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## **AUGUST NEWSLETTER 2012**

Dear Members,

Last weekend a group (10 of us) from Suiseki decided to go to the annual Wood and Working with Wood Show at Sydney's Olympic Park. At the very same time that day it was the exact moment in London that the Olympic Games opening ceremony was being held and I heard on the car radio on the way over there that our very own Olympic flame at the venue we were going to, was going to be lit at the very same moment as it was happening in London. On arrival at Olympic Park there were people everywhere and it brought back many happy memories of our own Olympic Games when it was held here in Sydney.

Again we enjoyed a great day looking at beautiful timbers from here and from overseas that can be used at our daiza workshops. Because we are finding some very unique Australian stones we are trying to match them with our own home-grown beautiful timbers in as much the same way the Japanese and other countries do for their stones. I think it is so important to use local resources to complete the story. In this way we can establish our own style and uniqueness in our suiseki as other countries have and are doing to this day. In the early years we were guided by the rules of the Japanese aesthetics to the do's and don'ts of the art of suiseki, but with time and more education and experience we are finding our own way but still within the guidelines of the art. The way we look at it is in much the same way with our bonsais. For example, using one of our Australian Native trees and putting them into a Japanese or Chinese bonsai pot – it doesn't seem to make it somehow, to me anyway! Not only were there timber and wood slabs but an unending display of tools and accessories for the professional and amateur woodworker, wood turner, and woodcarver and even for the wooden boat builders.

In one section there were displays of all the finished wood arts and crafts products and it amazes me to see so many talented people selling their unique wares. There were displays of school boys displaying and working on their final year furniture projects and how excellent was the standard. It is satisfying to see that wood crafting for years to come is in very good hands indeed.

For those of us who acquired some beautiful timber and other new tool bits are looking forward to creating some new and interesting daizas. We will keep you up to date with our progress.

Happy Hunting (oh! and shopping!)  
Brenda

### **THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**

'A daiza makes a suiseki a piece of art.'

- **Mr. Suzuki**



*The sales area at the woodworking show in The Dome, Sydney Olympic Park.*



*The last 4 'wood shoppers' still standing near the Olympic Flame with The Dome in the background.*



*This carved wooden bowl absolutely took my interest and I found out that it is made entirely of marine ply with several sheets glued together and then carved out with a die-grinder with a special gouging attachment. It looked so unusual and the polished finish on it was just so smooth. I was just besotted with it and I thought it was made from an unusual timber at first.*

George and Johns 'Timely Timber & Tool Tips'

August 2012

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

Well, another 'Working with Wood Show' was attended by a few members of the club. A different venue this year and it seemed there were less exhibitors than in previous years, possibly a sign of the slowing economy? I was keen to purchase a Makita Trimmer, but unfortunately no Makita stand this year (I've since managed to buy one from Bunnings but had to visit a number of stores before I eventually found one). As usual we bought a number of timber pieces that will eventually be turned into works of art (hopefully). I tried the router at the last workshop and it will be quite a useful item to have in the tool box. Since we're talking about routers / trimmers I thought it would be an idea to reprint an article from a few years ago dealing with some of the points in using routers.

If you have a routing or driwall attachment, you'll know how easy it is to remove waste material to an even depth. Some things to remember when using these attachments with router bits or other carving bits are:

1. **Direction of Travel (DOT):** *In which direction should the tool be moving, left or right?*

All rotary tools rotate in the same direction. If you're looking at the bit from above the work, the bit will be rotating in a clockwise direction. The **DOT** should be against the clockwise rotation of the bit. In other words, the **DOT** will be anti clockwise to the cutting edge of the bit. If you were routing an edge on the outside of your Daizas, you would be moving in an anti clockwise direction, right to left against the timber. If you were removing waste from the inside of your Daizas, you would be moving left to right against the timber. I know, left to right is

clockwise but it is anti-clockwise to the rotation of the bit, ok? Why does this matter? If you move anti clockwise against the rotation of the bit, the cutting edges of the bit will pull it into the timber; you will have more control and get a cleaner and easier cut. If you move clock wise with the rotation, the bit will tend to push itself away from the timber making it more difficult to control and more likely that it will jump and cause some damage to the Daiza.

