



# FORGE

Dedicated to the revival of the "King of Crafts"

Vancouver Island Blacksmiths

www.vibblacksmiths.com



## COMING EVENTS

- April 26 2009..... Meeting at Luxton
- May 1-3 2009..... NWBA Spring demo Sisters OR
- May 31 2009 .....VIBA Spring demo Adrian Mulholland.
- Aug 7, 8+9 .....CanIRON V11 Ness Creek Sask.

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## Brigit (Brigid, Brighid, Brig, Brigán, Brigantia, Brigantis)

Celtic goddess of widespread worship; patroness of poetry, smithing, medicine, arts and crafts, cattle and other livestock, and Spring. Her feast day was called Oimlec (modernized Imbolc), celebrated around February 1. Much of her legend has since been subsumed into the figure of Saint Brigit of Ireland. According to *Cormac's Glossary*, Brigit was a set of triplets, daughters of the Dagda, all of the same name: a goddess of poetry, a goddess of smithing, and a goddess of leechcraft. Smithing was believed to be imbued with magic, and smiths were seen akin to wizards. The following segment of "Faidh Fiadha" seems directed at Brigit and her worshippers... including presumably, the blacksmiths of the community:

*I summon today all these powers between me and these evils...  
 Against craft of idolatry,  
 Against spells of women and smiths and wizards,  
 Against every knowledge that endangers man's body and soul.*

--"Faidh Fiadha" (The Deer's Cry, or, St. Patrick's Breastplate)

Saint Brigit was said to be a daughter of Dubthach the Brown, who may have been a druid. She is thought to have begun a community at Kildare: Cille Dara, the Church of the Oak. Here there was an eternal flame kept by nine virgins, up until the twelfth century, when a bishop thought it smacked of paganism, and had it dowsed. The nuns relit the fire, and it burned until Henry VIII of England destroyed it in his purges. At our next monthly meeting we need to have all VIBA members combine wizardly powers to conjure up nine virgins ...to keep our Luxton smithy forges lit, of course....what were you thinking? Should be simple enough.

## 2008 - Executive

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Treasurer: Norm Norby 250 478-3589  
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## Submissions & Contributions

Submissions to "Forge" can be made at any monthly meeting or by snail mail to:

VIBA - The Editor  
1040 Marwood Avenue  
Victoria, BC Canada  
V9C 3C4  
OR  
Email: dgillett@shaw.ca

## President's Report

By: Ray Orchard



Once again production day was a great success. Much credit to Willy who organized things, right down to the weather. What a change from the dull, cold, rainy Saturday to the sunny, warm Sunday. Willy, many thanks! The last couple of year's sales of our products at demonstrations have seen stocks run low toward the end of the season, so keep making stuff to place on the table. I'm not sure how many were there for work day, not everyone signed the book...but I prepared 36 burgers. Skip has been able to sort things out for our spring demo. There were a number of scheduling conflicts to overcome and we are now going to have a one day session on Sunday, May 31 (our regular meeting day). Our founder (and I think first president) Adrian Mulholland will do the honours. He's a very accomplished blacksmith so it will be a worthwhile session for all. It looks like the day will cost us each \$20 to cover pizza and beer for lunch, (no burgers this time- I

want to watch and learn too....and Adrian refuses to charge us a Fee).

Next month also sees the first of our seasonal demos, the Luxton Rodeo, on the Victoria Day weekend, May 16, 17 and 18. I learned early on that you don't need much skill to demonstrate, people are delighted just to see red hot iron come out of the forge, on to a real anvil, and hit with a hammer. Even the least experienced can take part. It's fun! Let's have a big turnout. Sorry to hear Dave Ranns is not well. I'm sure everyone joins me in wishing him a quick recovery.

## Spring Demo Sunday May31

Our regular meeting day Sunday May 31st will be pre-empted for the spring demo by Adrian Mulholland, our founding father. Adrian will show us how to make an Adz, knife and then heat treat both, among other things. Cost will be \$20 to cover pizza and beer lunch.

