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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.chooseit.org.au/bonsai

Newsletter No 237 March 2013–

Our February meeting was opened by President Noel, on a day which had seen some much-needed rain put a dampener on still burning bushfires, and quench the thirst of our flora and fauna. After the heat of the previous day, and the long dry spell we've experienced, it was a welcome change to hear rain drumming on the roof, dripping from foliage and watch the gauge creeping up – for us, to 9mms!

However, at time of this going to print, the “long dry” continues and, as I drive round our local area, it is obvious lawns, trees and shrubs are looking rather stressed – some look to be almost at death's door!

There were a few apologies – Alex, Jan, Simon, Alison, and Rose who we hope is feeling much better by our next meeting. A warm welcome to our two new members – Ruth Rees and Angela Shanahan, and visitor Laurence Winckel. And it was really great to welcome 22 members to our first meeting for 2013.

Your Committee held its first meeting on 26th February to discuss several issues, including organising a visiting demonstrator for a series of workshops somewhere between June - August. Will Fletcher and Ambrose Canning are putting together a proposal by our Society to host the AABC Convention in 2016. This will be presented to the AABC committee during this year's convention in Canberra. More information will become available, once we know if we have been successful.

This Month's Meeting: Tuesday, March 19th commencing at 7.30p.m. Members are invited to bring samples of either the ingredients (or their potting soil mix), for a discussion which will also include fertilizers, and wiring methods. Bring along some wire and a branch (preferably with foliage), and Noel will help explain the do's and don't's of this sometimes frustrating part of bonsai! Potting mixes vary from one bonsai enthusiast to another – in the end, it's what works for your plants that's important! Please don't forget plants for the display table.

Workshops: Our first workshop will be held on Sunday, 24th March at Island Bonsai, commencing at 12pm. Ficus and native species can be worked on, perhaps some re-potting, but it's also a good opportunity to observe and ask questions.

April Meeting: Will be held on Tuesday, 16th April and, as Will Fletcher is travelling to that big island somewhere north of Tasmania for his winter sojourn, he will present the topic: “Will's dug up Tree!” After his last presentation, I'm sure this one will be interesting and entertaining – as always!

Raffle: Herbert - fertiliser, Rob White - bottle-top waterers, and one of the ladies chose the small pot.

From the Library: The library was again open for business with several members taking advantage of our lovely collection.

Display Table: Noel brought in the Japanese black pine which had been used as the demonstration tree for Andrew Ward's presentation last May. After some discussion about removing lower branches and needles from underside of remaining branches, Tony Hewer has been given the on-going care of the tree, for which he will provide up-dates on its progress. Herbert brought in his "Democrat" apple – complete with apples. The tree is estimated at 60 years.

Diana and Ambrose displayed companion plantings; and Diana also showed us her Huon Pine. Cameron's silver birch "mame" style looked cute in its tiny pot, as did Noel's 6½ year old cypress "mame" style. Heather surprised us all with three "moss balls", which she made using clay and moss, and is using for accent/companion planting. According to Heather, they are very popular in Japan. No doubt we will check on their progress!

Meeting closed at 8.20pm after which Will Fletcher presented his "Pond Experience", a description of which follows:-

I presented a large, spreading form of *Leptospermum scoparium*, the Common Teatree, grown from a cutting about 20 years ago, that I thought would look good arching over a pond. The trunk and main branches were well clothed with flaky bark, and along with a well developed nebari, the tree had considerable maturity. The foliage (cut back fairly hard last spring) had grown thickly into arching clumps. I had located a large, dark brown, unglazed terracotta pot, with an undulating edge, being wider at one end, narrowing curvaceously to the other.

I had previously planted the tea-tree at the wider end, and the branches and foliage were now cascading over the empty two-thirds of the pot. I decided to make a pond out of fibreglass. I bought the ingredients at a fibreglass shop in Argyle St for just over \$20, used moist clay to make the mould for the shape of the pond, and a couple of days later I put the third (and last) coat of resin over the pond and immediately tossed dry sand over the wet resin, which then glued itself to the surface.

At Tuesday night's meeting, I trimmed back a bit of the tea-tree to expose some more branches, raked back some of the flaky bark (which had been stained almost black by sooty mould a year or two ago), and nestled the free-form fibreglass pond into position under the tea-tree. I planted clumps of low, tufty grasses around the pond, and then (with a bit of tongue-in-cheek) placed three plastic, wary kangaroos, a dingo hiding behind a grass clump and four little ducks heading for the water. The work was then labelled " IS IT SAFE TO DRINK AT THE WATERHOLE?"

The use of figurines in bonsai and penjing seems to be most common in Chinese works (and many western practitioners embrace the practice) and it definitely gives the viewer the feeling of the tree(s) being a representation of large trees. However my view is that a good tree or landscape should not need any embellishment, and too often the result is somewhat tacky. However, it can also be fun, and would certainly appeal to children.

When I got the tea-tree home and filled the pond with water, it looked good (even without the animals!), and will get better I think, as the waterhole settles into the created landscape.

Finally, in the spirit of bonsai'ish humour (perhaps a bit of my own!), I presented a large Grevillea bonsai, under which birds had made a sizeable nest nestled against the trunk, replete with chocolate Easter eggs and named it, "OVA UNDER GREVILLEA". A smaller slanting-style

bonsai with a small figurine of a man threatening the trunk with a chainsaw, was simply labelled “NO!!!”

Thus ends the sermon.

(Ed. Note: Thank you again Will – we look forward to your April topic.)

ISLAND
BONSAI  Tasmanian native plants as bonsai



We were invited by Huon Valley Garden Club to display bonsai at their November show in Franklin. The visit was combined with a dig and several members collected a range of native species, which we look forward to seeing on the display table. Ambrose’s maple, some of the display, and below – a scene from the forest dig. (Photos courtesy of Ambrose & Evelyn).





One of the specimens Ambrose brought back from the forest.

Don't know if any members visited the recent Wooden Boat Festival, a wonderful event which included a lovely display of model boats. Some of our members, besides doing great things with their bonsai, have other talents as well. Think of Herbert and his beautiful embroidery. Tony Hewer is also a man with other interests and talents, and the following will give you some idea of his abilities and enormous patience.



Model of topsail schooner "L'etoile" (English meaning "the star"), which is owned by the French navy and still used today, along with her sister ship "La Belle Poule" for sail training around France, Great Britain, the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean.

Both schooners are identical except for their name boards and sail numbers. "L'etoile" has sail number TS 31 and La Belle Poule TS 30. Both Schooners were built

in France in 1932. Their length overall is 123 feet (37.5 meters), beam 24.6 feet (7.5 meters). My model is 5 feet (1.5 meters) in length, beam 12 inches (0.3 of a meter), height 4 feet 3 inches (1.3 meters), (1/25th scale)

The hull is planked in King Billy pine (planks are 10mm x 3mm) over marine ply frames which are attached using tree nails, the deck is planked with white beech planks (10mm x 1mm), masts and spars are Tasmanian oak, cabins etc are of mahogany. The bottom of the hull is copper plated with over 600 copper plates.

The model is radio controlled with two winches to trim the sails, a servo operates the rudder. It is still to be launched.

Total build time was approximately 1200 hours over 2 years.
(Ed. Note: Thank you for sharing this with us Tony.)