

SHORT COURSE DETAILS

SLW07636 BLACKSMITHING – PRACTICAL PROJECTS

Tutor: ALEX SMITH

Dates: LONG WEEKEND THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY – SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY

ABOUT YOUR COURSE:

You can learn a lot in three days! First of all you will learn the important things that underlie all blacksmiths' projects, which are fire management and the three H's – heating, holding and hitting. Hitting being the fun part and if you're in need of some therapy then this is a good place to come and enjoy yourself.

The first thing you can do is make a few 'warm up' items to get ourselves going. This will consist of three to five simple hooks each (which include drawing the material to a point, bending the point and then flattening and spreading the metal where the fixing point is). Then make a back plate with two fish tails (spreading the metal) either side and we then rivet the hooks to the back plate. That will get a few motor skills going and give you confidence in heating small bits of bar without MELTING it (the dreaded, dreaded thing for all blacksmiths to do) and turning your lovely forged items into paper weights, which you don't want to do for the next bit.

You then make the ram's head poker out of 12mm square mild steel. You start with the ram's head and split the horns with a chisel. This will test your accuracy but any mistakes – apart from melting it – can be fixed and your tutor has become adept after fixing many of his own mistakes over the years for you. You then forge the split bars into a point and twist. Then you bend/fold the bar over to create the face (the horns are now pointing backwards) and we fire weld the fold at the end together to create the face, clever eh! You chisel and punch in the features and then bend the bar for the handle and bend the horns. This is quite skilled stuff but I have taught lots of people to do this on their first go so no pressure and no experience is necessary. You then forge a point at the end for the poker and put a twist in the middle of the bar.

If you have any time left then you can make more hooks for friends and family or make something else that is simple like a nail, bottle opener, cupboard handle, simple poker or toasting fork or t-light holders.

This is the perfect course to get an insight into what we can do with this amazing material or, to put it another way, what this material can do.

LEVEL: SUITABLE FOR ALL

A subject focused course that is delivered to suit any level of experience from beginner to advanced practitioner. A structured start is followed by guided independent practice.

ABOUT YOUR TUTOR:

Alex Smith runs Chalk Pit Forge at Amberley Museum. He designs and creates functional and sculptural metalwork using all the skills involved in being a blacksmith including forging, splitting, twisting, bending, dishing, fire welding, riveting, punching and heat treating. He was awarded a BA as an Artist blacksmith from Hereford College of Arts and has been a blacksmith since 1998.

TIMETABLE:

This course is held in the Forge which is situated through the walled garden. We have morning coffee and afternoon tea at the Gardens' Restaurant but return to the main house for lunch. The walk takes about 8 minutes or can be accessed by car.

Arrival day: Thursday 15 February

From 4.00pm	Arrival for residential students
6.45pm	Non-residential students please arrive by 6.45pm for welcome chat and dinner
7.00pm	Dinner
8.00pm – 9.00pm	First teaching session – attendance is an essential part of the course.

Other days: Friday 16 and Saturday 17 February

9.15am	Morning classes start
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue until 12.30pm
12.45pm	Lunch (main house)
2.00pm	Afternoon classes
3.30pm	Tea
4.00pm	Afternoon classes continue
5.00pm	Classes finish
From 6.30pm	Dinner
8.00pm	Please note that the forge is not open in the evening.

Departure day: Sunday 18 February

(Residential students to vacate rooms by 10am)

9.15am	Morning classes start
10.30am	Coffee
11.00am	Morning classes continue until 12.30pm
12.45pm	Lunch (main house)
2.00pm	Afternoon classes
3.00pm	Classes finish
3.30pm	Tea then departure

REQUIRED PREPARATION:

You can hit 100 nails into a block of wood to help practice your hammer technique, but it's not a problem if you don't.

MATERIALS FOR YOUR COURSE:

We have a generously stocked craft shop, which opens daily from 8.30am–2pm.

For any materials you need to purchase from the shop, we suggest you do so during the first morning of your course, after having discussed with your tutor.

Included in the fee for this course:

All fuel costs and mild steel stocked by the College.

Available from the Shop:

Drawing equipment (ie. sketchbook, pencil, pencil sharpener, rubber)

Please bring any of the above, if you have them, and in addition:

Clothes suitable for workshop use

Steel toe capped boots

Please note that cotton or wool clothing is preferable to nylon or other synthetics. A pair of cotton jeans is far more protective than a pair of nylon trousers.

MOST IMPORTANT: Students must wear goggles (provided) and suitable protective clothing for this course. Leather aprons, welding gauntlets and goggles can be borrowed from the Forge. Other protective equipment – e.g. welding helmets, ear defenders – are also available in the Forge.

You may wish to bring any of the above, if you have them. If for example you have particularly large or small hands, your own work gloves are likely to be a better fit.

HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Please note that tutor supervision is required at all times when students work in the forge. The tutor's instruction on health and safety will include access to and use of the power hammer. All Personal Protection Equipment, apart from footwear, is provided by the College.

For your safety it is mandatory to wear steel toe capped safety boots when undertaking a course in the Forge. Students must provide their own footwear and bring them with them to wear on the course. If you fail to bring suitable footwear, you will not be able to take part in the course.

Safety boots can be purchased from most tool hire shops and builders merchants as well as online.
www.cromwell.co.uk www.bhinone.com