

NEWSLETTER



December 2024

Cover picture: Fire welded curtain rail ends by Toby Forbes Gower.



Editor's notes

Welcome to the December Newsletter for the British Artist Blacksmith Association

Last newsletter I was writing about my struggle for the first thing to make in my new forge. It turns out that should have been way down on the list. I have never worked with a sideblast forge, that is (for me) a challenge on its own. Besides that, after five years of not forging it may come as no surprise my strength isn't what it was. Ten minutes hammering and I'm ready for a break. Usually I started each session with some kind of S-hook. Made from square or round, with or without a twist. So far I have managed to burn quite a lot of points. I definitely need to start practising more!

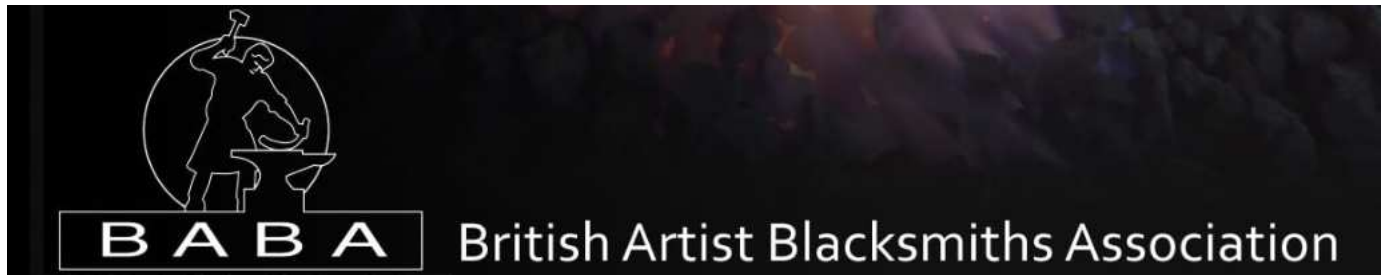
In the last newsletter there was a lot of information about the BABA workshop "Designing, Measuring and Making Sure it Stays Put... Down South". It turned out to be appreciated just as much as the first version in Scotland. Thanks to Adam Booth, Jim Whitson and Pete Hill for taking on this task. And to all participants to make it worthwhile!

Last week the first event of 2025 was announced: "A Christmas Ball" New Year Forge-In at Ratho Byres Forge, 4th January 2025!

More information about this event in this newsletter. And you want to read it, it will be an event that will be talked about! And while working on this newsletter a couple of BABA events have been confirmed. More further down in the newsletter!

For now I'd like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe end of 2024. See you again in 2025. Let's make it a spectacular year in which friendships old and new will be celebrated.





What is BABA and why join?

For 46 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 forges 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



My daddy is a blacksmith!

What is your name?

Elsie

How old are you?

9

Who is your daddy?

John Nicholson (Didsbury Forge)

Where do you live?

Manchester

Do you help in the workshop?

I used to help in the forge

I made a hammer, that is now a nutcracker for Christmas.

I made a bracelet too.

I want to start again, this weekend (AGM) was fun!

What do your friends think of your daddy being a blacksmith?

Most friends don't know. Elsie's parents tell they do.

I want to be a blacksmith!



A message from ABANA (Artist Blacksmith Association of North America):

A group of engineering students need help researching handheld forging hammers. We're helping to get the word out to the blacksmith community. Please take a few minutes of your time to answer their questions:

**Click here for the
enquiry**

The Aeolus Project

- From the BABA archive

Frederick Andrews



I am an artist blacksmith and metal sculptor based in Herefordshire. My work combines art, science and human interactivity to explore how objects can alter the way that we connect with our environment.

Since gaining a first-class degree in Artist Blacksmithing from Hereford College of Arts, I have specialised

in handcrafting a range of kinetic, sound and garden sculptures using traditional blacksmithing techniques in combination with contemporary fabrication and design. I create sculpture for private gardens, public spaces, galleries and sculpture parks, with my work exhibiting regularly across the UK. Having recently established my own forge and workshop in Herefordshire, I use the space to take private commissions, teach classes in welding and forging as well as continuing to create and develop my sculptures.

The Aeolus project is a series of sound sculptures that are played by the wind. The sculpture's sound is produced by the wind creating a series of harmonic tones as it blows across the strings, agitating them back and forth. The sound created by the instrument will be one of the harmonics above the fundamental tone (the note the string is tuned to). This phenomenon can also be experienced in telephone wires in high winds, that eerie singing effect is produced essentially by the same process that an aeolian harp aims to create.

