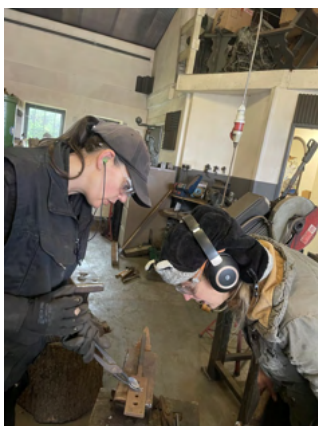


This year's BABA AGM heads to the urban centre of Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire at the Milton Keynes Museum, famous for its concrete cows! Milton Keynes is a unique venue that perfectly blends heritage, craftsmanship and practical space for an unforgettable blacksmithing event.



The venue promises an immersive

experience, with live demonstrations, presentations and hands-on forging in a traditional industrial hamlet environment.



*Kelly Burton and Katie Ventress*

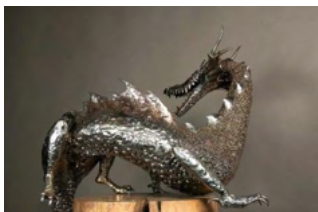
This year's AGM centres around a collaborative BABA forging project, spearheaded by Kelly Burton and Katie Ventress. Delegates are invited to bring hammers at hand (Don't forget your safety specs) to help create a legacy ironwork piece for the museum. Whether you're a student, hobbyist, professional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

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.



*Joe Tyler and Tom Tribe*



*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

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

The event begins Friday 21<sup>st</sup> 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!

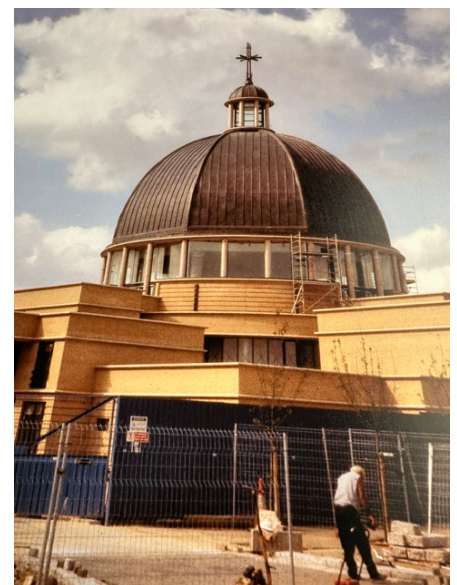
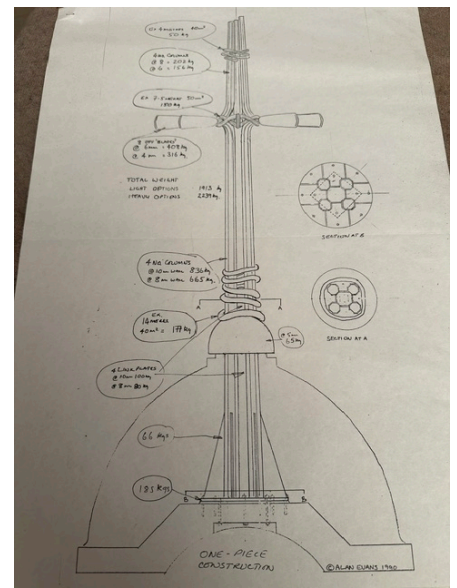
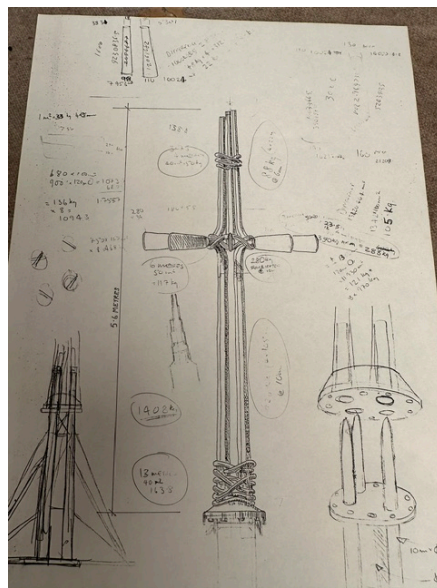
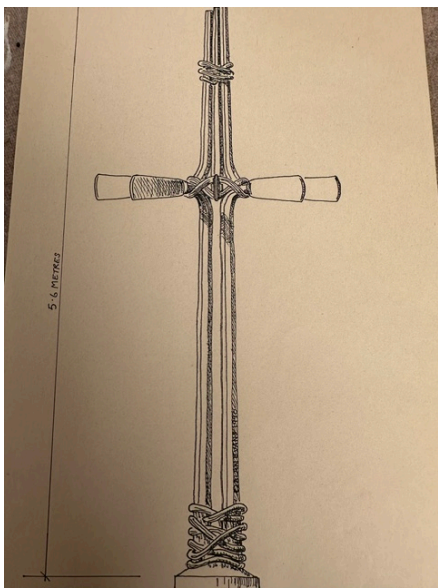


