

HISTORICAL METALLURGY

July 29, 2011 Paul Belford Anglo-Saxon, Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011, Early Medieval, Education, Iron Age, Medieval, Post Medieval, Roman, Romano-British, Science, Viking Academia, Anthropology, Archaeology, Archaeometallurgy, Bronze Age, Cardiff, Chairman, Facebook, GBP, Historical Metallurgy Society, local specialist, metal artefacts, Metallurgy, Museology, Science

Like many archaeologists, outside of my 'proper' archaeological [job](#), I seem to find time to get involved with lots of other archaeological activities as a volunteer. One of my many 'other' roles is to be the Chairman of the Historical Metallurgy Society. This is occupying quite a bit of my time, so I thought it was worth saying something about it. I guess in many ways it is quite typical of a lot of national and local specialist societies and groups – entirely run by volunteers who are often the world's leading experts in their particular fields, and producing information at various levels from high-level peer-reviewed academic journals and monographs to informal datasheets for archaeological fieldworkers.

The manufacture and working of metals is one of the most important human activities. Archaeologists encounter metal artefacts and evidence of metalworking in all periods from the Bronze Age through to the post-medieval. However it is often difficult to identify and make sense of. This is why the [Historical Metallurgy Society](#) was established almost 50 years ago. The Historical Metallurgy Society is a dynamic and exciting international forum for exchange of information and research in historical metallurgy. This means all aspects of the history and archaeology of metals and associated materials from prehistory to the present day.

Members' interests range from processes and production through technology and economics to archaeology and conservation. The Society holds several conferences and meetings each year which showcase the latest research, and explore a wide range of metallurgical landscapes and locations. The next meeting is in [Cardiff](#) in September.

The Society's [datasheets](#) were launched over 15 years ago, and remain a popular resource for archaeological fieldworkers and managers alike. [They can be downloaded free](#). The archaeology committee is currently updating and enlarging the scope of the [datasheets](#). The datasheets – and indeed Historical Metallurgy Society members – helped to inform the development of the English Heritage guidelines for [Archaeometallurgy](#), and [Science in Historic Industries](#).

A mini-datasheet on [ironworking residues](#) has also been produced – aimed specifically at archaeological fieldworkers.

The Society's archaeology committee has also recently produced a UK-wide research framework for archaeometallurgy called 'Metals and Metalworking'. This sets out current knowledge and areas where we need to learn more; it can be downloaded from the [Historical Metallurgy Society archaeology committee page](#).

Joining the Society only costs £20! Details can be found [here](#). Members receive a scholarly journal (Historical Metallurgy) twice a year and a newsletter three or four times a year. The Historical Metallurgy Society has an extensive archive of books and reference material, and can put you in touch with expertise all over the world... the Society also provides small grants for research and travel. Please visit the [website](#) – or look at our [Facebook page](#)!