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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.bonsai-southern-tasmania.org.au

Newsletter No. 266 October 2015

President Ambrose opened the September meeting at 7.28 pm with a welcome to 20 members and an apology from Jan Fleming, who we hope is recovering well from recent surgery – best wishes Jan!

Those who attended the workshops and presentation by visiting bonsai master, Bjorn Bjorholm, enjoyed the events very much. Bjorn is a pleasant young man, who seemed able to put everyone, regardless of age, at ease. His presentation was most informative and he was happy to answer questions during re-development of Chris's *Pinus sylvestris*. Everyone who participated at the workshops found Bjorn responsive to their questions and advice, and his assistance with wiring was invaluable. I think we were all very pleased with our re-styled trees, and I, for one, will be most enthusiastic to participate when our next bonsai master comes calling!

The Saturday dinner was a very cheerful affair – not sure how much bonsai entered into the conversation, but there was certainly a lot of conversation doing the rounds! And a few sore heads the next morning! Rob reported the cost to the Society for Bjorn's visit was around \$900.

The Horticultural Society's Camellia and Daffodil show coincided with Bjorn's visit, but we managed to arrange a display which included Diana's Wisteria in bloom, Gill's Crab Apple (since re-styled) and Herbert's maple forest all receiving favourable comments from visitors.



The Australian Japanese Society is holding its 45th Anniversary dinner in November, and has invited the Society to organise a display of bonsai for the occasion. In turn, our Convention sub-committee has been in discussion with the AJS for their participation in 2016.

A show of hands indicated members are keen to have another plant sale and the date has been set for Saturday, 28th November at Rob's (see page 5). In the meantime the Committee realised this date had been set aside for our last workshop for the year. After some email communication and the Arts Centre not available to us the weekend before, it was decided our last workshop will be held on Sunday 22nd November, taking the form of a pre-Christmas breakup, including barbecue, and Chris and Koula have invited members to come to Dysart for the occasion. An

announcement will be made at the October meeting and directions will be provided to members - we don't want anyone straying off into the bush!

Ambrose reminded members that the committee is already giving consideration to next year's programme and would welcome ideas for our meeting nights. Please give thought to specific topics, bonsai styles, species or something else you would like to have included.

Obviously, **the 2016 Convention** is looming large, and with only eight months remaining, a lot of work has been done in several areas. However, the time is now approaching when your Committee needs confirmation on your willingness to volunteer. Please keep in mind that briefings will be organised so that members are not "flying blind"! The following will give some idea of what will be required:

- **Raffles** sell tickets, set up prizes on each of the two days;
- **Registration area** - welcome visitors, hand out convention information bags; answer questions/give directions – e.g. convention room, location of sales & display areas, eating areas available, toilets etc.;
- **Sales area** – assistance with sale of items;
- **Display area** - observing anything displayed is NOT touched by visitors;
- **Stage area** – assistance e.g. skill, lifting/shifting trees, cleaning/sweeping debris, bins etc.;

Stuart is developing a list of volunteer positions which will be available soon but, in the meantime, give some thought to where you feel you would like to volunteer. You may have a friend or family member who would like to volunteer with you for a few hours.

There was a delay over the bonsai potting mix being received by the nursery, however Gill Roberts is co-ordinating this and members are asked to contact her on 6247 9719.

Raffle: Tony B. chose the Azalea and Alex won the Seasol.

Display table: Don't forget our monthly display table. No matter what time of year, our bonsai (be they bereft of foliage, or covered in blossom) have their beauty. And one can always be sure of some advice if they bring along something "untouched". Trees displayed on the evening included some members had worked on at Bjorn's workshops.

Presentation: Noel provided some valuable information on Monterey Cypress which he considers an ideal bonsai subjects for various styles, which adapts well to our weather conditions.

Bjorn's presentation:



Pinus sylvestris was chosen for Bjorn's presentation to members



Bjorn's workshops:



Bonsai Events & Diary Dates:

October meeting Tuesday, 20th October at 7.30pm Our Topic for discussion is “Bonsai Hardware” **presenter for the evening**

Next workshop Saturday, 24th October 2015 Bellerive Community Arts Centre from 1pm - 4pm. Our September workshop was attended by a small group of 9 – 10 members. Chris gave everyone a brief demonstration on the correct method for wiring, in which one “pairs” the same length of wire with a branch of a similar thickness by “anchoring” so that either branch can be manipulated without effect to the other. Difficult to explain in words, but Chris is determined to have us all using this method in the future.

