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SUISEKI NEWSLETTER JUNE 2022

Dear Members,

Winter has arrived and with it all the worst weather that I can remember for many years. Not only have we been blasted with tumultuous rain for weeks on end resulting in floods, the strong winds resulting in a lot of damage and just recently the 'Arctic Blast' – as the news described it, with the most horrible strong cold winds and rain – we have had it all and I think we are all so house-bound and fed up that we need to get out there for some R & R in the form of some stone fossicking.

When you hear the words 'stone fossicking' you immediately think that it takes long trips away from home to find that elusive suiseki.....not so! Looking locally is just as prosperous and over the years it has proved quite successful. So I thought that if this weather decides to behave itself during our so-called mild winter, we do not have to move too far from home to find stones suitable for stone displays.

If you happen to live quite close to a river or creek, all the rain would have washed down and unearthed stones along its journey and if these waterways are accessible to you why not venture down and see what is there. As we live south of Sydney, there are so many beaches with all different types of stones and over the years this has proved very successful. (You just have to be careful of any rangers!). One particular beach has a lot of ironstone in the most incredible shapes. This type of stone is very heavy and dense and comes in all different shapes – remnants of a past lava flow. Another popular spot is the disused basalt mine at Kiama, where many years ago the basalt was mined and the basalt is still seen today under the railway tracks all around Sydney. This area was the result of a lava flow that started in the mountains near Nowra and made its way down to the coast where this lava flow ended. There are still basalt stacks along the coast there and this is used as a barrier to stop the ocean from coming into the low lying area that was once the basalt mine. Even if you are unsuccessful at finding anything, it is still a great place to visit and to remember what would have taken place at this incredible site all those years ago.

Even though some of the places along our southern coastline are frequented by visitors, there are some 'fossicking rules' that you can use whenever you are out, and it is always good to refresh our thoughts on these for the health and safeguard of our members.

- Always carry a good first aid kit, and know how to deal with common injuries and to give basic first aid.
- Always wear sturdy clothing and footwear.
- Always wash your face and hands after handling rocks and minerals, especially before eating or drinking. (All the antibacterial wipes that are available, these are a must to carry with you).
- If you are in an isolated spot, always carry adequate reserves of food and water etc.
- Always refill any holes that you have dug.
- Never fossick alone in remote places, always go in a group or have someone else with you.
- Never burrow into creek banks, etc, as they may collapse without warning and you can get stuck in the mud.

- Never venture into remote areas unless you are with someone **or** without telling somebody where you are going and when you intend to return.
- **LOOKING AFTER THE ENVIRONMENT** - Do not dig directly in swamps or watercourses, as this may cause erosion.
- Do not disturb or damage flora and fauna.
- Do not use tracks in wet weather if this is likely to damage soil stability.
- Leave the area clean, and remove all rubbish.
- When starting to dig, save the topsoil and vegetation on one side; when digging is finished, backfill hole and cover with the saved topsoil and vegetation.
- Check wet-weather access on your chosen route – is the area you are visiting subject to flash flooding? And are the roads or tracks accessible following rain?

After you have finished collecting and you are satisfied with your bounty, before heading home take a look at what you have collected and look over them with a critical eye and leave behind the 'not-so-good' stones. You don't want to get home and just throw them into the bin at least leave them behind so small animals and insects can use them for shelter and for their homes. Looking after our environment is so critical we do not want to abuse Mother Nature!!

I hope this has given you some enthusiasm to get out there to look around and explore for some suitable suiseki material, not only that but to enjoy our wonderful coastline, rivers and creeks.

Have fun, stay safe and remember 'EYES DOWN'!!

Happy Hunting,
Brenda

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'Those trees, those stones, and those scenes are marvellous. They taught me patience: furthermore, they taught me to understand, to love and to live in peace with others. These beautiful beatitudes are the essence of saikei and suiseki',

- Toshio Kawamoto

One of our members saw this posting on Facebook and sent this to me to put in our newsletter (with the kind permission of the author and the finder of this amazing stone. The article is in his own words).

About this Suiseki, 'Oops',

Using a Suiban instead of a Daiza: I was trekking in Alaska a few years ago. I was with a guide and we were exploring some glacier lakes. I found this stone on a shore and asked if I could bring it home. As this was Inuit Land I was careful to respect that. The guide was happy to allow me this. She was fascinated by why and I explained that I was first attracted to the mix of quartz in the basalt matrix. However, when I looked at it, it reminded me of an Inuit Woman in her sealskin *parka. She immediately saw this and wryly commented that perhaps it would be better for non-carver local artists to just collect such unique figure stones rather than making them. Nature was by far the best artist.

I have been intrigued by the art of First People Nations in North America for over 40 years and the soapstone carvings that have evolved over the years which I have been collecting. I love the stories, myths, legends and natural history of the arctic regions. Talking about this with someone living in this region of America and Canada was something that was very enlightening of course.

When I went through security at the airport coming back the mainly Inuit security staff questioned why I wanted what was quite a large rock on board. It could be a weapon. I started talking about the figure in the stone and made many references to first peoples clothing and soon had a keen audience of not only security staff but passengers. They all saw what it was that I was seeing and were, in turn, also fascinated.

