



# WaterWords

Special Edition

"Forge-In" 2023



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

*The MBE for volunteer groups*

## Museum hosts Blacksmithing event, 27th & 28th May

The Museum was delighted to host a "Forge-In" event over the weekend of 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> May, when our doors were open to the public on both days and "in steam" on the Sunday.

We hosted the event in partnership with the British Artist Blacksmiths Association (BABA), and the event celebrated artist blacksmithing, our own industrial heritage and the importance of water.

For the past 41 years, BABA has developed and promoted the work of the modern artist blacksmith. In that time, the association has united many thousands of professional and amateur smiths (and interested 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.

Blacksmiths were invited to our "Forge-In" from all parts of the country and those who attended varied in skills from Master Craftsman to recently-enrolled college students. In fact, many of the students currently attend the National School of Blacksmithing at nearby Holme Lacy.

In order to showcase their skills, participants - there were sixteen registered

on the Sunday alone - were asked to create a work of art based on the theme of "Water".

Over the two days, visitors learned about this remarkable tradition, and watched in amazement as some very talented people created incredible artistic pieces. To add to



*A busy scene on the forecourt of the Museum during the Sunday morning of the "Forge-In". With six forges and twelve anvils available, the Blacksmiths are busy creating fantastic pieces of art.*

the atmosphere, many of the Museum's oil and gas engines were running on both Saturday and Sunday, with the steam engines on Sunday.

Having had such an enjoyable and creative weekend, volunteers are keen to establish the Museum as a venue for future blacksmith weekends and have already made

connections with BABA members and Hereford Ludlow College staff at the Holme Lacy Campus. Many of the blacksmiths spoke keenly about returning to us - so watch out for this event in 2024!

**COME AND JOIN US !**

Stan Lawler, who organised the "Forge-In" on behalf of the Museum and BABA, is our second Youth Trustee to have been completing a Blacksmith apprentice course at Holme Lacy Campus and we would welcome any of the young apprentices demonstrating their skills at this event, to come and see what is involved and join us as a Volunteer Trustee.

# Blacksmiths at work



The Museum forecourt was a frenzy of activity throughout the whole weekend, with forges and anvils in continual use.

For clarity, a forge is a device or place to hold an intensified fire for the purpose of metalworking. A typical forge has a forced air source to intensify the fire, a refractory lining or enclosure to hold the fire and a chimney or vent.

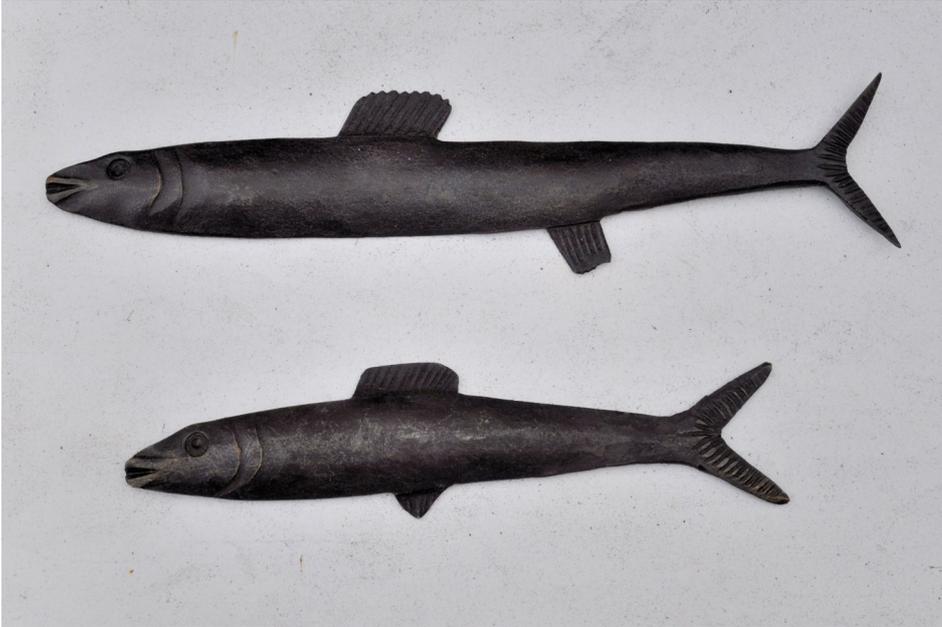
An anvil is a heavy object of durable material that resists the inertia of a hammer or mechanical ram while supporting material struck by the moving part. The modern blacksmith's anvil is a sophisticated tool developed over millennia of tool making, which has a hard heat treated tool steel face and a durable soft iron or steel body. The average blacksmith's anvil weighs 120 pounds (55kg). Universally, most anvils have a flat horizontal face and a conical horn or "beak".

