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### **JUNE NEWSLETTER 2011**

Dear Members,

Just recently another suiseki member and I ventured to Western Australia to attend the AABC bonsai convention in Fremantle.

At the convention we were glad to see a varied and good display of suiseki. Some of them were amazing and they were beautifully displayed and they all had stands.



*A couple of photos of the display plus a very interesting 'bacon' stone that looked good enough to eat!*

On arriving on the Friday at lunchtime, we decided to visit the markets which were in walking distance of the hotel. We had word that there were quite a few specimen stone shops in the area and we needed to investigate. We walked and walked, found lots of places but not successful ones. They were mainly shops selling polished stones and some jewellery. The only things that we gained were a good knowledge of Fremantle and a blown-out newly purchased umbrella due to the driving rain and wind.

We got back to the hotel drenched and totally tired as we had walked solidly for about 5 hours (seeing that we had gained another extra 2 hours coming from Sydney). What we will do to find some stones, but it was worth a try.

At the last stone shop we visited a lovely couple made us feel very welcome and they had a few pieces of stone but not what we were after. Some of their jewellery made from these stones was just lovely

and as we got to talking to the husband who sort of knew what we were on about with suiseki. He had prior knowledge of what we were after so instead he showed us this lovely stone with all the colours imaginable and they told us it was Mookaite Jasper. He gave us a bit of a screed on the information on this stone which is just amazing.

### **MOOKAITE JASPER**

Mookaite Jasper is also known under many other names such as mookalite, mookerite, moakite, moukalite and moukaite. However, mookaite is considered the proper spelling and is named after the local area it comes from, Mooka Creek in the Kennedy Ranges near Gascoyne Junction which is 100 miles inland from the coastal town of Carnarvon in Western Australia.

Mookaite is only found in Australia and is actually a fossiliferous sedimentary rock. Microscopic examination shows this rock consists of the remains of tiny organisms known as radiolaria that have an unusual skeletal structure of opaline silica. Billions of these little critters were deposited as sediment in the shallow areas of ancient sea beds. When the seas retreated, these sediments were cemented into solid rock by silica carried in groundwater. The type and degree of silification varies from place to place, forming opalite, chert and chalcedony.

It has been found in many bright colours of reds, purples, tan, snow white, ivory white, pinks and other colours. Sometimes if you are lucky you may find black dendrites and in the masterful hands of a lapidarist the cabochons can be extremely stunning especially when you come across a nice dendrite tree. The more beautiful the dendrite tree inclusions are the more expensive the stone is.



*Three fine examples of Mookaite in their polished forms. In the raw state this stone is just as beautiful but trying to get some pieces that would be suitable for suiseki is a task indeed.*

In the vendors area of the convention, the host club had a stall with ‘bibs and bobs’ of all things bonsai but on the floor under the table we saw a box filled with beautiful stones, heavy, dense and with a good patina. We were there on our hands and knees fossicking and hey presto; we were in luck and got some great stones for very cheap. People were coming up to us and asked what we were buying and we told them but by that time we had nearly cleaned up the treasures. I guess you just have to dive in when you strike it ‘rich’! Some of the customers were members of the general public and I think they thought we were quite mad and it must have looked as though we were digging for a

diamond mine!!! It was just so nice to come back home with some stones from W.A. especially after all the walking we had done the day before in the pouring rain.

I must say though we had a great time in Fremantle with some amazing memories to bring back home...and a few stones as well!!

Happy Hunting,  
Brenda

### THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

‘Rocks are the pages of Earth’s diary, and fossils are the words on the pages recounting surprising details of the history of life.’

-Anon



*Another stone that was on display in Fremantle – what a beautiful bonsai tree!*

*In the buffet area were these ‘stone’ lamps so I asked the Manager if I could take a photo and publish it in our newsletter – I did get some strange looks from him I must say!*

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George and Johns ‘Timely Timber & Tool Tips’

June 2011

Hello ‘Rock Hounds’

No tips this month as the better half (*no, not George!!*) and I are about 25 days into our WA holiday, so an article on our travels to date.

