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AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2011

REMINDER: Our next meeting this month will be held on Tuesday the 16th August **NOT** on the Wednesday night as this will be a special night especially for our international special guests Peter and Kate Adams. The night will start at 7.30 pm sharp.

Kate is an avid stone collector and they will both have some interesting and humorous stories to tell us on stone collecting.

Dear Members,

It is so surprising at how many people collect stones and not only for suiseki. When people go on holidays or visiting scenic areas they nearly always come home with a special 'memento', either to put into a glass vase on the coffee table, or to put into a fish tank or to just decorate the garden with little rocky outcrops. I know because I have done this for many, many years.

People who come back from holidays only have photos, post cards or the odd little stone to remind them of the beautiful sceneries they visited. As a suiseki collector we can have a reminder of that special place, placed in a wooden daiza and placed on a shelf to look at forever more. Landscape stones do this with their suggestiveness and the powers enable the stones to stimulate memories of that special place.

There is such a universal appeal for stones in all aspects from geology, lapidary, and the fascination for all things natural, crystallography and specimen mineral collecting. As a suiseki advocate I can see where all these areas of stone collecting can be very educational, fascinating and just for the thrill of discovering.

Not only is the study of stones in all forms interesting, it is also very exciting in the discovery and the pleasure of collecting. This lies in the search itself out in the fresh air with great company to share the excitement of finding something new.

Basically all or most suiseki collectors like miniatures in general and usually have the fascination for small bonsai, miniature figurines, small pots and this leads to the interest in the Japanese Arts and Culture.

If you love suiseki and bonsai you also have the love for the great outdoors which can be shared with family, friends and other stone enthusiasts. The true spirit of suiseki is in the shared experiences and learning together. All that is needed to participate on these trips is a good pair of walking shoes, a hat, some sunscreen, some bags to take the 'spoils' home in and some good food and drink to sit and ponder over the great discoveries and bragging of the day.

When we find these stones, especially the landscape stones, it is acceptable to level the bases so they fit snugly into their wooden bases so they give that special feeling of what they are supposed to represent.

Norio Kobayashi wrote in the book 'Bonsai: Miniature Potted Trees' that suiseki –

‘are more suggestive than realistic, productive of aesthetic sentiments in fancy and imagination. Appreciation of landscape stones should transcend theory. This may sound somewhat esoteric, but there is poetry in a true appreciation of landscape stones.’

I personally can't wait for our next stone hunting expedition with great friends, new places to discover and of course some great stones to find. Hope you also get the same excitement as I do?

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

**This article was inspired by the book 'The Japanese Art of Miniature Landscape Stones' by Felix G. Rivera and his permission was granted for use of the thoughts in his book.*

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

‘Rocks do not recommend the land to the tiller of the soil, but they recommend it to those who reap a harvest of another sort – the artist, the poet, the walker, the student, the lover of all primitive open-air things.’

- John Burroughs (1837 – 1921)

George and Johns 'Timely Timber & Tool Tips'

August 2011

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

We've had some new members join our workshops recently so this month we're revisiting the past to show once more a very useful tool for your workbench.

One problem of working on a small piece of timber is how to secure it without using clamps which tend to get in the way of rotary tools etc.

This is a new twist on an old idea. Woodworkers have used a device known as a bench hook which supports the work while sawing or doing other tasks and at the same time protects the surface of your work bench or kitchen table. The idea is simple and cheap to make, no need to buy anything special for the hook, just off cuts of any particle board or MDF is fine. This gives you a surface to work on but the work piece still needs to be secured. After some trial and error, George came up with a novel and practical way to achieve this. By using a standard bench hook with some additional material, you will be able to make a work surface that has excellent gripping properties.

To make the hook you will need;

* One piece of flat board / timber approximately 400mm x 300mm and 16 – 20mm thick. The size can be smaller if you wish but probably not much larger. Particle or MDF board is ideal for this job, no need to use a good piece of timber.

* Two pieces of timber batten 16 – 20mm square x 300mm long. You can use off cuts of the board material for these.

* PVA wood glue and 4 wood screws.

