Captain of the Hook
Interview with Tony Swatton

If Tony Swatton was hooked into making the movie props for Hook (a Tri-Star Pictures/Amblin Entertainment production), he was laughing all the way to the premiere!

Tony's business The Sword and The Stone is located in Burbank, California and has designed and created works such as armor and boots for Michael Jackson as well as weapons for Euro-Disney. His pieces of metalwork can be seen in several other productions including Back to the Future III, Tall Tale, and Hot Shots Part II.

Beginning at the age of 13 in the trades of gem-cutting, goldsmithing and silversmithing, the life of an entrepreneur was inevitable. By the time Tony was 23 it became obvious that he had outgrown his garage when he started a project of animated steel sculptures for Disney World's Dream Flight Ride. Because of the market demand for forged studio props, Tony found himself being called to do a lot of blacksmithing and soon became an ABANA member.

Tony first became aware of the Hook project when Mark Wade, a Prop Master for the Tri-Star release of a Steven Spielberg film came looking for a hook. Mark had contacted various places that had hired Tony for armors and swords. With six weeks lead time for the prototype, Tony started in March of 1991 to work on the Hook project. A total of 20 hooks were commissioned including 6 in sterling silver, 4 with oak veneer on metal (never shown), 3 in black oxidized steel, and 3 in bright polished steel. It took about 60 hours to make each sterling hook. If Dustin Hoffman's hand had not been bigger than his stunt double, all of the smaller silver hooks would have been used. Instead, they were given as gifts to the crew and production team.

"Sleep?" Tony said, "We would work 72 hours 'round the clock and take naps at the shop. With two other projects being worked on at the same time, and a six month deadline, it was quite a marathon!"

The initial hooks were made out of 1-1/8" hot rolled steel, turned on a lathe for tapering since he didn't have any blacksmithing equipment except an anvil for cold forming other work. Later into the project, Tony invested in a double burner gas forge.

It took 100 oz. of sterling silver (16 gauge) to make one base for a hook. There were a total of 12 people working on the project...
with a mill worker, metal spinner, engraver, and jeweler for the gold twisted braid. The process for each silver hook was lengthy. First the hook was machined to a taper and forged to shape with the base of the hook machined for the quick release mechanism. Then sheets of sterling silver were spun out into 2 half balls. For balance of the base in two pieces, each one was hammered for flaring and 8 gauge sterling silver half wire was soldered around the base to give it more depth and texture. The top section that had the hook release mechanism (if you remember, in the movie there were numerous items snapped into the hook by the notorious Captain Hook) was polished and hand engraved to add the detailed work.

"I guess it's like making a prosthesis for someone who really does have a hand." When asked about mistakes, Tony readily admitted, "All the time!" Once in awhile he glances over at his 2' x 2' box of scraps from the project and remembers the rounds of trial and error.

There were other hero pieces commissioned as part of the Hook project. Peter Pan's sword, a 24 karat gold plated blade, would chip in a fight scene so a total of two dozen were made. The ransom note dagger was a white bronze cast hilt and pommel, leather wrapped grip with sterling silver wire on it, and a triangular tapered blade. Tinker Bell's dagger and cutlasses for all the pirates were also produced.

A last minute idea by the directors required a miniature version of the hook for a window latch. You might remember the six camera shots of the latch (in less than one hour).

Every night, the damaged props would show up in a box at Tony's shop to be repaired for the next day of filming.

Hook #7 was displayed at the premiere of the movie which is the one Tony has in his shop. Three hooks went to restaurants in New York, London, and California -- "Planet Hollywood" owned by Arnold Schwarzeneger, Sylvester Stallone, and Bruce Willis.

Tony doesn't think too much about his "claim to fame" while he bikes over 1500 miles with his son. But when asked by a stranger on one of his tours what he did for a living, it just so happened he was standing under a billboard advertisement of... you guessed it -- the movie Hook.

- Janelle Gilbert Franklin

Editor's Note: Tony is a really great guy, but please don't try to contact him for the blueprints to make a replica of this hook. Blueprints of the original hook are copyrighted by Tri-Star Pictures/Amblin Entertainment.

