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JUNE NEWSLETTER 2010

Dear Members,

I just wanted to apologize for the absence of the May newsletter, as you would most probably know our bonsai club; Illawarra Bonsai Society was the host for this year's AABC Convention here in Sydney. I was kept rather busy leading up to the event and if in the past your club(s) were also the hosts you will understand what goes into organizing an event like that. Also this past weekend I was involved with the Bonsai by the Harbour event that was organized by the Bonsai Federation of Australia. My time was again taken up with that great weekend as well so now it is back to normality for me for a while, anyway!

Good friends not only in bonsai but as well in the suiseki world are just the most magnificent, thoughtful and kind people.....do you agree? I have proof in this statement as I am about to tell you of the thoughtful gifts I have been given just recently.

At the AABC Convention, one of our suiseki members from Canberra kindly donated to Suiseki Australia on behalf of the Canberra Bonsai Society a magnificent book for its library, complete with a printed certificate inside the cover to commemorate their convention that they had in 2004. The book is the Man Lung Penjing book by Wu Yee Sun and you can see more at manlungpenjing.org and it will be proudly handed over to Suiseki Australia's library at this week's meeting.

Another suiseki member from Brisbane who joined us at the event came bearing gifts for me in a plastic bag.....3 beautiful stones that he collected on a beach (oops!). They are very heavy and a beautiful deep maroon colour and I suspect they are ironstone. The patina on them is just magical and of course I will treasure them and I feel very privileged that I was in someone's thoughts. Just to think that he went out of his daily routine to go to the beach to collect them for me warms my heart.

At the weekend's event by the Harbour a dear friend who I haven't seen for probably 12 months or more couldn't wait to corner me to give me two packets with some treasures she picked up for me on her extensive trips both to Tasmania and South Australia. On the envelopes she had written from where she picked them up on her tours. One was a Gibber Stone from where else but the Gibber Plain. This stone is orange in colour with again a beautiful patina from being wind blown on the Plain. It just amazes me that we do have the stones here in Australia that we have been told that we should have for suiseki – smooth, heavy and have a good natural patina.

The other envelope had something very special inside that she picked up on a beach on King Island in Tasmania and when the tour guide told the group what they were she was amazed and she said they

were ‘crunching’ beneath their shoes!!! She felt awful to think they were stepping on them and they were told that they are smaller than those found in Western Australia; they are Stromatalites!!!! They are no bigger than say a small plum and of course as we all know they were the first life forms on Earth – many, many millions of years ago. To do justice to the poor things for crushing them she felt it was her duty to very carefully save one from destruction to give to me. Apparently the whole beach was covered in them and they were all virtually the same size. Of course it is no good for suiseki but I will treasure it in my collection of stone and gem specimens.

Over the years anyone who knows me well will always bring back a little stone from where they have been. When I look back at what I have received I think at how many countries my little collection comes from. The Vice President of our bonsai club picked up a beautiful mountain stone from Nepal when he and his wife were trekking there for 3 months and would you believe he carried it around in his backpack for all that time. It probably weights about one and half kilos so you can imagine at how chuffed I was to think he did that for me. Another member ‘stole’ a beautiful snow covered mountain stone from the Franz Joseph Glacier in New Zealand which I treasure. I have stones from all over Australia, Crete, Malta, Egypt, South Africa and even a small sample of beach sand that was specially shipped in to the Island where Cleopatra would spend her holidays. The island had no natural sand so this was specially brought in for her. When you look at this sand under a magnifying glass it looks like little round marbles and the member that got this for me told me that on this trip, when you walk on the beach with this special sand it feels very sensual under the soles of the feet because of the structure of it. That is probably why Cleopatra commissioned it to be brought in.

Now I can add South Australia and Tasmania to my very special collection that I treasure not only for the stones themselves but for the incredible people that I have also ‘collected’ as friends along the way.

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

This limerick was penned by our member from Eumundi, Frank Bryant-

‘A fellow called Frank from Eumundi,
went out to collect rocks on a “Sundi”,
from all of those collected,
only a few were selected,
when he sorted his treasures on “Mondi”.’