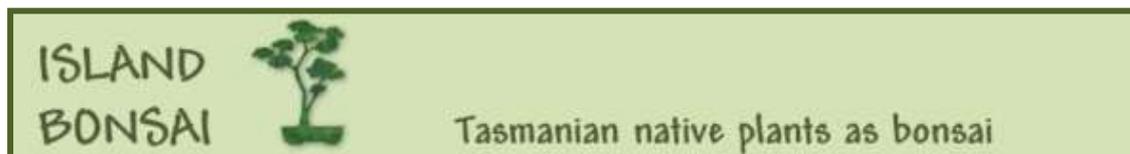
November Meeting: Tuesday, 17th at Bellerive Community Arts Centre, commencing at 7.30pm. Topic

29th AABC National Convention 20th to 23rd May, 2016: Plenty of notice so PLEASE keep those dates free. We need you all to pitch in and give as much help as you can in whatever way you can. There will be some information available for everyone to nominate where they will be able to assist. Remember, this is the very first time this convention has been held anywhere in Tasmania. It is a real boost for our Society, and we would like all our visitors to take back fond memories of the occasion. If you need to ask questions about the convention, speak to a committee member.

Other Diary Dates

Nov. 6th & 7th

Rose, Iris & Floral Art Show – Town Hall



Open on the 2nd weekend of the month, or by appointment . Tel. 6239 1920

Library Collection:

The Society's selection of books and journals is available for members to borrow for a month at a time, without charge. It's regarded as a further source of gaining information and improving our bonsai skills. New members in particular might find copies of "Bonsai Today" especially helpful on re-potting, shaping and pruning, see numbers 50 – 52, 57 -60, 63, 65 and 66. The first 49 copies also include some useful information, with bonsai enthusiasts such as Peter Adams looking at optional designs for particular trees.

Invitation:

If you have something interesting you would like to share with other members, or a request for information, let's hear from you. And if you'd like to tell us about yourself and your own "bonsai journey", it gives everyone an opportunity of getting to know you better. Photos are also accepted – whether they are your own or something from the internet (don't forget to include your source!).

Committee Members & contact details:

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The following information is for members still interested in polo/rugby shirts, or having your own shirt embroidered with the Society's logo:

- TAS Workwear Group, 50D Browns Rd. Kingston. Tel.62292881 – contact Peter.
- Polo Shirt – short sleeve, cotton stretch, navy, size Small \$21.20 (Item No.PS55)
- Rugby Shirt – long sleeve, 100% cotton, navy, size Medium \$60.50 (Item No. Lakeport)

Prices include \$5 per item for embroidered logo. Alternatively, you can have your own shirt embroidered with the logo for \$6. I'm happy to deliver shirts for embroidering and return orders on behalf of members, but it is wise to try for size if you're intending to buy from them!

To all members of the Bonsai Society of Southern Tasmania

It's on again, our Bonsai and Garden Sale.

After the success of the initial Bonsai and Garden Sale last year, it has been decided to hold one again this year. It will be on Saturday, 28 November 2015 from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm and, like last year, will be held in the car park at Rob White's house at 54 Quayle Street, Sandy Bay.

We can sell anything and everything bonsai and garden-related; a list of possible items is given below. On the basis of our experience from last year, there are a few pointers:

- All types of bonsai material will sell, from very young starter material up to fully trained trees.
- Trees and garden plants with informative labels sell better than unlabelled material.
- For garden plants, more advanced/larger material sold ahead of more immature plants.
- Bonsai and plant pots were popular.

As for last year, all material sold at the sale will require a commission to be paid to the Society. To simplify things, the commission rates will be 20%, 50% or 100%, the latter being effectively a full donation to the Society. Clearly, it is up to individuals to decide the commission rate for their material but it would be appreciated if everyone fully donated at least a few items for sale - that is, provides 100% commission to the Society.

Last year we attracted many customers but, with better publicity, we can do even better this year. Please be willing to help with advertising the Sale and encouraging your friends and acquaintances to attend.

Here are some suggestions for material that you could provide for the sale:

- Bonsai starter material.
- Partly formed bonsai in growing pots.
- Fully trained bonsai in bonsai pots.
- Bags of bonsai soil mix.
- Bonsai pots.
- Bulbs – early flowering spring bulbs should be ready to be dug up by the time of the sale.
- Vegetable and herb seedlings – buy some punnets of seedlings and pot them up individually and grow them on for 5-6 weeks.
- Flower seedlings – as for vegetable seedlings.
- Cacti and succulents – very popular last year.
- Ferns – again popular last year.
- Shrubs.
- Perennials – now is a good time to lift and split many garden perennials so pot up some for the Sale.
- Rooted cuttings – the fuchsias last year went very well.
- Plant pots – people snapped up all the terracotta ones last year.
- Garden tools and equipment – cleaned up and looking good, of course.

As for last year, any material not sold must be taken away at the end of the Sale – Rob has neither the desire or space to keep unsold material.

So, that's the outline of what is planned – please give some thought to what you can offer and start preparing material now.

Rob White

Treasurer, Bonsai Society of Southern Tasmania

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On landing in Japan, the first thing that hit me literally was the humidity, then I realized there were no English signs anywhere!

