

Newsletter



April 2026



A gate made by Steve Rook 2020/2021
Installed near Amersham Buckinghamshire



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

I have to start with sad news. Our former membership secretary, Dan Randle, passed away very unexpected. Our thoughts are with his family. We hope that memories of Dan might give a slight comfort.

Then the building story. It's becoming a real soap. The contractor didn't show up on Monday and it took him to late afternoon to let us know that he, due to personal circumstances, wouldn't be in for the rest of the week. While we're in the crucial stage of finishing everything.

It even got worse. He ignored all calls and messages, even from his co-workers. So he is now off the job and we're already three weeks behind schedule, with no clear view when we will be able to move back into our house.

But blacksmithing. That's what you should be here for.

This weekend is the BABA sponsored Practical Skills Workshop "hole punching". I was registered for this one, and really looking forward to it. But as we have workers in the house now, I'm stuck here. I hope one of the participants is willing to write a short article about the workshop and some pictures will be available for the next newsletter.

The next Practical Skills Workshop is already fully booked, you need to be quick to get a spot in these highly coveted events!

But there are always the blacksmithing events. Check the "Blacksmithing events" page in the newsletter to see what's going on. If you go on holiday too, there might be an event where you are planning to go. We even have an Australian masterclass in this edition.

I can tell you that the council is working hard on planning the AGM's for the next couple of years. Further information will follow as soon dates and locations are confirmed and can be shared.

The "Interesting internet" page has a collection of "why didn't I think of that" tools for you.

There are still some great tools for sale in the "Classifieds" section. Have you checked if it's something you can use?

Of course there are the last minute additions. Interesting ones I think.

- You can become part of a video archive about craftspeople
- An opportunity to make apex crosses and become part of history

newsletter@baba.org.uk



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



Some sad news to relate for those of you who are not yet aware. Dan Wolfy Randle - who many of you will know from BABA events, and who until recently served as our Membership Secretary - sadly and suddenly passed away a couple of weeks ago.

DANIEL CRAIG RANDLE

Wolfy

10 May 1984 - 10 February 2026

<https://www.memorygiving.com/wolfyrandle>

Interesting Internet

I assume most (if not all) of you have internet and follow different social media. And on those social media different people. If I come across an article I like (mostly on Facebook), I save that article (click on the three dots in the top right-hand corner). This will be where I will share those with you. But that is what I find interesting. What about you? Please send me links to topics you find interesting (newsletter@baba.org.uk).
Click on the images to go to the website mentioned.



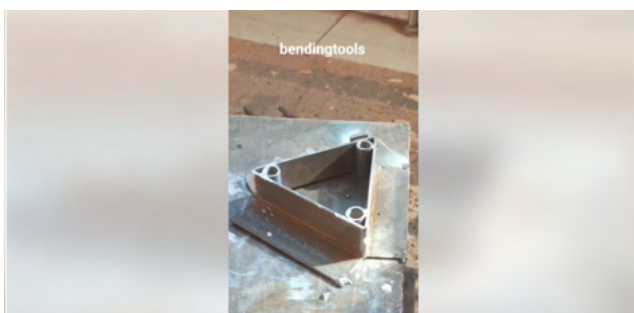
We all use angle grinders. We all use words we maybe shouldn't when we can't find that beautiful tool to unscrew the security bolt holding the disc in place. Here is a genius solution for that problem!



The mission of the Historic Blacksmith Conservancy is to promote excellence in traditional blacksmithing. The Conservancy is a repository for works, materials, and tooling of present and past masters. From these historic examples we derive educational programming aimed at blacksmiths, metalworkers, architects, designers, the building trades, and the general public. Our goal is to promote the appreciation of design and craftsmanship, while training the next generation of smiths to build on our inherited legacy.



A geniusly simple tool to find the centre in a round disc. You might know it already, it was the first time I saw it. So here it is for everyone who, just like me, didn't know it.

