

Forging a Copper Cloak Brooch or Shawl Pin

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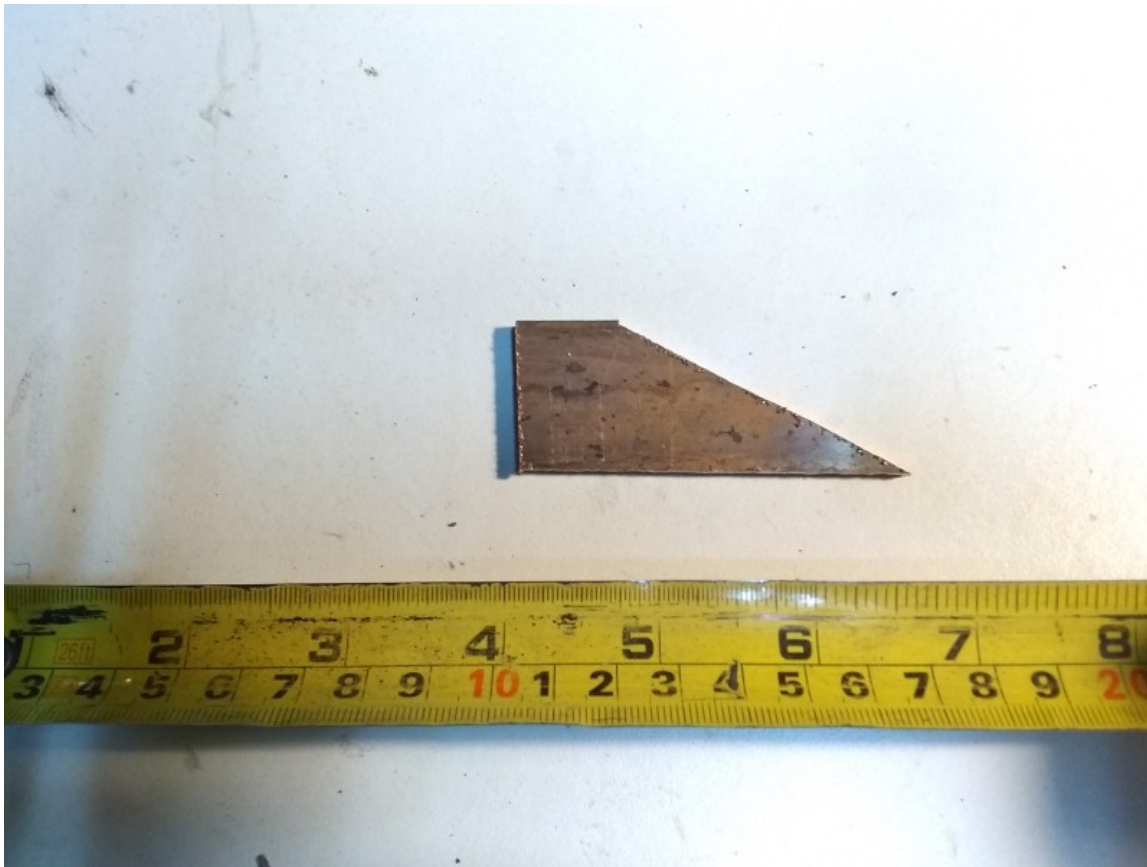
Years ago when I started blacksmithing, one of the small items I made were cloak brooches or shawl pins. These are on the jewelery end of blacksmithing. Steel is good practice but forging in copper or bronze is wonderful and adds to the jewelery aspect.



Copper creates beautiful highlights and being a super soft material works up quickly. The caution is that in our forges it is very easy to melt.

Work in dull orange and down for temperatures.

Below are the sequence and the sizes to make the above brooch. You are not limited to this style. I suggest playing around with some wire to see what works for you.



The original piece is 1/8th inch thick and 1 inch high in the photo and 2.5 inches long on the bottom axis. This shape is

simply convenient to pull out the long stem on the leaf.



This photo shows the initial forging to create a basic shape that I can then turn into the leaf and the stem. Here I simply knocked the upper corner (in the above photo) down into the bar, then reworked the point to give the short taper.



Next step is to shoulder to create the separation for the leaf. I did this in several steps.

I would work the shoulder a little bit, then turn the stem around and draw it out a bit. Followed by a little more shouldering, then the final draw on the stem. This hopefully will keep your leaf from

fracturing and falling off.



The photo at the left shows the stretch needed on the stem portion.

My leaf (which has not been textured yet) is roughly 1 inch long. The stem about 6.5 inches.

Copper being so soft it is easy to draw this length out over the horn as usual.

The next steps involve texturing the leaf.



This is a close up of using the cross peen of the hammer to texture the leaf. This is on top of a large bolt that I have forged to fit the hardy hole.

The first series of cross peens are lateral and flat with the cross peen, to stretch out the lobes of the leaf. In this

step you do not want to go too thin as the second step is to work diagonally to create the veining structure. This is shown in the above photo. The hammer is coming down on an angle so each dent is thinning on the edge. The bolt head facilitates the hammering off edge for the thinning and veining process without marking up your anvil.

Try some sample pieces in steel first. This texturing should be bold and not over done. If you use many light strokes you get a much more watered down pattern. A few heavy strokes give you a strong pattern.



Here the finished leaf with texture and overall length.

Creating the shape can be a bit of trial and error.



The brooch is shaped hot although photographed here cold. Use pliers that are round or that have the teeth sanded off. The copper is easily marked up with the teeth on steel tools.

I would suggest planning your design in a piece of wire that is about the same length. This will help plan out your steps.

The metal cools very quickly so have everything ready.

The shape should be pleasing to the eye as well as functional. The functional part is the pin has to be able to move and “latch” into position. That is to not easily fall out of position when there is fabric on it.



Above the pin has been forged out. This is also made out of copper and in this case is just a bit longer than 2 inches with the curl (which is still open in this photo). Both pieces have been buffed on the wire wheel to get rid of the thick oxide coating.



The final assembly is done cold. Make sure the pin is not too tight on the stem of the brooch. It should slide around easily.

To use the brooch slide the pin past the catch point and poke through 2 layers of cloth and rotate back into the catch point to “lock” it in. Coat with a clear acrylic etc. to prevent oxidation.