I received the following information from Lesley Greene. A beautiful forged piece by Alan Evans in Milton Keynes. Unfortunately a trip to see this work in real life couldn't be planned in the busy AGM schedule. But if you have time before or after the AGM, it is worth visiting!

### 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](http://www.baba.org.uk)



The winning piece at the Forge-In at David Coopers forge by Pete Hill and Shona Johnson



2021



2022



2023



2024



No. 177 2025



No. 178 2025



No. 179 2025

## 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](http://www.baba.org.uk)



2020



2010s



2000s



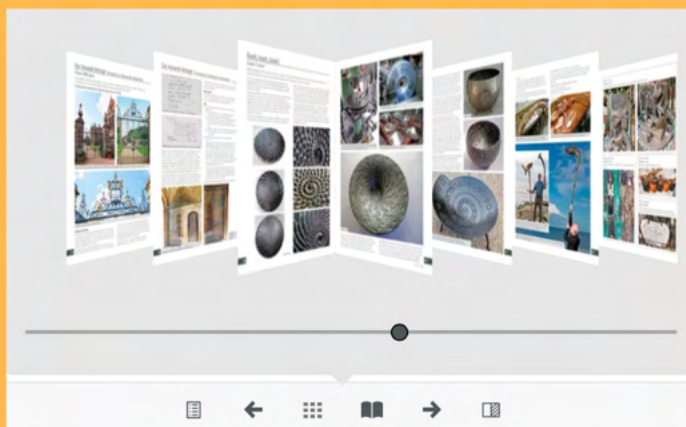
1990s



1980s

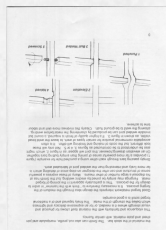


1979



Another reason to visit forge-in's. At David Cooper's one I saw this document. New to me. Members can find the whole document by Peter Parkinson in the "useful resources" section of the BABA website.

CI/SfB		Hh	(D4)

