



TOPP & CO.

GREAT BRITAIN

Exquisite Architectural Metalwork

**Heritage
Restoration
Traditional Work**

photo ©The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London

A Tradition of Excellence in historic architectural metalwork



3



1



2

- ◀ 1 Exhibition Park, Newcastle. Bandstand restoration
 - 2 Tijou grille for St. Paul's Cathedral
 - 3 Gates and fanlight for Royal Hospital Chelsea, London
- Mary Rose cannon - working replica ▶

Topp & Co. are expert in the field of traditional ironwork, having 35 years' experience in restoration of our wrought iron heritage as well as designing and producing new, bespoke work to the styles and standards of the masters of old. Few other British workshops can match our level of experience, our talent resources, or our physical resources in these endeavours.

We are the world's only remaining producer of genuine wrought iron, the material used in all forged work until the early 20th century. We produce standard and bespoke sections and handrails in our own rolling mill. We also supply bespoke bronze handrails.

Our services extend to educational lectures on our store of knowledge, and consultation in conservation and restoration of historic works of art in architectural iron.





Heritage

the past preserved

- ◀ 1 Deans Eye, Lincoln Cathedral
 - 2 Commissioners Yard, Palace of Westminster, London
 - 3 Restoring the gates of Parliament, Palace of Westminster
- Detail: Historic gate restoration ▶

For the last 35 years, Chris Topp and his associates have devoted vast amounts of time and energy to gain expertise in the preservation and restoration of the heritage of ancient iron the nation holds in trust for the future. Topp & Co. work to the standards set by the National Heritage Ironwork Group for conservation of ancient ironwork, and were instrumental in the writing of this code of practice. Without this devotion, the techniques, material and styles of the past would vanish. We put this great body of knowledge and skill to use daily, tackling work on such high-profile sites as the Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace, St. Paul's Cathedral, Hampton Court, Westminster Abbey, as well as great houses, castles, cathedrals and churches.





Heritage

the past preserved *continued*

- ◀
- 1 Barnes Park gates and railings - a good example of cast iron elements in a wrought iron matrix
 - 2 Historic gate restoration
 - 3 Railings for Westminster Abbey
- ▶
- Detail: Aldford Gates

We are just as committed to the many fascinating lesser-known works that we have restored - public works such as bandstands and park railings - and private ironwork at residences. We have intimate knowledge of the known craftsmen of the past, people like Jean Tijou, who revolutionised work in this country, or the Davis Brothers, creators of so much of the classic ironwork for great houses during the 18th Century, as well as the regional or ecclesiastical styles of various periods, so even if portions of old ironwork are missing or badly restored, we have a very good idea of what the original must have looked like.



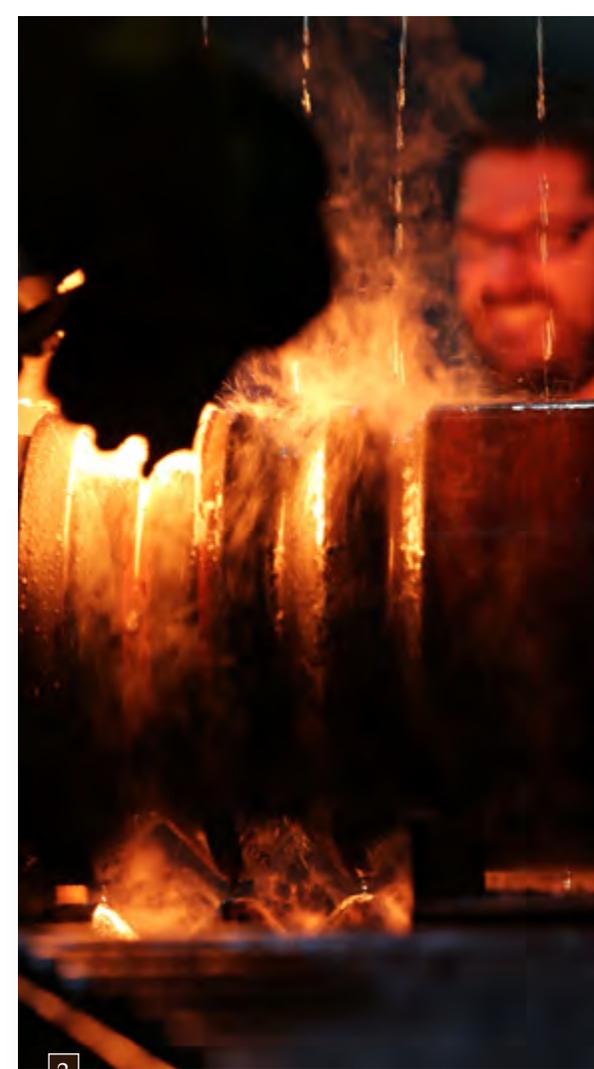


Future Heritage

tomorrow's legacy

- ◁ 1 Traditionally made balustrade
 - 2 New bandstand for Roberts Park, Saltaire
 - 3 A new gate in Medieval style
- Detail: New work in 18th C style ▷

In the course of our delving into the past, Topp & Co. have tasted the wine of classical design and construction, and we proudly assert that we can, and do, create the heritage of the future. We have all the skills and secrets of the masters of the Renaissance and Middle Ages, plus the tools and techniques of modern metalworking, on tap to serve the needs of those who discern great quality and classical taste, who want to match the fabric of history for their needs today, and leave an enduring, high quality legacy for generations to come.