George and Johns ‘Timely Timber & Tool Tips’

June 2010

Hello ‘Rock Hounds’

The bonsai season is well underway for another year with a couple of club shows already staged and the recent AABC conference which was, by and large a great success. The Suiseki display had just the right amount of nuance, not overly done but with an understated simplicity, a case of less is more. I particularly like the illuminated display stands, they gave a very classy feel to the whole display.

In a follow on from our last Timely Tips for newer members, this month we’ll start to cover some of the power tools that while not an absolute necessity, certainly make life a lot easier. The most useful piece of power

equipment that you can acquire is a rotary tool aka 'The Dremel'. This modern equivalent of the chisel is a must if you are serious about making Daizas.

Did you know that the Dremel was invented by a Japanese carver in the 14th century? Unfortunately he had to wait a further 500 years before he could access the power grid!!!

Rotary tools are priced from as little as \$10.00 for a battery powered unit, up to \$300.00 for a stand mounted ¼ HP model.

Battery powered tools may be convenient to use but tend to suffer from low power and short battery life, this is also true of the Dremel, I would recommend against buying a battery powered Dremel for carving work.

Some brands that are available are, Ozito (about \$50.00), Triton (about \$120.00), Workzone (about \$30.00) and Dremel (\$95.00 to \$150.00 +). These brands are generally available from hardware stores such as Bunnings, Mitre 10 etc. (Workzone from Aldi stores) more powerful (expensive) units are available from specialized wood tool suppliers, Carba-tec and Timbecon.

If you are thinking about purchasing a rotary tool, shop around before you buy, prices vary considerably between stores. Cheaper prices can sometimes be found from on line suppliers but you need to be sure that the seller is reliable and that you have some sort of recourse if the tool should prove to be faulty. If buying from overseas make sure that the power requirement meets our standard 240 volt AC (American tools for their home market are 110 volt AC).

From feedback and our own experience over the last few years, the Dremel seems to be the best tool to purchase. While these are in the higher end of the price range they appear to be better built and don't suffer from some of the burnout issues that afflict other makes. Also there are a lot of accessory items which only the Dremel brand has. It is almost impossible to get even the most basic spare parts for Ozito so if it should fail you'll have to throw it away and start again. This could also apply to Workzone tools. More on power tools to come.

Once again the Timber and Woodworking Show is about to hit Sydney, dates are 18-19-20th June.

If you have time, it's always worth a visit to see the latest in tools and craft and a chance to pick up some good timber pieces at reasonable prices, see you there.

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



*Two photos of the stones that were exhibited at the recent 23rd AABC Ltd Convention – more later in this issue.

DAIZA WORKSHOP

This coming Saturday, the 19th June a daiza workshop is scheduled at Ray Nesci's Nursery, Sagars Road, Dural at 9 am.

Bring along your tools, wood, stones and of course your lunch.

This next article was printed in the recent copy of the European Suiseki Association Issue 2/2010 which I thought would make for interesting reading. Ed.

ELBA – wandering for stones

By Milan Klika

“I sailed in an empty red boat not held back by anyone towards a red island of Ilvu. I looked through the mines there and yet untouched red fields and I made sure by own eyes that such boundless deposits of ore and pure iron cannot be found anywhere else in the world.”

Words of the main character in Mike Waltari’s novel “Mysterious Tuscan” appropriately describing the importance of a small island Ilvu, today’s Elba.

