SUISEKI AUSTRALIA

P.O. Box 4510
North Rocks
N.S.W. 2151
www.suisekiaustralia.com
Tel: (02) 9654 1893

JULY NEWSLETTER 2010

Dear Members,

The Tokonoma (or display niche) has been traditionally used in Japan to display art objects for many hundreds of years. The objects used in the display were suiseki, bonsai, scrolls, ikebana and antique wares. These displays would usually depict the seasons that the homeowner wanted to convey.

Suiseki were placed in the niche normally on their hand made daiza which was then placed on a bonsai stand. A complimentary bonsai would also be placed together with a scroll. It is important that the suiseki compliment the bonsai e.g. a semi or full cascade pine or juniper would be displayed with say a mountain stone to indicate to the viewer that both elements in the arrangement reinforces and enhances the theme of the display – a tree growing out of a crevice on a mountain.

Another way of using stones is combining them with bonsai, either as a rock planting or as a tray landscape. Then the two elements take on an additional life and beauty. When stone and bonsai are 'married' together it gives double the pleasure to both suiseki and bonsai enthusiasts the world over.

A rock planting is when a bonsai is placed on a stone or root-over-rock style to allow the roots to 'hug' the crevices of the stone and finally entering the soil in the bonsai pot. The bonsai grower has to place the tree on the stone as naturally as can be seen out in nature. They both have to convey harmony and movement to compliment each other. A mature bonsai can take many years to look presentable but for the suiseki collector a stone with a defect can be used to an advantage by placing a tree on or over it and this could alleviate the fault and look very presentable in a very short space of time.

A tray landscape follows a different path when the trees are planted directly onto the stones or clinging-to-a-rock style. Usually quite a few trees are placed on a tall stone that are grown wholly in small crevices filled with muck, soil and then covered in moss. On completion the whole unit is put in a suiban filled with water to represent a tree covered island. If this large suiseki has an unstable base it is quite acceptable to cut the base flat so it can stand alone in the water-filled suiban. Alternatively, if you haven't got a large suiseki to plant trees on, quite a few of the same type of stones can be glued together to form a mountain. This is when you can control how many crevices you need for the amount of available small trees you have. Remember that all the stones must be the same colour and texture to make the end result look realistic. A good glue to use is a dab of 'No More Nails' or waterproof 'Knead It'.
When choosing suiseki to be used in a tray landscape try selecting stones that have white markings to suggest waterfalls. The denser the stone is of course the longer it will last. If stones like sandstone or soft limestone are used they will not withstand the test of time. They will eventually break up with the

constant moisture and all your hard work and time has gone to waste. These landscapes can be made using Tunnel Stones, Shelter Stones, Plateau Stones, Waterfall Stones, Coastal Stones, Island Stones and even Mountain Stones. To get inspiration look through travel brochures, beautiful calendars or even go looking through some of your favourite holiday photos. It is only limited to your imagination and even if the stone has a slight fault or crack it can be easily camouflaged by the trees, under-plantings or moss. Remember to use trees in proportion to the stone you are using.

No doubt many of us have far too many stones that we have collected over the years. At the time of collecting they were all 'keepables', but after you get them home and clean them you see them in a different way. They then get relegated to the mullick heap in the backyard and this is when you can re-discover and use them to combine suiseki and bonsai into a single unified work of art. For most of us it is too cold to go out to fossick for new stones so why not spend a little time in your own mullick heap – you may rediscover some treasures that may become useful again but in a different way.

If you have such works of art, why don't you send us a photograph so we can put them into the next newsletter!

Happy rediscovering,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'Bonsai and Suiseki are both important channels and
vehicles to keep in touch with nature.'
- Hideko Metaxus

George and Johns '**T**imely **T**imber & **T**ool **T**ips' July 2010

Hello 'Rock Hounds'

The better half and I spent a day having a look around the Sydney Timber and Wood Working show last month. Unfortunately I couldn't see much in the way of tools that I needed (as opposed to wanted), but all was not lost as I managed to acquire an Arbortech mini carver at a pretty good price, probably not going to get much use for suiseki but hopefully will be good for some of the larger bonsai carving. I also bought some very nice huon pine and mallee slices which I will turn into display stands sometime down the track.
I talked to a carver who was doing some very interesting 3D cutouts on a scroll saw. I was particularly interested in the timber he was using and he told me that it is one of the preferred timbers for carving; the timber in question is called Jellutong, *Dyera costulata,* pale creamy colour with straight grain and comes from Malaya and Indonesia. It's available from custom wood suppliers and is low to mid range in price. It is quite soft and light, similar to WRC (Western Red Cedar) but without the pronounced grain, and should be very easy to carve for daiza work.