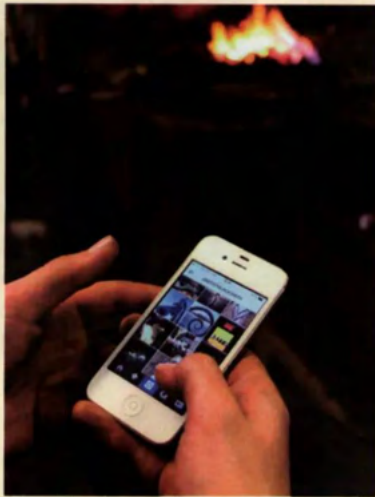


A collection of simple bending tools.

Guest Editor: Culture Shock

Rick Barter

In 2015 we published an issue of *Artist Blacksmith* which focused on social media. It generated an energetic reaction from our readers, and in my virtual postbag was the letter re-printed opposite, from Rick Barter in Kentucky. Rick has a witty and refreshing take on all things, and I invited him to Guest Edit an issue of *Artist Blacksmith*. Quite coincidentally, Rick's issue just happened to be AB150, our celebratory 150th issue that coincides with BABA's two anniversary projects – ROOT 1066 at Hastings in East Sussex, and Ypres 2016 in Belgium.



It seems wholly appropriate that Rick is an American contributing his thoughts about cultural clashes and collaborations to a British publication; BABA owes its existence to the enthusiasm and 'can do' attitude of its American cousins in the 1970s.

For each issue of the magazine, I seek a 'Guest Editor' to contribute an original article – it's a policy designed to ensure that we seek out and record new and original 'voices'. We meet and hear of people with unique experiences and distinct personal perspectives on blacksmithing or related themes, and often these great thinkers are not writers or photographers, and their worlds would be unrecorded if we didn't harass and persuade them to join us in print. Guest Editorship has broadened the themes we can explore – recent issues have focused on design, sustainability, college education, school education, blacksmithing history, international events, iron founding, metal finishing and the experiences of being a mature student.

We have never had a Kentucky farmer/blacksmith's angle before, and it is a joyful and uplifting one. I have had to liaise with Rick when he briefly climbs down off his tractor between hay-tedding sessions, and his turn of phrase delights me every time. (I have never corresponded with someone who can use words like 'exponentially' and 'badass' right next to each other to such great effect, and I cannot resist publishing some of the comments he has made outside of his editorial, such as "Talk about ingenuity and teamwork. Everyone that came before us was exponentially badass. They accomplished amazing feats with minimum technology through grit and determination. Men of true mettle! (See what I did there?)"). I have not changed American English to British English in Rick's article – you will understand why.

So, enjoy. Rick chose the Battle of Hastings and BABA's *Blacksmiths on the Beach* project with Leigh Dyer for ROOT 1066 as his theme, but his words are just as relevant to the Ypres 2016 Poppy Cenotaph event and indeed to the whole historical and modern human condition. – **Editor**

I am a farmer and blacksmith living in La Grange, Kentucky, USA. My wife and I have a 125-acre farm with thirty head of cattle (Hereford, Angus and Charolais), two horses, two dogs, two cats and several chickens. The farm and my life are a never-ending source of inspiration, frustration and stories.



The path I have taken to blacksmithing is a sordid tale with many twists, turns and a few backtracks, but, looking back, it was my destiny. It's in my blood. My great-grandfather and grandfather were welders and metalworkers. I vaguely knew this as a kid, but it didn't really mean anything to me; I was too young, and we were encouraged to follow a different path. Interestingly enough, no matter what path I tried to follow, it was meant to lead me right into the blacksmith shop.

After high school I became a draftsman. After being laid off as a draftsman, I went to college and got an accounting degree (accountants don't get laid off!). But, instead of becoming an accountant, I became a computer programmer. It more suited my personality and interests and I got to actually make things. Well, sort of. Esoteric things, but making anything is **something**.

While all these other things were happening over the span of fifteen years or so, I developed an interest in the black arts. As a child, I had seen blacksmiths plying their trade at living history museums and as an adult at various craft and fall festivals. Somewhere along the way I became curious. I became curious about welding. What did it mean that my grandfather was a welder? I became curious about blacksmithing. How did they do that? How does it work? Curiosity killed the cat, as you know, but is also the impetus for every one of my life-changing moments. Curiosity leads to books (by the Countryside Agency, Peter Parkinson, et al) and research, which leads to hobby and obsession, which usually leads me to another career...