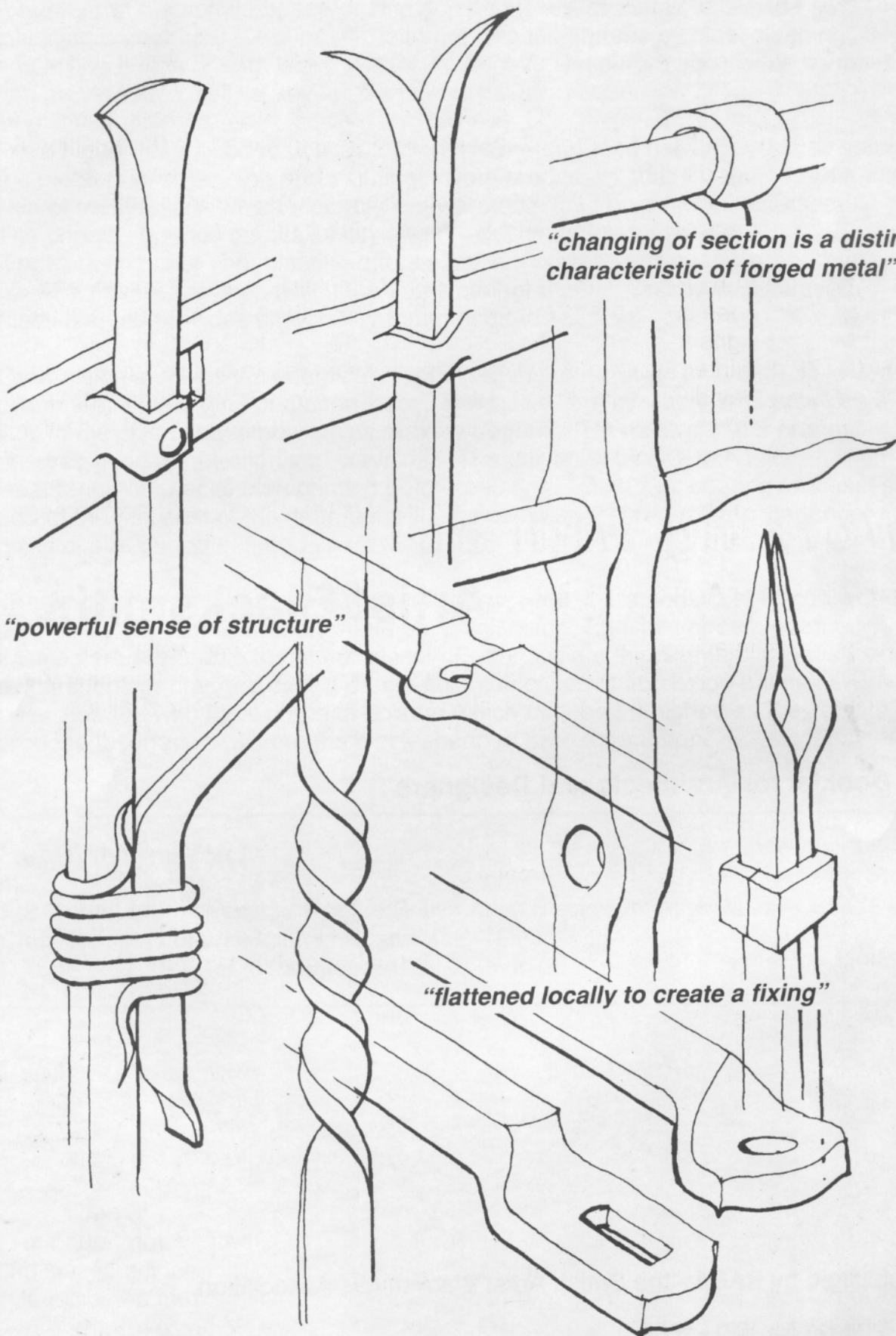


# Working with an Artist Blacksmith

**a Booklet for Architects and Designers**

Published by BABA - the British Artist Blacksmiths Association

P. Parkinson July 1993 ©BABA



*"changing of section is a distinctive characteristic of forged metal"*

*"powerful sense of structure"*

*"flattened locally to create a fixing"*

## **Introduction**

The last decade has seen a renaissance in the use of forged architectural metalwork, and a growing recognition of its significance in a wide variety of applications from the utilitarian and decorative, to pieces of site specific public art. New and expressive contemporary styles have emerged alongside the traditional, seeking to respond to the needs of contemporary architecture. These have found expression in a diversity of items from gates, screens, railings and balustrades, to sculpture, lighting, furniture and ironmongery.

Many Architects have little experience of wrought metalwork as a medium, and very little has been published in this country dealing with contemporary practice. As a result designs and specifications are frequently so loose that they permit a low standard of interpretation and a poor standard of work to be produced. Put another way, they do not take full advantage of the skills and capabilities that the Artist Blacksmith can offer to design, detail, make, restore and fix metalwork of a special character and quality.

This information sheet explains the role of the Artist Blacksmith, and discusses the design and specification of forged metalwork

## **The Role of the Artist Blacksmith**

It is important to appreciate that the Artist Blacksmith is not simply a skilled technician, capable of following the given design drawing and manufacturing the specified piece of metalwork - he can also work creatively and offer qualities, details and designs of his own. Indeed the way the Smith works gives rise to metalwork with a character and quality quite different from the kind of work produced by conventional fabrication methods.