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EDITORIAL:
Here is the third issue of The Hammer's Blow, full of good things for you to try. There are three noteworthy things in this issue. First, there are no want ads since nobody wants to buy or sell anything. Secondly, there are a lot of references to Quad State Round-Up 1993 that was held at Tipp City, Ohio (what a fabulous conference hosted by the SOFA chapter of ABANA). And thirdly, we wanted to see how photos would work out in this newsletter. Don't forget, this is your newsletter so send in stuff to fill the pages. If you like what you see, tell your non-ABANA friends to join so they can get in on the action.

- Jim Ryan, Editor

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THE HAMMER'S BLOW

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Next Issue Deadline:
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The Samuel Yellin Finish: While demonstrating at Quad State Round-Up, George Dixon pointed out that sometimes he will spend a third of total time on a piece working on the finish. He gave an example of a finish he likes that Samuel Yellin used. Notably, the iron Yellin finished this way looks as good today as it did when Yellin sold it. First, you apply a coat of linseed oil and turpentine. When that is completely dry, you put on a coat of varnish, brushing to get it even and using a dry brush to pick up any drips or runs. When that is dry, put on a coat of floor wax, using a stiff brush to get it into all the cracks and creases of the piece. Then, buff with a clean cloth and it will last for years. Samuel Yellin sometimes finished his outdoor iron with just boiled linseed oil and turpentine. After that, he sold the customer a service contract for one of his men to come back every six months and re-oil the iron. That of course meant --more business!

Automotive Finish: There was a discussion about finishing at Quad State Round-Up with Bob Bergman shared his experience with a job that was too big for him to handle the sand blasting himself. He had no time to let it sit in some blasting company yard for several weeks until they could get it done, so he went to the local NAPA store and inquired about an automotive finish. The answer is a four step process.

1. Use a cleaner/degreaser to get everything clean, especially tubing which is usually greasy.
2. ACME 560 Acid Etching Primer is the next step, mixed and sprayed on in two coats.
3. Then use an automotive primer sealer.
4. Finally, a top coat of enamel --any color you choose.

The benefit of the acid etching primer is that it eliminates the need for sand blasting. It either seals the scale, eats it, or something. It is mixed from two parts, dries in half an hour, and can be applied for up to 8 hours after mixing. Parts can be primed with the ACME 560 and then fastened, handled, moved around, etc. It does not scratch easily so it stays covered. It is expensive and will give a slightly crinkled finish unless you buff it out, but it is a good selling point when proposing iron work to a customer. They all know automotive finishes last. The cost is about equal to time or money spent sand blasting.

Book Review

Marilyn Romani at Centaur Forge has done it again. We are all acquainted with the term "wish book" that Sears and Penny's use for their Christmas catalogs. Centaur puts out the best wish book for blacksmiths that I have run across yet. It has all kinds of stuff to drool over. Well almost, since for my part, I eliminate about the first 75 pages strictly for farriers. I never did like horses, but there are a couple of good things to check out even there, like the rivets on page 19, the copper nails on page 18, and taps on page 73.

The nice thing about a catalog is that you can see pictures of items you really don't know the name of. There are tools for all blacksmiths, 42 kinds of gas forges, 13 classifications of hammers, anvils, swedges, fuller's, flatters, and dozens of hand tools. My favorite section has the books listed by category, such as Blacksmithing, Gunsmithing, Horsehoeing, Knifemaking, Machine/Foundry, and about seven more. This is a great wish book. Show your "significant other" the things you want for Christmas and everyone will be happy. And by the way, if you run into Marilyn at the '94 ABANA Conference, tell her thanks for doing such a beautiful job.

If you have one of these catalogs, read it and drool. If you don't have one of these FREE catalogs, write Centaur Forge at 117 N. Spring Street, Burlington, WI 53105 or call 1-800-666-9175.

