



P.O. Box 383
Sylvania Southgate.
N.S.W. 2224

www.suisekiaustralia.com.au
'Suiseki Australia'

President: Brenda Parker

Mob: 0412 384 834

SUISEKI NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2024

NEXT SUISEKI WORKSHOP will be on the 24th August and the display will be on abstract stones

Dear Members,

At last month's daiza workshop it was so cold and windy but still all the stalwarts turned up and we all had a very productive session. After many copious cups of hot tea, coffee and our traditional 'rock cakes' we warmed up enough to get working. At lunch we were treated to a special potato soup that was kindly made by one of our members. It's amazing how we all band together in sharing our workshop days and not only is it productive but very 'tasty' as well. There is only one consolation and that is spring is on its way so it will become more pleasant to hone our daizas in milder weather conditions.

I have attached photos of the theme for last month which was on Australian stones, and you can clearly see the dust on the bench covering that the wind brought in. Unfortunately, it was not worth the effort to remove the dust as more would appear as the area where we work only has a roof and sides but no doors to close so it became a wind tunnel. We never complain, we just rug up and enjoy our productive day together and then before you know it our day comes to an end with some lovely daizas being made.



Above: John's collection of stones from all around Australia



Above: Leonarda's outback stones



Above: My take on an outback scene



Above: George's fabulous Ayres Rock



Above: Another one of George's stones from Australia



Above: Georgina's fabulous large stone from Scone, New South Wales

NEXT MEETING Our bench display will be on abstract stones so see what we have in our collections to make for a different display.

See you then,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'Rocks have always been regarded by the Chinese as the most magnificent symbols for the force of Nature, fascinating in virtue of their grandeur and their wild inaccessibility.'

- Oswald Siren

ROCKS ARE WHERE YOU FIND THEM

We have such a large country which at times seems to be all covered in rocks except for the coastal areas. It is amazing that some people find it hard to find them either for suiseki or bonsai landscapes.

Books here on suiseki are almost just as scarce except for those from other countries but none of our own publications on the subject. Nowadays though, we do have the Internet to furnish our interest in stones and to see what other enthusiasts around the world find in their own countries which can help us.

A lot of us do attend lapidary and gem shows, but it is not the same on what we are after for our craft.

Obviously, we do have lots of places to look for stones, but that entails lots of travelling and for some it is out of the question, due to work and family commitments. Another fact is that we do have a lot of National Parks that surround our cities and do not allow us to remove stones or native flora. In the very early days it wasn't so strict but now you could be in a lot of trouble. There are a few of our members who do have properties and are lucky if they find that elusive stone for display.

In the Newcastle area north of Sydney, there are deposits of petrified wood and green Serpentine. Unfortunately, Serpentine is a great stone with lovely natural shapes and green tonings, but it can be dangerous if it is cut as the dust is a harmful variation of asbestos and is a carcinogenic. This stone is safe to display if it is not cut.

Another way of collecting stones is to go to a lapidary club and ask if they have any stones not worthy of polishing. Lapidarists look for what is in the inside of stones to polish for gem stones and not particularly looking for good attributes on the outside shape of it. Years ago a friend and I collected some wonderful shaped stones that were destined for the tip. They kindly let us take what we wanted from the mullick heap!! They are great stones and I love them in my collection.

Our beaches south of Sydney have an amazing selection of different types of stones but again watch out for rangers when collecting – be selective and discreet.

Many centuries ago, our eastern coastline was pummelled by lava flows and over the years many of us have found amazing stones and we knew then we were safe as the areas were not patrolled by rangers! I think today the story is different with new laws prohibiting taking them.

Also in the early days, we as a club were given permission by property owners to scour their properties for stones and especially at the head of The Shoalhaven River. We collected some beautiful dense and lovely shaped stones. Unfortunately, those days have gone.

Another tale I have to tell, is when I came across a Chinese landscape and garden centre and I just wandered in for interest sake.....and there it was, a magnificent largish stone which was all on its 'lonesome'. I asked how much it was and the owner said \$30, well, I couldn't take my money out of my purse quick enough. I has a lovely surface pattern and going back home in the car, I decided I would have it cut to make a large mountain and smaller one both on the same daiza. To this day it is still one of my most favourite stones. The purists may not agree on what I did with it at the time, but now it was done to help it 'sit ' properly in the daiza. To me it is one of my favourite stones.

Another story comes to mind when a couple of our members spent a month in Tasmania on holidays. They came back with a bounty of great stones from Sulphur Creek, Rocky Cape and Queenstown. Luckily, they could bring them back as they took their caravan on the ship so they had ease of travelling around Tassie. Well done, to you both!!

A couple of weeks ago, I was asked by one of our members of our bonsai club as well as our suiseki club, if I could do a demonstration at our bonsai club on a forest of Japanese maples. All the materials necessary were supplied. All I had to do was to put it together for her. I had some small dark ochre-coloured stones to add as the embellishment of the surface on its completion. After it was finished, I told her that all the stones were of the same size, and did she have any other sizes at home?? Well, a couple of days later they both went walking to a park near their home and there they were – a bounty of the same coloured stones all different shapes and sizes! Success, and on returning home the other stones were replaced with all the new varying shapes, and it now looks fantastic and much more realistic.

So, yes, it is possible to find them in the most unusual places and we must remember the adage that our very early past President told us to have - "EYES DOWN" when out and about!!

Also do not discount going to Aquarium and Pet Shops to find that elusive lovely stone which are mainly imported from other countries!!

Good luck in your search for that 'perfect' stone!



Above left: The stone that was bought from the Chinese landscape nursery

Above right: The 'Iguana' stone that was found at Sofala, - an old gold mining town, New South Wales.



Above: This stone was at a bonsai nursery many years ago that originally came from North Queensland with the idea of using it to grow a tree on!! No way!!

THIS THOUGHT-PROVOKING ARTICLE WAS BY OUR EARLY FORMER PRESIDENT – ALAN ROCHESTER

I consider myself as a mild purist, that is a follower of the art form to where it is today in Japan. I except the 'rules' and try to follow them as much as possible but, it gets to the point that if we apply the rules to our Australian stones, then technically we probably would have to dismiss more than 2/3 of them because they don't conform to the strict Japanese guidelines of colour, hardness and sometimes shape. I will still endeavour to collect that perfect stone, which I haven't found yet, but there are so many other stones out there that would fit nicely into Australian categories if we had them.

The classification of Mountain Stone with an Australian sub-group of Escarpment Stone, or the term Desert Stone with a subgroup Australian Outback Stone is a good example of a category we can display stones that represent Uluru (Ayers Rock), The Bungle Bungles or the Devil Marbles. These rock formations are unique to Australia so we must have a category to fit them. We need ideas from you, the members, with some other groups that our stones can be fitted into. Just because our country is prominently sandstone and of lighter colour, it doesn't mean that we can't use them.

The Americans have got themselves out of this problem by devising categories for their stones, i.e. Desert Stones, with a heap of subgroups as well as Murphy Stones and the Italians with the Ligurian Mountain Stones, so why not us?

At one of a previous club meeting some ideas came up for the Escarpment Stone with even subgroups: Coastal Escarpment, Mount/Land Escarpment and River Escarpment. Even some guidelines were drafted with references to colour, shape, texture and patina.



An escarpment stone that was found at the head of the The Shoalhaven River, New South Wales that was once pummelled by a vocano. A very dense stone.