Based upon the Ancient Greek concept of the Aeolian Harp, the Aeolus sculptures are designed as tools for reflection and are intended to be used as a medium for the audience to connect to nature and their environment. The instruments are accompanied by a hand forged steel 'slide' to play up and down the strings, allowing the user to play the instrument together with the wind.



Taking on this project was a challenge. I had never tried to make an instrument before but have always had a fascination for sound. Like many projects I take on in my practice, there was an element of jumping in at the deep end, setting a goal and working to achieve it, though on this project there were many times I realised how out of my depth I was.

With both pieces, I started with the idea of what I wanted to achieve and found myself working back through what an instrument is and where they come from; the first iteration being more guitar-like and the second taking on a bow-like structure that I felt was a good starting point for a stringed instruments identity.

The project incorporated knowledge and skills from my experience of both forging, fabrication and jewellery making. The actual physical side of making the piece was straight forward enough, though the design and problem solving was really where I had to put my thinking cap on.

The biggest challenge was the fabrication of the sound box. I explored different materials for the sound board eventually deciding on bronze for its tone, and for the actual sound box, I used stainless steel for both its aesthetic and resistance to rust, as rust inside the box would dull the sounds being produced.

When it came to actually designing the sound box's size I used "Helmholtz's Resonator formula" (*Look it up – Editor*) and, I must emphasize, a lot of trial and error, which was part of the process and what for me made the project such an enjoyably engrossing endeavour.

I will continue to pursue this project as I begin to work on a static piece that could take a more permanent place in the natural environment.



Photo Oliver Cameron Swan

"Aeolus"



Photo Oliver Cameron Swan



"Aeolus II"



Photo Oliver Cameron Swan





Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths

Tonypandy Award 2025

Call for Entries

The application deadline for the 2025 award is 31st December 2024

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

- The Company welcomes suggestions from any source for work, which meets the criteria of "outstanding".
 - We would welcome applications from British blacksmiths.
 - All work should be in Great Britain or Northern Ireland.
 - Work should preferably be accessible to the general public.
 - Modern and traditional techniques are equally acceptable. Work in any metal and heat process and style is acceptable. The age of the piece should not exceed five years from completion.
 - Nominations incorporating as much information as possible on the submission should be sent to the Chair of the Tonypandy Committee (details below) along with a digital portfolio of past commissions.
 - Please limit your images to no more than 45.
 - The initial assessment will be by looking at good, high quality digital photos that show the piece overall and in detail, as the committee will be meeting online.
 - The assessment panel is made up of established craft practitioners and individuals with a wide knowledge of blacksmithing and artistic practices.
- As the committee will be meeting online, the initial assessment will be via good, high quality digital photos that show the piece overall and in detail,
All shortlisted submissions will be visited and assessed on site.

Please email images using WeTransfer, <https://wetransfer.com> to the email address below, or by posting a memory stick to:
Steve Rook Two Ravens Forge, Unit 1 Dunmore Street, Balfour,
Glasgow G63 0TU

If you have any questions please contact me: 07908 544776.