## Secretary's Report

By: Charlie Low



VIBAmar29 09

This was a production day, so the meeting was pretty informal. President Ray called us more or less to order and the minutes were adopted. There was mention of an upcoming demonstration, but it was scheduled for the same weekend as the NWBA conference, the first weekend of May, so some rescheduling is being considered.

Galen told us about CanIRON VII, to be held at Ness Cr Sask. on Aug 7, 8, and 9. Registration cost is \$200.00, until July 1, when it goes up, food will be \$120.00, camping on site is available for \$10.00 per night. There are motels "nearby", but nearby is a Saskatchewan nearby- anywhere from 20 to 80 km. There is a plan to make an obelisk, 16 feet high. The demonstrators will be making the 4 bottom panels, and clubs across the country are encouraged to make the others. The next panels up will have maximum dimensions of 3 ft by 21.6 inches at the bottom, with the top being 2.4 inches smaller, at 19.2 inches wide. The next panel up will be 3 ft high by 19.2 inches at the bottom, and 2.4 inches smaller at the top, and so on, for 5 panels per side total. The theme is to be Journeys with the arts, which leaves a lot of scope for originality.

The production day was excellent. The weather cooperated, we had all the forges fired up, including one in the flying forge, and a propane forge outside, and Don was kept busy recording all the art that was produced. Ray made his usual excellent hamburgs, after a little problem with the barbecue not want to burn was dealt with mainly by Willy. There were also lots of chances to visit, as we had way more people present that could all bang iron at the same time.

## Production Day Report by Don Startin total value \$661

#	Item	made by	\$ value	\$ total
2	snake hook	Peter J	7	14
2	snake hook	Charlie L.	7	14
1	Candle holder	Martin	5	5
4	cold chisels	Charlie L	5	20
1	hat rack	Benoit	35	35
4	mini horse shoes	Peter	3	12
1	shoe horn	Benoit	20	20
1	leaf hook	Ingrid	5	5
5	candle snuffers	Marcia,Elizabeth,Galen	12	60
1	bracelet	Hugh	10	10
1	toasting fork	Benoit	10	10
3	beverage holders	Raynier	10	30
2	pen holders	Benoit	20	40
Pre-made Items				
1	Campfire poker and hatchet	Marty	55	55
12	steak flippers	Frank C	3	36
2	shoe horns	Charlie L.	9	18
10	Candle holders	Willy	15	150
3	candle holders	Marty	10	30
3	snake hooks	Charlie L.	9	9
4	Coil candle holder	Charlie L	9	36
1	Door knocker	Keith	50	50
1	Door bell	Keith	50	50

We couldn't have asked for better weather- not too hot, not too cold, and windless. A big vote of thanks to all the members who brought pre-made items and those who laboured to good effect on the day. Thankyou also to Willy for organizing the event and bringing his forge and anvil. Thanks also to Norm for helping out at the stats table putting on price labels. Special kudos to beginners Elizabeth and Marcie who helped Galen make the interesting candle snuffers. We all had a great day, and there's \$661 of good saleable items in our faithful wooden boxes.

Respectfully Submitted  
Don Startin

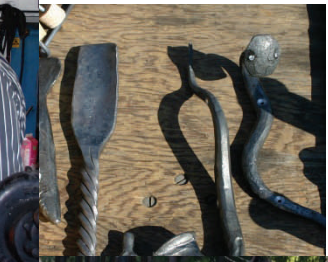
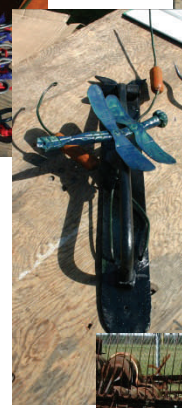


# Production Day

Photos by D Gillett









# BLACKSMITH CAMP

Monday, Aug 10 to  
Friday, Aug 14, 2009

## Instructor Adrian Legge Herefordshire England

Blacksmithing for over 30 years and teaching for more than 20, Adrian lives in Herefordshire running the shop his father started in the 1940's. His extensive teaching and work experience includes Cyprus, Poland, Kansas, Colorado, California, France and Canada. Adrian inspires students to love the way iron can be functional and sculptural, fluid and static, delicate and structural - all at the same time.



