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FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2007

Dear Members,

This is the first newsletter I have undertaken for Suiseki Australia and I would like to welcome all of you from near and far.

At this stage our members come from as far west as Western Australia, then South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and across the Tasman to New Zealand. We also have a member from Germany and he is the one and only Willi Benz, author of many suiseki books and an exponent in the art of displaying stones. No doubt you would have all heard of him.

I will send a newsletter every month except for January. I would also like to welcome you all to contribute to the newsletter. It will be an open forum as we are so spread around the country this newsletter would be a great way of sharing our stone collecting stories both humorous and interesting, photos of your stones and any information on the displaying of them. Your attempts or new ideas at creating a daiza (stand) for your stones would also be invaluable to all members. It is also a great way of keeping the newsletter interesting and varied. These can be sent either to the postal address at the top of the newsletter or you can send them directly to me via the email at brendap7@bigpond.com

We are the only suiseki club in Australia (with the exception of a few very dedicated small groups dotted around) and if we can band together we could certainly be right up there with the rest of the other clubs around the world. Suiseki Australia has been going for quite a few years and up until now the distance between members has been a huge problem. Hopefully, with the electronic age it will be easier to keep in touch.

In this country we do have some great stones and our dedicated group in Sydney, I am very proud to say, has a really good collection of stones that have been collected over the years. We have had some really good stone hunting trips over time and everyone has been successful at finding that little treasure and had a lot of fun and found new friendships along the way.

Let me indulge you with a little history on myself. I am the President of the Illawarra Bonsai Society in Sydney and have been associated with bonsai for about – dare I say – thirty or more years. I have collected stones for as long as I can remember as I was growing up in Adelaide. How many trips we used to go on as a family to Halletts Cove for picnics and I always came home with a swag of stones and driftwood. Here's the spooky thing, I still have all of those stones I collected as a child, so collecting stones is very much part of my psyche. I even have a son who lives in Perth who is a geologist, so the genes certainly did cross over. Since being in Suiseki Australia I have learnt, along with the other girls, to make our own daizas with the great help of two of our clever woodworkers, George Reissis and John Cowgill. Our tool collection matches those of the men and we have all become quite competent and willing to share our experiences at making them. Our daiza making workshops have also become a very social day with a lot of fun and food to be had by all.

We will endeavour over time to discuss in detail the categories that stones fall into, ways of displaying them, making daizas, hints on collecting stones and how to prepare them to be put on display, and even some geological composition and history on how they evolved. Keeping in touch with Willi Benz and on the internet will be a great way of keeping in touch with what are the going trends overseas.

Suiseki, as in bonsai, have a lot of rules and in no way do we want to tell you what is right or wrong, but as long as the rules are understood your own interpretation on the art will make it as individual as you are. We will be sharing our experiences of what we have learnt so far and collectively we should get some good articles to share around.

So, please feel free to contribute in any way to the newsletter. Look forward to a long and happy association with you all in this fascinating ancient art form.

Happy hunting,
Brenda

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“A stone, to have real value, must be able to inspire the viewer to imagine.”

- Mr. Kato

GEORGE AND JOHN'S 'TIMELY TIMBER AND TOOL TIPS'

Hello 'Rockers', welcome to the 4Ts. In future newsletters we hope to give you some advice and tips that may help you in making your daizas and presenting your suiseki/viewing stones.

The Boring Bits:

As this is our first contribution, we feel that some safety tips would be in order.

1. Your eyes are probably your most important asset. Protect them by using some form of prescription or safety glasses. This is particularly important when using power tools.
2. When you are sanding, a dust mask should be worn.
3. Hearing is another important sense. When using power tools, ear muffs or plugs should be worn. Router attachments produce high decibel levels especially when more than one unit is being used.
4. Your rotary tools may be small but they can still cause serious injury if they are not used correctly. Keep your fingers and hands away from the pointy end. This also applies to knives, chisels etc.
5. Try to keep your work secured while it is being worked on. This can be done with clamps, a grip mat or bench hook (plans for this in later editions).

