

Travel Scholarship Report for The Incorporation of Hammermen of Edinburgh

Giovanni Corvaja November 2025

At the end of November 2025, I travelled from Edinburgh to the medieval hilltop town of Todi, Umbria in Italy. The brilliant goldsmith Giovanni Corvaja set up his workshop here over 20 years ago, hidden away on an unassuming street on the side of a picturesque hill. I spent five incredible days with Giovanni and his sausage dog Vanja in this beautiful landscape.

Giovanni's intensive courses cost [REDACTED] my Airbnb cost [REDACTED] and my flights cost [REDACTED]. The remaining amount went towards material costs however in preparation for this week I invested [REDACTED] of my own in order to buy two 10g bars of pure gold. Whilst the cost of gold (let alone silver) is eye wateringly high at present, Giovanni is a master goldsmith and I knew that I would make the most of my time with him through working in gold.

Each day we began at 9am, stopped for an hour at lunch (1-2pm) and finished each day at 6pm. His workshop was a jewellers dream, every blow torch you could think of, polished hammers which lined the walls, state of the art machinery interspersed with equipment that had lived multiple lives. It was beautiful and inspiring. On our first day we sat down in his office and discussed what I would like to learn and achieve from that week as he allowed me to handle his work that he'd pulled out from his safe. My aim from learning from Giovanni was to learn and understand alloys and their compositions, to work with gold wire at a thickness of 0.1mm and to take steps towards creating a finished piece of wearable art from gold.

We began by creating a 22ct gold alloy, a reddish gold recipe popular amongst the avant-garde goldsmiths from Padova. I proceeded to draw 11g of this alloy down to 0.1mm, learning the correct technique for drawing, untangling and handling the wire. Giovanni introduced me to the mechanisms he uses to draw the wire down to the smallest thickness. Eventually I would turn all of this wire into dust granules.

On the third day I alloyed the other 10g bar into the same 22ct gold alloy. Through trial and error we were able to roll it down into a spherical 0.4mm sheet. I carefully raised this sheet into an organic bulbous shape. I will eventually cover this shape with the dust granules created from the wire. I have been continuing to work on this piece to turn it into a ring, however it is currently incomplete.

The practical skills and knowledge that I received from my time with Giovanni will stay with me for the rest of my career, his approach to how to think about and treat metal was enlightening. Each day we conversed about my project but we also talked about my attitude towards pricing, exhibitions/competitions, how to have a sustaining career with the utmost success and much more. He started to teach me what type of holistic outlook I should have on my career and artistic practise.

I can't thank the Incorporation of Hammermen of Edinburgh enough for facilitating me to go on this intensive course. This was a career defining experience which could not have gone any better had I tried. I would not have been able to work with Giovanni in this way without your support and I cannot wait to show you how I continue to use this new knowledge and skills within my career and jewellery practise in the future.



These images are taken from my course with Giovanni. From the walk down to his workshop in Todi, to handling his own crafted gold art, to technical explorations with wire and alloys. Eventually leading to the creation of a ring, problem solving and understanding its form to create my own piece of art made from 22ct gold. Whilst this piece is currently a work in progress I am pleased to be able to show its development and provide a brief insight into what it shall become using the skills that I learnt from Giovanni.