**Registration Deadline  
July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Ness Creek, Saskatchewan  
(20km NE of Big River)**

### Classes

Instruction will be geared to those with little or no experience through to more advanced skill levels and will include:

- basic tool production w/associated heat treatments
- traditional forged motifs
- forge welding and the various joint types
- joining techniques
- a design and make project

### Location and Logistics

The Blacksmith Camp is held at the Ness Creek Site near Big River, SK. Numerous all-ages recreation opportunities are available in the Big River area, known for being the wild west side of the Prince Albert National Park. Although the Ness Creek site provides a remote getaway in a rustic setting, water and shower facilities are available for campers and optional food services are provided.



[www.jackmillikincentre.com](http://www.jackmillikincentre.com)

## Enjoy bluegrass and old time music?

### NORTHERN LIGHTS BLUEGRASS AND OLD TYME MUSIC FESTIVAL

Fri. Aug 14 to Sun. Aug 16, 2009

*Don't miss the Festival!!*  
Weekend \$60 / Advance \$40  
Day \$35 / Advance \$25  
Free Camping  
Fireside Pickin'

The same week as Blacksmith Camp, the Northern Lights Bluegrass and Old Tyme Music Camp will also take place at Ness Creek. Students learn fiddle, banjo, mandolin, dobro, guitar, upright bass and vocals. All skill levels, all ages. Lots of music!

[www.northernlightsbluegrass.ca](http://www.northernlightsbluegrass.ca)



**NORTHERN  
LIGHTS  
BLUEGRASS  
& OLD TYME MUSIC**



Fire and air, earth and water were once considered the four elemental substances of our world. Among the ancients, only the blacksmith worked with all four. His forge held the fire and his bellows controlled the air to his purpose. His material, iron, the black metal, was part of the earth, and water was essential to cool his heated iron and give temper to his red-hot steel. Blacksmithing is an ancient and honourable occupation. Many, if not most, of the blacksmith's techniques are notable for their ingenious concept more than their effect. Each, as it was developed, was an exercise in pure intellect brought forth from a vacuum of ignorance to fill a practical need. No wonder a blacksmith was granted divinity by the ancient Greeks! ~ Alex W. Bealer

For More Information contact: **Jack Millikin Centre Inc.**  
 718 – 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Saskatoon, SK S7H 0H1  
 phone: 306.652.0897 / 306.220.2640  
 email: [whatsgoinon@jackmillikincentre.com](mailto:whatsgoinon@jackmillikincentre.com)

## Blacksmith Camp Registration

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/Province: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### What level are you?

- Beginner    Intermediate    Advanced

The course will encompass all skill levels with focused demonstrations and exercises for each ability range.

**MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT 10.**

**Tuition** .....▶  
 \$250 - Includes 3 days classes, break/snacks, free use of forge on Friday

**Tuition:**        \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Camping** .....▶  
 Camping - \$10/unit/day on Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs;  
 Free camping at the Festival on Fri/Sat/Sun

**Camping:**        \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Meals** .....▶  
 Full Meal Package – \$35/day; \$125 total for Tuesday Breakfast to Friday Lunch  
 Lunches only - \$10/day  
 Monday Night BBQ - \$15/person  
 Dietary Issues (Vegetarian, Gluten Free, Diabetic, etc.)

**Meals:**            \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Meals will not be provided during the Northern Lights Bluegrass and Old Tyme Music Festival; food vendors will be available

**Payment** .....▶  
 Cheques to: Jack Millikin Centre Inc.  
 Minimum deposit \$100/registration; 50% refundable before July 1<sup>st</sup>.  
 Accommodation and meals are available to guests.  
 Submit separate forms, payments/deposits can be combined.