If you have some tips of your own and would like to contribute, we would gladly accept and acknowledge same. Likewise, if you would like some information on a particular subject, please let us know and we will try to help.

Next month 'Selecting Your Timber'.

So long till next time,
G&J

Our very first contribution to the newsletter comes from Frank Bryant, who is the Vice President of the Sunshine Coast Bonsai Society, a great poem penned by him:

When you take up suiseki and you start collecting stones
Your friends look at you sideways and talk in undertones
Your family will think you are crackers you can bet your cotton socks
When you come home at the weekend with your rucksack full of rocks.

You scabble through your bag of stones and discard all but two
Which look like distant mountains with a misty kind of hue
When cleaned and properly mounted and you proudly show them off
Your family think they are rather good and your friends no longer scoff.

Now you have your own collection, albeit there are only two
You start your search for that special stone, no plain old rock will do
It must have a lovely feature to set the stone apart
As a wonderful example of the suiseki art.

– Enjoy your suiseki, Frank Bryant

SUISEKI BADGE

If you would like a suiseki badge, it can be yours for just \$7.00 (which includes postage). Post your cheque or money order to the above postal address and don't forget to include your return name and address.

DIARY DATES FOR 2007

***February 21st** – Air dried clay daiza workshop.

- Discussing New Year stone finds from holidays.
- Selecting a stone for raffle prize at the A.A.B.C. Seminar in Melbourne.

***March 21st** – Discussing and showing animal shaped stones.

April 18th – (No meeting – school holidays)

April 21st – Daiza making workshop at Ray Nesci's Bonsai Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural N.S.W. from 9a.m.–4p.m.

May 5th – Stone hunting trip to Bombo Quarry at Kiama, New South Wales.

***May 16th** – Discussing and showing landscape stones.

***June 20th** – Discussing and showing pattern stones.

June 23rd – Daiza making workshop at Ray Nesci's Bonsai Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural N.S.W. from 9a.m.–
4p.m.

***July 18th** – Discussing and showing biseki.

***August 15th** – Discussing and showing object stones.

August 18th – Daiza making workshop at Ray Nesci's Bonsai Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural N.S.W. from 9a.m.–
4p.m.

September 19th – (No meeting – school holidays).

***October 17th** – Discussing and displaying coastal stones.

October 20th – Daiza making workshop at Ray Nesci's Bonsai Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural N.S.W. from 9a.m. –
4p.m.

***November 21st** – Discussing and displaying water pool stones.

*All meetings commence at 7.30p.m. (sharp) at-
The Don Moore Community Centre,
Cnr North Rocks Road and Parnell Street,
NORTH ROCKS. N.S.W.

If you know someone who would like to join Suiseki Australia, you can go to the website www.schoolofbonsai.com and go to the suiseki link and the enrolment form can be downloaded and sent to P.O. Box 4510, North Rocks, N.S.W. 2151. Alternatively, you can contact me on (H) 02 9547 2157 or MOB 0412 384 834.

FIRST MEETING – February 21st (7.30p.m.)

At our first meeting for the year we will be discussing and showing stones that were found on Christmas holidays. We will also be experimenting on having an air-dried clay daiza workshop. Bring along a stone(s), a hand towel, apron, glad wrap and an ice cream container with a lid to keep the clay moist when not in use. A flat board or tray to take your handiwork home safely afterwards. Lynette Smith is graciously bringing some pottery tools along for us to use and has also offered to guide us along the way. We will let you know of the outcome. Also please bring along a stone of good style that you may donate if it is chosen, with a view of making a daiza so we can present it at our first display at the A.A.B.C. Seminar in Melbourne in May for a donated raffle prize. The daiza for the stone selected will be a combined effort between all members at this meeting.

See you then,
Brenda
