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The Bonsai Society meets at the Bellerive Community Art Centre,  
17 Cambridge Rd, Bellerive at 7:30 pm on the third Tuesday of the month  
(February – November)

**Website:** [www.key.org.au/bonsai](http://www.key.org.au/bonsai)

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## **Newsletter No 205 – March 2010**

**Meeting Commenced:** at 7.45pm. President Noel Kemp opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

There were a few apologies – Herbert Harding, Will Fletcher, Evelyn Black and Helene Browne so it was a small affair with twelve members present.

Noel spoke briefly about his very recent holiday travelling with a friend (for a change), and spoke of having to “do things a little differently” out of consideration for his companion.

It began in Burma, officially the Union of Myanmar, which is the largest country by geographical area in Indo-China (mainland South-east Asia). It is bordered by China, Laos, Thailand, Bangladesh, India and the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. One third of Burma’s total perimeter forms uninterrupted coastline. (Information on Burma courtesy of Wikipedia).

On his return to Australian shores, he had a 50 year reunion with some old college mates – some he hadn’t seen for all that time! There must have been a lot of catching up to do.

### **A Special Event for your Society:**

Your Committee held their meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March with the main agenda item being our Bonsai Exhibition from October 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> at the Rosny Barn. A lot of issues were discussed, one of which involves members. We will need assistance over the next six months to make it a success, and we need your help. There will be a lot of setting up to be done on the day prior to the exhibition – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October, and again on Sunday afternoon after 4pm. Trestles will have to be arranged, leveled and secured first. White fabric (single sheets are useful) will be placed on these, before the plants can be arranged on their stands. We ask that members start thinking about which of their bonsai they would like to display and start preparing them for October.

Demonstrations will be one of the main activities – suggestions are welcome.

Bonsai, plants, tools and pots will be on sale during the exhibition – if you have any items you would like to offer for sale over the two days, let us know.

If there are any members with special skills they feel could be helpful/useful – please talk to a committee member.

The treasurer reported some \$900 in the bank. The constitution has been updated and is ready to go.

The outing to Mt. Wellington on the 20<sup>th</sup> March was enjoyed by a group of eight members and, although the weather was cooler (wind chill factor below zero!) did not daunt the spirits of those who participated. Noel has provided a report on the outing, together with a couple of amazing photographs of the “Octopus Tree” – *Eucalyptus regnans* (see page 3 of the newsletter)

**Outing:** 1<sup>st</sup> May – Will Fletcher takes us on a trip to Mt. Field to observe the beautiful and iconic Tasmanian deciduous Beech, and other magnificent Tasmanian plants including the

Tasmanian Pencil Pine and Pandani, in their natural habitat. Short easy walks from our cars only. Bring wet/cold weather clothes and lunch. If it's very bitter up high we can wander some low altitude sheltered tracks then congregate for a warming coffee. Back to Hobart around 4 pm. We have arranged to meet at the Botanical Gardens (TOP GATE) by approximately 10am. We can arrange cars etc. and be on our way. Let's not be late as we do have about an hour and a half drive to Mt. Field.

**Show Reminder:** Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup> - Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> Chrysanthemum & Floral Art Show, during which Diana will be able to run a raffle, and sell plants/bonsai. Bonsai plants for display must be brought to the Town Hall on Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> April between 4.30pm – 6.00pm. We would like to see more members display their bonsai whenever possible. Please ensure there is a small card identifying your bonsai – botanical name (if possible), common name, brief description e.g. foliage, flowers, fruit, autumn colours etc. and age.

**President Noel's Open Day: Saturday 17th April, between 10am & 4pm,**

Noel is inviting members to take the opportunity of having a good look at his selection of pots. With everyone about to commence potting/repotting it's an ideal opportunity to bring along plants requiring new pots and make the right choice. Noel's address and telephone number are as follows: -

50 Derwent Avenue, Lindisfarne. Tel. 6243 6296

**Workshop:** Our first workshop for this year will be held on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> April at Island Bonsai between 1.00 and 4.00pm. (A list of items to bring appears at the end of this newsletter.)

**Raffle:** A Woolly Tea Tree won by David Budd, and Ona Barnes picked up some extra copper wire.

**Display Table:** Diana displayed her Creeping Strawberry plant complete with cones. Tegwen brought in a Eucalyptus perriniana (Spinning Gum); Ambrose showed off a group planting of Myrtles from three different locations, and Gill's contribution consisted of an Acer, Pittosporum and Cotoneaster in a "raft" style.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 7.30pm – Will Fletcher's topic is "*Inspiration from Nature - Mt. Wellington rock outcrop landscape*", during which he will create a potted landscape with rounded upstanding rocks, surrounded by cushion plants or similar to be reminiscent of the exciting sculptural landscapes on top of Mt. Wellington. It should be an interesting evening – not to be missed!

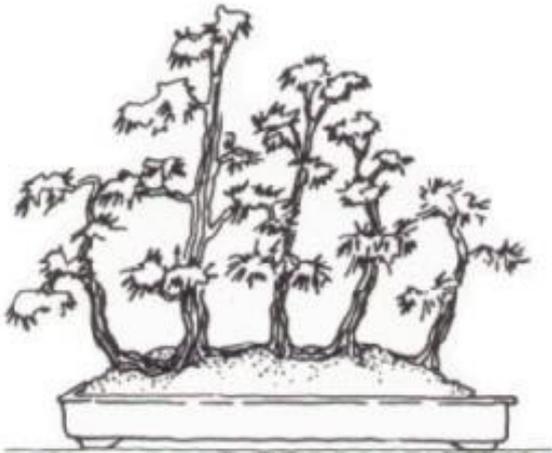
**Meeting Closed at:** Approximately 8.45pm

**Ikadabuki – Raft style**

Stuart brought along two different "Rafts" in training – one still in its temporary polystyrene box, the other in a pot. The latter had somehow fallen out of its box, but the roots had developed well.

