

Newsletter



July 2025



Cover picture:

Parts of one of the gates made at the "Little Newsham Forge Final Forge-In".

Designed by Brian Russell

Pictures by Clare Collier



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

I said it for May, but it still is valid for June: what a month it has been!

First of all the Iron at the Museum tour. That was a great success. Georgina Grant, curator at the National Museum of Scotland, had prepared an interesting tour along some of the iron artefacts in the museum. Some of them were scrutinised by the participants, leading to interesting discussions. Discussions that went on after the tour in the museum cafe.

And I can tell you there will be a "Iron at the Museum - part 2" in which participants will be visiting "The Stores" where the National Museum of Scotland keeps their items they can't display at the museum itself. Check the Blacksmithing Events section for more information!

Next was the ABANA meeting at Hereford. I have heard great stories from people attending, so that can be called a success at well.

At finally there was "Little Newsham Forge Final Forge-In" with Brian Russell at his forge in, you'd never guess it, Little Newsham. Over 80 blacksmiths participated. Twenty were registered to work on two gates, designed by Brian. You will see pictures of that event throughout this newsletter. I did join this one, and it was definitely worth the travel (only 3 ½ hours this time). Unfortunately it ended on a low for me as I pulled a muscle in my back which prevented me from participating on the Sunday (it's Wednesday now and I'm still on painkillers to be able to move around. A visit to a chiropractor is booked for Monday). A big thank you to Brian and Hilda for their hospitality!

The next big thing (as far as I am aware) is the BABA AGM in Stroud. The program was published in the latest Artist Blacksmith (No. 178). But for those who don't receive this amazing magazine, I will post it in this newsletter as well. It is worth being a BABA member just for this event!

On top of that: we just received confirmation that there will be BABA merchandise available at the AGM (pre-order only), so keep an eye out for the order options.

And of cause I would like to point out our classifieds. More items for sale (a storage unit full of equipment!) and reduced prices for other items. Check them out!

Oh, I almost forgot: do you live in Scotland or Northern Ireland and would like to see your work in a museum? And not just any museum, I'm talking about National Museums Scotland and National Museums NI. Check the "jobs, training and opportunities" part of the newsletter!

newsletter@baba.org.uk



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 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



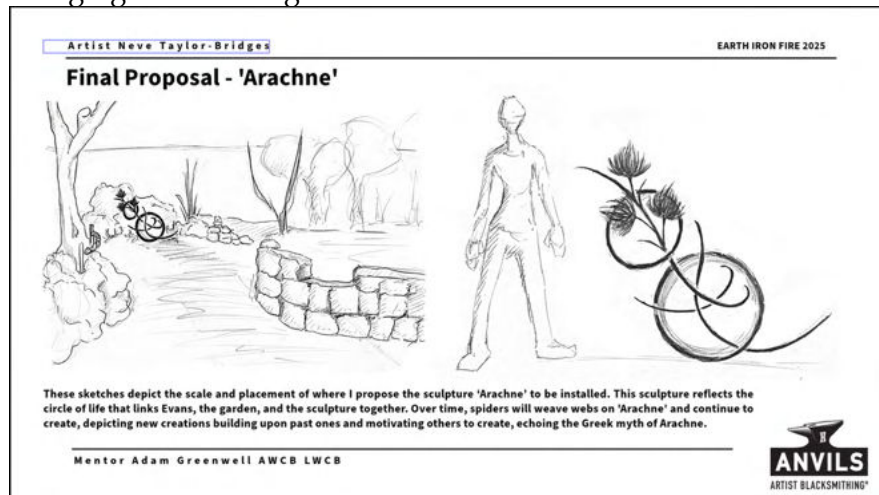
Hit it hard, get it hot. Four reminders from/for Phil Carter.

INSPIRED 2025 BABA AGM & Conference 12th-14th September

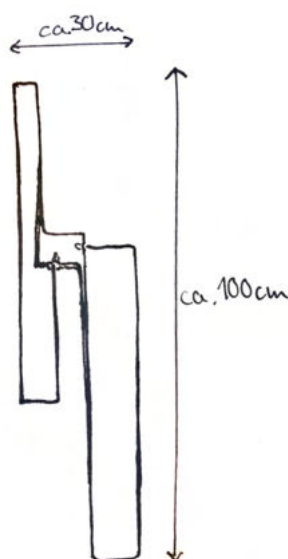
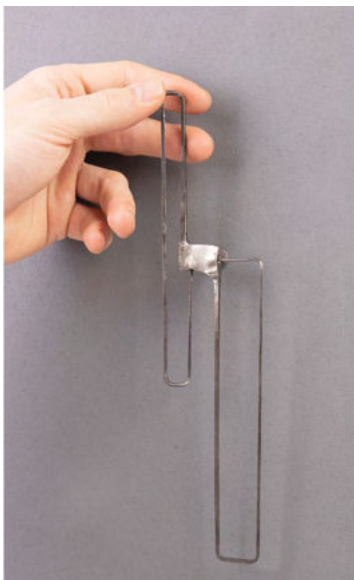
With tickets soon to be available on the new BABA website we are excited to share with you more of what you can expect to experience at this year's event. Set in the beautiful grounds of Stratford Park Stroud, The Museum in the Park will be our host for the weekend 12th to 14th September 2025.



Focusing on younger and less experienced smiths this year our main demonstrators will be Neve Taylor-Bridges and Christoph von Rohden. Neve is an Artist Blacksmithing Degree student from Hereford College of Arts. Neve will work under the expert mentorship of her lecturer, Adam Greenwell AWCB, LWCB from the National School of Blacksmithing. Together they will be forging Neve's design 'Arachne'.