I started learning to forge and weld metal on the side. Then it became a dirty little habit that consumed so much of my after-hours life I started to fall asleep at my day job, which I increasingly didn't really care about any more. So, I got a job as an industrial welder to feed my habit of metalwork and get me one step closer to being a full-time blacksmith. At least then I could be

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working with my hands and dirty and making stuff all day. Then I started to take commissions on the side. I did my first one and it scared me, but after successfully completing it, I felt a sense of accomplishment heretofore unknown to me! **It was all up to me.** I could interact directly with the customer. I could design and build something that came from my head and my hands and my heart! The power of taking an idea and making it reality is what drives me. And all the skills I've learned up to this point continue to serve me well - it's like every step I took on my path to blacksmithing armed me with exactly what I needed once I got here.

Also, the energy I derive from others who are passionate about their work and their lives cannot be overstated. I am so inspired by other creative and driven souls around me. I have been so fortunate to have interacted with so many passionate, sharing people. Most have no idea the impact they have had on me, but it has been great.

I was fortunate enough to meet Alan Evans and Peter Parkinson in 2002-2003 when I was on a trip to England. They were both gracious and hospitable and really great ambassadors of the craft. I know they probably don't even remember me, but the simple act of showing me around their shops, sharing lunch with me, signing my copy of Peter's book and giving me some back issues of Artist Blacksmith was so very generous that I remember it to this day. Thanks to both of them for showing me what a great community of sharing and camaraderie blacksmiths enjoy and for just being really decent human beings.

The icing on the cake for me is that all these years later, I am lucky enough to write an article for Artist Blacksmith magazine. Thank you for this opportunity. It is an honor.

Culture Shock

In October of the year 1066, the Battle of Hastings resulted in the collision of two cultures: Anglo-Saxon and Norman.

Thus began, among other things, the journey toward the language we know today as English. The amalgamation of words from the languages of both aforementioned cultures created something else, something unique, something more than the sum of its parts. Such is the way of things when cultures collide. Each participant in the collision exerts some influence upon the other. Each participant is changed in some way, and together they collaborate to create something entirely new.

I recently had an opportunity to attend a conference and meet other smiths from a different region of my country. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet others, talk with them, work with them, and influence each other. It also opened the door for future collaboration. Social media has done the same thing for me. It has allowed me to interact with others in many different countries around the world. It has put me on a collision course with people from completely different backgrounds and with completely different experiences. The more opportunities we have to collide, the more opportunities we have to collaborate and create!

It has been my experience that there is quite a lot of energy produced by collaboration. To me, that energy has been palpable. You can feel it. You can see it in the way people work together; faces taut with concentration, eyes sparkling with creative energy, or faces animated with laughter. It becomes a self-sustaining force that, when harnessed, can accomplish beautiful and interesting things. Each participant feeds off the



other's energy and (at least in my experience) works a little harder, a little longer, digs a little deeper and tries to give the absolute best of themselves.

I think we can all benefit immeasurably from working with others and sharing of ourselves. Much like the impact on the world resulting from the Battle of Hastings, we may not realize the import of our collisions until long after they occur, but the short-term effects can be just as transformative. Furthermore, I think great inspiration and drive result from working together and creating something with the combined efforts of all involved. I know I was bolstered and inspired in my own shop for weeks after leaving the conference. Conversations with people I had met continued either over the 'phone or over the Internet. New ideas were hatched and new things were created together. People met at one another's shops to share knowledge and techniques. They shared their results on the Internet and others joined in the fun. It was like a new language was being created; a language with pieces and parts from everyone who joined the conversation. The dialogue continues to ebb and flow. The collisions were made, the conversation started, and the language evolves.

The evolution is important. It keeps the conversation fresh and timely. It prevents stagnation and fires the imagination. The language grows and expands beyond itself because of the participation of its speakers and writers and listeners. All have influence. All have power.