The fabrication of metal consists essentially of the cutting, cold bending and joining of sheet, solid and tubular metal sections to produce the required structure. Its appearance derives from the careful selection of standard stock sections which are fitted together and joined, usually by electric welding or by bolting. In addition to these techniques, the Artist Blacksmith is skilled in a wide variety of hot forging processes which can radically change the section, surface and appearance of the standard stock bar, and the way it is joined.

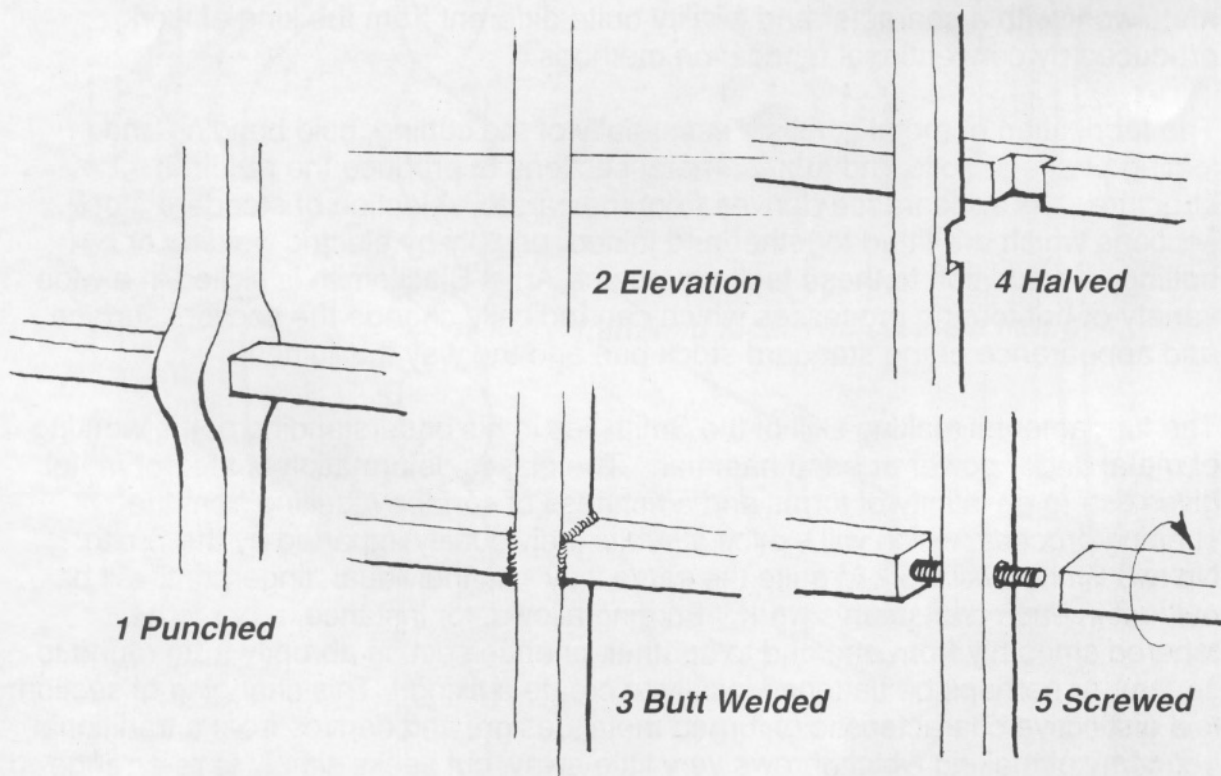
The fundamental making skill of the Smith lies in his understanding of the working of metal under power or hand hammer. The plastic deformation of the hot metal gives rise to an infinity of forms and a richness of surface resulting from the shaping process, which will exhibit a subtle individuality imparted by the Smith. No two Smiths will work in quite the same way - an individual "fingerprint" will be evident in each craftsman's work. Forging allows, for instance, a bar to be tapered smoothly from one end to another, change section abruptly from round to square, or perhaps be flattened locally to create a fixing. This changing of section is a distinctive characteristic of forged metal design, and derives from a traditional economy of making which throws very little away, but seeks simply to re-arrange

the material of the stock bar. The Smith can also cut, profile, manipulate and join sheet and plate material, with similar fluency.

