



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

JULY NEWSLETTER 2009

Dear Members,

How many times do you get strange comments from people who do not share our passion for stones? You try to explain the dynamics and aesthetics of the art and you get.....good for door stops, or good to throw into a lake or even worse, you have rocks in your head!!!! One bonsai colleague of mine only found out the other day that I have been collecting stones since I was a child – he was amazed that I have been collecting for so many years for one reason or another until I knew about suiseki. To add to this I am no spring chicken so it has been a lot of years and would you believe I still have a lot of them from way back.

My colleague then asked me what do we look for in a stone and after explaining a few tips I thought that it could be a good topic to, not only pass on information, but to reaffirm what we have already learnt or maybe have forgotten. Sometimes the most basic information gets pushed to the back of our memory bank until questions arise which arouse our learning instincts again.

I was reading an article by Kasiyama Tomisho and his thoughts on finding and looking for certain aspects in stones I thought was very interesting. He says that when you go out looking for stones you should always bring two or three home with you that you found interesting. Once you have them home changing them or creating a flat bottom is not necessary. The only thing that is important is that you have the imagination and sensitivity when you look at them. A stone is a natural element and it is possible that you can see in it the embodiment in miniature of a larger natural formation. Most importantly, to look at all of the sides and imagine whether or not an image can be seen on one of its sides.

When you are out collecting, our pre-conceived mental pictures are those of a mountain range for example, but there are stones that you find amusing and charming and they are those that maybe attract your attention like stones that have many colours, designs, patterns and when you pick them up you like the feel of them, the coldness of them, the hardness and denseness of them and even their age.

With these thoughts in mind when you are out collecting think, “where are you?” Does your area contain coal mines, granite quarries, caverns or even the head of a river? When you start noticing the surroundings where your stone(s) came from you will better appreciate them more. Inspect your stone properly before bringing it home and make sure the stone is genuine. Sometimes fragments of brick, concrete or slag have been commonly misidentified as natural stones. Weathering on these ‘fakes’ can sometimes mislead you into thinking that they are genuine. Rocks do get dirty and decay: wind and water make every type of stone slowly break down. Check the stone for any recent breaks or chips

and examine it in good light to check its authenticity. If you are near water, wet the stone and look at it again and this will also heighten the colours in a stone.

Another way of checking the stone is to see if it will crumble when tightly squeezed. These are the stones we do not want. Find a flat surface and scratch it with your fingernail and if it seems soft leave it behind. The harder the stone we can find the better.

Remember, finding stones that are important to you and that you find joy in are good suiseki. After all we all can't find perfect mountain stones or animal stones, for example. Mr. Tomisho only collects miniature or shohin suiseki – these are important to him.

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

‘Even for a Buddhist, life is too short to live with bad rock.’

- Shunmyo Masuno

George and Johns ‘Timely Timber & Tool Tips’

July 2009

Hello ‘Rock Hounds’

Sorry about the lack of TTTT last month but some things (like having a great holiday) you just have to do. It's been a very busy couple of months for us. Firstly the AABC conference in Brisbane, a great weekend was had despite the weather at the time. Good to see a substantial Suiseki display which may not have eventuated except for the perseverance of our president, take a bow Brenda. After 3 or so weeks of sightseeing and rock hunting in southeast Qld. and northern NSW (my tip here is to take less luggage and leave space for more stones), we arrived back in Sydney in time to make the last day of Bonsai By The Harbour (see the following tip).

Having just returned from 4 days at the School Of Bonsai Ideas Summit and workshops featuring Peter Adams and 3 well know and capable local presenters my feet our now firmly back on the ground and into the ho-hum of everyday life (can't wait for ‘The Tops’).

This month we'll bring you an idea that came up while watching a carving demonstration that was being presented at BBTH. The demonstrator was using a Dremel with a flexible shaft attachment. Normally the Dremel would be suspended from an adjustable stand clamped to the table or bench. In this case the stand could not be clamped to the table so the Dremel lay on the table. This caused some inconvenience as the machine moved around and was awkward to turn on and off. A table top cradle to hold the machine seemed the way to go, so we knocked up a prototype from some off-cut ply and gave it a trial. Feedback from the demonstrator was positive and with some minor additions this could be a very handy accessory. We hope to have a couple of these up and running for our next workshop and if the results are good we'll provide plans for DIY units in our next Timely Tips segment.

That's it for now, so long till next time,
G&J

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF SUISEKI AUSTRALIA

By David Robertson

For many years bonsai people have collected suiseki mainly from Japan. There was no organized club in Australia.

During a trip to the Canberra Bonsai Show in 1996, Ron Flack, George Reissis and David Robertson discussed forming a group and from that outcome it was put to the School of Bonsai Committee and Suiseki Australia were voted to go ahead.

The first meeting for Suiseki Australia was held on 16th July, 1996 at the Eastwood Town Hall. Fifteen people were present at the meeting and David Robertson was elected leader (Jim Scott turned down the nomination due to health problems).

The first newsletter was published in January 1997 and by July 1997, the club had 63 members.