Together we create. No matter the craft, the medium, the skill level, the language we speak, or the things in which we believe; we desire to fill the world with our creations. In doing so, we create a new world. It is my belief that the world we create is one of hope, of light, of joy, of fun, of magic.

I look forward to colliding with all of you to create our new world. Now let's go make something!



Collaboration - BABA Conference and AGM 2013

Photo Lucy Quinnell



Collaboration - Sculpture Workshop Day at Bringsty Forge, Herefordshire 2016

Photo Paul Margetts



Collaboration - BABA Conference and AGM 2012

Photo Asadour Guzelian



2021



2022



2023



2024



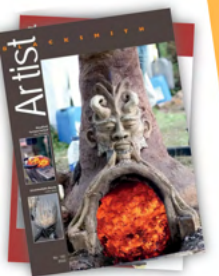
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No. 179 2025



2020



2010s



2000s



1990s



1980s



1979

THE BABA MAGAZINE ONLINE ARCHIVE

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

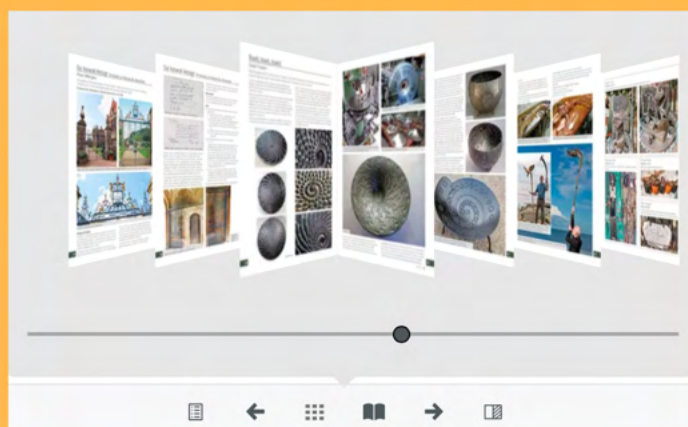
If not go to the members area of the BABA website and click on the “Magazine Archive” link.

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, 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



We received this very interesting request. An opportunity for you to be part of an archive!



I'm a documentary photographer working on a long-term project called The England Archive - a serious, multi-year archive documenting the people keeping England's heritage alive, ending in a international book and exhibition.

Working blacksmiths are one of the most important subjects in the archive, and I'm particularly looking to connect with smiths in the Cotswolds and Heart of England doing traditional work - agricultural ironwork, farriery, heritage restoration. If you're based in those areas and would be open to a documentary visit, I'd love to hear from you. This isn't a commercial project and there's no agenda beyond making a proper record of the work while the people doing it are still here to be part of it. Please get in touch: mash@englandarchive.org

England is not disappearing in fire or flood. It disappears person by person, quietly, on a Tuesday, when nobody is watching.

The thatcher retires and nobody replaces him. The churchwarden who has held the same keys for forty years finally hands them on. The hedgelayner who learned from his father - who learned from his father - quietly stops taking apprentices.

The England Archive is a documentary record of the traditions, customs, villages, landscapes, and living knowledge that make England what it is - and the people whose skill and commitment are keeping them alive. The craft, the place, and the person who sustains it are inseparable. When one disappears, the others follow.

We are documenting what is here - the events, the skills, the places, the people - before the last generation to carry them is gone. That window is not as wide as people assume.

The project begins, as most things do, with an outsider looking in. Someone who arrived in England and was genuinely astonished by what was still here - and increasingly alarmed by how quietly it was leaving.

The England Archive draws on the documentary lineage of Benjamin Stone (1897), Walker Evans (1941), and Simon Roberts (2009) - but asks a fundamentally different question. Not what does England look like, but who is keeping it alive, and who comes next.

Find out more about The England Archive on their website:

<https://englandarchive.org/>

Blacksmithing events

[14th - 16th April: Iron Notes - Oslo, Norway](#)

[25th April: 10. Olchinger Frühjahrsausstellung - Muhlbach, Germany](#)

[9th - 10th May: Knife - Solingen, Germany](#)

[15th - 16th May: BABA Skills Workshop "Powerhammer Techniques and Tooling" - Ratho, United Kingdom](#)

BABA members only, see the "Jobs, Training and Opportunities" section of this newsletter.