The raft (or straight-line) style is based on the natural phenomenon which occurs when a tree is blown over. Although the trunk lies flat on the ground, it may survive if some of its roots remain attached and viable. Many of the branches will have broken off from the side which landed on the

earth. Over time roots will emerge from here, and the remaining branches will grow into a vertical position. As the new roots take over, the original broken ones rot away, thus the “felled” tree takes on the appearance of several trees growing together.



(Courtesy of Bonsai Style/Ikadabuki/ Raft style) (Courtesy of made-in-afrika.com/aloes/trees.htm)

### **Fukinagashi - Windswept Style**

Stuart also chose to demonstrate a windswept style, known in bonsai as Fukinagashi. Many of us have observed trees in the wild – their trunks contorted into almost geometric angles whipped by the force of strong winds. I remember years ago on a trip to Western Australia, driving north along the coast to Kalbari, seeing many trees standing out in open paddocks, forced into right angles by the strength of the winds powering in from the Indian Ocean. Amazingly they retained some of their foliage!

Not all windswept trees are quite so dramatic. Some still grow tall, leaning to one side, with the bulk of their branches and foliage on the lea side. They may have damaged branches on the windward side of the trunk (jin and shari).



(Photo courtesy of [www.bonsai4me.com](http://www.bonsai4me.com))



(Photo courtesy of [www.bonsai4me.com](http://www.bonsai4me.com))

Others, growing on exposed windswept mountain tops may almost hug the ground in their efforts to survive. And there are those trees growing in more sheltered conditions, which may, on occasion, be exposed to a sudden gust of wind. In this instance, while the heavier trunks and branches remain unmoved by the wind, the new, weaker growth bends before the gusts, thus creating a windswept appearance.

## Excursion to Mt Wellington, 20th March, 2010

Eight members (and one spouse; Keith is a very reliable addition on our outings) met at The Springs car park – halfway up Mt Wellington – on Saturday.

I think most of us found it hard to dress for the anticipated “coolth” of the Mount, especially when it was 20° C at home that morning.

Will Fletcher lead the way as we made our way to the summit, stopping at a number of places to admire the range of species, many of which were displaying their berries. What a range of colours there was: white, pink, mauve, dark blue/purple! Will’s knowledge of Tasmanian natives was very evident as he fielded our many questions with alacrity, not only identifying plants but also being able to comment on their suitability for growing as bonsai.

At the summit we admired especially many windswept trees – all stunted because of the climate at 1270 m – and I thought of all the times I have heard the comment about bonsai, in general (at various shows) “Isn’t it cruel!”, to which one could ask “us, or Nature?”.

Returning to The Springs in our pooled cars we were amazed to find how warm it was. I was wearing six layers and my hands were only a little bit numb. On consulting my Antarctic windchill table later at home, I was interested to read that the effective wind/chill factor we were experiencing at the summit was minus 4° C!

Following a leisurely lunch at The Springs picnic tables we made a final stop, after a short walk along the Shoobridge Track, at the Octopus Tree. This natural phenomenon was obviously not named by a bonsai enthusiast, as it was as fine an example of a root-over-rock style as one could see anywhere. A not-so-subtle difference is the fact that the tree is a ~30 m Mountain Ash, *Eucalyptus regnans* with many roots (up to 35 cm diameter) “grasping” a huge (truck-sized) lump of dolerite (the rock type of which Mt Wellington is – mostly – composed); quite sight. We speculated as to how the roots managed to get a start to be able to grow over the rock, and into the ground.

Thanks to Will for leading us on an enjoyable, and educational outing.

(Noel Kemp)



**The Octopus Tree, \*Eucalyptus regnans\*, plus Stuart Clutterbuck (for scale!).**

## Things to Bring to Workshops:

Workshops are probably the best way to learn more about Bonsai, and while everyone works on their own trees, the advantage is that plenty of advice is always available from those with more experience, as well as an extra pair of hands if needed. Following is a list of items to bring to each workshop:

1. \$2.00 per member, which covers the cost of hiring the hall.
2. A plastic cover for the tables, alternatively a large plastic bag will do.
3. The most important thing – a tree or trees to work on. You can observe, but it is much more rewarding working on your own tree. If you have nothing else, try a cotoneaster from the garden if it is your first time.
4. Potting mix.
5. Gravel, preferably in with your potting mix.
6. Any tools you will need. Most of our tools are very simple, but if you do need to buy something, Noel may be able to arrange a purchase.
7. A rubbish bin or bag to remove your waste soil and trimmings. This material must not be placed in the dustbins.
8. Mesh to cover drainage holes. Old flyscreen from windows or doors is adequate for this.
9. A turntable makes it much easier to see all sides of a tree, but is not absolutely essential. An upturned plastic pot will help.
10. Moss – if you can find some. It helps improve the look of certain trees.
11. Pots and wire if you have it. However, both these items are available for purchase at the workshop, but remember to bring some extra money to pay for them. Wire varies in price per meter, depending on its thickness. Noel has a large collection of pots for sale.
12. A plastic spray bottle filled with water – soil mixes can be a little dry and it helps to settle your plant into its new home!
13. A plate of something for afternoon tea – adds to the pleasure of the afternoon.

Perhaps the list can be placed somewhere handy (bonsai toolbox for example) as a reminder of what to bring.