3



1



2

- ◁ 1 Nick-bend test for modern steel (left) and wrought iron (right) showing wrought iron's fibrous structure
- 2 Newly rolled wrought iron handrails
- 3 Our rolling mill in action
- Assembling forged gates ▷



The Real Thing

genuine wrought iron

The term Wrought Iron is specific to the fibrous, hand-refined material that served for millennia as the most used and useful form of iron. It is characterised by its composite structure. In the process of fining, iron and iron silicate were fused together as the metal was worked (wrought) at a white heat under hammers, producing something with a grain structure similar to wood. It is very malleable when heated and very much more corrosion resistant than modern steel. In testament to its endurance, there are still working wrought iron tugs in the States that are over a century old, and HMS Warrior, built in the 1850's as the first iron warship in the world, has been afloat its entire life. Topp & Co's subsidiary, The Real Wrought Iron Company, is the only supplier of this wonderful material nowadays, and we are experts in its use.





4



1



Cast Iron molten wonder



2



3

- ◀
- 1 Morgan Academy balustrade
- 2 Spectacular restored gates for Piece Hall, Halifax
- 3 Bethesda Methodist Chapel cast iron railings
- 4 Cast iron driveway gates and railings
- ▶
- Cast iron fireplace furniture

The other classic metal of the nineteenth century, cast iron, is famous for its ability to resist weathering, and, in normal situations in the external environment, cannot be faulted. Topp & Co. have extensive knowledge of repair, restoration and reproduction of classic cast ironwork. We can make new patterns to match old work. The traditional form of cast iron, known as 'grey iron' is, however notable for its brittleness, and must be used with care. We do use grey iron, but it has very low tensile strength. So we often use a modern variant of cast iron known as 'S G Iron', which has very good tensional properties, is not brittle and can in fact be bent cold to some extent, though like other cast irons, cannot be forged.





3



1



2

Hands On craftsmanship

Topp & Co are proud to have one of the best-equipped blacksmith shops in the UK, staffed by world-class craftsmen, technicians and designers. Our knowledge of ancient ironwork and ancient techniques is encyclopaedic, but we temper the old labour-intensive ways with the use of modern equipment wherever possible without compromising the quality of the result - thus, instead of cutting with chisel and hacksaw, we will use a plasma torch or an angle-grinder. Happily, there is no modern substitute for the magic of punching a mortise and forging a tenon at a yellow heat, but we do these things under a modern power hammer for the same result in less time than working with hand hammers. These examples reflect our philosophy of mixing the best of the old and the new to create exemplary work for discerning clients.

- ◁ 1 Hot-punching holes for strength, aesthetics and historical relevance
 - 2 Two of the forges in our smithy
 - 3 Chris Topp at his fire
- Power hammer work ▷





4



1



2



3

- ◀ 1 Teamwork is vital
 - 2 Detail work on a bronze balustrade
 - 3 Assembly of forged ironwork
 - 4 By hammer and hand
- View of the forge ▶

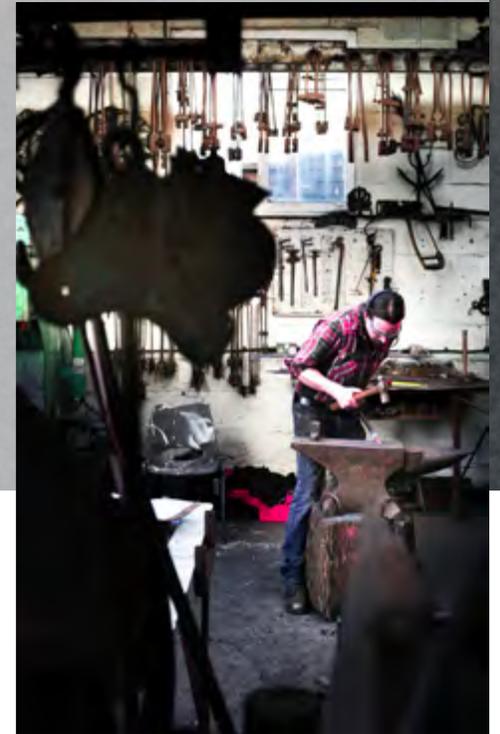
Hands On

craftsmanship *continued*

The great aesthetic differences between traditional forged ironwork and modern cut-bend-and-stick fabrication can be boiled down to three main things:

- The design freedom forged work affords
- The change in section of individual elements, allowing curves to develop and terminate gracefully
- The joining methods, which include mortise and tenon, rivets, collars and most especially, fire welding.

All these qualities require experienced craftsmen passionate about quality and willing to go the extra mile to produce the finest work.



Consultancy in historic architectural metalwork



Left to right:

- Chris Topp
- Les Branston, Building Surveyor for Calderdale MBC
- Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Halifax at the time of the opening ceremony for the Piece Hall Halifax, where the magnificent south entrance gates we restored had been re-installed. They had benefited from an extensive conservation programme to repair and restore them to their original condition and decorative scheme

Our expertise, gained over 35 years' experience, is available to you in the form of consultancy in traditional, contemporary and restoration fields, including:

- Condition & impact damage survey reports
- Design specification, including traditional construction detailing from old images for the authentic replacement of salvaged ironwork
- New and period style designs

We frequently deliver lectures and wide-ranging advice to key bodies in industry and education.

To lead in our industry requires collaboration with very carefully aligned partners, also leaders in their fields. Our relationship with major architects, designers, specialist contractors, conservation experts and practitioners, is central to our ability to deliver to the exacting standards required of our customers.

TOPP & CO.

GREAT BRITAIN

Exquisite Architectural Metalwork

Gates

Stairs and Balustrades

Railings

Handrails

Ecclesiastical Ironwork

Restoration

Parks and Bandstands

Public Art

Bronze Doors

Unit 5, The Airfield
Tholthorpe
North Yorkshire
YO61 1ST
United Kingdom

+44 (0)1347 833173
enquiry@toppandco.com
www.toppandco.com