

Summer 2018-19



SA Bonsai Newsletter

Reminder – AGM in March

Annie Reid – Secretary

Remember that the March meeting is also our **Annual General Meeting**. The positions of President and Treasurer will need to be filled this year. Andrew Ward will step down as President at this time. His term in this position has seen the club grow and develop into a vibrant entity with a focus on developing better bonsai as well as enjoying ourselves in the process.

The position of Treasurer has been temporarily filled this year by Terry Bertozzi and this position too, will be vacated.

All general committee positions are vacated annually and nominations are sought from financial members who are committed to serving the best interests of our members, including the promotion of bonsai in the many forms that this takes and upholding values of integrity and honesty associated with maintaining the good name of The SA Bonsai Society.

[Download the nomination form.](#)

Wanted – South Australian Bonsai and Penjing for the National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia



[The National Bonsai and Penjing Collection of Australia](#) (NBPCA) is home to a world class exhibition of bonsai and penjing, which is open for viewing by the public.

The NBPCA is housed within the National Arboretum in Canberra and includes a continuously evolving display of bonsai and penjing.

Bonsai and penjing on display within the NBPCA have been offered on a loan basis by bonsai growers from across Australia.

The loan of bonsai and penjing is for a two year period, during which time the trees are cared for by a team of dedicated staff and volunteers.

The NBPCA is calling for submissions from South Australia for potential loan material.

Any bonsai or penjing selected for loan to the NBPCA are to be in display condition and available for transport to the NBPCA in February 2019.

The current NBPCA Selection Ambassadors are Luke Parsons, and Matt Sharp.

Both Luke and Matt are experienced bonsai artists and are happy to help with the process of submitting nominations for potential bonsai and penjing for loan to the NBPCA.

If you believe you have a bonsai or penjing that would be suitable for display within the NBPCA, please contact Luke or Matt via the contact details below.

Luke Parsons 0488 244 318 Luke.parsons@internode.on.net

Matt Sharp 0417 803 298 Mattosharp@internode.on.net

Thoughts on the Royal Adelaide Show

Hugo Welling

I was glad to be part of an enthusiastic team of Club representatives, including Andrew Ward, AlanJobs, Malcolm Roberts and those folks who kindly helped hand out pamphlets.

The verdict? A great success and time well spent, with the *Little Fountain* being a stand-out 'must-stop' for many visitors. The Show was also a great opportunity for us to tell people what's happening at the Club and to generate interest. A gentleman called Jonathon assured me he was going to join. Like everyone, I talked lots to visitors. I thought at one point that I might have overdone it though when I heard a woman say quite firmly, "that's enough Hugo", only to look over and realise it was a mother talking to her son, Hugo. At least I hope his name was Hugo!!!

Like everyone, I tried to engage visitors with varying success. Three ladies effusively told me they "absolutely loved bonsai" all the while walking right past our display. Oh well – perhaps they'll stop next year.

A big thanks to all who gave their time this year. I'm looking forward to doing it all again in 2019.



2018 Adelaide Royal Show...

Alan Jabs

The 2018 Adelaide Royal Show is now a distant memory given it was several months ago and has since been followed by the SA Bonsai Annual Show.

For those select few who won awards and ribbons the congratulations are richly deserved as there were some excellent trees in the competition.

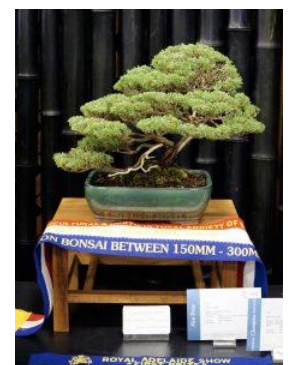
The many months that it takes to prepare trees for show, will I am sure be documented elsewhere or discussed with a coffee in light conversation. That aside there is another aspect to the Royal Show which involves the promotion of the SA Bonsai Show. To this end and a few days before opening, Malcolm, Hugo and I found ourselves in front of our little patch ready to create this year's garden display promoting the bonsai society.

Over the next few days we planned, built, took down and re built the display until we were happy with the look for this year.

Day one was all about construction but by day three the trees and plants came in and we were ready well ahead of time for the show's opening on Friday.

During each day of the show a SABS member was stationed near the display handing out information as well as answering whatever questions came their way. Display trees were changed over after several days to avoid stress and with the closing of the show once again Malcolm, Hugo and I took the whole lot down.