This eloquence and familiarity with the material itself allows for physical and visual strength where it is needed, or for an expressive delicacy and lightness which belies the strength of the metal. The finely tapered end of a traditional forged scroll is a good example.

Good forged metalwork interprets the design idea through the medium of the forging process. It is necessary therefore to "think with the hammer" in order to design for the process. This is particularly apparent in the joining of forged metal. Forgings may simply be joined by electric welding, but the Smith has at his disposal a large number of other means. Many of these express a powerful sense of structure and can offer the designer an eloquence of detailing which is far more lively and interesting than the welded joint of fabricated work.

Simply passing bars through each other using a punched hole for example (figure 1) provides a far more powerful sense of joining than simply butting bars together. On an elevation drawing, however, this joint will appear as in figure 2, which might also be understood to be constructed as figures 3, 4 or 5. Not only will these look different, but the costs of making and finishing will differ. It is often acceptable commercial practice for certain types of work, to leave the weld bead visible, as shown in figure 3. If a higher quality of finish is required, a sound but invisible welded joint can be produced by chamfering the metal before welding, allowing the weld to be ground flush. Clearly this involves more skill and labour time to achieve.



And now for something completely different.

As I said in the introduction, we are depending on a classic antenna for tv and audio reception. The number of channels we receive depends on the weather and if someone (or the dog) stands in the wrong spot.

I did yet another programme check (this time I got 49 tv channels and 19 radio stations). Not "Smooth radio" which is a favourite as they don't have extensive talks. So it's favourite number 2: Classic FM. And they played a song with a keyword that made me take notice: blacksmith. It turned out to be "The harmonious blacksmith" by Handel. The story according to the website [www.interlude.hk](http://www.interlude.hk):

*I am sure you have heard numerous piano students slugging their way through the final movement of George Frideric Handel's Suite No. 5 in E major. This particular movement has gained notoriety because it carries the imaginative nickname "The Harmonious Blacksmith." That nickname does not come from Handel, and only appeared early in the 19th century when the movement became popular on its own. The legend of the famous nickname suggests that Handel, while working for the future Duke of Chandos between 1717 and 1718, was surprised by a sudden violent storm while taking a walk. By chance, he spied the workshop of a blacksmith and sought shelter. While he was watching the men at work, he was attracted by the melodious tones of the hammers as they struck the anvil. Keeping this 'musical' scene in mind, he later composed the movement, with the regularly repeated pedal note in the first variation giving the impression of a blacksmith hammering.*

*A slight variation of the story suggests that Handel heard the blacksmith singing a tune, which later became the "Air." So much for the legend, which was first published in the "Reminiscences of Handel" in 1836 by Richard Clark. To substantiate his imaginative story, Clark found an old anvil in a blacksmith shop near Whitchurch, Edgware. And he identified a certain William Powell as the fictitious blacksmith. He even raised a subscription for a wooden memorial to Powell, and in 1868 a further subscription replaced the wooden structure with a more permanent gravestone. The inscription reads, "In memory of William Powell, the Harmonious Blacksmith, who was buried 27 of February 1780, aged 78 years. He was Parish Clerk during the time the immortal Handel was organist of this church. Erected by subscription, May 1868." The memorial to Powell still stands, but it was a blacksmith's apprentice from Bath by the name of William Lintern, who later claimed to be the harmonious blacksmith. Brought up as a blacksmith, Lintern turned to music, and since he was constantly asked to play that movement, the title of Harmonious Blacksmith was actually given to him. Hard to say whether we will ever discover the true source of the nickname, but when listening to a performance by Sergei Rachmaninoff it hardly matters.*

Now you are of course curious about this piece of music. So here are two versions. Click on the image to listen to the music.