[16th - 17th May: Coutellia - Thiers, France](#)

[29th - 31st May: Forge in at Dave Cooper's forge - Burton Agnes, Driffield, Yorkshire, United Kingdom](#)

[31st May: Hamerslagdag - Roggel, The Netherlands](#)

[6th and 7th June: Feu, Fer & Savoir-faire d'hier - Trazegnies, Belgium](#)

[19th - 21st June: Ferraculum - Ybbsitz, Austria](#)

[22nd - 27th June: Feuer verbindet - Hagen, Germany](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

2027

[3rd - 6th September: Biennale Europea d'Arte Fabbriile di Stia - Stia, Italy](#)

DC Blacksmiths 2026 forge-in

29th-31th May 2026

**Arrivals from noon on Friday more of a setting up day
with a full day of forge fun planned for the Saturday**

Camping available on site

Local band booked for Saturday Night knees up with catering

Theme and more details to follow!



Please rsvp to dcblacksmiths@gmail.com / 07932111836

Hill House, Main Street Burton Agnes YO25 4NG

BLACKSMITHING MASTERCLASS

Nairne
Australia

ADAM

GREENWELL

(UK) &



WILL MAGUIRE (NSW)



WILL MAGUIRE
BLACKSMITH

This masterclass is in Nairne, Australia!

Join Elemental Artist Blacksmith for a masterclass led by these two amazing artists. A not-to-be-missed opportunity being held in Nairne in June 2026.

For more info, send an email to bec@elementalartistblacksmith.com.au

In conjunction with a long weekend masterclass, we are holding demonstrations, artist talks and exhibitions.

Masterclass: Adam Greenwell from the UK will be presenting a masterclass from the 6th – 8th June 2026. Adam is an award winning blacksmith with 20 years experience in the arts. He has taught and demonstrated at multiple locations in the UK and is currently participating in a residency in Sweden.

Will Maguire (NSW) will be assisting Adam over the weekend. Will is a highly celebrated Artist Blacksmith from the Hunter Valley, his impressive body of work is a testament to his unique approach to working in this medium.

Location: Elemental Artist Blacksmith workshop. 115 Princes Highway Nairne SA 5252

Cost: \$600

Demonstrations: Adam Greenwell and Will Maguire (NSW) will be giving 3hr demonstrations from the 5th to the 8th June. More details to come.

Artist Talks: Join us for an insight into the creative processes of these two world renown artist blacksmiths. Tickets include a light supper and drink at the 'Tin Shed' distillery in Nairne. Cost: \$10.

We are also organizing an exhibition of forged iron artwork that will be held at the Tin Shed distillery for the month of June. If you have a small piece that is postable, and would like to submit it for this exhibition, please contact bec@elementalartistblacksmith.com.au. Larger pieces are accepted, but you will need to organize transport.

All work must include at least an element of hot forged work.

All works for sale must include a 10% commission.

Tickets for the masterclass, demonstrations and Artist talks will be available soon on the elemental website www.elementalartistblacksmith.com.au

For more information, please contact bec@elementalartistblacksmith.com.au or 0422 367 936
TEXT ONLY PLEASE.

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.

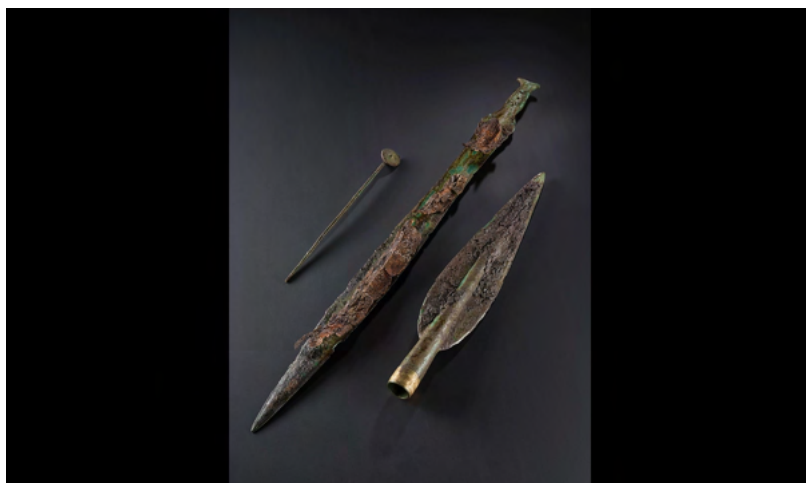
Scotland's First Warriors explores how and why people fought, the impact of war, and the legacy of prehistoric conflict.