Christoph von Rohden is an artist and craftsperson driven by the fascination with the material steel. He was born 1998 in Germany and is working in metal since the age of twelve. After school he did a three-year apprenticeship as an artist blacksmith, focusing on architectural metalwork and restoration. From 2021 to 2024 he studied a Bachelor of fine Arts with specialisation in Metal Art at the University of Gothenburg.



Christoph will be forging a wall piece based on scale models he has made to visualize the idea. The sculpture will be forged from one piece of flat bar. By drawing out long tapers he wants to emphasize the potential that such a small piece of material contains. The tapered bars are then used to create a sort of three-dimensional line drawing in space. Just with a few bends a composition is created, which references modernistic and architectural form language. The juxtaposition between a heavy and sturdy lump of steel and the light fragile tapers fascinated him since the beginning of his Bachelor study in Sweden.

Christoph Von Rohden - Wall Piece

In addition to our main demonstrators, we will also have Lisa Wisdom working with her bespoke charcoal forges.



Since 2008 Lisa has worked from her forge in a beautiful old heritage smithy in the remote and overgrown post-industrial landscape of a disused Granite Quarry near Falmouth.

Following the completion of her Jewellery training, Lisa trained as a traditional Blacksmith at The National School of Blacksmithing in Hereford followed by further training at work placements around the UK, North America, Canada and France. She co-founded The Cornish Blacksmiths Collective in 2012 (which became a Community Interest Company in 2023). There will be an opportunity for delegates to work with Lisa and trial her forges using sustainably sourced charcoal.

No BABA Conference would be complete without the opportunity for delegates to get to the anvils on their weekend off. Despite the limited space there will be opportunity for those who wish to have access to the forges throughout the weekend.

Children's Forging

Thanks to Clare Collier and Tom Quinnell the children's forging opportunity is being re-introduced to BABA events. With a lot of planning and preparation this wonderful experience will be offered to pre-booked school sessions on the Friday and open to day visitors over the weekend.

Artist Presentations

In addition to the practical activity there are also several talks planned. There will be artist presentations from Katie Ventress and Lisa Wisdom

Katie Ventress



Katie uses both traditional blacksmithing techniques and modern fabrication methods to create artworks for Public and Private commissions. Having been born on the Yorkshire Coast, in an area perfectly placed by sea, farmland, woods and moors, her passion for the local flora and fauna drives her urge to examine and experiment with recreating organic forms.

Lisa Wisdom

Lisa's career as a metalworker has continued to evolve, merging, as creative practices tend to do, with her life and landscape until all feed into one another and the individual parts can no longer be disconnected.

Lisa Wisdom "The Lookout"



Art & wellbeing - Making's the difference

Following Friday's evening meal there will be a group discussion chaired by the Stroud MP Dr. Simon Opher (who instigated Gloucestershire's "Art on Prescription" programme), he will lead a panel discussion on the power of art, craft and blacksmithing to support wellbeing amongst young people.

Saturday morning commences with the BABA AGM and the forging will continue throughout the day. There will be ample opportunity for delegates to get involved and to see the progression of the works being made by our main demonstrators.

Saturday evening will be a busy one with three items on the agenda but don't worry, there will be a bar.

Mary Greensted

Following Saturday's evening meal there will be a presentation by Mary Greensted on the Cotswolds Arts & Crafts movement. Mary is a celebrated freelance curator, lecturer and writer specialising in the Cotswolds Arts and Crafts Movement.

Pete Hill – 'Inspired to Design'

The evening will commence with a discussion titled 'Inspired to design'.

The discussion will be led by Pete Hill who will be accompanied by David Tucker, Sam Pearce and Cara Wassenberg.

Prof Heiner Zimmermann

With an opportunity to replenish your glasses the evening will be rounded off with a presentation from Prof Heiner Zimmermann titled 'Grave Crosses, a Frontier for Blacksmiths'.

BABA T-Shirt

As tradition will have it there is obviously a collectable event T-Shirt and this year there is a choice of two colours, Gold and Denim. Featuring Neve's design, the T-Shirts will be available for pre-order via the event booking link on the new BABA website which is going live at the beginning of July.



During the INSPIRED AGM and Conference weekend there will be an opportunity to see the Earth Fire Iron Exhibition in the main gallery of the Museum in the Park and the 150mm challenge exhibition at the Pangolin Gallery just a 5min drive away.

Following the event there will be a number of activities continuing into late October the details of which will also be included in the delegates pack.

Hereford College of Art (Hereford Anvils) will be holding hands-on family forging events in Stroud between 26-30 October.

Linked events in Stroud and the surrounding area include

1. The international exhibition "150mm Challenge" inspired by Ambrose Burne's at Gallery Pangolin is on show 13-27 September.
2. Two Hereford MA blacksmiths will work "in residence" between 20th-26th October at Hawkwood Centre for Creative and Future Thinking and there will be an open panel discussion on "Questions about Sustainability and Forging Forward" which will 'contemplate carbon' on evening of 22 October
3. Students at Ruskin Mill College working with students from Hereford College resulting in an exhibit of their work at the Ruskin Mill Gallery 11th-30th October with an opening on Friday 17th October by Mervyn Sheldrake (tbc)
4. Stroud Valleys Artspace will show new work by young local metalworker Calum Partridge between 12-26 September
5. The Stroud Autumn Arts Trail (weekends of 18/19 and 25/26 October) will feature local smiths' open workshops
6. The Museum is offering opportunities to schools to chase images of nature with Hereford Anvils and others, and for a wider public to enjoy what blacksmiths forged in the Bronze Age with young smiths Clare Collier and Rowan Taylor and a presentation workshop with renowned smith Hector Cole.
7. With grateful thanks to The Ironmongers' Company which has made possible Gloucestershire's Community Autism Support and Advice (CASA) to run workshops throughout the exhibition with young autistic people with blacksmith Arian Leljak at his local forge and at the Museum.