* Some acrylic paint or PVA glue

* Two pieces of 'Grip Mat' a little larger than the size of the hook. 'Grip Mat' can be purchased almost anywhere these days, \$2.00 shops are a good place to look.

* Cut the board to the size that you want, a table saw is ideal but with a little perseverance the job can be done with a hand saw. Cut the two battens to length and glue and screw them to opposite ends of the board, one batten on one side, the other on the reverse side.

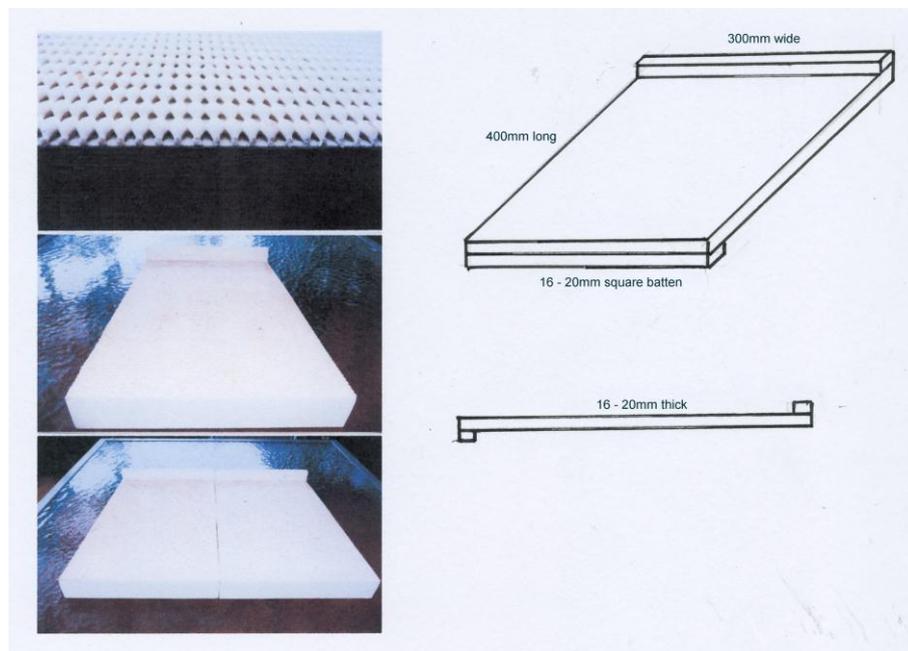
* Paint the finished job with a coat of acrylic paint or PVA glue and allow to dry. Paint a second coat and while the paint is wet, lay a piece of grip mat on the flat surface of the board making sure there are no ripples or creases. The paint acts as an adhesive and when it is dry you can trim the mat flush with the edge of the board. Don't use too

much paint as this will seep through and spoil the gripping surface of the mat. Do both sides of the board, allowing one side to dry before doing the second.

* The finished work will give you a non-slip surface on side, holding the work securely and preventing the hook from slipping or marking the bench or table that you may be working on.

* Hint; for larger jobs make two hooks and place them side by side.

Georges Grip Hook



Next month an update on rotary tools, so long till then,
G&J

Nerriga Areas – Certainly up there in “God’s Country”

By Roger Hinnrichsen

When, and whoever was in charge of stone distribution throughout Australia had the job finished, back at the beginning, I am sure that all of the leftovers were dropped off at Nerriga. The quantity, quality and variety of stones at Nerriga were in comparison (in my opinion) to anywhere in Australia. Generally in my experience most areas/river banks only have 4 to sometimes 10 varieties, however, at Nerriga there were hundreds and many of these were ‘one-of-a-kind’.

I was fortunate enough to be taken to “The Crossing” by my best mate Ron Pratt, the best “bush goer” and “suiseki seeker” I know. We first met some 30 years ago via our dual interest in bonsai.

Following some great stone discoveries at The Crossing, we ventured several kms further up the river to a great spot and camped for days at a time as often as time allowed.

Gathering wood for the camp fire and evening barbecue was the first priority, then onto the river banks for suiseki. The stone variety and quality was such that even after the evening barbecue, we made night excursions with fading torches looking for suiseki. These excursions were often made on “wobbly boots” (the wobbly boots being VB induced!) – Of course it was always the loose stones or tree root’s fault if we fell over.

