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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

Newsletter No 207

May Meeting Commenced: at 7.50pm. President Noel opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

We were a little short on members with 9 attending. Apologies were received from Stuart, Eva, Herbert (who was in Launceston), and Will and Ambrose who attended the AABC conference in Sydney. Ambrose has provided a report, together with photos which appear on pages 4 – 6.

There was no Committee meeting in May, next one is scheduled for the 8th of June, which will be reported on in the June newsletter.

Noel made mention of his time at Agfest this year, commenting that his sales were down on last year. It may have had something to do with his position, as he was at the end of a row of stalls, where it was very windy and rather cool, being in shade for much of the day.

Diana advised that quarantine staff have been notified of a new disease, a type of rust, which affects members of the Myrtaceae family including Melaleuca and tea-trees. It has already been discovered in New South Wales.

Show Reminder: 10th-11th September Daffodil, Camellia and Floral Art Show Bonsai plants for display must be brought to the Town Hall on Thursday between 4.30pm – 6.00pm. Members are encouraged to display their bonsai wherever possible. Please ensure there is a small card identifying your bonsai – botanical name (if possible), common name, brief description e.g. foliage, flowers etc. and age.

Workshop Reminder: Saturday 19th June at Island Bonsai (see page 3) for photos of the previous workshop.

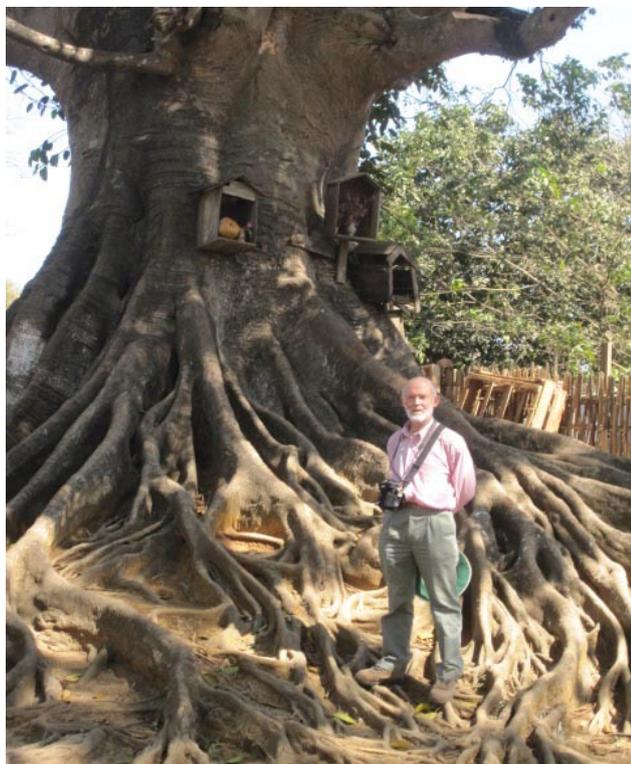
Raffle: Bougainvillea won by Helene, and Evelyn has some extra copper wire.

Display Table: Diana brought along a natural raft of Paper Bark which she had removed from the pavement, and one from a garden cotoneaster.

Helene's rowan was displaying its autumn colour, while the Huon Pine she bought as tube stock six months ago, was growing very well. She also included a Jade which she will use as a companion plant.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 15th, 2010 at 7.30pm. Ambrose Canning will be providing a picture and talk about the recent AABC Sydney convention and the bonsai national display in Canberra, both of which he attended.

Meeting Closed at: 8.15pm



While we haven't heard much about Noel's trip to Myanmar (formerly Burma) yet, the photo at least shows he was there.

Noel in Burma (not quite on the road to Mandalay, but very close) amongst the *nebari* of a huge *Ficus*

Noel had brought in quite a collection of his bonsai, some of which had been sorely neglected for some time. One, a *Cotoneaster thymifolius* which had grown out of control was pruned. A *Cupressus macrocarpa* which had been trained in a very nice windswept style has changed dramatically from lack of attention. (This he worked on at the workshop – see photo below.)

Another *Cupressus* which had some jin and shari work would require closer attention, as the jin is now closing over.

A 26 year old forest was in better shape than some. Some of his trees were raised from seed. During the course of discussion, treatment of cuttings was raised, and David Budd told us he had used a hormone rooting product called Clonex (hopefully spelling is correct) on *Dianthus* cuttings with excellent results. Of course, raising bonsai material from cuttings is a bit quicker than seed raising.

They say every picture tells a story as can be seen from the following. Members hard at work on their plants at our workshop on the 23rd May. A very pleasant afternoon with eleven members re-potting, pruning, wiring and generally getting “stuck in”. We also celebrated Gill's birthday – by consuming a lovely cream-filled sponge - courtesy of Herbert. Photos courtesy of Ambrose Canning.



Time for a break!



Noel and that out of control windswept Stuart working on a group (or was it a raft)



Helen receiving some assistance



The Birthday Girl

AABC Sydney Convention 2010

The annual convention of the Association of Australian Bonsai Clubs was this year held in Sydney, at the Bankstown Sports Club. I should have realised the significance of the name Bankstown, but it wasn't till we walked past a life size bronze statue of Sir Joseph Banks in the street that I made the connection. Bankstown is a very multicultural area. Walking the streets or riding the train I felt at times that I was in a foreign city with English a foreign language.

