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JULY NEWSLETTER 2011

Dear Members,

For something a bit different it was thought to talk on a few topics for a varied newsletter.

TOPIC 1

At every club meeting George comes up with a surprising ½ hour talk that has everyone riveted to their seats.

A couple of meetings ago he came up with the idea for a way to enjoy those stones that either don't have a daiza or to show just another way to display them indoors or even more so, alongside your bonsais at a show.

All you need is a very shallow pot or tray and it really doesn't matter if they have drainage holes or not. Collect mosses of different colours (there is plenty around after all the rain we have had), and place in the trays on a little potting medium and artistically place the stones on it, e.g. a hut stone, mountain stone or even an abstract stone and this will be only guided by your imagination. The great thing about this is that you can enjoy these 'fantasy' trays in your home and it doesn't cost anything to replace the moss. It doesn't matter what season it is and the arrangement can be changed daily, weekly or even monthly. A great way of bringing the outdoors indoors on these cold wintry days.



A couple of examples of George's moss gardens.

TOPIC 2

Do you have an old and unused electric toothbrush? Well, one member came up with this ingenious idea of turning it into a miniature sander for those small intricate daizas. All you need to do is to glue a small piece of balsa wood on the bristles of the toothbrush about 1/16th to 1/8th of an inch thick. Be careful not to allow the glue to clog up the bristles too much otherwise the electricals won't work. Then on the balsa wood you can glue different grades of white aluminium sandpaper. These can be

then cut quite easily to shape with a pair of scissors. This then becomes a miniature orbital sander. Most electric toothbrushes come with 3 or 4 separate brushes and you can glue a different grade of sandpaper on each one to complete the set.



TOPIC 3

Due to work commitments I was unable to attend the Bonsai by the Harbour event a couple of weeks ago at which I was supposed to do a talk and workshops on air-dried clay daizas. I delegated 'The Three Suiseki-teers' to fill in for me and to them I would like to give them my heartfelt thanks for taking over the helm. They are George, Sergio and Joan and what I heard everyone was very curious and eager to learn how to make them and in that way they have an easy way to put their stones on display and enjoy them, even though they don't have all the woodworking arsenal that we have at our disposal.

Hopefully after the clay daizas have all been completed I am hoping that the attendees of the workshop will send me some photos.



George, Sergio and Joan hard at work on the clay daizas.

TOPIC 4

I have read many articles on suiseki and the taboo subject that keeps cropping up is that cutting the bases or altering stones in any way, is a no-no. I don't think that there is a general rule that it should never be done, but there are exceptions to the rule. I have seen a lot of stones from overseas and if these stones were not cut to form a flat base a lot of them would just look like ordinary lumps of stone. I have a couple of stones in my own collection and if it wasn't for the flat bases these mountain stones could never be seated into a thin flat daiza. It would be an impossibility. It is the shallow fine wooden (or clay) daiza that gives the mountain stone a majestic feel to the viewer.

I happen to have rescued a magnificent stone from a lapidary club throw out bin and now I have 2 magnificent stones set on wooden daizas that would have been destined for the tip.

Speaking of altering stones, many years ago I purchased a very large mountain stone at a convention – it was a waterfall stone about 40 cms high. The actual 'waterfall' was painted on with white-out, the synthetic word correction fluid used in many offices to correct spelling errors. It literally took me weeks to remove this stark white 'paint' with both acid and paint stripper. The stone is just so magnificent on its own and the 'waterfall' stands out very well without that stark white blaze down the front.

I do admit that if you have a near-perfect stone with the exception of a sharp protrusion, why isn't it okay to soften the sharpness with an emery stone on a Dremel? I can't see the problem at all and I don't think that there are too many stones out there that would be absolutely perfect. Using discretion and common sense is the way to go – do you agree?

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'Great things are not done by impulse,
But a series of small things brought together.' - Vincent Van Gogh

George and Johns 'Timely Timber & Tool Tips'

July 2011

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

Travels in the West continued.

As this goes to press (as they say in the trade) we will have finished our WA trip and returned to Sydney. Our holiday was a great success, being able to visit some of the areas of West Australia that we'd heard about and be able to see places such as The Pinnacle Desert at Cervantes, The World Heritage area of Shark Bay including the dolphins at Monkey Mia. The Ningaloo Reef, which is one of the most beautiful and unspoiled places that you could hope to see. All this and many more places that we in the eastern states can't imagine, WA is indeed another country.

Our trip consisted of driving our car across the country to Perth, then hiring a large campervan to spend 3 or so weeks looking at as much as we could in that time and then returning to Sydney by train. As we said last month, the trip across was very interesting. Driving the Nullabor is something that is on a lot of people's 'Wish List' and it was a great experience, it's one of those things that most male drivers seem to want to do.

Driving our motor home around the countryside in WA was a different experience altogether. While it was very well appointed with all modern cons. including double beds, kitchen and bathroom (well almost), it did have some drawbacks. Being a self contained unit means that every time you want to

drive down to the local shops for a bottle of milk (or wine), you have to disconnect the life support system (read electricity and water supply and drainage), secure all fixtures and fittings and drive off, usually to the best wishes for a safe trip from the occupants of the neighboring site. Their well meaning looks turn to smug chuckles when you mumble something about just going down to the bottle shop for a bottle of Chardie!! The other disadvantage is that although these motor homes are very comfortable and easy to drive, they have the aerodynamics of a polystyrene Besser Block and in a high wind it's more like sailing the Sydney to Hobart than driving the mainly good roads of WA. The other menace is the WA Road Train (*Trukus horribilis*). These are ever present and one has to be constantly vigilant to avoid becoming a victim of this natural predator of the motor home.



