

UK Bonsai Association

www.ukbonsaiassoc.org



Bulletin Aug23

Welcome to this month's Bulletin.

A lot of bonsai enthusiasts with tree collections of a certain size would admit that never go on holiday in the month of August. I don't think anyone is going to be changing their habits in the near future, what's ahead of us weather wise in August is anyone's guess. While much of Europe has been baking in record temperatures, we in the UK seem to have got off lightly. Beware this could turn on a sixpence.

Visiting some of the nurseries up and down the country they are very aware, I see new large shading structures going up, preparing for the worst. If you are going away take great care whom you choose to look after your trees whilst you're away, the best avenue to go down is a fellow enthusiast from your club. Never rely on an automatic watering system unless you have thoroughly tested it out and even then there are many reasons why you should still have a friend keep an eye on your trees whilst you are away.

Well, as they often say, better late than never. We would like to congratulate Miroslav Kolar who represented the UK in the European Bonsai Association New Talent Competition which was held in Czech Republic in April of this year. The competition was started in Monaco way back in 1995 and over the years has been held at different locations around Europe, even here at Stratford-Upon-Avon in 1999. Miroslav joins a very small select group of people from the UK who have come in the top three over the years, with even a 1st place back in 1998. Well done Miroslav.

2023 2nd Place / Miroslav Kolar

2019 3rd Place / Tony Oswin

2013 2nd Place / Marcus Watts

2008 2nd Place / Paul Finch

2006 2nd Place / Peter Evans

2005 2nd Place / Peter Baldwin

1998 1st Place / Mike Sullivan

1995 2nd Place / Tony Tickle

If you think you might have the skills to go up against other European talent in 2024 keep an eye on the bulletin, we will highlight any future information.

We have been running the bonsai badge and book section on the website for nearly four years and every month the bulletin high-lights four of each. We would ask kindly if you have any bonsai badges or books not listed, please could you send us images for inclusion, we are starting to run low and I know there's plenty more out there.

If you can make any contributions to the UKBA website or this news bulletin please don't hesitate to contact us. Whether a change in your club location or a trip that you make abroad, why not share with us all?

The next steering group meeting on Zoom is scheduled for Tuesday 01Aug23 at 1900.hrs.

Bonsai Events

Aug23 & Sep23

13Aug23 Sun (Confirmed)
Bristol Bonsai Society Show
Failand Village Hall, Oxhouse Lane,
Failand, Somerset. BS8 3TS.
Adm: tba. Times: 1000-1600.hrs
Ctc: Mark Wood 07964.249279
Email: woodmdwoody@yahoo.co.uk
www.bristolbonsaisociety.wordpress.com

19Aug23 Sat (Confirmed)
Bonsai Display organised by
Scottish Bonsai Association
At The Japanese Garden at Cowden
Upper Hillfoot Road, Dollar,
lackmannanshire.
Scotland. FK14 7PL.
Adm: £8.50. Times: 1030-1700.hrs.
Contact: Marina Miller
Email: president@scottishbonsai.org

26-28Aug23 Sat-Mon (Confirmed)
Wirral Bonsai Main Show
Gordale Garden Centre,
High Road, Burton, South Wirral. CH64
8TF.
Adm: Free.
Times: 0930-1730/1000-1630/0930-1600.hrs
Contact: Andy Hardman 07513.953646
Email: andy.hardman@hotmail.co.uk
www.wirralbonsaisociety.wordpress.com

27Aug23 Sun (Confirmed)
Bonsai Shed Car Booty & Auction
Wood Stock Lane North, Hill Park Rose
Centre,
Thames Ditton, Surrey. KT6 5HN.
Adm: Free. Times:0800-1500.hrs.
Contact: Andrew Barber 07590.595538
Email: foodsmithltd@gmail.com

02&03Sep23 Sat & Sun (Confirmed)
Dragon Bonsai Workshop & Auction
Cwmaman Resource Centre, Station Road,
Glanaman, Wales. SA18 1QL.
Adm: Free. Times:
Sat Workshop & BBQ 1000.hrs-Late
Sat night Bunkhouse & Breakfast £25
Sun Auction 1100-1400.hrs
Contact: Chris Thomas 07798.798194
Email: chris.thomas1@sky.com

03Sep23 Sun (Confirmed)
East Anglian Bonsai Show
Kesgrave War Memorial Community
Centre,
Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, Suffolk. IP5
1JF.
Adm: £4.Under 16.yrs Free
Times: 1000-1530.hrs.

Contact: Dave Fryer 07449.801297
Email: daveafryer@aol.com
Supporting Clubs:
Bury St Edmunds & Cambridge B.S
Ipswich Bonsai Society
Middlesex Bonsai Society
Norfolk Bonsai Association
North London Bonsai Group
Southend Bonsai Society
Supporting Traders:
Ato-Saki Bonsai Bonsaistow

Bon-Tag Dei Ceramics
Driftwood Bonsai Every Sprout
Reid Bonsai Tone Ceramics
Stone Monkey Ceramics
Walsall Ceramics 11 x Private Sellers

10Sep23 Sun (Confirmed)
South Staffs Bonsai Society Show
Birmingham Botanical Gardens,
Westbourne Road, Edgbaston,
Birmingham. B15 3TR.
Adm: tba. Times:1000-1700.hrs.
Ctc: Dave Barnsley 0121.6822200
Email:davidbarnsley@blueyonder.co.uk
Supporting Club:
Stourbridge bonsai Society
Supporting Trader:
Funky Fish Ceramics