Part of the garden at the Museum in the Park

And now for something completely different

By John von Peij

Two months ago (or was it three already?) I posted an article here about a snail species that builds an iron shell. And I thought that was the only animal using iron. How wrong I was. Here is another animal using iron, although not as spectacular as the snails.

A new study from King's College and Imperial College London has discovered that the serrated edges of Komodo dragons' teeth are tipped with iron.



Led by researchers from King's College London, the study gives new insight into how Komodo dragons keep their teeth razor-sharp. It may even provide clues about how dinosaurs like *Tyrannosaurus rex* killed and ate their prey.

Native to Indonesia, Komodo dragons are the largest living species of monitor lizard, averaging around 80kg. Deadly predators, Komodos have sharp, curved teeth similar to many carnivorous dinosaurs. They eat almost any kind of meat, from smaller reptiles and birds to deer, horses or water buffalo, pulling and tearing at their prey to rip flesh apart.

The researchers discovered that many reptiles have some iron in their teeth, but

Komodo dragons concentrate the iron along the cutting edges and tips of their teeth, staining them orange. Crocodiles and other monitor lizards, by comparison, have so little iron that it is often invisible.

The complete article I used for the above text can be found here:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/255014/komodo-dragons-have-iron-coated-teeth-apart/>

A more scientific article can be found here:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-024-02477-7>

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.



A school for adult education in Belgium (CVO Gent) has a blacksmithing department.

In Gent they have a huge cannon, called "Dulle Griet". It is the big sister of Edinburgh's "Mons Meg". Both are forged by Jean Cambier, also known as Jehan Cambier of Mons.

The blacksmithing department decided to go for a challenge and make a reproduction of Dulle Griet, the way the original was made: forged. Since it was impossible for them to forgeweld 75mm square bars to reproduce a 12 ton cannon, they decided to go for a 1:4 replica. Their story can be followed on Facebook. Click on the image for the page.



Researchers at the University of Oregon are exploring a new way forward: using low-temperature electrochemistry to extract iron from iron ore without burning fossil fuels. By skipping the blast furnace entirely, this method could dramatically reduce carbon emissions – without raising costs.

Led by chemist Paul Kempler, the team has developed a technique that turns iron oxide and saltwater into pure iron metal and chlorine gas (a valuable industrial byproduct). It's a cleaner route to steel, and potentially just as affordable – early estimates suggest production could cost under \$600 per metric ton, comparable to traditional methods.

But here's where it gets interesting: not all iron ore behaves the same in this process. Researchers Ana Konovalova and Andrew Goldman discovered that particle shape plays a huge role. Porous iron oxide particles, which have more internal surface area, allowed the reaction to run faster and more efficiently. Dense particles, on the other hand, slowed things down.



In the new permanent exhibition 'ME FECIT SOLINGEN – Blade : City : History', the German Blade Museum presents, among many other highlights, the production of a sword using 17th century methods. From collecting the ore to the finished sword, the necessary work steps are shown.

The project was realised by Fusina Feraro (www.fusinaferaro.com), experts for archaeometallurgy.

Experiments with & Bowl Forms & Finishes

David Tucker

What is a bowl? A functional vessel, or a sculptural form and a vehicle for experiment and artistic expression? Craftspeople have long favoured the bowl for its lack of a specific form or function, thereby allowing personal interpretation.

In the early 1980's I was fortunate enough to be one of the first students on Peter Parkinson's inspired metals course at Farnham. One of the privileges of being a student is having the time to explore areas of personal interest, unhindered by the need to make money, and it was during this time that I was able to develop a range of structures and decorative finishes for mild steel which eventually culminated in a range of forged iron bowls.

I wanted to be able to make really big bowls, so it soon became clear that some form of segmented structure would be necessary. I began looking at old industrial equipment, such as steam engine boilers, and was struck by the forms and patterns possible with plates and rivets. This began a long love-affair with rivets and other 'honest' methods of joining metal, such as collars, which just seem to say "here we are, holding these bars together!"

Several 'eureka' moments made my bowls possible. The first came as I desperately tried to heat large plates (up to 16" square) evenly in the forge. I needed to spread the air-blast over a wide area to create a really big fire and after several unsuccessful experiments with home-made mild steel bottom-blast units, like large upside-down colanders, I was lucky enough, on my bicycle ride home, to find the

perfect bowler-hat shaped cast-iron form in the hedgerow, left behind after some Council pipe-laying. This wouldn't burn away, and with the additions of an inlet pipe and outlet holes, I was now able to heat large plates, with no hot spots in the fire, and little danger of burning the metal.

My next discovery was that regular and reliable elements of a sphere could be created between top and bottom tools in the fly-press. I cast two different-diameter half spheres in aluminium. This allowed me to press complex shapes and rivet them together to create large armadillo-like structures. The resulting bowls became more sculptural and increasingly ambitious.



I was keen to develop finishes that might rival glazes on ceramics and which would require no caustic processes. I started by using traditional finishes such as hot waxing and 'Zebrite'™ but soon became frustrated by the limited range of colours and patina available.

After experimenting with commercial preparations and heat treatment processes with limited success, I hit upon the idea of controlled rusting of the metal. The experiments that I conducted were instinctive rather than informed and I soon began to feel like some ancient alchemist, exploiting natural phenomena and discovering untold recipes!

After considerable experiment I learned that it was necessary to have completely bare metal surfaces to obtain an even finish. I tried pickling the steel and

immediately dipping in boiling water to encourage quick drying and limit unwanted rusting.