Heard at the Round-Up:
Bill Hahn had good advice for beginning smiths, "Practice Hammer Control. Don't be afraid to use a light hammer to learn with. You can always use a heavier one later."
**SHOP TIPS & TOOLS**

**Viscous Vise Grips**
George Dixon Swannanoa, NC

George owns a pair of handy Vise Grips like the ones shown here, which he used while demonstrating at the Round-Up to hold round rod tightly. A short piece of angle iron was welded to each jaw. Narrow angle iron is too thin to do the job with this tool. In order to get the strength needed, George took a piece of 1/4" by 2" angle and cut it down to about 1/2" to 5/8" on a side. He notched out the jaws of the Vise Grips with a torch and welded the heavy angle iron into the notch. You can weld it with low hydrogen, stainless rod, or whatever you have that will hold to tool steel. The interior curve of the angle iron gives a good grip to many sizes of round stock.

**Dandy Drill Guide**
Jim Ryan (Editor) Dubuque, IA

When you need to drill 36 holes (7/64") in the center of a flat bar, exactly 3-3/16" apart: 1) Take a 4" piece of the same size flat stock, drill a 1/4" hole centered near one end. Put a short piece of 1/4" round stock in it to make a peg. Weld, braze, or fasten however you want. 2) Drill a second hole, 7/64" exactly 3-3/16" from the peg centered on the piece. 3) Weld two tabs on sides of the guide. 4) Drill the first hole by measuring carefully. Then put the peg into the hole just drilled and use the second hole as the guide. Move the peg into the hole just drilled and so on. All the holes are the right size and distance apart, centered in the bar. Fast!

**Taylored Tenon Holder**
Roger Quaintence Amana, IA

This idea to enhance a tenon holder is pretty slick. The verticle square rods are 1/2" square and about 2" long. The spring rod is about 3/16" x 1" mild steel. When you put this in a vise, the square pieces align themselves automatically to hold any size square rod you put in them from 1/4" up to big stuff like 1-1/2". It's a real handy thing to have for holding square pieces upright.
Here is the hook design Gordon has used on a few of his pot racks that is relatively easy to make. The hook slides in the slot but won't twist or come out easily.

The next page shows the forging sequence for this hook design.
**pot rack hooks**

*Forging Sequence*

**Step 1** - Heat 3/4" square bar, using a fuller to form a 1/2" square neck. Adjust the length of "A" for desired hook length.

![Diagram of step 1](image)

**Step 2** - Draw out hook in square or round. Leave approx 3/4" of the 1/2" square taper at the neck.

![Diagram of step 2](image)

**Step 3** - Cut about 3/4" back from neck. Dimension "B" can be varied to accommodate any rosette head size.

![Diagram of step 3](image)

**Step 4** - Upset in header plate and form rosette as desired.

![Diagram of step 4](image)

**Step 5** - Bend to 90 degree in square section of the neck. Form a hook on the tapered end.

![Diagram of step 5](image)

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Method For the Hook Hanger
An excerpt from the Florida Artist Blacksmiths' newsletter, the "Florida Clinker Breaker", submitted by Steve Bloom of Archer, FL.

A - Use a 6" piece of 1/2" x 1/8" steel. Form a finial at the end.

B - Form a hook.

C - Fold the rear of the hook through a right angle. Be careful not to crush the hook.

D - Use a spacer, the thickness of the bar that the hook will be hanging on, to close the rear of the hooks to fit.

Double Hooks

A - Using 1/4" square, flatten out a section to 1/2" x 1/8" twice as long as the bar is wide. Leave about 4" of square bar at one end and about 6" at the other.

B - Draw to a square point at both ends, curve and finial and hook at each end, facing the opposite way.

C - Use spacer as above to form a spring tension in the flat part of the hook.

Leaf Hooks

A - Use a length of 1/4" round, draw to a point. Curl a finial on the end.

B - Curve into a hook and cut off at desired hook length.

C - Form a leaf on the end opposite the hook. (See last issue of The Hammer's Blow.)

D - Bend hook forward to hang on the bar, leaving enough room between end of hook and end of leaf for the bar to go through and crimp using a spacer.
composite hooks

When the hook is fastened to a backing plate, many new forms can emerge.