Rachmaninov plays Händel ~  
The Harmonious Blacksmith

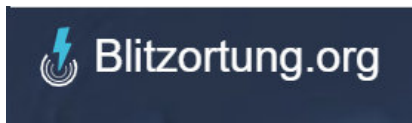


"The Harmonious Blacksmith" by Paul  
Barton.

Bonus: a free link to the sheet music is in  
the description of this video!

## 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.



While working on this newsletter there was a big tunderclap here in Falkirk. This site shows lightning strikes all over the world in real time. Fascinating!



After last month's video about the female chain makers strike at Cradley Heath, here is another historic video about Cradley Heath chain makers.



### The Iron Scribe Co

We are so pleased to have found and saved the original Ziggy Schramm COSIRA & RIB Ironwork drawings! Its going to take some time to catalogue and digitise but we're working on it. Theres so much more than whats in the 'Catalogue Of Drawings For Wrought Ironwork' book first published in 1973.

If you would like a copy of a drawing please send a DM.

Keep an eye out as we start to re-publish the collection.



A genius solution (I think) if you have to weld a lot on the same spot!

## Blacksmithing events

[3rd - 4th July: 3ème Symposium de l'Ecole Internationale de Ferronnerie - Muizon, France](#)

[11th - 12th July: Schmiedetreffen am Freudenthaler Sensenhammer - Leverkusen, Germany](#)

[23rd - 25th July: NGK Smedendagen - Driesum & Wouterswoude, The Netherlands](#)

[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](#)

[\*\*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 glucht - 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 2018 Jake 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

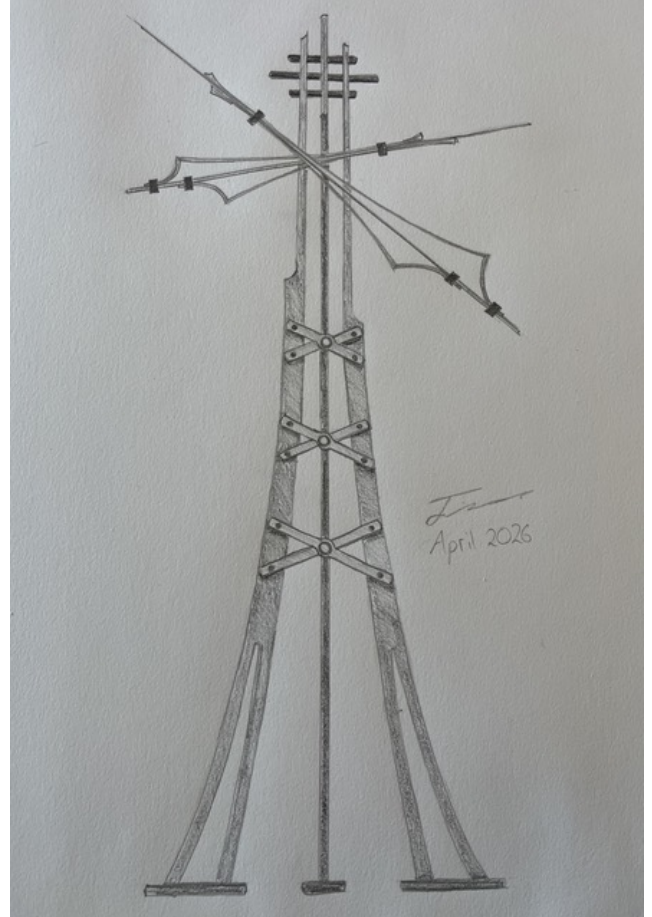
intricate forms exploring the forging process and connections.

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](mailto: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 of these if needed. Please feel free to get in touch if you want advice on accommodation or travel.