The first non school show was a small exhibition of stones for the BCI/BFA Convention at Warwick Farm in 1995.

The first major Suiseki Australia Show was held at the Burwood R.S.L., Sydney, on the 30th and 31st August, 1997 with over 70 stones on display. A special cut glass trophy for Best Australian Stone was won by Richard Kong.

Suiseki badges went on sale in August, 1997.

In March 1998, Alan Rochester became President of Suiseki Australia.

September 1998 was a big month for the association as the show at Ray Nesci's nursery was filmed by Channel 10's Totally Wild Show and was aired some weeks later.

Ron Flack, George Reissis, Richard Kong, and David Robertson attended the 7th International Stone Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Ron Flack was 'volunteered' to attend a committee meeting of the International Stone Collector's Association, where we were invited to join the International Association, which we accepted.

On the 21st to 27th March 1997, Ron Flack, George Reissis, Clinton Nesci, Alan Rochester, Richard Kong and David Robertson went to Taipei and entered Australian stones in the 8th International Stone Exhibition.

During 1999 a stone was sent to China for inclusion in their permanent display being set up in Kunming. The stone arrived at the destination but was never to be seen again. David Robertson delivered another stone personally in September, 2000 with the hope of this stone going on display.

In September, 1999 there was another show in Taipei and a group of nine from Suiseki Australia attended. This was only one week after an earthquake shook Taipei and there was another one while they were there.

In January, 2000 the newsletter was renamed to the Forum.

In July, 2001 the Forum documented the sad news of Jim Scott's passing which was a great loss for Suiseki in Australia.

In November, 2001 Ron Flack and David Robertson returned to Kuala Lumpur for a Bonsai and Suiseki Exhibition. They met up with Willi and Gudrum Benz from Germany again and flew back to Australia with them. Willi's lecture on Bonsai and Suiseki was at the Burwood R.S.L. in the first weekend in December, 2001.

IMPORTANT NEWS - PLEASE READ

- I received a very exciting email from Chiara Padrini from Italy, a suiseki master in her own right. She wanted to make contact with us as she had heard good reports about our stones and our daiza making. She requested that I forward on her website address so she can share her love of stones with us and even to hear from us in Australia. Her stones are beautiful and she would be more than happy to hear from us and also to see some of our stones. The website address is www.padrini.it
- As we are affiliated with The School of Bonsai I was told by their publicity officer that a gallery has been prepared for us to put pictures of our stones on there. This is great news so I hope that you will all take advantage of this to share amongst us. You can send your photos to me or you can do it direct to www.schoolofbonsai.com and click onto the Suiseki site. For your security there is no reason to put your name to them but a brief description of the stone and size for interest sake. I have told Chiara that the gallery page is being prepared and when we have enough photos on there I will contact her as she is very anxious to see our stones from 'down under'.
- At the Peter Adams Ideas Summit weekend a very nice young gentleman call Steven got up and spoke about another website that is purely for Australian bonsai and anything else associated with this art. There is a suiseki page that you can also use to publish any information or pictures of stones that you have. As Steven told us all, it is not his site but it is everyone's site to use to spread the word of bonsai, suiseki and the like. I hope that you will take advantage of this great tool that we have at our disposal to spread any information around about our art form. Most of you would probably know about it already but for those who don't you can log on at www.AusBonsai.com to share, learn, promote and explore Australian bonsai.

WHERE AND WHEN

Our monthly meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month (except school holidays, December and January) at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks Road, North Rocks, N.S.W. commencing at 7.30 p.m. sharp. If you would like to contact me regarding any information on the meetings, daiza making workshops or offering articles to be included in the newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at brendap7@bigpond.com or you can telephone me at (H) 02 9547 2157, or on (Mob) 0412 384 834.

On the following page, one of our members drafted up this sheet so that it can be used to document our own stone collections. As so many collections have been lost over the years we thought that this could be a way of keeping records for posterity. There is a space to place a photo of the stone or you can use the template and print the stone onto it directly from the computer all on thicker paper and then place

them in a binder. At least if you cannot bring stones to display you could always bring your folder for suiseki members to look at. Please give us your thoughts or any alterations to the draft document.

SUISEKI RECORD



ORIGIN:

CLASSIFICATION:

DIMENSIONS:

HEIGHT: **LENGTH:** **WIDTH:**.....

COMMENTS:.....

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NO MEETING IN JULY due to the school holidays, **BUT** there will be a daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's nursery on the 18th July starting at 9 a.m. Bring all the necessary equipment and your lunch and if you visited Chiara's website we may have a discussion about the stones at lunch time. Bring your ideas about them along as well.

See you all then
Brenda

P.S. A suiseki friend of mine from interstate went to Europe for a holiday and on her return she emailed me these incredible gifts that were given to her and her husband by Dan Barton. The beautiful handmade water pool stone was made by Dan's daughter. Lovely to have good friends like that!
Enjoy.



That is some mountain stone!!!

If you received this newsletter by email, note the beautiful colour inside the water pool stone.
