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## **FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2010**

Dear Members,

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE!** Please send your cheque/money order for \$15.00 to Suiseki Australia, P.O. Box 4510, North Rocks, New South Wales, with your name clearly marked on your notification to ensure that your continuing support will help with the production and postage of the monthly newsletter for 2010.

Please consider if you do not already do so, to receive your newsletter by email, not only to save the environment but to enable you to see the pictures of stones in full colour. Please advise me at [brendap7@bigpond.com](mailto:brendap7@bigpond.com)

Welcome back one and all to another year and hopefully a very happy and rewarding New Year for all of us.

I had a very interesting day over the holidays when I stopped in (with prior permission) to visit one of our members on the South Coast to see his stone collection.

I was gob-smacked to say the least, to see what this man has collected over 20 years from as far north as Cape of Carpentaria right down to Tasmania, across this great country of ours covering every state and ending up on the far western coast of Western Australia.

He admitted to me that his knowledge of suiseki was non existent to minimal all of those years ago but since then has learnt so much just by being a member of Suiseki Australia.

I arrived at his house and the wonderful journey started as soon as I landed in his driveway. There were these incredible stones completely covering his gardens, under trees and along the pathways. Everywhere I looked I saw stones that were just amazing in all colours, sizes and shapes and straight away I could see that he definitely had a very good eye for what constitutes a fine stone.

We continued the trip around his garden and I could see he also had great insight into the composition and origins of the stones on a geological level.

He also had a small bonsai collection and there again these trees had the most incredible stones in their compositions. I aired my dismay and told him that most of them were too good to have trees growing on or over them.

Everywhere you looked around there were these incredible shapes that all represented something or another in nature.

Then came the piece-de-resistance when I was invited inside to view his collection in his 'stone' room – and I said, “*There’s more?*” I just can’t begin to tell you what I saw! Masterpiece after masterpiece and I could have taken each one of them home – from gorgeous little minis to larger specimens, all displayed on shelves even overlapping onto the floor.

Just to give you an insight to what I saw – there were pattern stones that looked as if they were painted by a professional, there were animals, mountains, buttes, escarpments, water pool stones, cave stones, human shaped stones and every other shape you could imagine – oops, even naughty ones! To add to these he had one (of only two) of the best Ayres Rock (sorry, Uluru) that I have ever seen displayed with the red sand that was collected from the centre of Australia. I was elated when I was given a bottle of this very unique coloured sand to use in displaying my own stones.

In this room he also had a bowl just full of stones that were heavy, shiny and *very* black. Stones that we were once led to believe only existed in Japan.

There was only one disappointment that I had with these stones and that was that these perfect specimens did not have any wooden daizas, although there were some that were displayed in suibans. I reassured him that he definitely had the best collection that I have ever seen and I only wished that he was closer to Sydney so we could help him with creating some stands at our woodworking workshops.

The one thing that I loved about his collection was that he remembered absolutely every location where he found the stones and that he has never been guilty of paying not one cent for any of them. To me a true collection! Don’t get me wrong here when I say that, as there are so many other good collections within our club but I thought that this was unique in that they were collected with no prior knowledge of the so called rules about suiseki in general and that they were a true reflection of what he saw in these stones all of those years ago.

If you could have seen the diversity of these stones, the shapes and colours, you can believe that Australia does have stones that are well worth looking for, so get out there, they are ripe for the picking. They are equal, if not better to what I have seen on the Internet and from suiseki publications from overseas.

I have to admit that I had the most heart warming few hours that I can ever remember. Good on you Ron and thank you for your interesting tour of your garden and of your collection.

Happy Hunting,  
Brenda

**THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**

‘Fine art is that in which the hand, the head and the heart of a man go together.’

- John Ruskin

Some photos from the tour of Ron's collection-



Just one section of stones in the garden



Some of the stones inside the 'stone' room



Ayres Rock



Mountain stone with waterfall

Club meetings for 2010 will be held at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks Road, North Rocks at 7.30pm. They are as follows and they coincide with school terms. Everyone is welcome.

17<sup>th</sup> February  
17<sup>th</sup> March  
19<sup>th</sup> May  
16<sup>th</sup> June  
18<sup>th</sup> August  
15<sup>th</sup> September  
20<sup>th</sup> October  
17<sup>th</sup> November

If you have an interesting stone tale that is worth sharing, please submit it for publication in this newsletter. The more we see the more we grow as a club. Please send any stories and/or photos to [brendap7@bigpond.com](mailto:brendap7@bigpond.com) and let's share the passion. It doesn't matter how big or small, any news is good news!

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

Welcome to 'Twenty Ten', just rolls of the tongue doesn't it. Hope you all had a relaxing break over Christmas and New Year and are all set to 'ROCK' & Roll once again.