The iron ore was mined on this island ever since the Iron Age, when the Tuscans built their first smelting furnaces there. A characteristic fire glow was coming out of them for hundreds of years. The Greek name Aithalia – “Glittering” has been preserved from there. The island attracted powerful lightnings during storms, which are said to assist the creation of the bolt cult. They meant the impulse for building cathedral, whose priests were going through a ceremony, during which they were exposed to their discharges. Those who survived were then consecrated by the God himself. Another influential God in this area was the God of iron, who had his own cathedral situated on the near-by shore. In later times wealth in raw materials on Elba insured good business for the Romans and all the following cultures until the second half of the 20th century. Nowadays the areas of mining are deserted and attract collectors of minerals and beautiful stones only. Although such activities are officially prohibited, they are tolerated. Suiseki collectors are mostly interested in areas, where the ore veins run into the sea. Permanent sea rush washes and shapes the stones there. During the rock-forming processes typical rock-forming was acquired by ore smelting and by discharging it into soft layers. We may find ferrous stones, called “ferros” on the island on some beaches, where they are rolled from steep shores. Other options how to get them are diving and gathering them straight from the sea bottom. Exploration of huge iron cliffs smoothed into curious shapes by the sea is a great experience. Water leaking through cracks stinks of sulfur, is mixed with omnipresent iron and makes small lakes of unbelievable orange colours. Black sand is full of shiny pyrite and one feels as if he has just visited the smith of God Hefaistos. Apart from iron ore, copper was also extracted on the island. It still gives interesting green effects to some stones. The combination of dark brown basis with gentle veining is particularly beautiful.

The whole area is remarkably varied in colours. While wandering along the shore we may find beaches close to one another, that are white, green, black and brown or really multicoloured, where it is possible to find stones of extraordinary, impressive tones. From the above mentioned it is evident that we are in the paradise of suiseki lovers. Exciting experiences wait for them even at home when they are cleaning their bags. Large number of stones are covered by tough clay that is necessary to be removed after careful washing. By gradual cleaning we can discover several holes that are linked in secret cavities inside the interesting parts of the stones. By numerous punching and chinks forming bizarre texture on the outside, we can feel the inside world of the stone. This fact gives them a really unique meaning. I can recommend the journey to Elba not only to those who long for relaxation by the sea but also to more active lovers of nature. There are lots of calm admirable places, where you merge in the nature and devote your gathering passion unmolested.



*More photos from the 23rd AABC Ltd Convention held in Sydney a few weeks ago.

DATES OF COMING EVENTS

18th – 20th June, 2010 – Timber and Working with Wood Show, Fox Studios, Moore Park, Sydney.

17th & 18th July, 2010 – Campbelltown Annual Gem, Mineral and Jewellery Show, Community Hall, Queen Street, Ingleburn.

21st & 22nd August, 2010 – Blaxland Gem & Mineral Club Show, Hall on side of Glenbrook Theatre, Great Western Highway, Glenbrook. (Just near information centre).

21st & 22nd August, 2010 – Cumberland Gem Show, Roselea Community Centre, Pennant Hills Road, Carlingford.

18th September, 2010 – Nepean District Lapidary Club Open Day, 12 North Street, Penrith.

12th – 14th November, 2010 - Parramatta-Holroyd Lapidary Club Annual Exhibition, 73 Fullagar Road, Wentworthville.

NEXT MEETING

This meeting will be held on Wednesday the 16th June, 2010 at 7.30pm sharp. Could everyone bring along a stone displayed in a suiban complete with sand, stand and soe. Also any new ‘Show and Tell’ items that would be of interest. See you all then.

**** CONGRATULATIONS! ****

Go to

Neville Althaus for being awarded the BCI (Bonsai Clubs International) recognition for The Most Outstanding Suiseki exhibited at the AABC National Seminar, Bankstown 2010 for his 'Madonna & Child'

And

George Reissis for also being awarded a certificate of recognition from the WBFF (World Bonsai Friendship Federation) for his Outstanding Suiseki of an 'Escarpment Stone' also displayed at the recent 23rd AABC National Seminar, Bankstown, Sydney 2010.

THE LAMENT OF THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Do you like your Newsletter?
We really hope you do,
We'd like to make it better
But we need some help from you.
If you have a little anecdote,
Something that happened to you,
Even perhaps a poem you wrote,
That would be something new,
Or perhaps you found an article
While surfing on the net;
Be it serious or farcical,
No censorship as yet.
Please put on your thinking caps
And see what you can find,
'Cause filling all the page gaps
Really is a bind!!!!

By Frank Bryant, July 2007