This proved unsuccessful; the wire brushing required afterwards producing a polished surface which inhibits rusting. Sand-blasting the surfaces prior to rusting was my next eureka

moment, this produced an even surface and was followed by regular spraying with a fine water spray and brushing with a brass brush, eventually proving to be the most reliable way to produce a rich and stable finish. Additions to the water spray made subtle changes to the finish. For instance, the addition of salt to the water spray in an attempt to speed the process produced a veined, two-tone finish. This was sealed with several coats of wax.

I then looked at other ways of encouraging rusting to take place. I thought that steam might be the answer and built a steam tank from an old immersion heater, hanging sand-blasted steel in the steam for several hours. This had the pleasing effect of forming rivulets and linear patterns on the surface as the droplets of water condensed on the steel and trickled down the surface. This again could be sealed very effectively using wax. In fact this controlled rusting process, once it has reached a certain depth, discourages further rusting from taking place. I was able to hang separate pieces at different angles in the steam tank to control the direction of flow.

Next I tried burying the sand-blasted steel in damp sawdust to encourage rusting. This produced the most remarkable and wide-ranging finishes of the whole experiment. I found that chemicals within



the wood reacted quite dramatically with steel and that it was possible to produce a wide range of colours, each type of wood producing its own distinctive colour. The most impressive reaction was produced by oak, which formed a deep and very richly patinated finish in a matter of seconds. Pine sawdust, while having a less dramatic effect, produced a green speckled finish. By changing the size and form of wood dust to chippings and even shavings I found that I could control very effectively the final finish and patina. Other controls included the contact time with the steel and the moisture content. I conducted many tests trying all variables and recording the results in a log. The samples, produced more than twenty years ago, have retained much of their original colour and patina, despite being stored in a rather damp workshop for all these years!

As my series of bowls progressed, I increasingly moved towards cleaner lines, and away from rivets. The pieces became simpler, requiring less plates and eventually using no rivets at all! I made special joggling tools, to allow overlapping plates to fit flush to each other. Later bowls were flanged and



welded along the seam. I avoided foot rings or feet, preferring the bowl to sit

on an integral part of its structure. This results in the bowl appearing almost to float on a surface when viewed in profile.

I am still making bowls which draw on my early experiments. For a more recent series of bowls, I

wanted enclosed, pebble-like forms and completely clean lines. To achieve this, I pressed circular plates into dish forms, welding them together and polishing around the seam to create fully-enclosed bowls. An unexpected and pleasing effect has been that the bowls rock like pebbles, always find their equilibrium. The opening and lip were made on a lathe, to create the crisp lines that I wanted. By varying the curvature of the two plates, the overall size, the welded join (rounded or sharp), the form of the turned lip and the finish, I was able to create a wide range of subtle variations on the theme. Some bowls were given textured finishes through 'soaking' at yellow heat in the forge, while others have been left outside until rusting pitted the surface (this takes forever).

Bowls have been a wonderful vehicle for experimenting with shapes, structures, joining methods and surface finishes, which inspire, inform and spill over into my wider work.

Blacksmithing events

[26th - 27th July: Fête des Forges - Eppe-Sauvage, France](#)

[1st - 3rd August: Schmiedefest Obermaiselstein - Obermaiselstein, Germany](#)

[29th - 31st August: Hephaiston, Helfstyn, Czech Republic](#)

9th September - 2nd November: "Inspired": Earth, Fire, Iron: Alan Evans and the New Iron Age, an exhibition at the Museum in the Park Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK

[6th and 7th September: Dorset county show - Dorchester, UK](#)

[4th - 7th September: Biennale Arte Fabrice Stia - Stia, Italy](#)

12th- 14th :September: BABA Conference and AGM, Museum in the park Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK

[15th - 20th September: Metallgestalter Symposium - Tobiashammer - Ohrdruf, Germany](#)

[20th - 21st September: Österreichisches Schmiedetreffen Kärnten - Burg Hochosterwitz, Austria](#)

[26th - 28th September: Gotha Gluht, Gotha, Germany](#)

[27th 28th September: BFBA Focus 2025 Stoneleigh Park, UK](#)

[9th - 12th October: Grave Marker - Forging future remembrance, Campus Steneby, Sweden](#)

24th October: Iron at the Museum - Part 2: The Store

[1st November \(DEADLINE!\): Competition Grave Marker](#)

[20th - 23rd November: Austrian Skills - Salzburg, Austria](#)

[13th - 14th December: Flammende Schmiedeweihnacht - Ybbsitz, Austria](#)

Iron at the Museum - part 2



Date: 24th October

Time: this is TBC, but likely 9.00-12.30. Confirmation will follow nearer to the date.

Tour: this behind-the-scenes tour at the collections centre will include ironwork not usually seen by the public, including an archive from the workshop of Scottish blacksmith Thomas Hadden. Ironwork. This will be seen from across the departments of Science & Technology, Scottish History & Archaeology, and Global Arts, Cultures & Design.

Address:
National Museums Collection Centre
242 West Granton Road
Granton
Edinburgh
EH5 1JA

Registration required via newsletter@baba.org.uk, maximum number of participants is 15

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.

[The NBCC Blacksmithing competition](#)

Competition dates

- [Royal Welsh Show - 21, 22, 23, 24 July](#)
- [New Forest & Hampshire Show - 29, 30, 31 July](#)
- [Edenbridge & Oxted Show - 24, 25 August](#)
- [Dorset County Show - 6, 7 September](#)
- BFBA International Live - 27th, 28th September

[The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths](#)

- [The Neville Shulman competition](#)

The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths

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



The Neville Shulman Prize Brief 2025

The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths (WCB) is delighted to announce a new competition open to all UK-based blacksmiths to design and make a new piece of decorative ironwork for use at WCB luncheons and dinners in the future.