If all of this sounds a bit complicated think about a power saw. You always push the saw through the timber. Have you ever seen anyone pulling a power saw through a piece of timber or drilling a hole with the drill in reverse? The principals are the same for routers.

### 2. **Tool Speed:** *How fast should the tool go?*

Ok, so you have 10 daizas to make and one workshop a month, so you'll crank it up and rip through them in no time at all. Not the way to go.

There is no set speed for every type of bit available. The general rules are:

\* For routing / carving / sanding the speed should be set from 2 - 6 on the tool.

The speed of the tool should not slow too much once you have started using it. If the tool starts to slow noticeably, don't use as much force or increase the speed a little.

### 3. **Effort:** *How much force is required to move the tool?*

The effort will depend on the type of timber (hard or soft) and the type of bit you are using. For example, if you are routing a piece of western red cedar with a small diameter bit, you would move the tool fairly quickly without laboring the tool. If you were hesitant and moved too slowly the bit could start to overheat and you would get some burning of the timber and bit. If you were using a larger bit on the same piece of timber, you would move more slowly.

Generally, it is a matter of trial and error between the tool speed and the effort required to do the job efficiently.

The main points are;

1. Don't use a higher speed than is required, you will overheat the bit and possible burn the work.
2. Don't use too little speed, the bit will tear rather than cut.
3. Don't use too much effort; you will overload the tool, get poor results on your work and possible burn out the tool.
4. Don't use too little effort, you will burn the bit and the timber and you will be wasting time.

As in all aspects of wood working, if you are unsure, practice on a scrap piece to get the correct feel for the job you are about to do. A few minutes spent doing this could save you some grief further down the track.

Finally, you need to make sure that your bits are kept clean and sharp. Check while you are using them and if you see that they are clogging or burnishing, stop and clean them. This is particularly important with the tungsten burrs as they can clog quite quickly and will not work effectively. A good way to clean them is with a small metal brush (available most hardware shops) or a dentist type probe. If they have become hardened with tar and pitch (caused by overheating) they can be cleaned by soaking in oven cleaner and then brushing out with a toothbrush and clean water (wear gloves), spray with WD40 or similar after cleaning.

Remember the safety aspects when using these types of tools.

- \* Wear safety glasses and a dusk mask.
- \* Keep the pointy end away from hands etc.
- \* Disconnect from the power supply when changing cutting bits.
- \* Handle the cutting bits with care, they are very sharp.

More about routers and bits in coming newsletters.

So long till next time,

G&J

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

At a rock centre in Ibigawa, rocks are collected from rivers, mountains and fields, are cleaned, sorted and valued according to their shape, colour, texture and original location. A single stone has been known to fetch \$370,000.

## CONGRATULATIONS

On July 16<sup>th</sup> this year, Suiseki Australia celebrated its 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. The first non-school show was at the BCI/BFA Convention at Warwick Farm, Sydney in 1995 and then Suiseki Australia commenced on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1996.

Congratulations to all (past and present) that were instrumental in forming this group for us to appreciate the art of collecting and displaying stones.

### ROCKS AND BONSAI

By Joy and Lin Carter, Brisbane

The consideration of the above title offers very broad horizons in an already broad landscape. Basically, one may start with a large piece of rock on which to stand a bonsai, and this may be a rough slab as found in nature or it may be a sawn slab which in its turn may be polished or left as sawn.

Next the bonsai tree may be planted into a natural stone container as one, with luck, may find in nature. Finally rock may be included in the bonsai composition as a base for the tree to grow over, as an inclusion in tangled above-ground roots or as an additive adornment on a mossed surface. Rock plays a big part in the building up of a saikei landscape where it may be used to set off the essential trees or as its own *trompe l'oeil* mountain range.