I took a taxi to Kouka-en, the bonsai nursery where I would be working for the next month, and was soon face-to-face with some of the world's best bonsai professionals and masters. I felt humble in their presence.

Fujikawa-sun (owner of Kouka-en), and Mioki-san, qualified bonsai professional (i.e. a person who has finished their bonsai apprenticeship) were there to greet me. I was then introduced to Dario Mander who was the lowest ranking apprentice there. Dario showed me around the nursery and I was immediately blown away by the quality of the bonsai. I then realized I had a steep, uphill learning curve if I was to survive one month at Kouka-en!

Within an hour of arriving, they were eager to put me to work to check my capabilities. First up was a small juniper. I humbled myself with this tree and finished it before day's end, with the approval of Fujikawa-sun.

That afternoon Dario and myself travelled to my apartment on our push bikes. The apartment was nice and compact but, at the same time, adequate for one person - having a washing machine, small kitchen and a micro bathroom. I was also lucky enough to have a balcony.

Dario then proceeded to show me the area I was staying, called "Shopping Street", which is literally that - 5 blocks of closed-off streets transformed into a long shopping strip full of food stalls, clothing and everything in between. Ishibashi train station was located halfway down the shopping street. Oh! did I mention the heat!

Next day Dario met me, and we travelled by bike (about 30 minutes) down to Kouka-en so I could learn the way there. Again, I was put to work on another small juniper. Lunch time arrived very quickly and what an amazing place to have lunch! Surrounded by world class bonsai and bonsai professionals, including Bjorn, who had just arrived back from a tour in the USA. Fujikawa-sun always had lunch with his dear mother who lived next door in a modest size Japanese house.

Every afternoon we had tea break. Green tea would be served and silence observed, unless Fujikawa-sun wanted to speak to us. I found this experience hard at first because my head was buzzing but, after a week, it almost became a time of meditation.

I managed to finish the juniper by the second day with Fujikawa-sun's approval

The third day I was given a more advanced tree - a black pine. This tree took me five days and I was really impressed with the quality of the tree. Japan has a huge bonsai industry which produces high quality raw stock as well.

The fourth tree was a shohin black pine which took four days to complete, most of the tree being wired with Imm wire using tweezers!

I had to have every Saturday off, Fujikawa-sun insisted on it. The first Saturday Ken, a two-week student from America, and I visited Yoshi-en, another bonsai nursery 40 minutes away by bike. This nursery was very big and had lots of tools, thousands of pots and stands and anything you desired. Their bonsai were nice but not as high end as Kouka-en bonsai. I purchased lots of bonsai tools and a pot.

On the other Saturdays off I visited Kyoto and the Golden temple, temple ruins in Ikida and, thanks to Google maps, located a couple of shopping malls. I also spent time walking back streets seeing the real Japan!

Some things that I found interesting were the mini rubbish trucks that play a pre-recorded jingle and announcement, to let you know they are there to collect your rubbish. All Japanese people are extremely polite. Virtually no litter in the streets. The mascot of Ikida is a Wombat. No hooligans. Food and drinks are very cheap. And lastly, you don't have to travel any further than 100 meters to find a drink machine – very handy in the 30+ degrees every day I was there!

By the third week I was given a really rough tree to work on. The trees I worked on at Kouka-en were called “student trees”. This means that after the trees are wired, the wire is removed by Dario for the next student. So the rough tree I was given looked like it had been through a blender. After 5 days I managed to produce a magnificent tree which Fujikawa-sun was highly impressed with. I also noticed by now that the trees I had wired had not had the wire removed. I questioned this, and was told that Fujikawa-sun was very pleased with my wiring.



After my success with the previous tree, I was stepped up to apprentice level trees. I had a large black pine picked personally by Fujikawa-sun and got straight to work. Fujikawa-sun was pleased with the final result and how I tackled various problems with this tree - slight reverse taper in the trunk, bad branch position and lack of a needed branch.



All trees chosen for me had specific problems that needed attention, and Fujikawa-sun was looking to see if I had found the problems.



Quite often I would see him out of the corner of my eye, watching me work.

I couldn't possibly talk about all the bonsai I worked on, but the last was most challenging, given I only had 3 days left. This twisted old juniper turned out a little rougher than the other bonsai because I would have needed around 6 days to complete it. Still Fujikawa-sun sat with me near the end and helped me refine the tree.

When leaving the nursery everyone walked me out to the taxi, and I was saddened as I drove off. I hope to return someday to further my knowledge of bonsai and it wasn't until I arrived home and started working on my own trees, that I realized just how much I had learnt. The day I left it was 37° and second day back in Tasmania it was snowing and -6°. What a shock to the system!

Japan is an amazing place with amazing people and bonsai. A must if you ever get a chance to travel.



Open by appointment
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