The 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. Each prize winner will receive **£1,000**. The winning pieces will become the property of the WCB.

The entry may take any form but must weigh no more than 2.5 kilogrammes and fit within a 200mm cube. A maximum of two pieces may be selected each year. If the criteria and standards are not met, no pieces will be selected.

We 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.

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.

2025 Competition Timing

1 August 2025 - Completed forms are to be sent to the Clerk of the Company (accompanied by 4 good quality photos).

1 September 2025 - A shortlist of pieces will be selected by the WCB and the applicants informed by the Clerk.

20 September 2025 - The shortlisted pieces will need to be delivered to a judging venue.

27-28 September 2025 - The shortlisted pieces will be judged in person over the weekend.

12 October 2025 - Non-winning work will need to be collected from the judging venue.

23 October 2025 - Winners will be announced at the WCB Michaelmas Awards Luncheon where the winning piece/s will be displayed.

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 Clerk.
- Any entry forms received after 1 August 2025 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 2025.
- 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 12 October 2025.
- 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.

If you are interested in participating, please request a
Competition Brief and Entry Form from the Clerk:
clerk@blacksmithscompany.co.uk

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



Open call for contemporary craft makers

National Museums Scotland, National Museums NI, Design-Nation, Craft Northern Ireland, and Craft Scotland are pleased to invite applications for a collaborative exhibition project.

Up to 15 makers who are residents of Scotland and Northern Ireland will be supported to create new, contemporary work inspired by the Museums' collections and current research into our shared decorative and making heritage, from the Mesolithic to the medieval period. The commissioned work will be shown in a multi-partner exhibition, opening at the National Museum of Scotland in summer 2027, and at Ulster Museum in early 2028.

About the project

This project began as a discussion between members of Design-Nation based in Northern Ireland and Scotland, inspired by the British Museum and National Museums Scotland collaborative 2015 exhibition *Celts*. Many members view their practice as being part of a legacy of making that connects the nations via shared cultural heritage and traditions of manufacture. While *Celts* was a stimulus, the project also hopes to encourage new reflections on much longer-term perspectives on Scottish-Irish creative links, building upon active research on museum objects. From the stone tools of early prehistory to the gold jewellery of the Bronze and Iron Ages, remarkable decorated early Bronze Age pots to the scrolling, complex ornament on Iron Age bronzes, and the creative wealth of the early medieval period in bronze, silver, gold, stone, and manuscripts, these artefacts are materially led, beautifully made, functional as well as decorative. They provide a glorious archive of craft manufacture and design for future makers to learn from and draw upon.

Applicants will not be asked to recreate or replicate, but to be inspired by the ancient decoration, craft process, or embodied concepts that they are introduced to through current research on these objects to create something new and unique. The museums will also benefit from learning about craft and technique from the makers who take part.

Applications will be accepted from makers who are residents of Scotland or Northern Ireland, whose work is inspired by the contemporary legacies of Scotland and Ireland's shared cultural heritage, and whose practice incorporates traditional techniques and processes, utilising materials historically pertinent to the North such as wood, ceramic, bronze, silver, gold, stone, glass and textiles. We are particularly interested in applications from makers whose creative practice and work bridges the ancient and the contemporary.

Successful applicants will be awarded a £5,000.00 fee to cover:

Research and development of a new piece/body of work.
Material and equipment costs

Time, accommodation, and travel to both National Museums Scotland in Edinburgh, and Ulster Museum in Belfast for a one-day knowledge exchange workshop at each venue on Thursday 4 December 2025 (National Museums Scotland) and Thursday 22 January 2026 (Ulster Museum). Both venues can support online access to the discussions held at each workshop for any participant who is unable to make it in person.

Workshop dates:

National Museums Scotland: Thursday 4 December 2025
Ulster Museum (National Museums NI): Thursday 22 January 2026

This fee is to be used at the applicants discretion as we understand that the expenditure will vary depending on where a maker is based and what materials they work with.

Applicants will benefit from access to both museums' collections and curatorial knowledge for research, and one-to-one meetings with the curators.

[Click here for the website](#)

College Taster Days

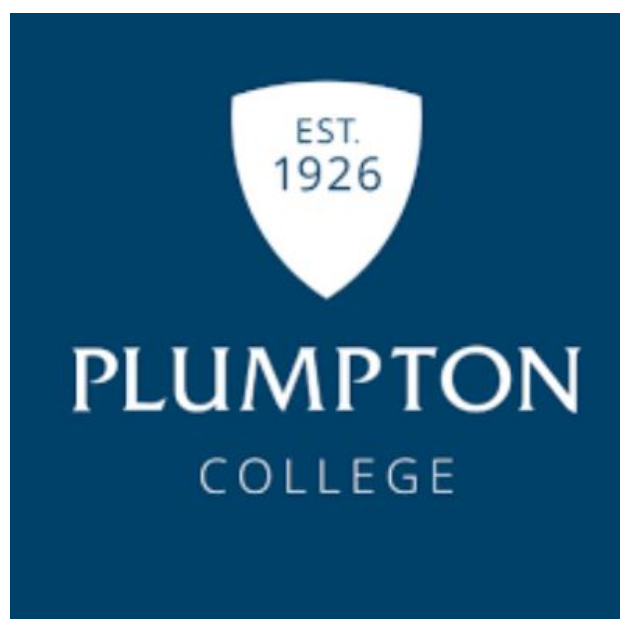
Click on the logo to find out more about their open day / taster day or information about their courses. Colleges that still have taster days planned have the date mentioned.