We had a major problem with George's scroll saw at our last workshop, the bottom cast iron arm breaking at the pivot point while cutting a fairly thick piece of timber. We thought that the blade should have snapped before the arm broke but the response from the supplier was 'Next time use a thinner blade' Arrrrrrgh !!!!!! The point of this is that if you are using a scroll saw for cutting out, take it easy especially if the timber is thick and / or hard. If you have access to a small band saw this might

be a better tool for some of the thicker / harder timbers. We've carried out repairs to the saw and hopefully it will continue to serve its purpose.

At our last workshop Neville was working on a daiza and after some consideration it was decided that the daiza was going to be too thick for the stone it was displaying. Sometimes it's hard to get a piece of timber that is just the right thickness. Usually on a smaller daiza the timber can be sanded down either by hand (if you have the time and patience) or more likely on the linishing sander. This time the daiza was too large and it needed about 6-8mm removed from the bottom. After thinking how this could be done with the tools available we decided to saw through the length of the daiza and remove the required amount from the bottom. The tools we used were a hand panel saw, a clamp and a timber bench leg. This took a little time but with a good end result.
First step was to mark the daiza all the way around at the point where the cut was to be made, this is to guide the saw and it would help if this line was cut with a small Dremel saw bit.

Next step, find something upright that is suitable to clamp the timber to, clamp the timber and carefully start to cut through. In order to keep the saw cut straight you need to release the clamp and rotate the timber as you saw. Because you are sawing along the grain, it will take a little longer and a bit more effort, but once your through, the bottom of the daiza can be sanded smooth ready for the next stage. In this case we ended up with a bonus 5mm thick slice that could be polished and used for display, *TIP:* using a sharp, fine toothed saw and a quick clamp will make the job easier.

We'll try to get some pics of the finished job next newsletter. Moral of the story is 'Where there's a will there's (usually) a way'.

Last but not least, Aldi are selling a 1/4'" router, router table and set of router bits for about $130, individual items can be bought if needed. These are big toys for the serious daiza / table builder.

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

DID YOU KNOW?

- Glaciers are the mechanism by which new soil is created.
- Earth's oldest rocks – the granite foundations of the Western Gneiss Terrain in Western Australia.
- Sedimentary rocks hold information about past environments, telling of the origin, travels, and final deposition of their particles.
- No matter how hard a rock is, it will eventually be broken down by a variety of means in a continuing process of renewal.

*****

The following article was published in the Daily Telegraph by Troy Lennon and his permission was granted to reprint this article for our newsletter.

Earth is constantly changing. Tectonic plates are shifting the continents, while volcanic and seismic forces are creating mountains, islands and other formations. Meanwhile other less obvious forces are slowing wearing away at the rocks, sand, soil and even buildings that surround us. While the wind, rain and natural chemicals in the environment contribute to some of the forces of erosion, animals and humans also do their part to reshape the planet. Some erosion is natural and desirable but in other cases it is the enemy.

ROCK CYCLE

The earth is constantly creating new rocks, breaking them down, consuming them and then producing more rocks. Over millions of years the earth's tectonic plates throw up new material where plates are moving apart (spreading zone) and consume it where one plate slides beneath another (subduction zone). Rock starts out as magma that is thrown up to become lava, cooling to form igneous rock. Some of the solid rock is transformed into sediment by weathering and erosion. The sediment is carried away by water or wind and may become compressed into sedimentary rock such as sandstone. Some is transformed by heat to become metamorphic rock. Eventually most of the material will be pushed back down into the mantle to be recycled again.

ABOUT 600 MILLION YEARS AGO

Much of what is now Central Australia is sunk below sea level in a depression known as the Amadeus Basin. Pressure on the tectonic plate buckled and folded the rock layers in this region, forming mountains including the Petermann Ranges. After this, erosion gradually wore down the mountains and deposited sediment from them into the basin depression, where it was eventually compressed into sedimentary rock.

