



**Hawley  
Collection**  
@ Kelham Island Museum

## HAWLEY COLLECTION SHORT GUIDES TO SHEFFIELD TRADES

### TOOLS OF THE TRADE

## Pen & Pocket Knife or Spring Blade

cutler, forger, grinder, maker, mooder, smither, striker, tanger,  
scale cutter

### Overview of the trade

Pen knives originally had fixed blades mounted on a straight handle and were used for shaping the shaft of a feather to be used for writing. Spring or pocket knives were made to be carried in a pocket, and were sprung in order to close them and protect the blades (and the user!).

### The people, the work, the tools

**Pen and Pocket Knife Mooder:** hand forged (shaped) the moods (blanks) for pen and pocket knife blades, shaping steel rods on an **anvil** using a **forging hammer** (various weights) and a **mooding boss** (indented metal block) to create a uniform shape. Alternatively, the Mooder would use a **fly press** to cut the blades out of a flat sheet of steel, producing 'flyed' blanks. Arthur judge mooder

**Pen and Pocket /Spring Knife Forger:** (also called a **Pen and Pocket/Spring Knife Smither**) hand forged the blades from the blanks, creating the cutting edge of the blade with blows from his hammer. He then formed the shoulder/bolster of the blade by placing the blade into a **bolster print** and hitting it with a **striking hammer**. Next he used a **choiler** (an upturned chisel-like tool which was wedged into the left hand side of the anvil) to cut the choil (thumb nail groove) and another pointed tool wedged into the anvil to strike the nail hole. With 'flyed' blanks, the Forger used a **smithing hammer** to make the edge of the blade thinner and flatter without leaving hammer marks along the edge of the blade (which would have to be ground out, making extra work for the grinders).

**Pen and Pocket Knife Grinder:** sharpened the cutting edge on a stone grinding wheel.

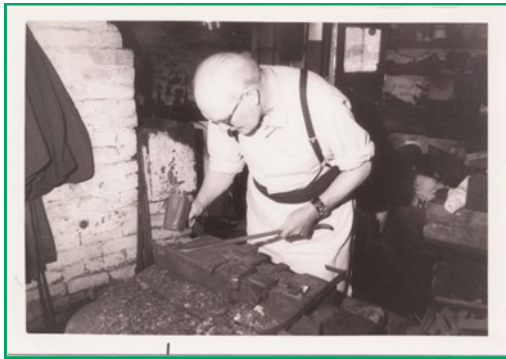
The **Pen and Pocket Knife Tanger:** created the tang (which went into the handle) of the blade using a **tanging boss** that was fixed in the anvil, to create the shape.

**Pen and Pocket Knife Cutler:** riveted the blades together, added metal spring linings and then riveted the handle scales (outer part) to the metal linings, forming the handle. Once assembled, the whole knife was buffed to a final glossy finish and sent to the warehouse.

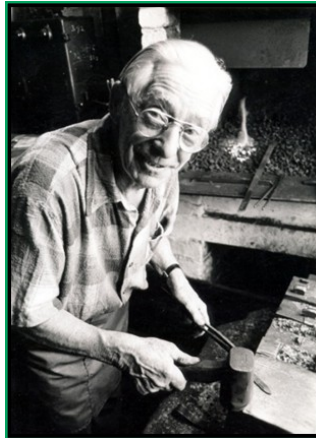
**Pen and Pocket Knife Scale Cutter:** provided the handle scales which were cut from a wide variety of natural and man-made materials including bone, mother-of-pearl, horn, wood, ivory, tortoise-shell, aluminium, brass, fibre, and xylonite.

**Pen and Pocket Knife 'Maker':** was generally the same as a forger/smither, though may have denoted a larger company that sold the finished work of other Pen and Pocket Knife craftsmen.

**Information from:** Ken Hawley, The Hawley Collection at Kelham Island Museum, Sheffield, June 2011



Pen Knife Blade Mooder



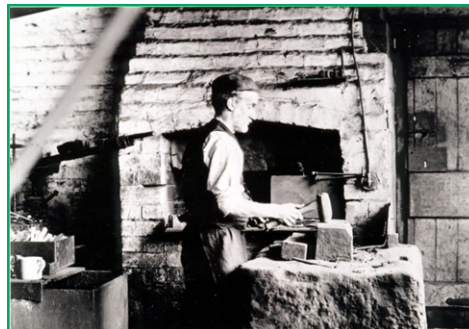
Albert Craven, Pen Knife Blade forger/smither



Bolster strikers



Pen and Pocket blade cutler



Pen and Pocket blade smither/forger



P&P blade cutler hammers



Pen and Pocket blade choler



P&P blades, springs and scales ready for putting together.