

ORGANISING FLY TYING SHOWS

TOM LEE – NORTH KENT BRANCH



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The North Kent branch have now been doing two shows a year for around twenty five years during which time they have raised around £20,000 for Cancer Research UK and The Leukaemia Research Fund. This article provides some very useful pointers to anyone looking to organise a fly tying show, especially if it's being done to raise funds for charity.

🕒 When we first started the shows the main intention was to encourage new members for the branch but over the years we have found this objective to be dead loss. Yes we have enrolled the odd new member but for the effort put in by the branch members the return is minute.

🕒 Our objectives at these shows are now to promote the Guild and fly fishing in general, raise as much as we can for the given charity, try for new members and - this is important - for members at the show to have an enjoyable day.

🕒 Organisers of the shows usually want a fee for the stand but if you can say that all monies raised will go to a well-known charity, then there is a good chance that the fee will be waived.

🕒 Our show days are on Bank Holiday weekends and members who attend year after year give up a lot of their and their families time to attend, so we encourage members to bring their wives, partners, children, grandchildren, along.

🕒 In view of the entrance cost to some of the shows it does mean some negotiating on the number of complimentary tickets. Explain to the organisers that we have people on the stand for perhaps only half a day and different teams there on different days.

🕒 Get as many flies tied in advance as possible by getting branch members to donate flies as this will enable the tiers to spend more time talking fish and flies to customers and persuading them to buy flies or make a donation.

🕒 Have a couple of members in front of the stand to engage the public with a bit of banter: "every fly guaranteed to catch, if it doesn't, bring it back next year and we will give you your money back. Conditions apply! All flies tied in a nut free environment." Our boast is that we have never had a fly brought back!

🕒 Give advice freely on fishing and fly tying. Do not simply concentrate on the fly in your vice and not engage whoever is standing in front of you. If someone, especially a

youngster shows interest, ask if they would like to tie a fly and help them to do so ... yes, we know about Health and Safety.

🕒 Do not run a raffle - some poor sod will have to deliver the prize at the end of the day when all he and his family want is get home!

🕒 On a practical level we charge 60p a fly but have found it best to card up five flies for £3.00. Packs of 8x5 inch white cards can be bought easily and printed up as you wish on a PC. Stick a strip of foam onto the card, insert flies and place in a polythene bag which gives a professional touch.

🕒 Later, once you know how much has been raised, contact every member who helped either by tying flies beforehand or helped on the stand and tell them how much we raised and thank them for their help.

🕒 Also, tell the show organisers how much you raised and thank them for inviting the Guild to the show, saying how much we all enjoyed the day and look forward to next year.