Email tonypandyaward@icloud.com

The application deadline for the 2025 award is 31st December 2024

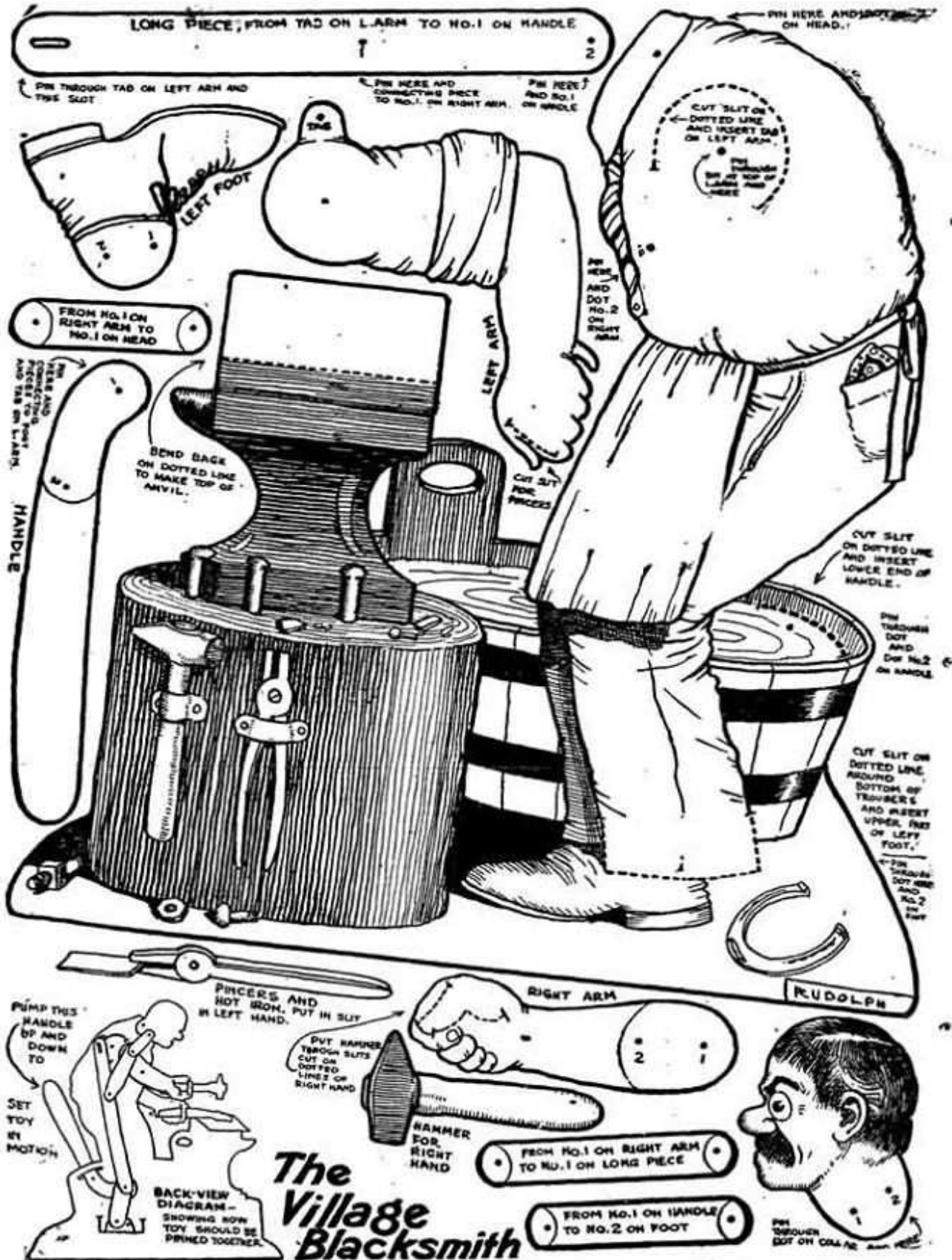
And now for something completely different

by John von Peij

I bet you weren't expecting this!

Another Cut-Out Toy for Boys and Girls

Copyright, 1933



Level 3 students win a competition at Newbury show!

By Rob Fielding, Weymouth and Kingston Maurward College

We were asked by Nick Peppit whether our students wanted to enter the Newbury show. The only problem was it was less than 2 weeks away from them starting a new year. We put our Level 3 blacksmithing and welding students to the challenge. Most are progressing students (who haven't done much blacksmithing since June), however we do have 1 new student, who before starting this had very little workshop experience.

The theme was 'Floral', Nick had sent some flower blanks to use, and the piece needed to be max size of 700mm across. The students started brain storming and drawing ideas, using the flower blanks as well as their own ideas. Within a couple of hours they had finalised their design, with only 5 days to make it.

Working as a team they divided themselves into groups, a couple focused on forging the flowers, a couple rolling the outer ring, a couple cutting the Lilly pad, and the rest on the horseshoe flower in the centre. As a group finished they moved onto making the scroll infills, they had quite a production line going, all helping each other.

The group were quite pushed for time, but completed it within the tight turn around, we delivered it to the Newbury show for all to see.

I'm very pleased to say our students won 1st place, so their panel will be galvanised for free, and the college will receive £100 of PPE.

This was a great introductory piece for the students to get stuck into, designing, forging, welding, and working as a team. Well done everyone!



Above: Panel 4



Top right: Tom and George making a scroll
Bottom right: Will making a scroll



BLACKSMITHING EVENTS

4th January 2025: A Christmas Ball at Ratho Byres Forge, Ratho, UK

More information in this newsletter

25th and 26th May: Waterworks Museum forge in and Steam day, Hereford, UK

More information will follow

21st and 22nd June: Forge in with Brian, Little Newsham Forge,

Darlington UK

More information will follow

SAVE THE DATE! You read it here first!

