

# WAVING THE FLAG

KEN NUTTING – WORCESTER FLY DRESSERS



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Organising a promotional event can be challenging at times. On occasion it seems impossible to get the right people to attend and the right team for your event. Here are a few thoughts based on our experience of organising a number of regional shows for the Worcester branch of The Fly Dressers' Guild.

## SELECTING AND LOOKING AFTER YOUR TEAM

What you want are willing fly tiers and perhaps other helping hands who enjoy what they do and are prepared to join in with the build-up and break down of your stand. If your crew aren't happy it shows and your visitors will notice and they will walk on by without interest. However a happy crew will attract interest from onlookers in what they are doing and people will readily take interest and all you have to do to get them talking is say, "Hello!".

The secret to a successful show is to have enthusiastic fly tiers who like to share their passion of fly dressing. Choose tiers who will be happy meeting other tiers and exchanging ideas, discussing materials, patterns and techniques and swapping fishing hot spots, as well as talking to people who have never come across fly tying or fly fishing before.

It also helps to have a range of experience amongst your tiers, for a number of reasons. Some people may be too embarrassed to engage with experienced tiers, and prefer to talk to people closer to their level. Beginners can also provide tangible evidence of what other novices could achieve with a bit of practice. Plus tying on a stand with the

proper preparation will boost tiers' confidence and could help create a wider depth of teaching expertise in your branch.

Sitting at a vice all day is not ideal for some, tea coffee and treats are great but most of my regular tiers like a walk around the show so you may need extra crew to cover for breaks and comfort calls, but most of all you must enjoy what you're doing.

## PROMOTING YOUR EVENT, ATTRACTING PUNTERS

Advertising, invitations and media releases all take time, make sure you plan when each of your promotional activities will be released and allow enough time for them to work. Sending electronic invitations is an effective way of directly contacting guests. If you are part of a large show, getting in the program is useful and will get you noticed before, during and after the event, so make sure you have your contact details included.

It's a fact we have to face: it's the free stuff that will bring people in: sponsored gifts are great they cost very little and they provide a link to associated groups. I have found from experience, the larger the organisation the harder it is to get a quick decision on cross promotion of anything. Sometimes it's not about just contacting them, but contacting the right person to develop an on-going relationship. A free raffle for a box of flies is also cost effective, after all this is what we are all about.

On a large show, banners and posters and notices pointing to your location are useful:

they get you noticed and help direct your audience to your stand; try to design them so they will catch people's interest and take lots of cable ties and stakes to place them at appropriate locations.

Consider including an exhibit, a speaker, a demonstration, a film or video; something fun such as an activity, maybe a guess the fly or a have a go at casting and of course try tying your own fly.

Ask yourself how you can make your event fun and worthwhile for people to attend.

## EQUIPMENT

Equipment can be expensive to buy so borrow or hire what you need, but use your own photos for displays of your activities. Contact the national Guild to see what equipment they have available for loaning out.

Targets for casting can be as simple as a hoop of old hose or use an old landing net frame and don't forget the safety glasses.

Above all remember to have fun with it!

Below are photos of some of the shows organised by the Worcester Fly Dressers.

