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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 208 – June 2010

Next Meeting to be held 20th July 2010 is the AGM. Time to elect a new committee and time to renew your membership – forms for both attached to this newsletter. Please ensure your nominee signs their acceptance. Refer to page 4 for details of Ambrose Canning's presentation.

June Meeting Commenced: at 7.40pm. President Noel opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Eleven members attended, with apologies from Helene Browne. We welcomed visitor Heather Wiggers who found out about us when she met up with Noel at Agfest. Heather has decided to join us as a full member, and took the opportunity of attending our workshop on Saturday, 19th June. More on that later.

Your Committee held a meeting on the 8th June during which the following items were discussed:

1. October Bonsai Exhibition - various issues including a roster set up. One or two members have already offered assistance – we would like more.
2. Constitutional changes have been completed – copies will be made available.
3. Topics for remaining meetings were also organised (see details on page 2)

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: Will be on Sunday, 25th July at the Bellerive Community Arts Centre, between 1- 4pm.

Our workshop on Saturday 19th June at Island Bonsai was again well attended with eleven members (including our new member, Heather).

Raffle: the prize was a Rosemary, which was won by Stuart – don't know if it will become a bonsai or grace the garden.

Display Table: The array of bonsai included a windswept Juniper which Tony had planted into a rock. Diana's Nothofagus "Antarctica" (Chilean variety) still displaying its autumn colour. Gill brought a Japanese Maple bereft of its foliage, and sought pruning advice on two Azaleas which have had their second flowering. Noel showed us the much-improved windswept Cupressus (which he has continued to work on after a period of neglect!) also a Chinese Elm and Nothofagus; Will's Pittosporum undulatum s/sp.emetti looked very healthy – this variety produces scented flowers; and Hans displayed a Chinese Elm.

Prior to closing the meeting, Noel showed us a Japanese print depicting trees which somehow provided the inspiration for his treatment of this *Cupressus macrocarpa* - Monterey Cypress.



It is one of a series of woodcuts by one Utagawa Hiroshige (1797 - 1858) made after he travelled the road between the Shojun's capital Edo, to the Imperial capital, Kyoto.

There were 53 stations - stops for travellers where they could get a bed, and food, for the night, as they travelled around the country. The distance between the stops was a comfortable distance for a laden horse to travel in a day.

Hiroshige made the journey between Shojun and Edo, and the impressive scenery along the way stimulated him to make the sketches, which lead to the production of the 55 prints - one of each of the stations and one for the start and finish.

"53 Stages of Tokaido" (or, in Japanese, Tokaido Gojusan- tsugi). My print is (supposedly) of Yoshiwara, Station No 14, but on chasing it up on Google, it bears little resemblance to the one illustrated there.

That doesn't matter because my constant viewing of my print - since 1981, when I purchased it in Japan - has obviously burnt itself into my memory, to my advantage, as I shaped and developed the Monterey Cypress bonsai consciously unaware of this illustration.

Note these dates for your Bonsai Calendar

August 17th – David Budd will be fixing trees to rocks in the traditional way

September 21st – Noel (to be advised)

October 19th – This meeting follows our weekend exhibition, and precedes the Hobart Show, which means committee members will be setting up our display prior to the meeting. It will be a free night allowing for reflection and open discussion on the exhibition and results thereof. If we have some new members it will provide an opportunity to get to know one another, and perhaps the winner of the People's Choice award can talk about their successful entry.

Meeting Closed at: 8.20pm after which Ambrose provided a collection of very interesting photographs taken during his attendance at the recent AABC exhibition in Sydney, and a visit to the National Bonsai & Penjing Collection at Regatta Point in Canberra.

His first photograph introduced us to the Benalong Twins – a pair (or could it be one tree with twin trunks?) which speculation suggests could have been there when the First Fleet arrived on our shores.

Then it was off to the Bankstown Sports Club where the convention was held.

