



## LGW Courses Report 2022

Activity	No. of courses	Total participants	Female	Male	BME	Concessionary rate	Returning participants
Intro course	12	70	54%	46%	10%	30%	23%
One day courses	83	506	46%	54%	10%	27%	13%
Family courses	33	242	46%	41%	21%	n/a	13%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>14%</b>

## Compared to previous years

Year	Total participants	Female	Male	BME	Concessionary rate	Returning participants
2021	497	46.1%	50.5%	14.7%	1.5%	12.1%
2020	286	52.8%	47.2%	17.8%	5.2%	31.1%
2019	343	48.7%	51.3%	9.6%	8.7%	30.6%
2018	273	45.1%	54.9%	11.7%	9.8%	17.7%

## Induction to Membership conversion

So far 26 people have returned to the workshop (as members or to join another course) after their Induction course (37.1% of Induction course participants)

## Membership

Year	No. members	Female	Male	Low income	Unwaged	Asylum seekers	Growth in membership
2022	53	18	33	7	8	1	108.2%
2021	49	18	31	9	7	1	122.5%
2020	40	17	23	5	8	1	125%
2019	32	14	18	9	3		

## 2021 Census data

	Female	Male	BME
England and Wales	51%	49%	18.3%
London	Unavailable	Unavailable	46%
Hackney	52.2%	47.8%	46.9%

## **Course growth**

68% of courses were fully booked (this was highest for Induction and Family courses, 75% and 76% fully booked. In 2021 this was 73% overall, 83% in 2020. We offer a lot more courses than in previous years, and seasonal illnesses have led to more late cancellations.

Update of concessionary rates has increased. There are three factors in this:

- a) We can now set up a range of concessionary rates for all courses on the Obby dashboard. Previously people had to contact us to ask for the discount booking code.
- b) We have made more concessionary spaces available on our courses. We used to only offer them on weekday courses.
- c) Recently I have noticed an increase in low income bookings, which I assume is caused by the cost of living crisis.

In terms of workshop safety, we are almost at capacity for courses on our most popular days Friday and Saturdays. We also teach on Sundays, usually 2 per month. There is scope for evening classes in the summer, this was piloted during Shoreditch Design Triangle and very low bookings.

Our marketing could be improved, with regular documentation of our courses, methods and members work on Instagram. Instagram is most effective when there are last minutes places to fill. We could improve our use of tags. Our newsletter is erratic, but not flooding people's inboxes is probably a good thing. We sent 9 newsletters in 2022, occasionally 2 in one month and often 2-3 months in between, our open rate is 42-48%. Newsletters are most effective when there is an offer to promote. Our Instagram following is 2668. We have 1920 email subscribers. Mostly people find us through the website. We get an average of 116 visitors per day to the website.

## **Things we are doing well**

- People feel part of this community of makers.
- People know what they can do next (tools to buy, other courses and joining the coop).
- People have a lovely day, even if it's difficult or frustrating at times, they leave feeling satisfied. This is especially important in our work rehabilitating office workers, they join our courses on their day off they need to feel looked after and inspired.
- Lots of comments about the weather! We will continue to contact people in advance of their course to remind them how to be prepared for heat/cold if extreme conditions are forecasted. On the hottest days we offered people the chance to reschedule. We cancelled one course due to a storm and one course when a tutor got covid.
- We have a pool of 8 regular tutors and a couple of extras who do occasional sessions, so mainly we are able to cover for each other when it's needed.

## **Course reviews**

We had 137 reviews in 2022. 130 (95%) of these were 5\*. 4% were 4\* and 1% 3\*. Of those who left 4\* reviews most of them had no criticisms or suggestions, and left glowing reviews. Constructive criticisms were: noise from the road and a kids party at the farm, running out of time on the bowl turning course and bowl turning needing a better left handed set up.

16% of participants left a review. Reviews come through our partners Obby.co.uk, this kind of review culture probably encourages only amazing or annoyed reviewers, those who are in the middle are less likely to bother leaving a review. However participants also email us and their feedback is also always very positive.

## **A few reviews, selected at random**

*The spoon whittling course I took has been a highlight of 2022!! I loved it so much that I've gone on to buy my own spoon whittling kit and I cannot wait to apply my newly learnt skills and have a go at making a spoon.*

*My husband and I attended one of their Saturday family workshops at Hackney with our two children as absolutely beginners, and it went very well! Dave was very patient and kindly helped everyone working on their chosen project, and we also had the chance to interact with other families. Great experience!*

*Fantastic day, great surroundings, instructor was a great teacher, really clear and helpful. Ended the day with a great little bowl!*

*Highly recommend - a full day of fun crafting.*

*A very comprehensive introduction to tools, techniques, and members at London Green Wood. The four days can be quite tiring, especially if you're not used to using axes and being outside all day. But it was so much fun and jumped on the opportunity to join the cooperative!*

*I had a great four days learning how to properly and safely, effectively and efficiently use a variety of tools. This is a fantastic course to get you more confident using axes and knives in particular. My sharpening technique has greatly improved also! Recommended if you want a catch all introduction to green wood work, whether you intend to join the coop or not!*

*My first course at London Greenwood and I loved it! The day was well-structured as we learnt to use a variety of hand tools to carve out our bowls. Graham, our instructor was supportive and friendly. Lovely space too! I'm already looking at other courses to do :)*

*Great space and the class was so much fun!*

*My 7 year- old son and I had a great time at London Green wood. It was our first experience of whittling, and I couldn't believe how quickly time flew by. We really lost ourselves in what we were trying to do. It's not as easy as it looks, more practice is needed I think.*