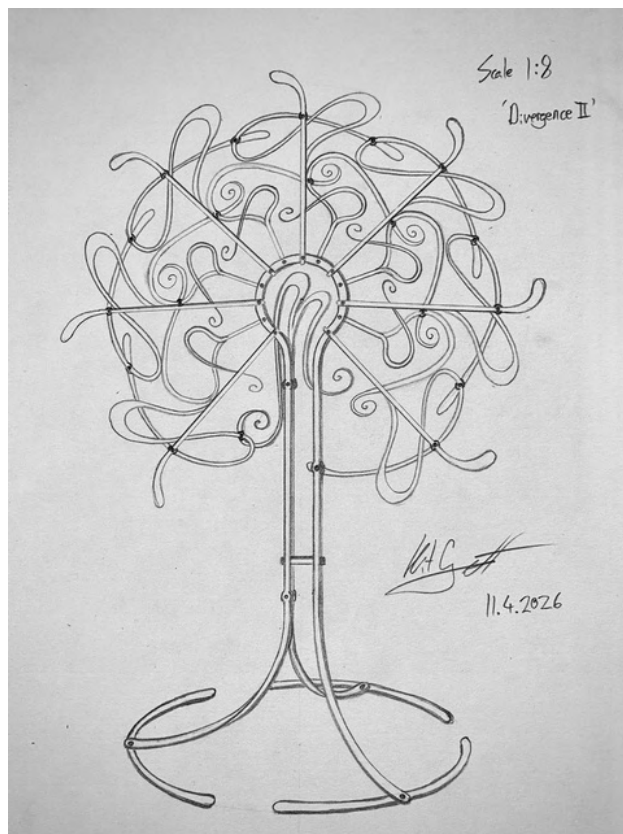
We look forward to welcoming you to Ratho Byres Forge in October!

Website info

[www.jemetaldesign.com](http://www.jemetaldesign.com)

[www.kitgarnett.com](http://www.kitgarnett.com)

[www.rathobyresforge.co.uk](http://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.

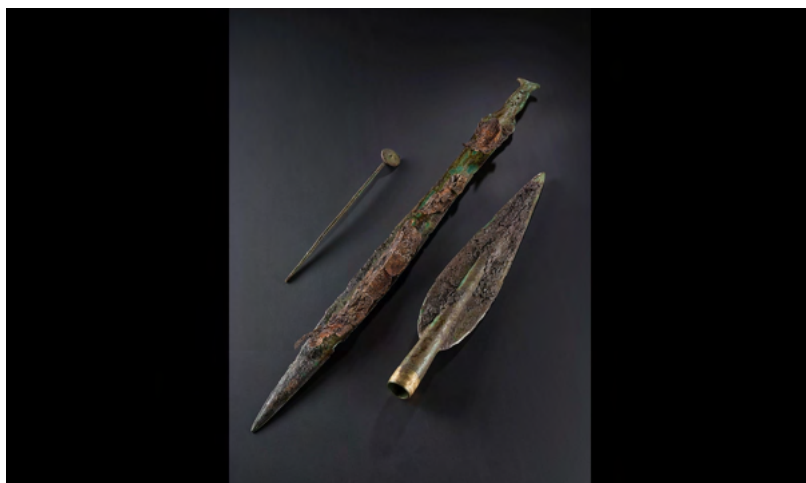
Scotland's First Warriors explores how and why people fought, the impact of war, and the legacy of prehistoric conflict.