Outa my way!



Meanwhile, back at the ranch

We were constantly looking out for stones during our travels but given the size of the state and our reluctance to stray too far from the bitumen in our house on wheels, we only managed to collect a few samples from the different areas and a couple of stones that may become worthy of a place our Suiseki collection. Most of the rivers that we crossed were either flowing with no chance of searching the banks or were dry with the river beds consisting of red soil and a few pieces of driftwood, not much in the way of stones at all. The beach areas along the coastline have some fabulous limestone formations but any small pieces have long since been picked up or wash away in the strong surf conditions that occur at times. A hammer and a chisel would have been handy but either too many people about or conscience got the better of us, dammit!!



Hammer anyone?



Not a bather in sight

‘We took a small sample of red soil from the shark bay area, I don’t see how anything grows in this, but it makes beaut fine sand for a Suiban, (did you know that spell checker’s alternative for Suiban is soybean?)

A visit to Esperance and the Cape Le Grande national park was a highlight of the trip. The beaches along this section of the coastline have to be some of the most beautiful in the world. And the rugged coastline is simply majestic. At Lucky Bay we collected some sand which is supposedly the whitest sand of any beach in Australia, it certainly is the finest that I have seen.

Another highlight of the trip was a visit to the ‘Superpit’ open cut gold mine in Kalgoorlie. This is the largest open cut mine in Australia and one of the largest in the world. It’s about 3.5ks long x 1.5ks wide and 500m deep. As I crossed the car park something glinting on the ground caught my eye and as I bent down to investigate, my heart gave a lurch as I realized that I was looking at GOLD!! Little

flecks of that magic colour imbedded in the stone. Was this my own Welcome Stranger' nugget? Enough money to set me up for life or even just pay for the holiday? Alas no, it was only iron pyrite 'Fools Gold' but it sure looks pretty and will remind me of our holiday and what might have been.



Mighty big hole!!



Strike me lucky! Or not

Our return journey was on the Indian Pacific from Perth to Sydney. After loading the car onto the train we set out on a 3 day train ride across the country. You'd have to really be into trains to want to do this more than once. While the food and the service from the crew was great, The cramped, uncomfortable cabin made for 3 sleepless nights and you can only watch so much scenery flashing by the window before reading a dull book becomes the preferred option.

If you don't mind driving long distances and have the time, the car is the way to go. Stop whenever and wherever you like to take in the marvels of this great land. Enjoy the trip, getting there is half the fun. Would we do it again? You betcha we would!!

That's it for this month, next time we'll get back to business.

So long till next time,
G&J (&D)

VALE RON FLACK

15th January 1921 – 22nd June 2011

Ron was known to many in the bonsai and suiseki world and will be remembered for his quick wit and knowledge. He was one of the founders of The School of Bonsai and Suiseki Australia, and also a past President of Suiseki Australia and I think everyone who knew him will be indebted to him.

Ron was a teacher and demonstrator with a long line of lasting memories and stories that always seemed to put a smile on everyone's face. He was very dedicated to the advancement of Suiseki in Australia and I only hope that we all do him proud.

He will be sadly missed but the memories will linger for many years to come.

Rest in Peace.

"We never lose the ones we love for even though they are gone,
Within the hearts of those who care, their memory lives on."

-Anon

-Members Gallery-

Members, who send photos of stones that they have collected on holidays or that are in their collection, will be highlighted here each and every month, so send the photos in to share with other members.



The above stone was collected at Cape Campbell, New Zealand, the eastern most point on the South Island. Apparently this beach had thousands of them strewn everywhere.



This abstract stone, 'Picasso's face', was found on a hiking trip to Nelson Lakes area, New Zealand.

THIS MONTH'S ROCK FEATURE – The pure white marble of Carrara

One of the most famous marble quarries is that of Carrara in the northwestern Apennines. It was used in the Pantheon and highly favored for many of the famous Renaissance sculptures, such as Michelangelo's statue of David. Marble Arch in London and the medieval cathedral, Duomo di Siena in Italy, are also made from this well-regarded stone. Blasting with explosives in the stone quarries is generally avoided because of the possibility of fracturing and damaging the rock. Great care was taken in the past to mine the marble using traditional labor-intensive sawing methods. Today, large diamond-impregnated cable saws are used to cut out enormous blocks for export. The Carrara area is also popular with mineral collectors. Here, rare but well-formed and spectacular crystals of minerals such as quartz, feldspar, sphalerite, gypsum, fluorite, pyrite, and sulfur can be found in the white matrix of the Carrara marble.

The 17 foot (5mt) tall statue of David was sculpted from a block of Carrara marble by Michelangelo between 1501 – 1504.

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on the 20th July at 7.30pm.

George will have his photography board for us to continue to photograph our stones for our Suiseki register. We want to keep a documented register of the stones within the club as in the past many good collections were lost or mislaid so we are endeavoring to keep a record for posterity. Bring along your 'better' stones that you would like to photograph them for the club's record.

Our theme for this month was going to be Food Stones, but we would like to keep that theme for the August meeting when Peter and Kate Adams will be in attendance. So this month, put on your thinking caps, think outside the square and come up with a 'different' way of displaying.

See you then.

How amazing is this – a member has one great stone and he thought that it deserved not one, but FOUR daizas.