12th - 14th September: BABA ADM, Museum in the park, Stroud, UK

More information will follow

As you can see there is plenty of room on this page for your event!

Let us know at newsletter@baba.org.uk

“A Christmas Ball”

New Year Forge-In at Ratho Byres Forge
4th January 2025!

We are going to host a New Year Forge-in, this has been an on and off sort of irregular thing, interrupted by Covid and life, but it is back this New Year!

The theme this time will be “A Christmas Ball”. So get your thinking caps on, come and forge something humorous, comic, pretty or silly, drink some tea and perhaps a beer or two and recharge your inspiration battery before heading back to work proper. This is a one day affair on Saturday the 4th January from 9am till whenever we run out of puff or enthusiasm, in the barren, wild, far, far north, well, just a few miles form Edinburgh Airport actually. There is plenty of budget and posh accommodation options nearby and plenty room for camper vans in the yard at the forge.

We will put on hot, hearty, veggie soup for lunch and would ask folk to bring something tasty for the lunch table.

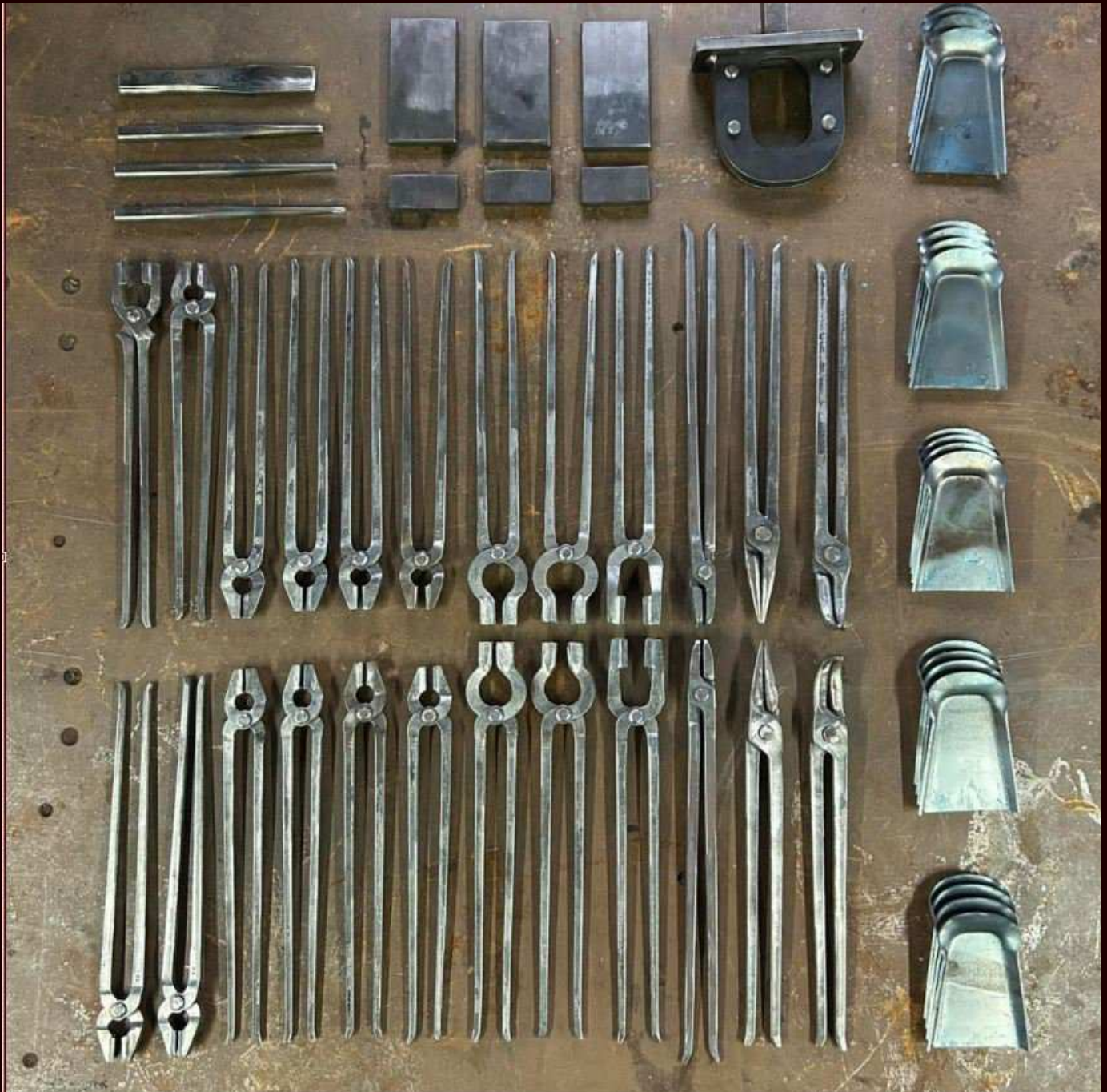
Given the time of year and potential for weather related travel disruption we will be totally fine if you decide to attend on the spur of the moment and fully understand if folk change their minds last minute, but please drop us an email or message to let us know if you are planning to attend just so we have an idea of numbers.