8th June



WEST  DEAN



14th June

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



Blacksmith Classes

Give it a go with our hands-on blacksmith experiences for beginners and seasoned veterans. We let you get straight into the action swinging hammers, striking hot metal, and letting the creative sparks fly, as we help our guests to create unique pieces to take away with them and give them an experience that will last a lifetime.



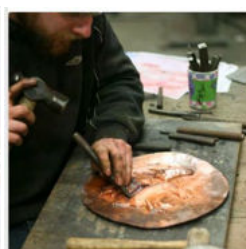
1 Day Axe Making



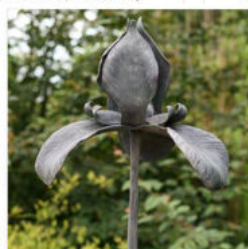
Blacksmith Experience Day



2 Day Damascus Knife Class



Copper Repousse



Flowers With Fire



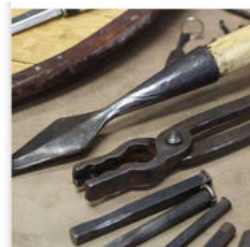
½ Day Blacksmiths Taster Session



Forged Arrow head class



Welding For Beginners



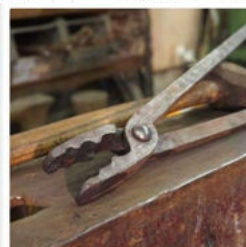
Spear / Javelin Making



5 Day Sword Making Class



3 Day Sword Making Class



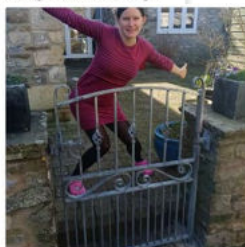
Tool Making Hammers & Tongs



Heritage Bench



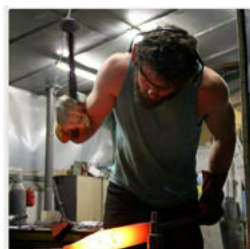
Damascus Knife making



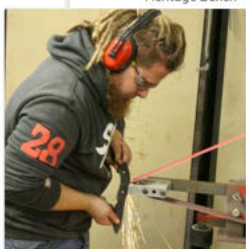
Build Your Own Gate



Bespoke Project Day 1-1



One Day Knife Making Class



Two Day Knife / Dagger Class



Couples Wedding Knife Class

[Click here to visit the website of Phoenix Forge](#)

Phoenix Forge, Mile End Farm, Trevaughan, Carmarthen, SA31 3QL



Maker Relief Fund

Support for Craftspeople who need it most

Many craftspeople are facing significant challenges in sustaining their practice, due to a combination of financial pressures and systemic marginalising factors. Heritage Crafts' Maker Relief Fund is targeted at people facing financial hardship while striving to make their living as a professional craftsperson.

It is based on the principles that:

- * the best way to safeguard the UK's intangible craft heritage is to support the individuals within whom that knowledge and skill resides; and
- * such individuals are the best arbiters of their own need, deserve to be treated with dignity, and rarely benefit from being subjected to undue bureaucratic demands or the judgement of strangers.

The fund will award 50 grants of £ 1,000 over a 12 month period to practising professional craftspeople who are based in the UK, are over the age of 18, and who consider themselves to be in one or more of the following categories:

- * people on low incomes;
- * working class people;
- * Black and ethnically diverse people, including Gypsy, Roma and Travellers;
- * people with disabilities, who identify as neurodivergent, and/or have chronic physical or mental health issues;
- * members of the LGBTQIA+ community; or
- * people with caring responsibilities.

Grant details:

Recipients will be identified from all the eligible entries received by midnight on the 15th day of each month, between November 2024 and October 2025 inclusive.

The following number of grants will be allocated in each month:

November 2024: 5	December 2024: 6	January 2025: 6
February 2025: 5	March 2025: 4	April 2025: 3
May 2025: 3	June 2025: 3	July 2025: 3
August 2025: 3	September 2025: 4	October 2025: 5

* Grants do not have to be used for business costs; they can be used for general living costs or other purposes according to the needs of the recipient. Heritage Crafts will not require evidence of expenditure.

* All eligible submissions received by midnight on the 15th day of each month (between November 2024 and October 2025 inclusive) will be in with a chance of being awarded a grant by the end of that month.

* All applicants will be informed if they have been successful or unsuccessful.

* Successful candidates will not be named or publicised, but be encouraged to keep in touch with Heritage Crafts in case it can offer further support and to hear whether the grant made a difference.

* Unsuccessful candidates will automatically remain available for selection in all subsequent months in which the grants are offered, unless they request to be removed from consideration.

* The selection will be made each month by a panel of staff/Trustees and an independent observer, and recorded for compliance purposes, though the recording will not be made public or shared, other than by request to the Charity Commission or relevant law enforcement agencies, as required by law.

This submission form has been set up to be as light touch as possible, to reduce administrative burden and to preserve the dignity of makers. If you would like to see the questions in advance or to submit your form via email, please download a Word version of the submission form [here](#). If you would like to submit in another way, such as by telephone, please let us know at info@heritagecrafts.org.uk.

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)

Before completing this submission form please think seriously about your level of need. Please consider that there are a limited number of grants available, and if your need is not so severe at the moment there will be other opportunities to apply, up until October 2025.