It was interesting to look at the configuration of the displayed bonsai, with some criticism from members that plants were placed too closely together, thus spoiling the overall effect. From all accounts it was a lively convention, sparking different opinions about Salvatore Liporace, the Italian bonsai artist who seems to have ruffled a few feathers with some of his ideas. For example his opinion that Australian bonsai were too big (refer to Ambrose's report in our previous newsletter). Wiring was also in his sights, with a preference for copper, as opposed to aluminium which he considers remains too flexible and will therefore not control the branch/trunk. He also expressed concern about possible damage (micro-fractures) which can be caused if the wiring is too tight, and prefers to use less turns when wiring to avoid this. No doubt his visit, and ideas in particular, will be talked about for some time!



One of the photos showed a Water Gum – *Tristania laurina* – (it's other common name is Kanooka) described as a shrub-tree with ribbony bark, leaves alternate, hairless, darker green above. Common along rivers and shaded slopes near-coastal NSW and East Gippsland.



Herbert's choice was the Montezuma pine – *Pinus montezumae* - a species of conifer native to Mexico and Central America, where it is known as Ocote. Grows to about 35 meters with a trunk diameter of 80cm. Bark is dark brown-grayish and, from the photo has lovely graceful foliage.

Those of us who have yet to visit the National Bonsai and Penjing Gallery in Canberra were also interested in the photos of the bonsai on display there. Not all are Australian natives, and one or two some of us probably hadn't heard of, such as *Angopthera costata*, common name Smooth-barked apple, (a member of the Myrtaceae family) which grows to between 15-25 meters, pink to pale grey bark, dark green foliage with showy white flowers; and the *Ulmus parvifolia* var. *Catlin* referred to as the Catlin Elm which is a sport of the common Chinese Elm. Partly evergreen in mild climate and evergreen in more temperate climate, its leaves are shiny dark green and lanceolate and smaller than Zelkova. It was named after John Catlin, and landscape designer from California who found the sport on a Chinese Elm in 1953.

Presentation by Ambrose after AGM – 20th July, 2010

The two plant groups are:

- *Viburnum plicatum*, cuttings taken in 2008
- *Cornus alba* (Red barked dogwood), from natural layerings from ground touching branches, potted up winter 2009.

I am using the technique described in *Bonsai Today* magazine issue 8 which I borrowed from the Society. In that case they were taking maple seedlings and placing them through small holes in a tile or board, and when the trunks grew to fill the holes it made them swell and fuse together. I am doing it a bit differently because my plants are older. I will be cutting them back and inserting them through the holes from below.

The style I am aiming for is a close group or clump, or even a multi-trunk if they will ultimately fuse together at the base. The style is inspired by the book *Four Seasons of Bonsai* by Kyuzo Murata who uses many garden type plants with generally thin stems and planted in groups or clumps.

Initially these two groups will just be potted back into black plastic pots to continue their training for another year or two.

PS. The two aerial layerings I started at a previous demonstration are both still alive. I have checked their root development and it has started but is not much yet. They are not ready to separate yet. They may have grown sufficient roots by this summer and be ready to be separated. I hope to be able to bring them along to a meeting at that stage.

Did anyone else see an ad for our Society, which appeared on one of Southern Cross's Community News segments, on Wednesday 9th June?

My Moss Mine (supplied by Ambrose Canning)

I realise that I don't actually mine for moss - collecting moss is a more accurate description. But I like the sound of this title, and the moss is now mine!

In the past I have always collected moss from around my home. Usually I can find some on the cooler and damper southern side of the house. Sometimes it appears naturally on pots and I can recycle it. I have had a moss that appeared this year that is a brilliant dark green, but it grows too long and ends up anything from 1 to 2 cm high and completely hides the lower trunk and roots of a bonsai. I have another moss that I collected off a concreted area under my bonsai tables. This one remains quite short, but it can repel water if it gets dry and I have to be very careful when watering that the water actually gets through and into the bonsai soil.

But usually I don't have enough moss. Often, in the past, people's first comment when seeing one of my bonsai is "where is your moss". At the two recent Bonsai Society workshops I have not had any moss on hand.