This is a major promotion for the SABS and worthy of support and assistance, so next year give it some thought and raise the hand.



C Drinkwater's winning bonsai

John Marsh presents at the September meeting

Annie Reid

John has been practising bonsai for over forty years and initially received formal training for Vita Koreshoff, and later Dorothy Koreshoff. He taught bonsai at the Koreshoff Bonsai Nursery and enhanced his skills further by completing a course at the Lingnan Penjing Academy.

He began his presentation by explaining that the earliest evidence of Penjing practice can be seen in wall murals dating from the Tang dynasty (706BC)

Originally Chinese artists and scholars (Literati) recreated natural landscapes in miniature so that they might appreciate them indoors and in a sense, capture the essence and spirit of the landscape found outside. The Literati were financially supported by the Emperor, which gave them the free time necessary to create these beautiful trees and as John mentioned several times during his presentation, creating Penjing involves a process that takes time.



Tang Dynasty mural



Art inspires Penjing practice

Philosophically the art of Penjing is influenced by the principles of Taoism, specifically the concept of Yin and Yang; the idea of the universe governed by two primal forces, opposing but complementary. However, Penjing design is not only inspired by nature but also by Chinese poetry, calligraphy, and other visual arts. Buddhist and Daoist philosophies valued the spirit contained in wild trees, naturally dwarfed and full of twists and knots and so the desire to create miniature landscapes expressing similar characteristics was a natural response to these philosophies.

The famous Chinese handbook of painting, *The Mustard Seed Manual of Painting*, first published in 1679 became an indispensable source of inspiration for Penjing practitioners and reiterates the difference with western painting which emphasises the solid subject of an image rather than on the empty spaces and mere suggestions of the subject. As in Chinese painting, the Penjing master looks for the flow or *Qi* of the tree and is conscious of the negative space created by its form – this process requires considerable contemplation and a oneness with nature through Chinese philosophy.

John highlighted nine steps that can be employed to achieve the natural sparseness characteristic of Penjing

1. Remove all unnecessary material, especially dead material (bad *feng shui*)
2. Don't pre-select a style, look for all possibilities – try to find the *mu* of the material (mood)
3. Begin with the lowest section of the trunk. Trust that you must forget what you've learnt. Trust that your tools will strike when required.
4. Apply *siling* methods to capture the spirit of animals; look for things such as dragons shapes and turtle voids.
5. Be conscious of a sense of scale
6. Be conscious of taper and balance
7. Use artistic invention based on emotion
8. Pot selection – this should highlight your work, not overshadow it. It should show respect for the age of the tree – old chipped or cracked pots can add character
9. Repeat step 7



Tree from the Tung Su Anhui province

There are also four major categories (not styles) of Penjing

- *Shumu* – single tree
- *Linsue* – forest with multiples trees
- *Shuihan* – water and land
- *Shanshui* – mountain and water

One of the interesting points that John highlighted was that Penjing in China are characterised by the provinces where they are grown and the trees created usually reflect the unique conditions of the area, particularly the climatic conditions. For example Jiangsu Province tends to specialise in Conifers with rounded mounds of foliage while Tung Su Anhui Province concentrates on curving trunks with 2.5 bends.

For an excellent resource on Literati Penjing ask Nan or Dennis (club librarians) for *Literati Style Penjing* by Zhao Qingquan.

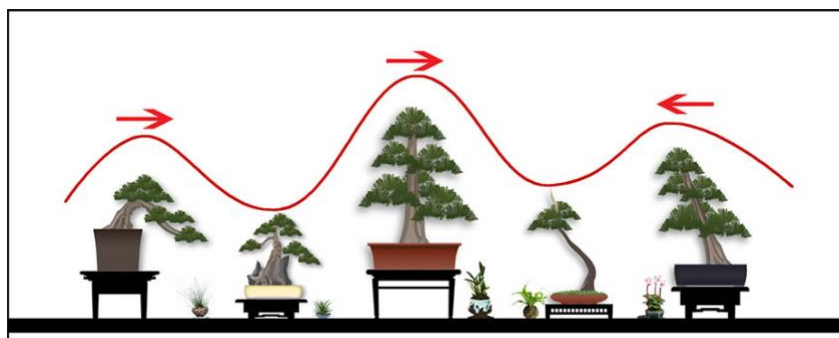
The art of displaying bonsai at conventions/exhibitions

The final part of John's presentation concerned how trees should be displayed on exhibition benches as a formal display for a convention or special event such as our annual show.