Coat Hook

1 - Start with a piece of 3/16" or 1/4" by 1" strap about 8" long. Notch it about 1" from the ends as shown and forge arrow head finials. Drill mounting holes in the arrow heads 9/32".

2 - Split a 10" piece of 3/16" x 3/4" about 4 inches at one end and 3" at the other. Widen the cuts to an X and forge the legs to round.

3 - Upset a knob on the end of each leg of the bar. Drill two mounting holes in the flat part of the hook.

4 - Curve the shorter ends up into the top of the hook and the longer ones at the bottom.

5 - Drill matching holes in the back plate and rivet the hook and plate together.

6 - Suggestion for mounting screw: Use a 1/4" x 1" lag screw and forge the hex head square. Gives it a nice hand hammered look.

7 - Finish the piece with paint or with boiled linseed oil. Wipe dry and rub down after it dries awhile.

Cup or Key Hooks

A delicate key hook is made from horse shoe nails fastened to a backing plate.

1 - Flatten the head end of the horse shoe nails. Drill a small hole in the center. Bend the point around into a finial and bend the hook shape.

2 - Make a backing plate from 1/8" x 1" strap with leaf or arrowhead finials. Curve the plate out from the wall line. Rivet the hooks to the strap.
Ball Bearing Hook
submitted by Steve Gordon, Mt. Airy, MD

To produce this hook, you need to make two tools. Tool A is made by welding a 1" ball bearing to a 1/2" square rod. Tool B is made by welding a 1" ball bearing to one side of a pair of tongs.

1 - Cut a piece of 3/8" square 5" long. Heat one end and indent with Tool A and a hammer, making a rounded indentation.

2 - Hold indentation with Tool B and draw a point.

3 - Hold Tool B and make a rat tail.

4 - Hold with Tool B and form a hook.

5 - Put in a decorative twist and drill hole for screw.

Mantle Hook
submitted by Molly Schaffnit, Poca, WV

This is a traditional hook used over early fireplaces to hang anything that needed to be heated or dried, like herbs.

1 - Using a piece of 3/16" by 1/2", about 1' long, draw a taper at one end and a fish tail at the other end.

2 - Measure 2 -3/4" from fish tail and mark with center punch (A).

3 - Measure thickness of mantle and mark with center punch (B).

4 - Measure projection of mantle and mark with center punch (C).

5 - Scroll up the fish tail. Form a hook at the tapered end. Bend to fit front of mantle at punch marks.

6 - Finish with boiled linseed oil and turpentine or with beeswax.
Heart Hook

submitted by Pat McCarty of Washington, MO

Pat gets a lot of ideas from woodworking books and figure out how to make them from iron.

1 - The heart is cut out of 16 gauge copper or iron. 4-1/2" wide, back over depression in a wood block.

2 - The hook is made from 7" of 1/4" square stock. Twist about 1-1/2" in center of stock.

3 - Flatten one end and drill a hole for a rivet to fasten hook to the heart.

4 - Taper, square and shape the hook end and rivet to the heart.

5 - Flatten a piece of #12 copper wire for the hanger, form a loop and solder to the back of the heart. Finish with wax and your favorite finish.

Heart Hook

demonstrated by Bill Hahn at Quad State Round-Up

1 - Using a piece of 1/4" by 1", length of about 6" or 7", split one end about 2-1/2" to 3" along center line.

2 - Using a fuller, neck it in about 2" from the other end. Leave about 1" or 1-1/2" untouched in the center.

3 - Draw the fullered end down to about 1/4" square with one way taper at the end. Form a square hook at that end with tapered finial at the end.

4 - Heat the split end and draw each end to about 1/4" square taper, with one way taper at the end. Form into heart shape.

5 - Punch or drill hole in the center of unforged center section. Bill's hook had a diamond shaped hole and looked really great.

6 - Finish with boiled linseed oil, or your favorite finish.
Exhibited pieces were submitted by smiths with various skill levels. Great smithing was represented by beginners and pros alike. First place was awarded to Glenn Horr of Berkley Springs, WV for his door latch shown in lower right frame. Photos submitted by Paul Sperbeck and Jim Ryan.
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