**Total**                \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Deadline**  
**July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

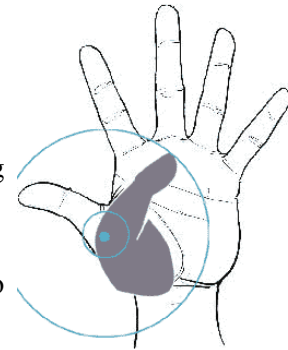
Camp follows CANIRON, August 7-9 at Ness Creek. Check [www.caniron.ca](http://www.caniron.ca) for details.



# Opposable Thumbs

By D. Gillett

While most primates can oppose their thumb to some of their fingers, the evolution of the fully opposable or prehensile thumb is usually associated with *Homo habilis*, the forerunner of *Homo sapiens* (us). The most important factors leading to the habile hand (and its thumb) are: the freeing of the hands from their walking requirements—still crucial for apes today, as they still have hands for feet, and the simultaneous development of a larger anthropoid brain (which applies to most of us, anyway). Blacksmiths require an opposable thumb. Reduced to the essential elements, blacksmithing requires the ability to heat, hold and hit a piece of metal. Without thumbs you cannot hold or hit.



The following tale of woe is a true story, it actually happened to a VIBA member with whom I am intimately familiar. This person had just finished a Damascus blade that had turned out quite well. A Santos mahogany handle and sheath also looked great. The straight grained wood, rosy red in color was accented perfectly by the brass hardware. Since it was to be a kitchen carving knife, I wanted to make a stand for the wooden sheath, to look something like a kitchen knife block, only fancy. I made two prototypes to judge the dimensions and shape. I cut the rough outline out on the band saw and shaped with the belt grinder. My band saw blade was getting a bit dull, but went thru the soft spruce 2"x4" framing studs that I used for the prototypes without difficulty. As soon as I started the cut on the hardwood I knew exactly what the problem was and how to fix it. Santos mahogany is more than twice as hard as walnut. There are several brand new band saw blades of various widths hanging on the wall beside the saw. Changing a blade takes two minutes, max.

Whenever a cutting tool develops a problem and seems to require more force than is normal, increasing the force is never the real solution. It is, however, the default response employed by some of us. I actually do use a push stick when using the band saw much of the time, but the skinny push stick immediately available at the time wouldn't work, considering how hard I needed to push. Also, it was a curved cut and somewhat difficult to control with a stick. When the blade completed the curved and angled cut and exited the wood, my push force immediately pivoted the whole wood block around, and my thumb hit the blade.



This is the x-ray of my hand, taken in the emergency room. As you can see, knowing the magnification factor for the x-ray allows one to measure exactly the kerf width of my band saw blade when passing through bone. A trip to the Operating Room with a plastic surgeon resulted in a stainless steel pin protruding  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch out the end of my thumb, holding the two bone fragments, and the end of my thumb, together.



What, exactly, can I learn from this?? **Impatience, in a shop full of metal and woodworking equipment, will hurt you.** I am a hobbyist, I have no deadlines or work schedules. Slow down, take your time. I already know the safety procedures for band saws; all I have to do is follow them. The most important safety equipment can always be found in the grey matter between your ears. Whenever you approach any cutting tool, remember my x-ray. Do you want to find out its kerf width through your bone?

I am learning patience now. Do you know how difficult it is to do things with a baseball sized dressing on the thumb of your dominant hand? Showering with your right hand in a plastic bag, held high over your head, probably appears comical. Brushing your teeth, cutting your meat at dinner, and other problems best left to the imagination, aren't really all that funny. Finally, I learned that cutting most of the way through your thumb with a band saw does actually hurt just about as much as you imagine it would.

## **CanIRON VII**

**The Western Canadian Blacksmiths Guild hosts CanIRON VII**

**The date is August 7, 8 & 9th, 2009**

The location will be at Ness Creek Sask. More information to follow but I will say it is beautiful lake country, perfect for a holiday. There is room for on site camping @ \$10 per day. Also, there are Hotels, B&B's and cabins in the area.