The principles for the correct positioning of tree are as follows:

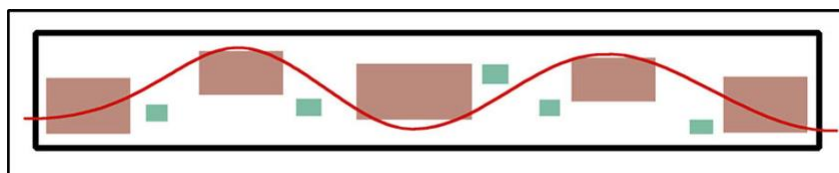
- The tallest formal upright is positioned in the middle of the bench
- The next tallest trees are placed at either end of the bench, facing inwards. It would work well if one of these was a cascade.
- The trees filling the space between are smaller and point towards the centre

This arrangement creates a gentle curve which dips on either side of the central tree.



Tree placement on an exhibition bench.

The curve is also reiterated when seen from above with the central tree positioned towards the back of the bench and the trees at either end brought forward.



Plan view of tree placement

Enthusiasm for Australian natives as Bonsai

Annie Reid

At the October meeting Matt Sharp and his trusty team shared their interest in native plants as bonsai.

Matt began by reminding us that bonsai has evolved from careful observation of ancient trees in the wild. The Chinese and Japanese have built the convention of bonsai styling from an understanding of the way pines grow in nature and bonsai practitioners in southern Europe and the Mediterranean are inspired by the ancient olives that dictate their styling of these trees. It follows that we are well placed to observe ancient specimens of our own native trees and that this in turn can give us insight into how these trees should be styled. Matt went further

by suggesting that Australian practitioners should become the leaders in showing bonsai-ists from other countries the best way to work with Australian natives.

Chris Drinkwater has a fondness for working with Eucalypts and explained that to keep the leaves small, he defoliates twice per year and if planning to show a tree, he does it 6 weeks prior. Techniques were discussed about stimulating new growth along branches and one of the most intriguing methods for doing this is to set alight rolled up newspaper and scorch the leaves – without setting alight to the entire tree of course. The point was made that all native plants love water and using *Dynamic Lifter* and/or *Osmocote* is essential although Banksias can be little more sensitive and prefer a fertiliser specifically designed for natives. I have to add, some time ago Greg Paterson recommended *Searles Native Plant Food* for my Callistemon which I also use on my Banksias and all seem to be thriving.

Philip Ekers showed two Banksia *serrata* that he has had for quite some time and explained that they love water so much, he will soak them for a day at a time, several times during the summer, in a bath with *Seasol* added. He explained that he uses an open mix for the Banksias and repots/root prunes every five years.

Matt concluded with the comment that all natives prefer an open mix with Callitris being the exception.

Time to search through your local nursery's old stock!



2018 SA Bonsai Show

Competition Awards for 2018

Novice bonsai-in-training Award: The Keith Walter Memorial Award is sponsored by Keith's family which honour's Keith's achievements and contributions to bonsai throughout his life and is intended to encourage new competitors to prepare and enter trees.

First Prize: Luke Swalling

Second Prize: Rebekah Gillies

Third Prize: Jack kay

Encouragement Award: Gail Richardson

Best in Show: Chris Drinkwater

Fun with Bonsai Award: Hugo Welling

This award is sponsored by Janet Sabey

Reflections on the show

Following the success of the 2018 SA Bonsai Show, several members have offered observations

David Shields

There always seems to be an undercurrent of excitement and pride amongst members in the lead-up to our annual show, even though



Matt demonstrating

we know a lot of planning and hard work goes into making the weekend a great success. Maybe it stems from being older and somewhat disregarded in lots of ways. We all quietly put our hearts and minds into a demonstration of beauty and artistry equal to anything electronic or media driven.

The big showing this year was another reminder – we can and do work together with pride and satisfaction at the end of another year of self achievement and a resolve to create an even better tree or trees next year, starting now!

The public enjoyed the great display and opportunity to view, to buy starting trees and equipment, and a resolve to get off the TV couch and become a creator of a tree to be proud of and to enjoy the fellowship of like minded people, gain new friends and start a hobby to help pass those down times we all have.

We must commend the hard working committee for their decisions which, for the most part, worked very well. The young visitors loved the tree potting, ably handled by Janet and the "Go find the answer" contest took the children away from technology (for a short time anyway).