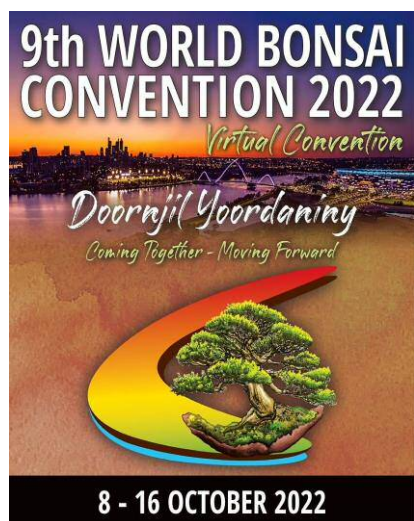
When I arrived back in the UK I asked the wonderful potter Dan Barton, to create a Suiban which he did with a remarkable glass glaze to emulate a breaking ice pool and the woman about to fall into the water. This is why I call this Suseki. 'OOPS'.



NOTE: If any of our members see anything interesting on stones on all of the public forums, get prior permission from the owner to publish it in our newsletter. Remember newsletters are 'your' forums for learning and exchanging information to further our knowledge and experiences in this fascinating art form. Email them to me and they will be published in the newsletter. Special thanks goes to Georgina K. for submitting this very interesting article and photo to us for sharing.

You just have to check this out – our suiseki friend in Brisbane, Lindsay Bebb has opened an on-line shop with a wide range of stands and stones for sale. Lindsay has made all the stands (which are absolutely wonderful) and they are made in both hard wood and soft wood and the prices are to suit all budgets. I spoke to Lindsay the other day via email and at the moment he is very busy planning the WBFF Convention to be held later this year in Perth via Zoom. The stock on his website is available for sale now. When the convention is over he will probably go back to producing these lovely stands for sale, keep posted I will keep you up to date with the progress by then. The website to go to is:

www.bonsai-stands-and-stones.com



To find out more about registering for this virtual convention go to the WBFF website for details. It will be a must-see event with demonstrators from all over the world showing us their bonsai talents. Perth is the host city for this virtual event.

Photos from our last club/daiza meeting that you may enjoy seeing. The theme for that meeting was on Animal Stones.



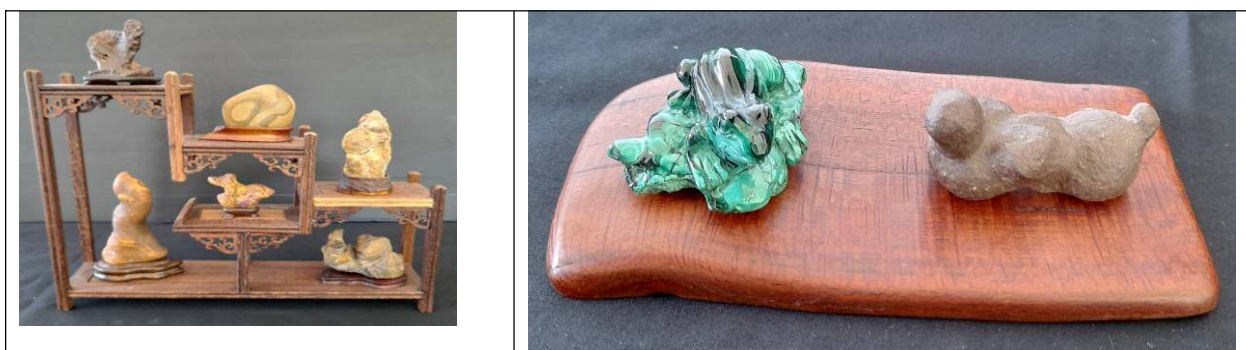
From left to right: Two lovely 'puppy dogs'. Our newest members are very inventive when it comes to making unusual daizas.....well done! A turtle stone using a cheat's way out for a daiza on a ready-made carving of a turtle altered to hold the stone.



From left to right: Another dog stone partaking in drinking some water at the waterhole. Top stone a piece of ginger stone called the Pouncing Tiger, and on the right a rhinoceros – both stones from China.



From left to right: A pod of Beluga whales, and on the right a very handsome 'snail'.



Above left: A collection of small animal stones, **right:** A carved frog in Malachite and baby seal.



Above: An Iguana stone found at Sofala, N.S.W.
Right: A very wise 'Owl' on a very natural daiza.



Above left: One of our member's 'mouse' stone and **right:** the same member's 'pig' stone.



Left: A meerkat on guard.
Right: A sleeping cormorant.

NEXT MEETING

This club/daiza meeting will be on the **18th June** at Ray's Nursery starting at 9.30am. Hope you can all be there, see you then. The theme will be '**Landing on Mars**'.

This following poem was written by one of our past members, Frank Bryant back in February 2007. Poetic meanderings following a suiseki group field trip.

Remember Romeo and his Juliet
And that question of what's in a name,
Take a stone and what ere you call it,
It will always look the same.

Thank goodness for suiseki,
Which turns that all around,
With vision and lateral thinking,
Images in stones are found.
I know it sounds a bit far-fetched,
But when a closer look you take,
That lovely stone – the **green** one,
Becomes an island in a lake.
I hope by now I've opened your mind
To look with viewpoint changes,
Then that bigger rock with its jagged textures
Is a rugged peak of some mountain ranges

And so you see, there's a lot in a name,
Or at least in the eye of the beholder,
But in the end a stone's a stone,
Unless, perchance, it's a boulder!!



This very green stone (the photo doesn't do it much justice), was given to me by a bonsai member who went to a swap and exchange event at a lapidary club with her husband and was given this stone. She thought I would like it as it was only in her garden and she was cleaning out the area. Wow! I love it.