



P.O. Box 4510
North Rocks
N.S.W. 2151
www.schoolofbonsai.com
Tel:(02) 9654 1893

MAY NEWSLETTER 2009

Dear Members,

One of my favourite television shows is the 'Antiques Road Show' from England, and you may well ask 'why?' I love antiques, not for their monetary value but for their history of where they first originated from and who made them. If those pieces could talk what wonderful stories they could tell us. I listen with abated breath at every word the expert says and to think some of these artifacts are still in pristine condition dating back to as early as the 16th century and are still in use today. The English people seem to love and thrive on tradition and this got me thinking.

Here in Australia, although we are a comparatively young country, there is not much tradition in our family keepsakes. Suiseki also comes to mind, and when I think how far back I was interested in collecting stones and I think of the collections that have vanished over that time, it seems such a wasteful shame. After all it is an art form, like those paintings, glassware and pottery seen on that show.

Collections of suiseki that have been lost or forgotten on the passing of such highly esteemed members of the bonsai and suiseki community here in Australia, namely, Jim Scott, Alan Cropp, Betty Bishop and Alan Rochester. There are no recorded documentations only a few scant photos that were published in the early days of Bonsai Down Under magazines. A lot of these are lost forever and it seems such a shame.

For those of us who are passionate about our hobby, it seems to me that we should all keep some photographic record of our collections for all to share. Today, with all of the electronic gadgets that are available make this quite an inexpensive way of keeping a record of our treasures. Digital cameras, for example, are easy to use and can be loaded onto the computer files and then later printed onto discs for time immortal. Not only photographic records, but some sort of brief description on its origin or where in fact it was found.

Those early pioneers of suiseki in Australia, had some wonderful examples and stories to tell of their stones and it is sad that we don't know where they ended up and also that we don't have a book of their documentation to be used as a learning tool for newer members and to compare the trends that have changed in this art form over the years.

Morbid as it may seem, we should all have some sort of documentation in place of what we would like to see happen to our collections. We have some wonderful examples of Australian suiseki that were actually collected here with hand made daizas and some of them are works of art. Wouldn't it be a shame if one day they were only tossed onto the 'scrap heap', so to speak! After all, there are people out there who are so passionate about their hobby that they would like to see some record of our former years of suiseki here in Australia and even the chance to own one of them for posterity.

Let us all start our own tradition as we have now become quite established in our knowledge and experience and have some wonderful suiseki within Australia. Be diligent and take the time to keep a record of your stones with a brief description so we can proudly say that they belong wholly and solely to our history of Australian stones.

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'Man is constantly adding to his knowledge of the world,
but to do any good it must be shared – by the people.'

- Alistair Cooke (1908)

George and Johns 'Timely Timber & Tool Tips'

May 2009

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

This month we'll cover more uses of the epoxy filler that we featured in August 2008.

Sometimes you collect a stone that is just not suitable to be displayed on a standard wood daiza. This could be an abstract stone or some type of animal or other unusual shape that can't be shown to its best advantage on a flat daiza. Some examples could be an object such as a boat sailing on the seas, a bird sitting on a branch of a tree or a tall narrow abstract stone on a fancy carved base. If you have the skills and the time, these types of daizas can be carved from timber and you will no doubt have seen and envied some of the intricate works that are a feature of many Chinese viewing stones.

With a little practice and perseverance you can achieve some very good results by using the above mentioned epoxy filler. To recap, the materials you will need are;

Tin of epoxy filler – this is also known as car or builders bog – Regular Plastibond is the recommended product.

Colouring agent; powdered oxide or liquid tint

Plastic film e.g. Gladwrap

Mixing paddle; narrow spatula / paint scraper or even a 'paddle pop' stick.

Flat plastic lid or stiff board to mix on

Disposable gloves

Do a trial run at first to get the hang of the technique required. Choose a small stone, anything will do and imagine the sort of daiza you would like. For instance, a round river stone that resembles an egg could be placed in a daiza that looks like a nest.

The first step is to estimate how much filler you will need for the complete job, it's better to finish the work in one go, rather than adding more filler if you don't have enough at the start.