The novelty section, I thought was a little more intense and harder to interpret than was necessary – less thinking and more fun – perhaps needs a bit more laughter injection but good effort from those taking part. Coffee area and demonstrations were well received and of course our great kitchen kept us well nourished, a big thankyou from all our insides.

Sales, helpful hints and free advice went pretty smoothly and in some cases tested staff knowledge which was freely exchanged and I am sure many visitors benefited from advice given without a sales pitch.

All in all a great show worthy of us all and I am sure the hard work was worth the effort and let's get that undercurrent started soon to improve next year. Thanks to all concerned.

Gail Richardson

I had never considered there were parallels between the post Christmas sales and the opening of the Bonsai Show but there were. There was the crowd outside the door, eagerly awaiting the doors to open at 10am – people of all ages and all smiling. At the appointed time they were through the door, had paid their entrance fees and were headed to the sale area, only to exit later with purchases. However, they often came back again to look at the beautiful trees on display and to look again at the large array of plants for sale. Whilst it seemed there were fewer children attending this year, those who did were very excited about the prospect of their very own treasure hunt.

This year the club did itself proud yet again. The display was well set out and the number and quality of trees exemplified the dedication and commitment of the members. It was very impressive.

Equally impressive was the way in which the members assisted the public and nothing seemed to be too much trouble. The friendliness of members I think could be measured by the number of membership applications sought by the public.

If there was one area of disappointment for me it was the number of entries in the novice section. There seemed to be fewer this year. Perhaps this is in response to the high quality of trees on display at each club meeting and hence a reluctance to show inexperience. But we all have to start somewhere and everyone has been a novice at some time.



Janet working with a young enthusiast.

Annie Reid

While I have volunteered to assist at previous shows, it was quite another experience to be involved as the club secretary because I saw first hand the amount of organisation involved from the early planning stage to the final floor mopping and turning off the lights on Sunday evening.

It certainly couldn't be achieved without the enthusiastic participation of so many of our members who rally around each year, do the hard work, put up with the glitches that always seem to occur and still manage to laugh and share in the banter of bonsai stories and observations of what's happening around them.

In fact, doing some 'security' wandering was a good opportunity for me to talk to members about their perceptions of the show and ways we might streamline how things are done. A number of suggestions were forthcoming and these have been noted for committee discussion.

Of course for me the best part of the show is looking closely at the trees displayed and being able to return to them over the two days provides an excellent opportunity to really absorb their structure and beauty.

This year Howard Hamon has taken the trouble to photograph the majority of the trees using a white background and this provides another opportunity to soak them in at a later date.

Howard last undertook this time consuming process for the 2015 Convention and we are fortunate that he has been willing to do it again. While these images form the slide show on our website homepage, if any members would like the complete set, give either one of us a USB and we will copy them for you.

Accolades keep coming

Alan Jabs

Long time stalwarts of the bonsai community here in Australia, Glenis and Lindsay Bebb have received significant recognition with the 'Bonsai Angels' award given in France recently.

A post from Tony Bebb on Facebook proudly let the world know of the recent presentation. Tony said: "Finally found a photo and can share this news. Pretty proud of my Dad and Bonsai Mum.

Congratulations [Lindsay](#) and [Glenis Bebb](#). No other couple has worked harder for the success of Australian, New Zealand and World Bonsai".



Receiving the Bonsai Angels Award from Tony Tickle and Pauline Muth at the BCI Convention in Mulhouse, France

Both Glenis and Lindsay have dedicated significant business and personal time to bonsai here in Australia as well as overseas. Both are well known to SA Bonsai Society members as Glenis is the current President of BCI (Bonsai Clubs International) and Lindsay (past president of AABC) is the Chairman of the WBFF (World Bonsai Friendship Federation) which will be holding the 9th World Bonsai Convention in Perth, WA in 2021.

The award of *Bonsai Angel* is summed up as follows: Somebody who has helped you develop your skills, or someone who organises a club, society or study group, an event or show. A valued friend who selfishly gives up their time to support you or your club. Bonsai Angels is a way of recognising and telling the bonsai world about the contribution they have made. Anybody can nominate someone as long as that person promotes bonsai and its associated art forms. This can be done this via [Bonsai Angels website](#)

Cold and *more cold* – Bonsai on the Canadian Prairies

Alan Jabs

Back in Canada and Winnipeg after a two year absence, I decided to look up the local [Bonsai Club in Winnipeg](#) only to discover the web site said no meeting while I was there. Not a good start!