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

# NEVILLE SHULMAN

## PRIZE 2026

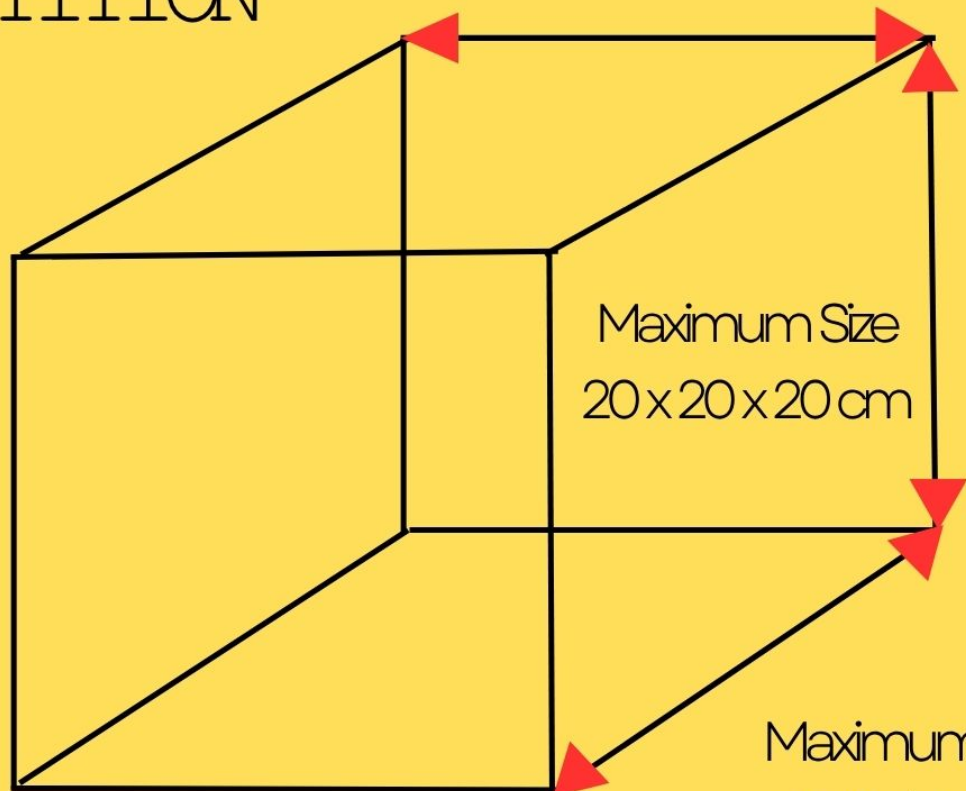


OPEN COMPETITION

Functional

or

Sculptural



Maximum Size  
20 x 20 x 20 cm

Maximum  
Weight  
2.5 kg

Prize fund  
£1000

**Ingredients:** Iron, steel, and a variety of other metals.

**Craftsmanship:** Primarily hot forged with expertly applied traditional cut profile techniques.

[More Info Here](#)

**Photo submissions by**

**1<sup>st</sup> August 2026 via entry form:**

More Info:

[www.blacksmithscompany.co.uk/craft/awards](http://www.blacksmithscompany.co.uk/craft/awards)



# 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](mailto: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/>

Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove B60 4JR

---

## ‘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](#)**

Opportunities

## Two positions at Avoncraft Museum

### Instructor

Avoncraft 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

Avoncraft 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 Avoncraft 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@avoncraft.org.uk](mailto:collections@avoncraft.org.uk)

More information about the museum can be found at their website: <https://avoncraft.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](mailto: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**

[7th March](#)



**KINGSTON  
MAURWARD  
COLLEGE**



Herefordshire,  
Ludlow & North  
Shropshire College



**Myerscough  
College**



**WARWICKSHIRE  
COLLEGE  
GROUP**



**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](mailto: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](#)

Terry Clark has lots of Tongs that he needs to get rid of.

Also Leg Vices and Twisting & Bending Irons.

Come and have a look (Near Guildford, Surrey) and make Terry an offer!

Please call/text first: Sally on 07768 830933

or landline 01483 235244



I have a copy of " The Blacksmith's Craft" published by the R I B in 1952 and was hoping to be able to sell it to someone setting out to be a blacksmith.

My smithing days are behind me now but as you probably know it was a very useful book.

Would it be possible for you to circulate your members with my offer?

My contact details are J. R. Smith on 01964 503185 or joegarrod09@gmail.com



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Newsletter@baba.org.uk)**

We received the following message:

During a fire at the premises (started next door) a forge was damaged and has remained outside for almost three years, causing extra weather damage, as you can see from the pictures.

We understand the forge can still be an attractive proposition for someone to renovate, as we just want it removed. It would be a shame to scrap it if it's still usable.

Is there any way you can offer it to all your members?

We really would like to have it removed asap.

Win Cnoops  
Site and maintenance co-ordinator  
07866 705181  
win@underfallyard.co.uk  
www.underfallyard.co.uk