We will have 4 or 5 top notch demonstrators doing their thing and we will also have demonstrators for knife making. We are going to have a Hands On project on the go as well. More information to follow on that.

The cost to pre register will be \$200.00 from now to July 1st then the price will increase to \$250.00. The phone number and address will be posted later. On site meals will be available at a cost of \$120 per person for the event, and again please make your intentions known as soon as possible.

As we proceed we will provide more information.

Larry Olm, President

18- 501 Cartwright Street

Saskatoon, SK

Canada S7T 1E1

(306) 934-2027

[lcolm@sasktel.net](mailto:lcolm@sasktel.net)

The Saskatchewan Chapter of the Western Canadian Blacksmith Guild has been asked to host CanIRON VII. With less than less than 5 months to plan an event this big we have been busy. We have a great site, and the Demonstrators are lining up. Why is it when we ask people to come to the middle of nowhere, work like Crazy for three days, they all want to come?

We are trying to get the [www.Caniron.ca](http://www.Caniron.ca) website set up for us as soon as possible, but it will likely be a couple of weeks yet. I will send it out Updates as I get them. Please see the following for more information. for Blacksmithing Camp the following week CanIRON with Arian Legge

Event Contact: Daryl Richardson [darylr@sasktel.net](mailto:darylr@sasktel.net)

**Vancouver Island Blacksmith Association  
Membership Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Prov./State: \_\_\_\_\_

Post/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a: New Member  Renewal

Regular Membership \$30.00 Annually

Contributory Member \$100.00 Annually

Members are required to sign a Liability Waiver  
Make cheques or money orders payable to:

**Vancouver Island Blacksmith Assoc. (VIBA)  
1040 Marwood Avenue  
Victoria, BC CANADA  
V9C 3C4**

**Artist Blacksmiths Assoc. of North America  
Membership Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Prov.: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Full Time Student.....\$35./year

Regular Membership.....\$45./year

Senior Citizen (age 65+).....\$40./year

Overseas Surface Mail.....\$60./year

Oversea Air Mail.....\$80./year

Contributory Membership.....\$100./year

Public Library Subscription.....\$35./year

**Credit Card Payment**

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Visa  Mastercard

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

by Phone: 703-680-1632

Mail: ABANA, 15754 Widewater Dr  
Dumfries, VA, USA, 22025-1212

Email: abana@abana.org

**V.I.B.A.'s TRAVELLING GALLERY UPDATE**

**Charlie Dowdeswell – contact**

**<charlesdowdeswell@yahoo.ca>**

I am quite excited to announce that a major step has been completed in the quest our TRAVELLING GALLERY. Trina, the trailer has joined the ranks of VIBA. 'Trina is a compact tandem trailer that in a past life hauled horses.

There is room for storage of a display tent, some collapsible plinths, and associated paraphernalia. There is also space to hold the 'juried' artwork that, by plan, is not huge [floor area 4.5 feet x 6 feet]. There will be room for a large number of reasonable sized pieces. The sizing is deliberate because, in my view, as a Travelling Gallery that will only be set-up in each location for 1-3 days, huge pieces are just not practical and there are other outlets more appropriate for huge item display. Now begins the 'fitting out'. I am very open, as I've mentioned before, to ideas for fitting Trina, plinth design etc. Willy has arranged for lettering etc for Trina and Tent, when the time comes. Still needed is help with, or people who would donate 'whatever' for advertising such as – a little body work and repainting after the 'fitting out' etc. If you know anyone . . . As we will be up-front and in busy locals, the advertising via donation/support signage could be a very valuable item.

On that note, I would like to hear from those VIBA members [for the time being piece submission will be held within our membership] who have items they wish to be juried for the Gallery. Please send email, or get in touch somehow, to let me know [even if you have told me previously], as I am gathering for a list of artist and piece for reference. The date for jurying has not been set as yet. We will make arrangements as soon as there are enough items for the Arts Council to jury. Don't procrastinate – let me know of completed and work in progress.

Thank you all,



for