However, after emailing friends Joe Grande (editor of BCI Magazine) and Stu Innes (who visited South Australia a few years ago) and I was suddenly introduced to the fact they were running a beginners course on Bonsai and as I was in the area would I be prepared to do a presentation on bonsai in Australia for the members present. Making sure I was well prepared, I attended on the night with my notes. Following introductions to those present, the session went through some preliminary basics outlining the topic of the night which by chance fitted nicely with my presentation.

The course they are running offers those who have never been exposed to bonsai the chance to pick up the knowledge needed to exercise their learned skills and work on a tree supplied as part of the program. This is a great way to make use of the colder times of the year as it was well into the sub zero temperatures outside that night. At these temperatures, working on trees is not possible as they are all in a dormant phase apart from those happy to live inside in modified conditions.

They do it tough in Winnipeg with short growing seasons and winters regularly seeing minus thirty Celsius, heavy snow and bitterly cold winds, which makes plant selection and using local species a priority.

Being a member of the SA Bonsai Society has offered me many opportunities and meeting like minded people across the world has given me the chance to grow my knowledge. Being asked to present at a club on distant shores is a further feather in one's cap. I urge all to make time to meet with local clubs wherever you may travel for the simple reasons that the camaraderie, experience, knowledge and enjoyment is well worth the effort.

Homecoming of sorts

Alan Jabs

Berkshire Bonsai Affiliated to the Federation of British Bonsai Societies

Fifty years ago my family took the chance and immigrated to Australia becoming part of the flood of 'ten pound poms'. Our little village on the banks of the River Thames in the county of Berkshire, England was an idyllic location to start one's life but better places and opportunities beckoned.

When the opportunity arose to go back 'home' after those fifty years, I took the idea and made it a memorable part of my travels this year. Not one to miss an opportunity I included a visit to the local Bonsai club.



Like most clubs I have visited, they operate along similar lines with dedicated people filling the all important roles. However, they differ in two ways. Firstly, they recently lost several of their key people who were the major drivers of the club, losing a knowledge base at the same time. As a result, they are now in the process of sorting out and re-inventing the club, taking what was the past and merging it successfully for the future. Secondly they, along with all clubs in England, have access to many opportunities to promote themselves up and down the country as well as into Europe. Something here in Australia we have yet to embrace especially given the issues with moving our trees across state borders.

The Berkshire Bonsai Society was formed in 1994 and is a small, friendly club dedicated to the enjoyment of Bonsai.

I was welcomed into the meeting and assisted many of the members with ideas and suggestions with their trees they had brought along to the workshop part of the night, including some specimens we simply would never see here in Australia. Banter and questions between all helped here as many were novices and the usual "what is Bonsai in Australia like" was asked by more than one attendee. While the workshop was in full swing several members produced trees from their cars and an impromptu set up was worked on for an upcoming show at Heathrow. Much care was taken with this until it was just right and several very good trees were left out simply for aesthetic and not quality reasons.



Travelling to the UK, I can recommend a warm welcome from all in the club. A wonderful night in rural England and one I would like to repeat, hopefully not leaving it for another fifty years.

Fun at our Christmas meeting

Crazy quiz questions and inventing limericks were just the start of fun at the final meeting of the SA Bonsai Society for 2018.

Andrew as always, made the perfect host-cum-compare, as he kept things moving and our energy levels high. Of course, the task of coming up with clever responses was made a little easier with a drink and a bowl of chips within easy reach.



We all enjoyed selecting 'gifts' from the table of items generously provided by our members and this was followed by a delicious selection of treats on offer for the Christmas feast.



Meeting Venue

Goodwood Community Centre
Rosa St
Goodwood

Postal Address: PO Box 159, Goodwood, SA, 5034

Patrons: Dorothy Koreshoff, Carlien Walter

Office Bearers:

President: Andrew Ward

Vice President: Matthew Sharp

Secretary: Annie Reid secretary.sabonsai@gmail.com

Treasurer: Terry Bertozzi

Assistant Treasurer: Joseph Rabig

Newsletter Editor: Annie Reid

Committee:

Jenni Carnie

Philip Ekers

Howard Hamon

Greg Horner

Heather Matthews

Luke Parsons

Malcolm Roberts

Janet Sabey

Hugo Welling