The Japanese have perfected the art of tree and rock integration as we see in so many pictures of their masterpieces, but in that country they have their own types of rock just as they have those trees which flourish in their climate. In Australia we have quite different types of rock available in nature just as we have wide norms of climate. Here in the Deep North there are so many trees which cannot flourish as they do in Sydney and Melbourne. Our coastal temperature and humidity range is unpalatable for so many conifers, and the traditional seasons of spring and autumn sometimes pass unnoticed. So let us talk about the trees we CAN grow and the rocks we CAN find with them.

On Queensland's southern border on the Granite Belt there occur the ancient granites in endless form and quantity. Its very antiquity has allowed the infiltration of organic humus which gives excellent succor to pines and Brachychitons which enjoy the coolness thus afforded them.

Moving westward into the Texas district we come upon wondrous limestone carved and furrowed by eons of water action. Large Brachychiton trees flourish in this area and in our own garden *Juniperus sargentii* and Brachychiton species grow happily on its surface.

In far Western Queensland in the region of Sturts Stony Desert and the Simpson Desert are to be found the peculiar igneous basaltic rocks from pinhead size upward. These hard dense stones are highly polished by wind and sand, are of all shapes and are frequently cavitated, offering the temptation to plant a tree IN a rock. It can be unnerving to travel with a spouse who surreptitiously picks up and pockets rocks every time she gets out to open and close a gate, especially in areas where the fuel-weight ratio is a constant calculation. But by now, years later, it is possible to appreciate what fascinating containers she has acquired.

Coming east from the deserts into Southern Queensland we find the silicified woods of fifteen to twenty million years ago, rarely identifiable in terms of today's timbers. It would seem that only the palms have survived with little change, for sawn petrified palm LOOKS just the same as today's freshly sawn palm pieces. The petrified woods may be found in all shapes, colours and grains and so may be used for many purposes in bonsai, from the rock-clinging styles to large polished slabs in place of the traditional Japanese tables.

In this wide area are to be seen many of our native trees growing in and over rocks in the way we strive for with our bonsai. In our own garden we have succeeded in growing many natives OVER rocks of many kinds. In this category of trees are to be found Casuarinas (three types), Melaleucas, Callistemons, Brachychitons and one

eucalypt. For the ardent bonsai traveller in the Moonbi ranges is to be seen a magnificent fig growing over a granite boulder seven feet high. There merely needs reducing to be exhibited.

One final comment: rocks are not the only features which may be used in root-clinging styles. Here we have a Chinese Elm growing over the femoral condyle of an ox, a Ficus on a bovine vertebrae and Ficus on coral. The possibilities are only limited by your own imagination.

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At last month's meeting one of our members, Georgina Kretschmar demonstrated on how to do Chinese Painting. She has taught this art form for many years and it was such a joy to see this beautiful flowing and artistic way of putting designs onto rice paper. Below are some of the photos of her completed works and Georgina showing us how to prepare the ink and how to load the special brushes.



*Georgina guiding us through the steps to creating the basic techniques for Chinese Painting.*



*A few of Georgina's completed art works depicting traditional scenes, complete with a few 'friendly' mice.*



Another member, Richard Kong, showed us he is also an exponent of Chinese Painting and wrote the Korean words on the paintings done by Georgina with the words of what she had painted.



A traditional chrysanthemum painting (above) and a beautiful white lyrebird (right) another of Georgina's completed works.

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At last Saturday's daiza workshop we were delighted to have a visit from the Urimbirra Bonsai Club from Dapto who came up to see our woodworking workshop. Twenty members made the trip by bus and they came armed with barbecue meat and all trimmings together with many delectable cakes for us to partake in. Our members contributed with extra food to add to the great day that we shared together. Our members put on a simple display for the uninitiated in the art of suiseki and how to display them. Many of their members told us that they had been collecting stones for many, many years and they were delighted in the knowledge that there are more 'rock hounds' out there that they had realized. They all had a great time learning more on the creation of daizas.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be on this coming Wednesday night, the 15<sup>th</sup> August at 7.30pm sharp at the Don Moore Community Centre, North Rocks Road, North Rocks.

Please bring along stones for display and anything else for Show and Tell that would interest our members. See you all then.