In winter and being extra cold, we spent many great stays at Phil and Di’s retreat, with great evening barbecues and tall stories told by the open fire.

However, nothing is forever, as they say and I'm very sorry to say that the pristine riverbanks and surrounding paddocks (where we picked many great mushrooms for the barbecues), have been wrecked by (1) Gold prospectors using water blasters/pumps on the riverbanks leaving large holes everywhere and (2) Idiot trail bike riders and four wheel drive hoons cutting up the paddocks and wrecking the gates leading into "nature's corridor" which is at the rear of Phil's property and shouldn't be touched.

Hopefully, a large flood will one day restore the riverbanks back into "God's Graveyard for Stones."

In addition to my business of Cambewarra Bonsai and Suiseki Nursery (for the last 20 years), I have also traded in business as "Attitude Wood Art". This has involved in the manufacture of various wood products to provide for display in various wood galleries. Items included burl and slab coffee tables, burl fruit bowls and platters, cutting boards, Banksia table lamps and Tea Tree pedestal lamps, coat hangers etc.

I am now closing this business and have sold off the bulk of the timber to professional 'woodies'. However, any daiza makers looking for Jarrah, Woody Pear and Western Australian Sheoak offcuts in well-seasoned pieces, may find a good selection if you happen to passing through.

Happy Wabi-Sabi
Roger

P.S. The address for Roger's nursery is 5 Hockeys Lane, Cambewarra, New South Wales. Phone No: (02) 44460080

THIS MONTH'S ROCK FEATURE – Common Stones and Minerals Collected

Serpentine

A metamorphic rock. Green, brown, black, yellow, red, and white. Greasy or waxy lustre. (Moh's hardness 3-5)

Calcite

An igneous rock. Fibrous masses or granular. Often forms stalactites in caves. Most often seen as inclusions in suiseki (2-5)

Feldspar

An igneous rock. White, grey, red, bluish, reddish, yellow, green. Important rock-forming mineral. Found in many kinds of igneous and metamorphic rocks. (6)

Jasper (Chalcedony)

An igneous rock. Waxy, glassy, white, grey, blue, red, green, brown or black. Red variety known as chert. (5-7)

Nephrite

A metamorphic rock. Clear to milky to solid colour. Forms amethyst, beryl, etc. (7)

Gneiss/Schist

A metamorphic rock. Uneven granular and medium-to coarse-grained. Layers of quartz and feldspar with narrow bands of micas and hornblende. Light greys, tans, or pinks, with darker bands of hornblende or biotite. (6-7)

Limestone

A sedimentary rock. Rock having 50% or more calcite (or aragonite) and 50% impurities such as dolomite, quartz, clay and rock particles. (3-4)

Basalt

An igneous rock. Black, purplish, dark grey or reddish rust colour. (5-6)

Jadeite

A metamorphic rock. (A) Apple green, emerald green to white; dull, waxy. (B) Bright to dark green, greyish green, or black; vitreous, pearly, silky. (C) White, grey or black; 50% or more of calcite. (D) Light greys, tans, and pinks; foliated bands are usually darker; medium-to coarse-grained; crystalline with parallel mineral orientation. (6-7)

Rhyolite

An igneous rock. May have a glassy texture as seen in Desert suiseki. Shades of grey, pink, to deep maroon. (6 – 6.5)

N.B. This table was kindly reproduced with the kind permission of Felix G. Rivera from his book Suiseki – The Japanese Art of Miniature Landscape Stones.

MEMBER'S GALLERY

...and our congratulations go to...



Lindsay Bebb for winning the BCI Suiseki photographic competition for the second year in a row with this magnificent and beautifully displayed water pool stone.

WHERE WE MEET

Our club meetings are held at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks Road, North Rocks on the third Wednesday of every month except during school holidays and December and January. We commence at 7.30 pm and everyone is welcome.

Note: Next week's meeting will be on the Tuesday night instead of Wednesday as explained at the beginning of this newsletter.

For more information you can contact me at brendap7@bigpond.com or on my mobile 0412 384 834.