

Report on Weird & Wonderful Wood 2022

As a club, we first attended W&WW in 2010.

I became club secretary earlier in that year and I applied for the club to have a stand there.

Maurice Elliston had a large garden party tent that we could use, we borrowed Fred's generator, and we used John French's lathe. Peter Taylor suggested that we run a tombola as that had been a good source of income for his fundraising.

The event proved to be a success, and we did the same the following year. However Maurice's tent was getting rather tired, so with some of the proceeds from W&WW we invested in a commercial standard marquee to use in subsequent years.

And we have attended W&WW each year since then (except during lock-down when the event was not held).

We received notification and an invite to attend this year's event last November, and it was agreed at the November club meeting that we would have a stand there again. Members were prompted that we would need tombola items at that meeting (and subsequent meetings).

From previous years, we knew the format that works for the club. However, we had lost a couple of good volunteers. Maurice Elliston and John Gladders previously helped with setting up on the Friday, and did a sterling job of selling tombola tickets over the weekend. We needed volunteers to help in these areas.

Tombola prizes were a major concern. In previous years Peter Taylor had been very generous with his donations. We needed a lot more donations to cover this shortfall. Based on previous years we estimated that we would need at least 250 items. From the appeals for tombola prizes we received approximately 100 items prior to setting up for the event. Some were collected from two members with health issues. Committee members had also been busy making items, and we had some items carried over from the previous event) so we started off thinking that we have enough prizes for day one (depending on how busy it was going to be), and possibly the start of day two. While at the event some club members came along with more prizes.

The first day was very busy – starting off before the event opened to the public. Then it was busy all through the day. Mike, Stuart and Martin took turns demonstrating on the lathe. James helped set up and run the tombola. The weather was brilliant, sunshine all day. A banner that Ian had ordered, arrived the wrong size (the printers had ignored the decimal points in the sizes). But this blocked the sun from shining through the back of the marquee so our marquee was nicely cool. We really noticed the difference when we briefly got a chance to venture out into the open.

Day two was overcast with a very light shower early afternoon. We refreshed the displays, and we struggled to start the generator. However we eventually got that going. John Cuckow arrived to help. Ian, Mike, Martin and Stuart demonstrated on the lathe. The event opened to the public at 10:00 but it was a little later before we started to see people. Then it went manic, and it was busy most of the day. Suddenly (well that's how it seemed) it went quieter and we noticed that the flow of people was towards the exit. Then it was a mad rush to break-down the stand and get it ready for collection. Vehicles were only allowed into the grounds after 18:00hrs – then it is chaos. A one-way system was operated around the single track route (one way for most – some decided to go the wrong way). Stuart's dad came along with a van and was able to take some of the bulkier items, so we were able to clear site quite quickly.

Overall we did very well – doing better than we had done in previous years on both days. We promoted our club and potentially gained some new members. If people were from other areas, we would point them in the direction of their local club.

We met, and chatted with members of other local clubs. Like us, all clubs are struggling to get demonstrators. They are generally down on numbers of members – gaining some, but losing others. There is a new club in Norfolk – Wherry Woodturners, who meet in South Walsham (near Acle).

Many thanks to everyone who helped make this a success.

John Woods