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

Blacksmithing competitions

I have been asked to publish information about blacksmithing competitions around the country. This will be in addition to the blacksmithing events mentioned in the previous chapter. Click on the links to get more information about the organisation or competition. If the 2026 page for an event is not online yet, there will be no link.

[The NBCC Blacksmithing competition](#)

[7th March: annual Judging Seminar and first round of the National Blacksmith Competition - Hereford, UK](#)

[North Somerset Show - 4th May 2026](#)

[Devon Show - 21st, 22nd & 23rd May 2026](#)

Royal Cornwall Show - 4th, 5th & 6th June 2026

[Royal Three Counties Show - 12th, 13th & 14th June 2026](#)

Royal Welsh Show - 20th, 21st, 22nd & 23rd July 2026

New Forest & Hampshire Show - 28th, 29th & 30th July 2026

Edenbridge & Oxted Show - 30th & 31st August 2026

Dorset County Show - 5th - 6th September 2026

BFBA "International" event - 27th September 2026

[The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths](#)

[The Neville Schulman competition - Deadline 1st August 2026](#)

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

An opportunity emerging from the positive experience of "Earth Fire Iron" and the forging workshops at St.Laurence Church Stroud.

Although this is weighted in towards stonemasons this is a genuine opportunity for a collaboration and/or an artist blacksmith solution.

The text below is an excerpt of the whole commission. The complete text can be found here:

<https://stlaurencestroud.uk/about/jobs/>

Apex Cross Artist Commission, 17th April 2026

Project Overview

St Laurence Restored: Protecting Stroud's Historic Heart is a major capital and engagement project to secure and revitalize the Grade II* listed St Laurence Church in central Stroud. Alongside critical conservation work, the project will deliver a rich programme of heritage and community engagement.

The project is structured into two phases:

Development Phase (60 weeks): Planning, investigation, community engagement pilots

Delivery Phase (60 weeks): Capital repairs and full public engagement programme

Purpose of This Role

We are seeking expressions of interest from stoneworkers, artist blacksmiths and other 3D materials designers to design and, subject to available funding, produce up to seven new apex crosses. The intention is to blend respect for the church's historical and architectural significance with innovative, imaginative responses that will contribute to the building's visual identity for future generations. This commission offers a unique opportunity to leave a lasting legacy at one of Stroud's most historic and visible landmarks, combining tradition, creativity, and public engagement.

St Laurence is an exciting church with dynamic congregations, an engagement with mystical Christianity and working to engage with all to give the church and all the events that take place there a vision of what a town centre church can be at its best. This is a legacy project to enhance the church with the Restoration project for a future century

Aims of the Commission:

Reimagine the seven lost apex crosses with sensitivity to the church's Gothic Revival character but also taking into account Stroud's contemporary and innovative community spirit.

Celebrate craftsmanship and creativity in stonework and all other potential long lasting materials.

Enhance public appreciation of heritage through visible, thoughtful additions.

Provide an opportunity for emerging and experienced artists to contribute to this landmark Stroud institution.

We would encourage applying artists to engage with local residents in Stroud, and incorporate any ideas or concepts gleaned, that resonate with their artistic intention.

Timeline:

Submission deadline: April 17th 2026

Who Can Apply:

Individual artists or teams with experience in stone carving, public art, or architectural sculpture.

Emerging and established artists are welcome.

Applicants must be able to provide examples of previous relevant work.

Practical Skills Workshops : Power hammer Techniques and Tooling

Friday 15th and Saturday the 16th May

The next skills workshop topic, Power Hammer Techniques and Tooling, will be hosted at Ratho Byres Forge, near Edinburgh, led by Steve Rook, Pete Hill and Shona Johnson.