As we said last news letter, we'll be doing a mix of tips and related articles this year, so for our opener we bring you;

### **'NEW YEARS RESOLUTION'**

Having worked up until midday on Christmas Eve and then helping the better half to prepare for and host the traditional family get together on Christmas day, I was quite prepared to vege out over the next week or so. After the first day of a double dose of DVD movies (it was raining so I didn't feel too bad about goofing off), I had the brilliant idea of cleaning and organizing my garage / workshop / storage area. My first task was to create some shelf space in order to store my bonsai pots in an orderly sort of fashion, at present these are stacked away in boxes and filing cabinet drawers. This should be an easy task, I thought, but to my horror as I looked closely at the shelving and what was taking up all the space were STONES. Stones of all shapes and colours and sizes, how did these get there I asked myself, I do recall picking up the odd small rock now and then but not in my wildest dreams could I have brought all of these rocks into my garage.

I immediately made my New Years' Resolution that there would be no more STONES. Not now, not ever. My first job would be sorting and clearing out the wheat from the chaff or YES!!!! from whatever. I decided to put the stones into categories like;

- \* 'This is a 'World Beater' 1%
- \* 'A nice Suiseki' 9%
- \* 'Good for rock style bonsai' 10%.
- \* 'Good for the garden' 20%
- \* 'Good to keep the neighbor's cat in line' 10%
- \* 'Good for nothing or WHAT WAS I THINKING' 50%

All of the stones that I collected seemed to have great potential at the time but in the cold light of day, or the confines in my garage, maybe it was a case of overkill. The other side of this excess is that if I were to make daizas for all these stones, I would probably be reducing the worlds' old growth forests by a considerable amount, not to mention the carbon footprint of all those hours on the Dremel.

So my task this year is to reduce my raw material supply, I'm thinking of throwing all the unwanted stones around the property and having a club fossick and BBQ. So once more to my resolution 'No More Stones', I'll keep you posted.

By the way, I'm going to Canberra for a short break and I've heard that Wee Jasper is worth a look if you're into geology and such. Maybe worth having a quick visit????

JC

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At last year's Christmas break up party we had a show and tell night and no one was to tell each other what they were going to bring. It turned out to be the best and one of the funniest nights we have ever had. There were lots of food and wine and a lot of camaraderie. There were some surprising and very funny (even naughty) goings on (stone related of course) and those people will remain anonymous, but it was all in good fun. Rolf gave us an interesting insight into a traditional German Christmas even bringing in a Stollen (German Christmas cake) that he purchased from his latest trip to Europe. We even had the pleasure of tasting it much to the surprise of his wife, who she says guards this Stollen with his life, so we were very privileged indeed. He even showed us pictures of snow covered

churches and mountains from his native Germany. His wife, Georgina, showed us her latest creations made out of clay – a magnificent Kabuki dancer in his radiant costume and a wonderful white rabbit.

We all took it in turn around the table to show our secret bounty – Joan showed us her latest attempts at making flat stands to display stones on which turned out really great and there were some new stones. John showed us a novel way to photograph stones by using Holland blinds secured to his garage ceiling in different hues to suit the stone being photographed and in different widths and all that was needed was to pull them down and when the photographing was finished he would just wind them back up to the ceiling ready for the next time. A great idea! There was one person who had something wrapped in plain paper and was very reluctant to show it and just looking at the look on his face we all started laughing uncontrollably, anyway, we won't go there!

It was a great night and a great way to finish up the year with friends who all share the same passion. I have included some photos from the night.



The illustrious 'group'!



Cutting the Stollen



German Xmas decoration

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“BIG” is always the best, well, I have to totally disagree wholeheartedly with that statement! Why you ask?

We always find stones that make a statement, not only in their stature but with their notable features and colours etc. and we can admire them for what they represent.

We marvel at what nature has manufactured and presented to us but when you find the same sort of stone but in miniature, well that can actually take your breath away. The minute features that are just so perfect in every detail just show you just how special they really are.

To think about how stones are made you wonder how over time the minute details remain so fine and delicate and the stones are just so recognizable in their form, texture and colour.

Good miniature suiseki are definitely harder to find than their larger counterparts. The detail on the small stones has to be in proportion with the stone itself and looking at the picture here of the distant mountain range looks so realistic and genuine that would be equal to a larger stone. The same would have to be said for the Madonna and Child stone also pictured here. The size of the stones is very apparent as they are both held in the hand.

Now, do you agree with me that “BIG” is not necessarily always the best???

P.S. Both of these stones belong to members of Suiseki Australia and both the daizas and the flat stand were also made by our members.



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Each month, for something different, we will include ‘A Rock Feature’ that may have interest to stone collectors in general. It will be a novel way of learning about the formations on this earth that have taken millions of years to evolve. We hope that you will find this interesting.