ABOUT 400 MILLION YEARS AGO

About 100 million years of tectonic friction has pushed sedimentary rock into folds, crushed, buckled and uplifted it until it spikes above the ground.

ABOUT 300 MILLION YEARS AGO

The basic forms of Uluru and nearby Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) emerge out of the exposed sedimentary rock layers after eons of wind, rain and sunshine have done their work.

Uluru today is the eroded, exposed end of sedimentary rock layers that extend a further 6km underground, a single mass of rock shaped by nearly a billion years of geological activity.

TYPES OF EROSION

WEATHERING

Before their surface is carried away by wind, water or other means, rocks undergo a process known as weathering. Weathering weakens the outer layer of the rock causing it to be susceptible to being worn away. In many cases weathering is caused by moisture or other chemicals within the rock forming crystals which break the rock apart. Sometimes small plants of organisms grow in cracks on the rock and as they grow larger they force the cracks apart allowing more water and chemicals to enter the rock to boost the weathering process.

COASTAL EROSION

Coastlines show many different kinds of erosion. All along the coasts of islands and continents the landscape is being slowly but surely worn away. The salt in seawater seeps into the rocks forming salt crystals that break apart the surface of the rock. Waves, rain and wind wear down the rock. The waves can be particularly abrasive when they carry sand and other materials that help to scour the rocks. Beach sand is actually sediment that has been eroded from rocks, often originating far inland, and carried along watercourses and deposited on the shore. Waves will either erode the sand on a beach or deposit more, dredging it up from the sea floor.

WIND EROSION

Wind can be a formidable force for breaking down rocks and landforms. When rocks are weakened by weathering processes (see Weathering) the loose pieces are susceptible to being blown around. When the loose material is blown around by high winds it can actually sandblast the rocks and erode them even more. In the Valley of Fire state park in Nevada in America are landforms that have been blasted by winds, including natural arches. Earlier this year a prominent sandstone arch collapsed. The winds can also shape hills so they follow the direction of the prevailing breezes. These are known as yardangs. *Did you know?* Wind erosion can also etch beautiful natural sculptures out of rocks, these are known as ventifacts.

WATERFALLS

When the course of a river takes it over a cliff it forms a waterfall. As the water flows over the waterfall it carries away weathered rock. The water also carries sediments that scour the rock. When the water hits the bottom of the waterfall is can also gouge out more rock to create what is known as a plunge pool.

Large waterfalls such as Niagara Falls in Canada and the US are changing very rapidly. Since the falls formed about 12,000 years ago they have retreated about 11km. The cliff face is receding about 1.5m every year.

ERODED NATURAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

There are features in landscapes all around the world that are the result of erosion. The Grand Canyon in Arizona in the US is one of the biggest and best known. The huge canyon was carved through a plateau by the once powerful waters of the Colorado River. Closer to home are the Twelve Apostles off the Victorian coast. These eight free-standing columns of rock are the remnants of limestone cliffs eroded by strong waves over millions of years. Until recently there were nine columns but erosion toppled one in 2005. However new columns will eventually be created as the action of erosion continues. The Jenolan Caves in NSW were created by rainwater and carbon dioxide forming carbonic acid, which dissolves the limestone to create a landform known as a karst. The cave formations are created by the dissolved limestone being slowly deposited as water seeps through the rocks to create stalactites, stalagmites, helictites and other formations.

'Water is fluid, soft, and yielding. But water will wear away rock, which is rigid and cannot yield.'

-Chinese philosopher Lao Zi, 6th Century BC

*****

STONES

By Song Sung-Moon

Stones are
Ever in Silence.

Violent rainstorms wear away
Your flesh and bone;
Yet you endure the pain
Shedding silent tears.

A holey mere skeleton,
You look like a saint.
Saying not a word, you tell us
Tens of thousands of words.

*****

REMINDER – The Campbelltown Lapidary Club Show, at the Community Hall, Queen Street, Ingleburn, will be on the 17th July.

NEXT MEETING – There is NO meeting in July due to the school holidays but there is a daiza workshop at Ray Nesci's on Saturday the 24th of July starting at 9.00 am. Bring along all of the essentials for a very creative day.

See you all then.