I have found a new source of moss. I have been thinking about it all summer as, every day when I commute to work, I go past it. I have just been waiting for the right time. The moss is growing on the roadside along the Tasman Highway, when heading east towards the airport, as the highway climbs Tunnel Hill out of Mornington. This area is cool and damp in winter and never gets sunshine, but can be hot and dry in summer. There are several different types of moss growing together on the road side gravel. It is in an area that periodically will be cleared by a grader or backhoe to maintain the road side drainage.

I took a broad straight edged shovel and sliced off several thin strips each about .09 sq. metre (one foot square). Back home I did not use any moss straight away but divided it up into some propagating trays I bought from the hardware store, with a thin layer of potting soil underneath. I now have all the moss I will need this season.

(Editor has been known to acquire moss from traffic islands and under concrete parking barriers.)

Presidential Report 2009-10

Winter is with us, and potting time is once more keeping us occupied – exactly how much time will depend on the size of our individual collections. Out winter workshops are well attended. Is it the new venue (this winter so far) viz. Will Fletcher's Island Bonsai Nursery room which is attracting the members? Thanks Will for allowing us to use your premises, and very nice surroundings they be for the cold winter's days too. Sharing of advice between members produces artistic and other useful results.

Our annual run of shows continues: the Hobart Horticultural Society's four, at the Town Hall, the Royal Agricultural Society's Show at the Show Grounds and the Claremont Garden Clubs Show at the Claremont Memo. Hall kept some of our members occupied. Special thanks to this (too small) a group of members who constantly provide trees for, and help set up and dismantle, these various displays. This small group does not wish to be an exclusive club, but welcomes any other member to supply a tree, or three, at future exhibitions.

Our monthly meetings have once more provided a range of interesting and varied topics with speakers being drawn from our members. Thanks to Ambrose Canning, Diana Jones, Will Fletcher, Stuart Clutterbuck (and yours truly) for giving talks/demonstrations on aerial layering, preparing for winter, bonsai with natives, rock groups (non-musical!), rafts, Monterey Cypresses and some enjoyable illustrated talks by Ambrose on Lodhi Gardens, in New Delhi, India, also the recent AABC Convention hosted by the Illawarra Bonsai Club, in Sydney, and the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection in Canberra. The rest of the members felt almost as if they had been there too!

Thanks too to Will for his leading us on two excursions, one in March to view the alpine- and sub-alpine flora of Mt Wellington, and then in May, to Mt Field, where we delighted in seeing the lovely autumnal colours of Fagus (*Nothofagus gunnii*) – our only deciduous native.

Will and Ambrose are featuring prominently here this year with our Christmas barbecue being held at Will's on the slopes of Mt Wellington, and the January barbecue at Ambrose and Gabriella's lovely Federation home in Sandy Bay; thank you for opening your places to the members and friends.

Special thanks to all those – particularly Stuart and Ambrose – involved in making the Society an Incorporated body. Perhaps by the end of this financial year we will be there. It has been a protracted – but necessary – process. As has the bother associated with the change of our hiring arrangements of the Bellerive Arts Centre. Thanks too to those involved in ensuring that we continue to have a place to hold our meetings (legally and at a reasonable price).

To our Vice-President Herbert Harding I offer thanks for stepping in, for more than one meeting while someone has been off gallivanting around the world, or just on the mainland (no names, no pack drill!). Also thanks, on behalf of the rest of the Society members, to Stuart, Treasurer, Evelyn Black, our hard-working Secretary, our Committee of Ambrose, Eva Effenberger, Will, Gill Roberts, who doubles prodigiously as Tea Lady; David Budd who continues, quietly and reliably as Librarian, while Gill and Diana represent our Society at the Royal Agricultural Society meetings. Without this selfless work our Society would not function as well as it does.

I wish the incoming committee all the best for the coming year.

Noel R Kemp

“One or two members have expressed interest in a dig over the first weekend in September (before our permit expires). Anyone who wants to join in, would they please contact the Secretary either by email e.black@bigpond.com or telephone 6229 5741.”