### **A CASTLE ON A PLUG**

Edinburgh Castle is visible from all directions, towering 260 feet (80 m) above the cityscape of Edinburgh, Scotland. The royal castle is built on the summit of Castle Rock, a volcanic plug that has been occupied since 900BC. Over the centuries, Edinburgh Castle was modified and developed as a defensive fortress, to the point where its walls now appear to grow straight upward from the vertical cliffs of the rock of the same colour. The castle’s might has been tested on at least 13 occasions.

Nearby Arthur’s Seat along with Castle Rock are the remnants of a volcano that erupted during the Lower Carboniferous Period, approximately 350 million years ago. Glacial action has exposed the internal structure of the volcano including its ash cone, plugs, sills and dikes. Castle Rock plug was carved into a classic “crag and tail” feature by glaciers flowing from the west. The ice pushed over and around the hard volcanic plug forming the “crag”.

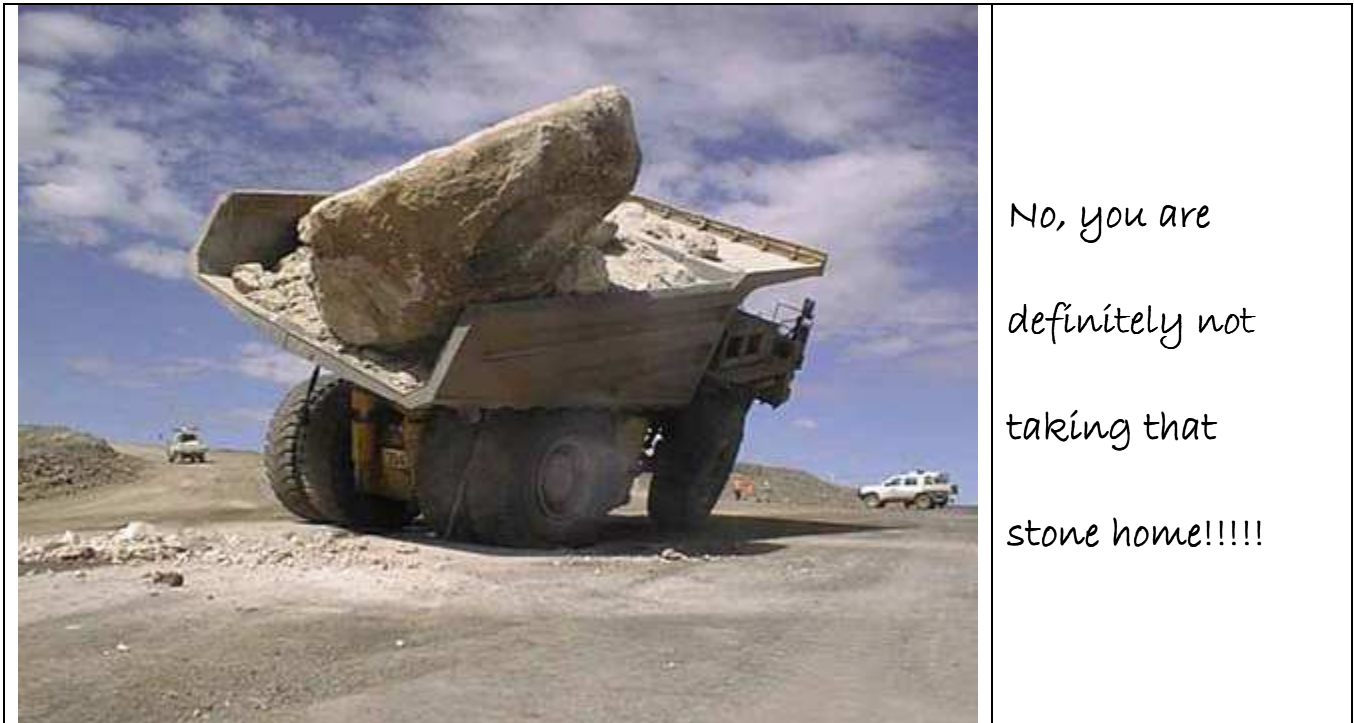
Another similar phenomenon is half way around the world at Mt. Popa, a golden Buddhist shrine dedicated to animal spirits on top of a 250,000 year old volcanic plug, near Mandalay in Myanmar. Another extensive Buddhist shrine complex is the temple of Borobudur in Java, Indonesia. A low broad basalt plug has been turned into an ornate stepped pyramid 35m high by the Sailendra Dynasty in the ninth century. It took about 80 years to complete.

*Reference: Geologica, by Dr. Robert R. Coenraads and John I. Koivula*

**NEXT MEETING**

The first meeting for 2010 will be held on the 17<sup>th</sup> February at 7.30pm sharp. Please bring along anything new that you have acquired over the holidays for another show and tell night. It will also be on this night when we can arrange future daiza workshops to be held at Ray Nesci's nursery. See you all then.

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No, you are  
definitely not  
taking that  
stone home!!!!

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