As always we look forward to welcoming you to the Forge and having a bit of craic!

Shona and Pete
Ratho Byres Forge
Freelands Road
Ratho EH28 8NW



CLASSIFIEDS



Toby Forbes Gower

The widest range of Blacksmithing tools at sensible prices

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



Victory tools, Power hammers sales and hire

Power hammers priced from £4295 plus vat

Being a blacksmith for many years and having to weld a mile to buy my first Massey, I fully understand the hardships of buying your first power hammer. With this in mind I have decided to hire out our new Anyang ST power hammers to help you complete your job with the option to deduct the hire charge from the full price if purchased.

For more information about our new Anyang ST power hammers, any of our second hand power hammers or forge force induction heaters, please contact us on 01362687116 or email us at nigelbarnett@artist-blacksmith.co.uk

[Click here for the website](#)

clever tools for blacksmiths

...not missed until today?

There are a number of little helpers that make forging easier and more efficient. Even a traditional craft can be optimised...



ANGELE TECHNIK oHG
88416 Ochsenhausen Germany
www.angele-shop.com



Holdfast

This tool is perfect for fast clamping different workpieces directly onto the anvil. Only a simple hammer is needed to attach or detach the clamp. The size of the tool is suitable for different anvils and the shaft clamps securely in the square or round holes.



Guillotine

This helper allows various jobs if you are working alone. Finishing, settling, punching and much more. Flexibel handling due to the bevelled C-Frame design. With fast and easy tool change, suitable for different tool dimensions. Fixation on the square hole of the anvil or for mounting on the workbench.



Adjustable spanner

The adjustable spanner is a perfect universal bending bar. The handle can be extended with a piece of pipe. This enables more power transmission. Hint: You can clamp a raw material with the same cross-section as the twisted material on one mouth-side. This allows working with a larger lever without damaging the adjustable spanner.

Due to import regulations, we can only deliver from a minimum order value of 150€.

[Click here for the Angele website](#)



Double forge for sale

All days double forge for sale, good working order but does require repairs to the canopy. Would consider all reasonable offers. Further information please email or phone Situated in Cumbria

Steve.hopps2@gmail.com
07870785322



Cast iron forge for sale

£950 or offers

Cast iron double forge with stainless steel hood. Watertray and coke tray included No tools included

Any questions? Please contact

Terry Clark 01483 235244

Sally Clark 07768 830933

Email sally@artsmith.co.uk

Anvil for sale £230

Collection only - Near Guildford, Surrey Buyer collects, cash on collection

You are welcome to view

Any questions? Please contact

Terry Clark 01483 235244

Sally Clark 07768 830933

Email sally@artsmith.co.uk



Cast iron forge for sale

Cast Iron single forge in full working order, originally from school workshop in very good condition and has not done any real work. The forge is located in the Wirral Merseyside. The forge will break down into components plus loading assistance is available. See attached photos.

Looking for offers around £1500

If you are interested please contact Wolfgang on 07719 146829.



Retirement Sale

David Stephenson, Pickering, North Yorkshire.

davidblacksmith61@gmail.com

01751 460252075999 48219

Please contact David for prices and availability.

Including: Anyang 15kg power hammer (2 sets of dies)
Johnson and Jepson 'Goliath' power hammer (dated 1910)
Forge hearth and blower
Mobile forge with foot bellows
2 x fly presses
3x anvils (41/2 cwt, 64kg, 26kg - all excellent faces)
3x leg vices
Engineers vices
Mig Welder
Drill press and bits
Many anvil stakes and tinman's tools
Tongs, hammers and hand tools.
Grinders etc.



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



Announcement

Dear ,

NHIG needs some new talent to join our top-flight team working in a vibrant, energised environment dedicated to the preservation of historic ironwork. We have moved from obscurity to strength since we began, pioneering a new awareness of a vital element of our history. You can be a part of it!