It is your responsibility to consider how this might affect any benefits or welfare payments you might be in receipt of, and your tax liability, and get independent financial advice as required. Heritage Crafts cannot be held responsible for any resulting loss of income or unforeseen costs. This fund is financed by an anonymous donor specifically for this purpose. We thank them for their incredible generosity.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE WEBSITE
OF HERITAGE CRAFTS](#)

The National Heritage Iron Group has a “term of the month” The term this month is CAST IRON:

A family of iron and carbon alloys with 2 - 4% carbon. Used for casting. Heat treatment allows some cast iron to be converted to malleable iron, capable of being bent.

All terms come from the NHIG Glossary of Ironwork Terms, written by Peter Parkinson and funded by the Foyle Foundation. It can be downloaded from our website: <https://nhig.org.uk/resources/>



Decorative cast iron panel, England, mid-19th century.
Image © National Museums Scotland.

Classifieds: toys for the toy shop



Toby Forbes Gower

The widest range of blacksmithing tools at sensible prices

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



Double forge for sale

Alldays double forge for sale, good working order but does require repairs to the canopy. Both tue irons & boshes are in working order, would also come with twin blower speed controls & slide valves, 12" flue pipe & 2 X slack tubs. When dismantled it would consist of angle iron or sheet steel & would require a Transit type van or trailer.

Asking price of £600.00 ono.

Happy to discuss further with interested parties.

Situated in Cumbria

steve.hopps2@gmail.com 07870785322

Six foot long blacksmiths double chambered bellows, mounted in a hardwood frame that can be taken down for transporting. These are also Tudor reproduction and I have been using them for demonstrating at festivals. I have fine tuned them to get the most air out of them. One pump of the handle allows a steady flow of air for a period of time, you don't have to pump constantly. The leather is oiled and has always been looked after.

Bristol. About two hundred pounds.
Paul 07875100961 paulgulati@hotmail.



I'm selling a 7.5cwt pilkington pneumatic hammer. In working order, and packs a fair punch! Comes with its original anvil and air receiver. The receiver has been thickness tested and is like new. I've attached photos.

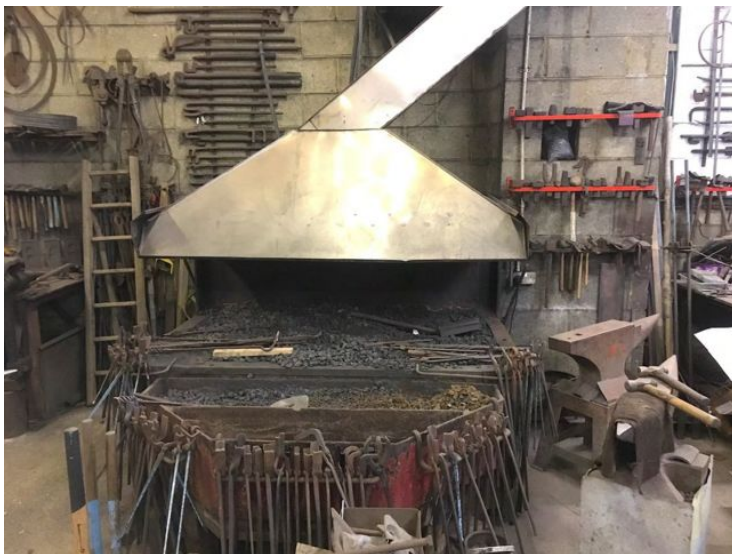
Not sure exactly what to ask but thinking around £3250. Located Gloucestershire. Transport can be arranged at additional cost.

I'd also be interested to buy a steam hammer of between 1 and 3cwt, Massey or similar, that I can run from a traction engine. so could do a px deal.

Best regards
Sebastian Austin
seb@austin-uk.co.uk



Pair of 4'x4'x5" cast iron platen tables
on
100x100mm box section frames
£1500.
Each table weighs 1400kg.
Located near Frome, Somerset.



Cast iron forge for sale

Open to 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

Near Guildford, Surrey
£180
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





Workshop for rent Uppingham,
Rutland LE15 9TX

£200 per month including water.
Electric charged extra for first year.
Includes 3 phase electric, 1 ton electric
hoist, 50 Ton Press, 3 phase welder and
large welding bench with manual
bender. Also square bar twisting
machine, 1 ton fork truck and misc. 110
volt electric hand tools, compressor
and spray gun.

Stock of steel and wrought components
(Brundles etc)

Email: spencej1896@gmail.com or
07931750511

John Spence also has the following items for sale due to retirement.
Contact John through email: spencej1896@gmail.com or call 07931750511



all the machinery is still for sale in the workshop along side wrought-iron components and
some steel bar