We were told that there were six Tasmanians attending the convention. I knew of Will Fletcher and myself from the south, Lynne Farrell from Launceston, a couple from the NW Coast, and I glimpsed one of our members Aaron passing on Sunday. Overall the convention had 270 attending, their biggest ever number of attendees. I had forgotten what huge places the NSW clubs can be.

The Bankstown Sports Club was large with multiple themed bars and restaurants and plenty of gaming machines. Even so, the large rooms and areas they had for the convention were crowded at times.

On the Saturday after the opening and welcome, Grant Bowie started with a demonstration and also a talk with pictures of various bonsai before and after. Grant was originally from Sydney but is currently living in Canberra and is the current curator of the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection. He was very pragmatic about his bonsai and the styles he was discussing, a very down-to-earth Australian in his approach. He talked of being very conservative when working on trees from the national collection, but very adventurous when working on his own bonsai.

Next was Salvatore Liporace from Italy. He is a professional bonsai artist of long standing who travels and demonstrated all over the world, has won awards all over the world, and so works to a very high standard. He only spoke a limited amount of English, and so during his demonstrations he used an interpreter. I think that some things were lost in the translation, his full story was not always repeated, but overall the lady translating did a great job. By good chance I was sitting at the front so I could hear all his talk in Italian, but not understand it, and I could clearly see his expressions and gesticulations. He was very serious but occasionally a big smile would cross his face. It reminded me of watching a foreign film with subtitles, at first it is awkward following the translation, but by the end I no longer realise I am reading subtitles. I know from my engineering work that Italian professionals can appear arrogant and not open to discussion or questioning of their methods, but it is their culture and their professionalism. Salvatore was true to form and he certainly ruffled a few feathers at the convention, but in my mind that is a good thing as in effect he challenged us all to lift our thinking and our work to another plane.

It was interesting to hear Salvatore say that in his experience there is a trend to smaller bonsai, in the order of 50 cm maximum height. He thought that Australian bonsai he had seen were often too big. However, he later showed pictures of bonsai he worked on in Italy and plenty of them were big. He did say that it was similar in Italy ten years ago but now the trend is to more compact bonsai. He talked about his ideal of a trunk height to thickness ratio of 6:1 or even less. He also talked about grafting and demonstrated his technique to add new branches where needed to a juniper. Salvatore explained how in Italy the bonsai scene is very competitive, and the trend is for customers to purchase collected old trees, pines or junipers, that have been styled by professionals. He showed a picture of a tree that had sold for 50,000 Euro!

On Saturday afternoon there was a demonstration by three members of the local Illawarra Bonsai Society. They covered three aspects of preparing and displaying a bonsai, the tree, the pot and the stand. Jami Milner worked on a juniper and styled it to replicate the tree silhouette in their society's logo. Janet Selby makes bonsai pots and she talked about the process involved. Finally Brian Wasson showed how he constructed display tables. It seemed deceptively simple how he fitted the pre-shaped pieces of timber together, which to me indicates that it is actually quite difficult and takes much skill.

The Sunday followed a similar pattern, with Grant Bowie starting the day with further demonstrations and discussions about fertilising. He talked of moving his bonsai collection from Sydney to Canberra with its shorter growing season and cooler climate, and how he had changed to a higher nitrogen fertiliser. He gave an example of someone he knew from a cooler part of Canada who used a 12% high nitrogen fertiliser during their short growing season.

On Sunday I warmed to Salvatore, perhaps I was just getting used to him. He also did a lot more hands on work which was interesting to see.

The final act was the Italian Stallions. Two members of the Illawarra Bonsai Society, both of Italian decent. They worked on two gardenias, and at the same time showed slides of Italian icons. They then shown the pictures again with a suitable bonsai photographically added, the Leaning Tower of Pisa with a cascade, the Colosseum with I can't remember what, a Ferrari with a windswept, and so on. In the end they produced two specially made pots by Janet Selby, one modelled after the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the other after the Colosseum! The two gardenias were planted up into them.

There were multiple things raffled. Books, pots, stones, etc. I bought lots of tickets and carefully entered then against the prizes I wanted, or the ones I thought were small enough so I could carry them back on the plane. I was sure, with the number of prizes on offer each day, that I was sure to win something! But nothing. Obviously other people were equally keen to enter and win.

In an upstairs room there was an exhibition of bonsai. There were lots of fantastic trees as expected. Many of them were large, but there were some tables in the centre with small to medium sized trees. Overall it was crowded, almost every bonsai had a companion plant but there was just not enough room. They could have removed a third or even a half of the trees to allow more space between them. But overall it was a fantastic display. A favourite tree of mine are the Cedars, and there were a few great Cedars on display. There were also many natives, the usual suspects such as sheoak, banksia, callistemon, acacia, etc.

Next year's convention is in Perth, Western Australia, from the 20th to 23rd May. Featured will be Min Hsuan Lo from Taiwan, who is famous for "Lo's Style" creating the image of large old trees. Also featured will be Megumi Bennett, born and brought up in Japan but now from Sydney. Yasuko Aoki will be visiting Australia and demonstrating Bonseki. Local demonstrators will include Arthur Robinson (Satsuki Azaleas), Cj Leo (native Tee-trees), Derek Oakley (miniatures, Australian natives, his favourite is Melaleuca), John Oldland (Bonsai in Asia Guidebook, traditional species and styles), and a number of other local WA bonsai artists. The venue will be The Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle.

Salvatore Liporace at work (right), and below, the results





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Another bonsai at the
AABC Convention