We left Sydney and had an easy 10 day drive across the southern part of this great country. We spent 4 days travelling around the Eyre Peninsular, stopping at Cowell – world’s best oysters and Australian black jade. Coffin Bay – worlds 2<sup>nd</sup> best oysters and beautiful fresh seafood. Ceduna – start of the great Nullabor crossing. Stopped at quite a few places along the way looking for suiseki stones but



either not interesting enough or much too difficult to get to without risking life or limb, I'm talking about scrambling down cliffs along the very rugged coastline, definitely a young man's game.

Whoever said that driving the Nullabor was boring only had eyes for the road (not a bad thing to be doing given the amount of caravans and road trains that use the road). Sure, there are no decent trees to be seen but the landscape is ever changing with low scrubby plants such as salt bush, blue bush and other hardy ground plants with the occasional myall (acacia sp) for some height. From a hundred metres in the air, the scenery looks brown and boring but at ground level it's anything but, with shades and textures from blue greys to green. Lots of signs warning about wild animals on the road but didn't see any Camels, Emus or 'roos, except for the carcasses along the verges. Where in Sydney can you drive along the road and see Wedge Tail eagles feasting on last night's road kill, absolutely fantastic!!) All this but NOT MANY STONES!

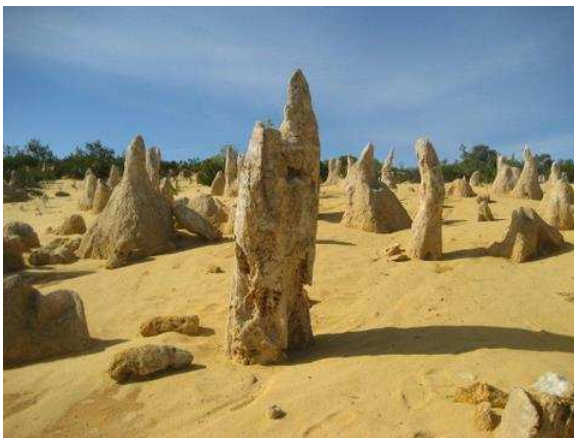
The AABC convention was good with a lot of effort being put into the weekend by the host club. Top marks for displaying many outstanding native plants as bonsai. A very nice display of suiseki was on show but I would've liked to have seen more Aussie stones on display, particularly some from the unique areas of WA.

After a few days around Perth, we travelled north with the first stop at Nambung National Park, just south of Cervantes, which is primarily a fishing town, as are a lot of towns along the coast. Nambung Park is the home of the world famous Pinnacles Desert. The 'Pinnacles' are limestone formations that rise from the sand dunes in an eerie other world like vista. The limestone formations range from a few centimeters to 3 meters tall and in a wide variety of shapes. In viewing stone classifications there are many different styles, just a pity that 99% are too big to worry about and the other 1% are closely guarded by very keen park security staff (probably heard that we were coming). There is still some controversy as to how these amazing natural outcrops / stones were formed. Both theories agree that plant material was a major influence in the formation. One is that they were formed from plant roots which over time, due to the acidic nature of the surrounding soil allowed the roots to calcify and become harder than the surrounding sand. The other theory is that the pinnacle formations are the remains of a petrified forest that, being due to the extra acidic nature of the surrounding soil, were not eroded as much as the sand dunes that are predominant in the area. Whatever the reason, these formations are truly unique and worth viewing if you ever happen to be in this neck of the woods /dunes.

Check out the photos and 'Google' the Pinnacles for further info on this very unique Aussie location.

So long till next time,

G&J (&D)



*The photos sent by John of the Pinnacles in Western Australia. Do you want a daiza or suiban with that??*



*More from the Pinnacles – a perfect water pool stone.*



*Excuse me madam, what would you be picking up? Just looking I presume!!*

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### **NEXT MEETING**

Our next meeting will be on the 15<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm sharp.

Bring along any new stones (procured from Fremantle) or any recent stone hunts.

Also it will be a photography night to keep our stone register up to date. Bring along your good stones that you will want to be kept documented for future members to see. George will be taking along his photography cubicle for us to use.

See you all there.



*The beautiful Carnarvon Gorge*