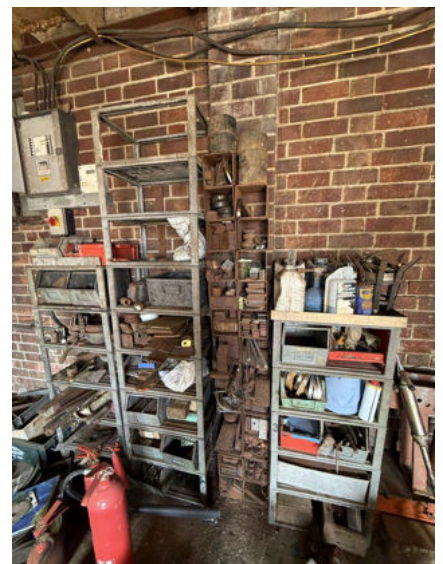
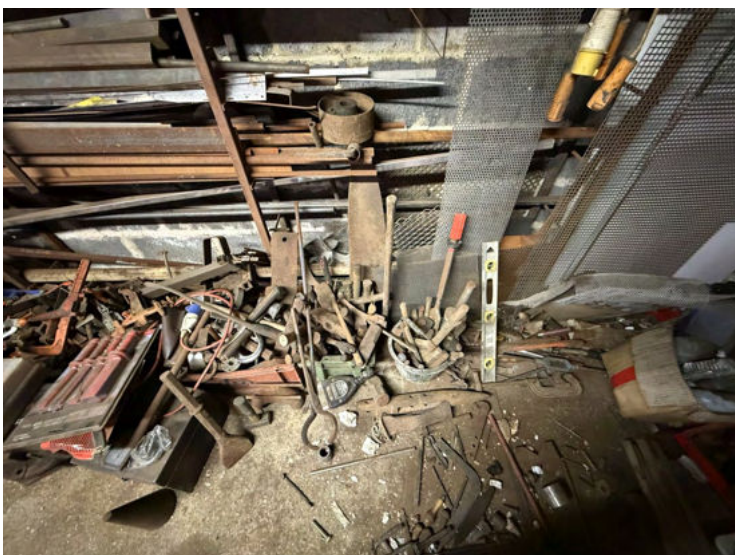
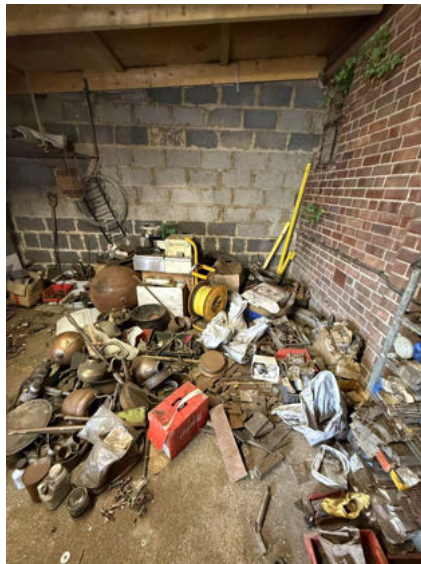
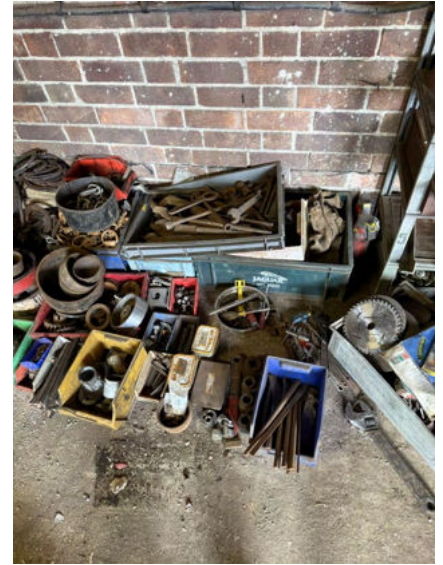
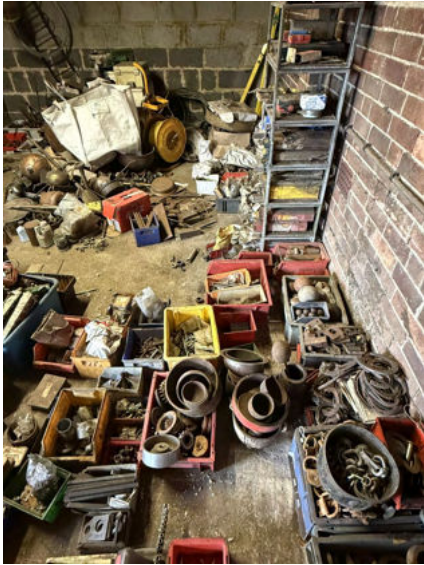


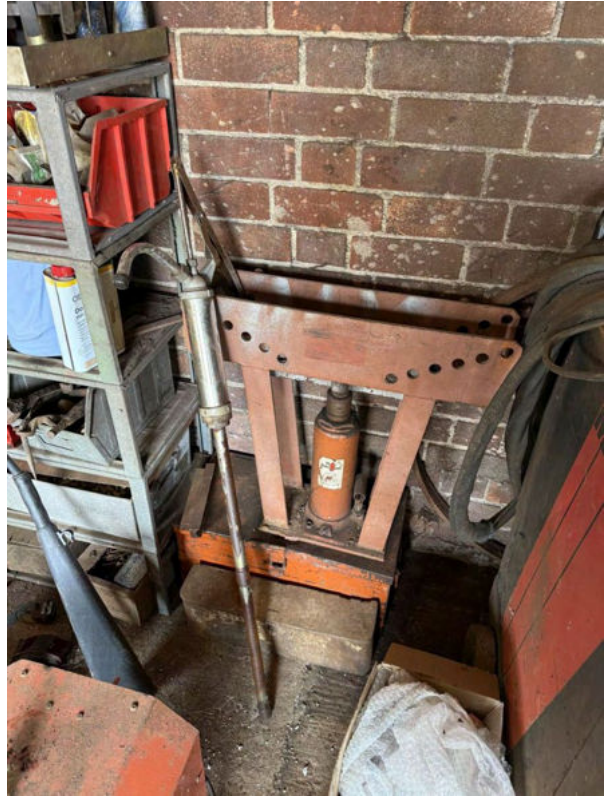
Brian Russell has a large forge out side his workshop that is looking for a new home. Size 4 feet square. Free to any one who can come and collect. Loading available. DL2 area.

Contact Brian on hotsteelbrian@btinternet.com.



I got an email from Dan this week. He has been spending four weeks(!) sorting through a collection of tools and items he thinks might be adapt for an artisan metalworker. Look at the pictures and decide for yourself. If you see anything you are interested in, you can contact Dan at d.j.m.hipwell@hotmail.com. The equipment is located in the NN14 postcode area.





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:

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