The workshop will begin at 2 pm Friday 15th May.

The Friday afternoon session will be focused on theory, discussion of process and tooling and will include demonstrations. Saturday will be hands on with practical exercises and tuition and run from 9am till 5pm.

Given the hands-on nature of this workshop, spaces will be limited to 6 individuals, and due to space there will not be any option to spectate.

Because of the practical approach and the topic, priority will be given to applicants who have at least some experience using a power hammer. You might be a graduate establishing your own workshop or a working smith wishing to expand their skill set, but due to the extensive focus on using a variety of power hammers and hand held tooling, participants will be expected to be familiar with basic use of these machines.



To apply for a place on the workshop, please submit a brief summary of your experience and how you feel you would benefit from attending. Please be sure to include your contact details and it shouldn't be more than a couple of paragraphs.

Please email applications to design@baba.co.uk

The closing date for applications is Saturday the 14th March 2026.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome on Sunday the 15th March.

Successful applicants will receive payment information and will need to pay the fee promptly to secure their place.

The allocation of places will be decided based on the applications received. If there is sufficient interest and applications we will consider scheduling an additional workshop to repeat the topic.

BABA is subsidising these workshops to enable the participant fee to be only £25.00, with attendance open to BABA members only.

A sandwich lunch on the Saturday is included in the cost, and hopefully folk will choose to enjoy a meal together somewhere 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 little 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.

Power hammer techniques and hand held tooling for hammers

Friday 15th May: afternoon/evening session - max 6 participants

Discuss basic techniques, do's and don'ts, tapering on flat pallets, use of shaped pallets, making tooling on saddles to fit pallets

Look at the common tooling used under a hammer.

Discuss, stop or kiss blocks, taper blocks, hand held fullers, round backs, flatters, swages, set tools, Vee blocks and butchers, include sketches on white board or flip chart

Mention material selection for these various tools, rough and ready or more considered, depending on job to be done and expected life span required of tool. Hot work tools steels, more robust steels, recycling steel for tooling, pro's and con's.

Discussion of options for forming tools, machining, grinding, laser cutting, forging etc.

Options for securing blocks and tools under hammer.

Saturday 16th May: Practical session, 9.00am

Demo basic techniques, using selection of tooling under different weights of hammer
Students to try hammers and some of these tools

10.30 tea break

All to forge a round back hammer, supplied tool steel, handle and harden. This could be at any size to suit students own equipment.

1pm lunch (included in cost)

After lunch (till end of the day)

Look at isolating masses with side sets and fullers to produce set tools with integral handles.

Produce Vee block or swage block

Opportunity to try other tooling or forge additional tools or try forging on variety of hammers from DP tyre hammer to 5cwt.



As access to a hammer will be at a premium, participants will be encouraged to try the different hammers -DP tyre hammer, 30kg and 50kgs modern air hammers, 2cwt and 5cwt Massey hammers, thus ensuring everyone can be working as much or as little as they wish.

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

[3rd March 2026](#)
[18th April 2026](#)



**Myerscough
College**

[18th April 2026](#)
[6th June 2026](#)



**WARWICKSHIRE
COLLEGE
GROUP**



[1st March 2026](#)
[13th June 2026](#)

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



Ratho EH28 8NW



**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

It's time for a new page with information about blacksmiths that teach as well. Can you help me fill this page? Please email me at newsletter@baba.org.uk

FORGING FORWARDS

Unlocking creative potential through blacksmithing education.

Located between Exeter and Crediton



A detail of the cover image, a gate made by Steve Rook

Classifieds: toys for the toy shop



Toby Forbes Gower

The widest range of blacksmithing tools at sensible prices

[Click here for Toby's webshop](#)

For Sale

RIDGID Model R-200

BSPT Dies 1/2 3/4 1 inch RH Threader & Plastic Case

Quick starting dies for threading pipe faster and easier

Ratcheting action to minimize operator fatigue

Little Used - £290

Contact Melissa Cole, Wiltshire. email: melissa@melissacole.co.uk



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



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