Think about the final colour, the filler tends to dry with a cream or pinkish look that won't be suitable so it will need to be coloured. This can be done in 2 ways, either by tinting the filler before it is mixed or by staining or painting after the work is finished.

If you decided to add colour to the filler, choose the suitable shade of tint, in the example of our birds nest you would need straw to brown. Mix the colour thoroughly with the filler; this will give you the base colour. Once the colour is mixed you need to add the hardener. The normal rate is 1 part hardener to 50 parts of filler. This is about 1 heaped teaspoon (5ml) to 1 cup (250ml). This mix would take about 5-6 minutes to set so leave yourself time to work the filler. Use less hardener if you want more time to work the mix, it will still set but take longer. Mix the hardener and filler thoroughly on a flat surface that is covered with cling wrap or similar to prevent the filler from sticking to the surface. If you want to highlight the base colour with other tints you can mix this through now, just swirl it through to give different shades. You need to work quickly because the filler is going off.

Take your stone and cover the area that will be exposed to the filler with glad wrap, this should be done before hand to save time. Position the stone into the filler and start to work the surface to get the finished result. For the birds nest you would try to emulate grass or twigs etc. You can use any number of 'Tools' to do this, toothpicks, skewers, paddle pop sticks, small spatula, whatever suits your purpose.

Once the mix has started to firm up you can remove the stone. You have about 30 minutes or so from the initial set when the filler is like cheese. During this period you can trim or carve with a blade, after this time it will have hardened completely and be very difficult to work.

Once the filler has cured completely it is ready for final finishing. This could be painting if you didn't mix colour initially or spraying with a coat of clear finish. It sounds a bit fiddly at first, but with some practice you can get some very good results. It could be the answer to that difficult stone that you've been hanging onto, wondering how to display it. Give it a go.

We'll feature some pics of George's daizas that were made using this method in later newsletters; you will be surprised at the results.

So long till next time,

G&J

Meetings for Suiseki Australia are held at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks Road, North Rocks at 7.30 p.m.

We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of every month (except for school holidays).

Daiza workshops are held at Ray Nesci's Bonsai Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural starting at 9.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Details as follows:

20th May Suiseki meeting at North Rocks

17th June Suiseki meeting at North Rocks

19th – 21st June Wood Working Show at Fox Studios, Moore Park

20th June Daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's Nursery

No Suiseki meeting in July

18th July Daiza workshop at Ray's

8th August Daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's Nursery

19th August Suiseki meeting at North Rocks

12th September Daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's Nursery

16th September Daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's Nursery

17th October Daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's Nursery

21st October Suiseki meeting at North Rocks

14th November Daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's Nursery

18th November Suiseki meeting at North Rocks

Come along and visit us and learn more about collecting and enjoying suiseki and viewing stones.

ROCKY TIMES TO COME

An article in a recent edition of “The Land” newspaper reported that following the recent devastating floods on the mid north coast, a Coffs Harbour farmer’s prime paddocks have been ruined when the floods left them covered in rocks and stones. He is now facing a huge clean-up bill to remove them. Perhaps members of Suiseki Australia could volunteer to assist with the job, and do a little fossicking on the side.



This article was sent to us by Jan Briggs who now lives at Crosslands in Northern New South Wales. Jan has been a member of Suiseki Australia since its inception.

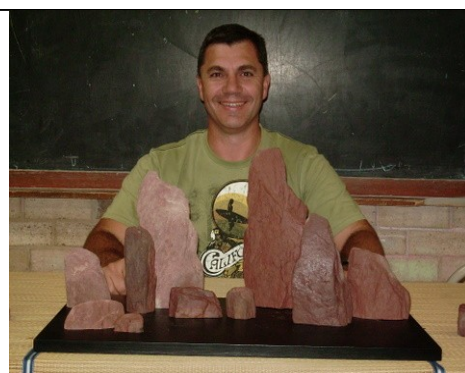
My Son who is a geologist and works in Libya, North Africa, went out in the desert for a field trip and he sent me these amazing photos. What do you think they look like? He traveled for miles with just sand and then from nowhere these amazing formations seemed to just leap out on the horizon.