*Fabulous course - so lucky with the weather and lovely tutor. Definitely recommend.*

*Really enjoyable day bowl carving, great introduction to working with green wood and certain tools. Might have a new hobby out of it!*

*I bought this for my partner for her birthday and the two of us went together in early October. We had Sam who was such an interesting, calm and engaging tutor - showing us how to turn a block of wood into a spoon. He offered one to one advice and made us feel capable when handling new tools. I also loved the way he talked so reverently about the wood. I left feeling so light, best Sunday in a long time. Have the bowl making class on my mind...*

*Really nice couple of hours, we both learnt some new skills from the very nice teachers. Most importantly my son has gained some safety techniques when using the knife. Very much recommend*

*Amazing - lovely setting , very friendly atmosphere and great teacher. Will be back for more!*

*The class was great. Was very intensive, starting with axing a piece of wood that was prepped slightly for us. Then we started turning the wood for many hours. At the end, we used a carving knife to get the stem out of the bowl. Dave, the instructor, was very patient and helpful. I definitely recommend this course, but be prepared from some physical effort. The place was fabulous in the middle of Hackney Farm, was a great experience overall.*

*Our tutor Jo worked very hard to guide us through the quite demanding (and satisfying) process of bowl carving. Each step was clearly explained and demonstrated and there was one to one help whenever we found things a bit tricky. Temperatures into the thirties were an extra challenge but I think we were all proud of our finished bowls. There was a relaxed and supportive atmosphere despite the heat.*

*Excellent 4 day course ,taught by very knowledgeable and helpful people. A great introduction to working with green wood. Totally enjoyable experience. Learnt a great deal.*

*Clear, kind, calm teaching, relaxed and focused atmosphere and lovely setting. Highly recommended.*

*Turning my own bowl was a great experience! It made me inspired to turn more bowls and other things in the future!*

*Brilliant workshop overall. Great tuition, lots of laughs and left with a lovely spoon!*

*Great little workshop, both my daughter and I had a great time, I appreciated the focus on safety with knives at all time. We'll definitely come back.*

*Great half day spatula making. Highly recommend doing this but do wear warm clothes if it's cold!*

*Very enjoyable time outdoors making spatulas, spreaders and spoons with lovely trainers. Not as easy as it may first appear, but there's plenty of help and guidance. Must try the wood turning next!*

*Great instructor, learned loads and really enjoyed it.*

## Recommendations

- prioritize a gender mix of tutors, especially where there is more than one tutor (eg. multi day courses and community/ private sessions)
- higher tutor ratio for corporate bookings. because individuals have not personally chosen this, more risk of people who are very uncomfortable with tools. recommend ratio of 1:5 or 1:6.
- aim for all courses to have their own dedicated tools (except for axes), that cannot be used by other coop members. tutors for that course have responsible for maintaining course tools and keeping them locked away.

## Course specific notes

- Bowl carving is our most effective at getting people to return to the workshop by a long long way. But in 2022 bookings were low and over half of courses were not fully booked. This was mainly Spring Summer and I can't explain why this was. 2023 bookings are good so far for this course and there are waiting lists. But recommend this course budgeted to breakeven at 5 participants.
- Bowl turning, is very popular. Our most popular for 2023 with dates full until May. We are still the only place in London teaching on a pole lathe as far as we know. Someone from the Brockwell Park group got Turners funding to do some courses with us. But for gender participation this is our lowest performing course (32% female). This is not surprising if you look at APTGW, Turners Company etc. But we need to do more to communicate that this course and turning in general are for everyone.
- Family Whittling is our most inclusive course for ethnic diversity. Data was patchy this year, but this is backed up by previous years. We haven't had low income spaces on this course in recent years, this was because it caused confusion with the booking system, but the obby system is more adaptable now and we could add these back in. We have offered free places on our sessions with Hackney Ark to people in our network (ie. families that have enquired before), this happened a few times this year but the families didn't always show up. At the end of 2022 we introduced a pay-it-forward option for the family courses, only one person has donated a place for a low income family, which we have not yet had a booking for. Ideally we'd have more low income spaces available so we could promote it more.

These courses are expensive to run, we work with high ratios and now that we are at the farm, tutors need to go to Abney to collect wood. There is an option to run these courses from the new children's garden at Abney, but don't know what the cost of renting the space would be. We could argue for a discount because Hackney would use our courses in their reporting to Heritage Lottery and they will be in need of more community activities. Hackney may also fund some family courses at Abney as part of their activity plan.

Second only to Spoon Carving, Family courses get a lot of people to the workshop.

- Spoons, we teach more of this than any other course. 35 in 2022 but only 60% fully booked. We tried expanding this course to every Saturday in 2023 but we haven't had enough bookings, in fact Spoons in booking slower than any other courses. Have slightly reduced cost in response, and can do this again in need to. In 2023 uptake of low income spaces has increased. There is demand to run 2-3 Spoon courses per month.
- Spatulas and Induction course both have slightly higher female uptake than male.

- Induction course has 30% concessionary bookings.

#### Monitoring improvements

- Online form for Diversity monitoring on courses, for each tutor to complete after their course.
- More reliable photo evidence of courses, will also help us to share and promote our work.
- Both the above to be submitted with monthly invoices.
- In future we could monitor no. of people who don't turn up on courses. This is quite high for Family courses, in 2022 there were also a lot of no shows or people turning up very late for Spoon Carving. We increased cost of Spoon Carving course and added information about turning up on time in the pre course information.