Join the team!

Work in a close-knit community of like-minded souls making a real difference to both the present and the future of heritage ironwork. We have a broad rapport with other heritage organisations nationwide, so you will be part of something bigger than the NHIG - a dedicated movement to save past glories from the ignominy of neglect.

Positions open:

Treasurer

Membership

Social media

We all work from home except for our administrator, but meet up regularly for meetings. Some of these are online, but the best are in person, usually in London or Bath, followed by a knees-up at a local pub.

If you are interested and want more detail, please contact Stacey Hibberd at secretary@nhig.org.uk

We received the following email:

Dear BABA,

My name is Bartholomew, I'm 17 and a 1st Year L3 student blacksmith at Brinsbury college. I am looking for any form of work as a blacksmith, helper/ assistant, etc. I have experience working in group projects and work well in a team as well as independently.

I'm a friendly and outgoing person and once I start working, am driven and consistent with getting my work done. I made a Fire Crane in my first term of college last year and since then have focused on detail and making sure my finished pieces are clean.

I particularly enjoy making roses, leaves and flowers, having recently made a wisteria as part of a class project in the beginning of the school year. I post some of my work on my instagram account @6_eyed_blind_bart .

I'm based in Chichester, however I do not have a car so I can only travel by public transport and by pushbike, so sadly I am unable to travel too far.

Any help would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you very much for your time and consideration

Bartholomew Roux-Green

You can reach Bartholomew at smaugrat@gmail.com

He also sent some pictures of his work:





The Artworkers Guild

Creative Connections is a year-long programme which creates a space for creative people who are beginning to establish themselves professionally. Programme participants meet and connect with Guild members, build supportive networks with each other and develop their professional practice.

The programme includes hands-on workshops, talks, discussions and social events - all opportunities to connect with other creative people to share insights and ideas, encourage each other and navigate the challenges of sustaining a career.

Creative Connections is open to any creative person at the start of their creative career. Applications for 2023-34 are closed. If you would like to know more about applying for 2024-25, please email Leigh Milsom Fowler (leigh@artworkersguild.org) to register your interest.

[Link to Artworkers Guild](#)



The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust is a charity that transforms the careers of talented and aspiring makers by funding their training and education, creating pathways to excellence and strengthening the future of the UK's craft sector.

Scholarships

QEST offers scholarships of up to £18,000 for the training and education of talented and aspiring craftspeople. We want to sustain vital skills in traditional and contemporary crafts and contribute to excellence in the British craft industry.

Apprenticeships

QEST offers funding of up to £6,000 per year towards an apprentice's salary, for an apprenticeship of up to three years. QEST apprentices have trained in glassblowing, pottery, beekeeping, shoemaking and more.

Applications are now closed for our Autumn funding round. The next round opens from 6 January - 10 February 2025.

Emerging Maker Grants

The Emerging Maker Grant is a new funding opportunity for talented early-career craftspeople. The grant provides funding of up to £10,000 to committed makers to enhance their craft skills and advance their careers.

Building arts programme

A collaboration between The King's Foundation and QEST, this 9-month programme is aimed at students or practitioners who have at least three years' experience in practicing their craft to explore the multifaceted nature of the built environment. This Programme is applicable to people who work in industries such as architecture, design, carpentry, metalwork, painting and stonemasonry.

[**Click here for the QEST website**](#)

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 council.

For enquiries and applications regarding the Development Fund please contact the BABA Secretary:

Steve Rook, 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

WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE IMAGES OF YOUR WORK for inclusion in Artist Blacksmith magazine

You have several options:

Single images with a title/caption for 'gallery' pages are most welcome at any time.

Gallery

A collection of 3 to 6 images of pieces by one artist. Please limit text to 100 to 150 words maximum. A very brief description or something about the inspiration or the artist's philosophy. A small insight.

Commission

Similar to the above, but relating to one specific commission. The finished piece, some detail shots, or perhaps some images that clearly show aspects of the making. Again, with just a very brief outline of the commission.

- 1) Please send images at as high a resolution as possible.
- 2) Please give a title or caption for each image.
- 3) If you did not take any given photograph yourself, please give the name of the photographer so they can be credited.
- 4) Please ensure that the images are not blurred and try to avoid confusing backgrounds
- 5) WeTransfer <https://wetransfer.com/> is quick and easy to use. Dropbox, GoogleDrive or similar works too

Send images and text to Henry Pomfret: artistblacksmith@baba.org.uk