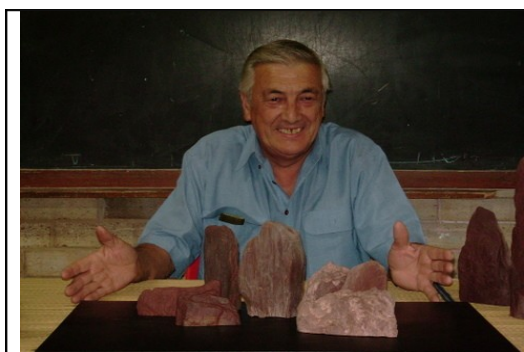
We had rather a fun night at one of our meetings just recently when I announced that we were going to have an 'adult playtime'. I have to admit there were a few gasps of horror but it was all in innocent fun. I had quite a few stones, collected from the Neragunda River, on the South Coast, cut flat on the bottom and everyone had to take it in turn to compose a little scene on a black display board. Below are the pictures taken on that night.



Georgina



Sergio



John



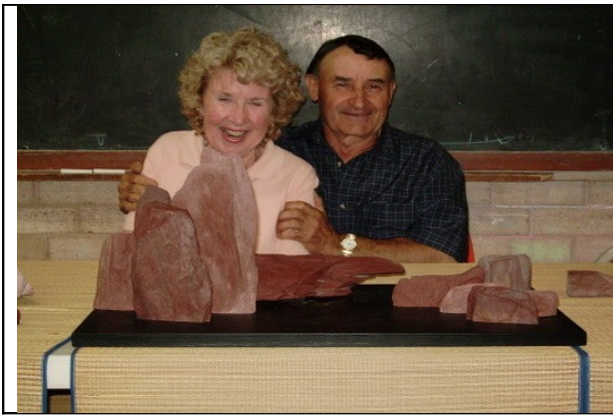
George



Dianne



Maureen



Last, but not least.

Ray, what are you doing with that woman?

Actually, they didn't want to do the stone arrangement on their own, so it was a combined effort.

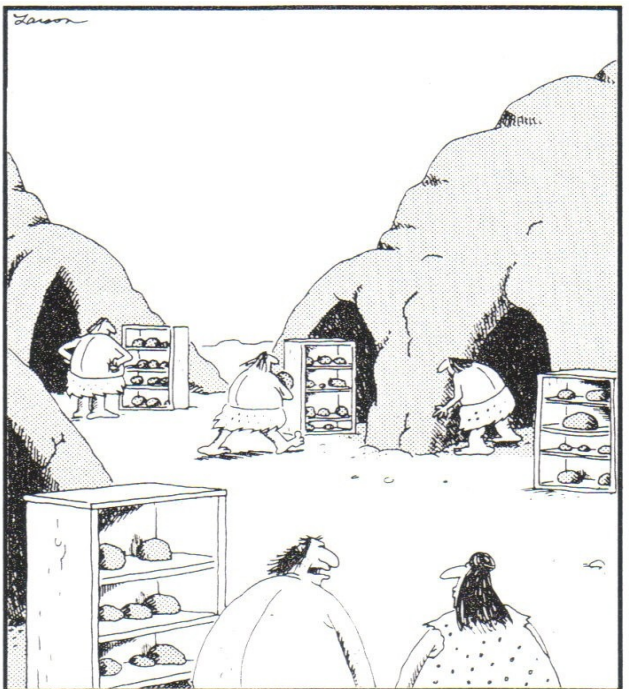
NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday the 20th May at 7.30 p.m. at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks, North Rocks.

We probably will not have many at this meeting as most would have already jetted north to go to the AABC Convention in Brisbane. For the rest of us we will further discuss ways we can document our stone collections and if you have some good ideas please raise them at this meeting.

Remember to bring a stone(s) for display complete with stand and maybe a very small soe or accent plant.

See you all then.



"You know, I used to like this hobby. ... But shoot! Seems like everybody's got a rock collection."

Sent by Georgina Kretschmar
(How cute!)