To illustrate the use of this equipment, Henry Pomfret is shown mid-hammer blow (top left) whereas Emily O'Dell, Guy Milton and Gus Baldwin are working tirelessly halfway through the competition (top right). Daniel Dargue and Charlie Hill are heating work in the fire (bottom, left) and Elliot Warrington is concentrating on his artistic work whilst Dan Moss looks on (bottom, right).



# The fruits of their labour!

After many hours of toiling over forge and anvil, the Blacksmiths produced some amazing works of art, which not only showcased their artisan skills but also demonstrated just how creative each of them had been in addressing the competition theme of "Water". Some of the stunning examples of their work are illustrated below:



Henry Pomfret produced a pair of fish, which were extremely finely detailed, and very tactile! (top, left).

Meanwhile, Levi Caymen crafted a menacing looking king cobra (top, right).

Bob Gayfer forged this simple but extremely effective and well-executed "breaking wave" (bottom, left), while Pete Crownshaw created a piece called "Why" which depicts the River Wye running through the landscape—complete with boat that can be moved either up or downstream.

The Museum was very grateful to BABA, both for donating the coal and coke for the forges, and also providing advice on how to stage such an event. During the weekend a number of BABA Council Members attended and were on hand to help with the smooth-running of the event.



## Volunteer Viewpoint

**Our "Forge-In" event was very much driven by Stan Lawler, who is a regular volunteer here at the Museum. In the following paragraphs, Stan gives us a brief insight into his background and experience:**

I am in my final year of the Blacksmithing course at the National School of Blacksmithing at Hereford, and I am also a volunteer engineer and Trustee at the Waterworks Museum. Prior to Hereford I spent time working on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, which is where my main interest in heritage iron work comes from. Alongside the Voluntary work at the museum I also work for various other blacksmiths throughout the week, and spend time with blacksmith Jim Cooper at Ellandroad Engine House in Rochdale, Lancashire, in their 1910 forge and workshop.

I am also the Student Representative of the British Artist Blacksmith Association, and do a lot of training with the National Heritage Ironwork Group.

Since joining the museum I have found it a lot of fun, and it has been so rewarding to get a greater understanding of the engines at the museum. As I am one of the youngest, it is clear that I also know the least, but having the opportunity to learn and gain a range of additional skills has been really rewarding, and something I think is really important to the museum's atmosphere. It is a lot of fun to be able to experiment with new things, get covered in oil and make a racket with the whistle and something I am so grateful to everyone for putting up with.

Next year I hope to try and continue to be able to keep in touch with the museum, despite going off and working elsewhere for blacksmiths, on what I hope to be a few larger heritage blacksmithing projects, with the Princes Trust, and then after that into the big wide proper world of work.

## And the winners are ...



At the end of the event, Fred Snelgrove, Trustee and Collections Manager, was asked to judge the competition. He awarded places, as follows:

Third place went to Henry Pomfret for his "dripping tap" (right in photo, above);

Second place was awarded to Callum Hargreaves for his "flying fish" (centre in photo above);

The very worthy winner, however, was Adrian Legg for his "Seahorse" (left, in photo above).

## Local group visits "Forge-In"

During the "Forge-In" event, we welcomed members of the Herefordshire Photographic Society to the Museum. During their visit these very talented local photographers were asked to take images of our engines, pumps and premises.

Their achievements are truly stunning, and the group must be congratulated on producing images which captured both "live steam" and "machines in motion".

The group have kindly offered all photographs for the Museum to use on our revamped website which will go live in the summer 2023.

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