15-17Sep23 Fri-Sun (Confirmed)
Yorkshire Bonsai Society Display & Show
At Harrogate Flower Show
6 The Stables, Newby Hall, Ripon, North
Yorkshire. HG4 5AE.
Adm: £20 (Exhibitors Free)
Times: 1000-1700.hrs
Contact: Craig Brown 07763.771701
Email: jrcraig008@sky.com
Supporting Trader:
North Of England Bonsai

16Sep23 Sat (Confirmed)
Sussex Bonsai Group Display
South Downs Nurseries & Garden Centre,
Brighton Road, Hassocks,
West Sussex. BN6 9LY.
Adm: Free. Times: 0900-1600.hrs
Contact: Ray Brunsten 07342.650713
Email: ray.brunsten@gmail.com
www.sussexbonsaigroup.wordpress.com

17Sep23 Sun (Confirmed)
South East Bonsai Fair
Little Fant Farm, Farleigh Lane,
Maidstone, Kent. ME16 9LY.
Adm: Free. Times:1000-1500.hrs
Contact: Adam Hadley 07765.522117
Email:hadoribonsai@gmail.com

24Sep23 Sun (Provisional)
Doncaster Bonsai Experience
& The National Shohin Exhibition
Markham Grange Nursery,
Longlands Lane, Brodsworth,
Doncaster, South Yorkshire. DN5 7XB.
Adm: Free. Times: 0900-1500.hrs
Contact: John Skill 07818.110978
Email: doncasterbonsai@gmail.com
Supporting Traders: Many

We would remind people the status of all events is marked in brackets ie, provisional, postponed, confirmed or cancelled. Whenever visiting an event pleased check for more up to date details on the website and if travelling any great distance, please confirm the event is still running with the event contact person.

We only list on the bulletin events scheduled to take place in the next two months, if you want to know about events further into the future, please visit the main diary on the website.
Thank you

Bonsai Event Reports UK

To read the full reports with photos on the events listed below please visit the website.

01Jul23 Sat

Manchester Bonsai Society Show





02Jul23 Sun

Bedfordshire Bonsai Society Show



02Jul23 Sun

Surrey Heath Bonsai Show



16Jul23 Sun

Aka Matsu School Of Bonsai Annual Show



19-23Jul23 Wed & Sun
Cheshire Bonsai Society Display



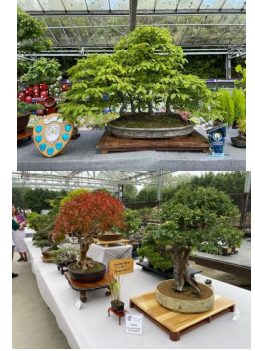
21-23Jul23 Fri-Sun
Accrington & District Bonsai Society Display



21-23Jul23 Fri-Sun
UK Bonsai Association Display
At Hyper Japan Festival



22-23Jul23 Sat & Sun
Chichester Bonsai Exhibition



Trips Abroad

22&23Apr23
EBA New Talent Competition Czech
& 28-30Apr23
Cassovia Bonsai Show Slovakia.



Don't forget if you're travelling abroad and your trip includes something bonsai please let us know, thank you.

Club Speaker Nights

02Aug23 Wed (1930-2200.hrs)
Talk by David Cheshire
Subject: Pests & Diseases
Bedfordshire Bonsai Society.
Toddington Village Hall, Leighton Road,
Toddington, Bedfordshire. LU5 6AN.
Ctc: Richard Gaiger 07745.507318
Email: r.gaiger@ntlworld.com

04Aug23 Fri (1930-2200.hrs)
Talk by Peter Warren
Subject: Pines
Ipswich Bonsai Society
Kesgrave Community Hall, Twelve Acre
Approach, Kesgrave, Suffolk. IP5 1JF.
Ctc: Dave Fryer 07749.801297
Email: daveafryer@aol.com

10Aug23 Thu (1930-2200.hrs)
Talk By Collette Williams
Subject: Pruning.
Chichester & District Bonsai Society
Bassil Shippam Centre, Tozer Way, St
Pancras,
Chichester, West Sussex. PO19 7LG.
Ctc: Liz Panton 01798.865551
Email: lizpanton5@gmail.com

18Aug23 Fri (1930.hrs)
Talk by Peter Warren
Subject: tba

Southend Bonsai Society. Ashingdon Memorial Hall,
Ashingdon Road, Rochford, Essex. SS4 3HF.
Ctc: Paul Schofield 07942.679688
Email: southendbonsaisociety@gmail.com

21Aug23 Mon (1930.hrs)
Talk by Mark Moreland
Subject: Propagating & Miniature Bonsai.
Bristol Bonsai Society. Failand Village Hall, Oxhouse
Lane, Failand, Somerset. BS8 3TS.
Ctc: Mark Wood 07964.249279
Email: woodmdwoody@yahoo.co.uk

25Aug23 (1930-2200.hrs)
Talk by Robert Stewart
Subject: Summer Pruning.
Solent Bonsai Society
Wallington Village Hall, Broadcut,
Fareham, Hampshire. PO16 8ST.
Ctc: Keith Hartley 07847.487435
Email: kb.hartley@ntlworld.com

08Sep23 Fri (1930-2200.hrs)
Talk by Steve McKee
Subject: Tree Critique
Ipswich Bonsai Society. Kesgrave Community
Hall, Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, Suffolk.
IP5 1JF.
Ctc: Dave Fryer 07749.801297
Email: daveafryer@aol.com

11Sep23 Mon (2000.hrs)
Talk by John Armitage
Subject: Junipers & Pines.
Manchester Bonsai Society
Stockport Labour Club,
2 Lloyd Street, Heaton Norris,
Stockport, Cheshire. SK4 1QP.
Ctc: Wayne Crumpton 07742.111142
mbsmembershipsecretary@gmail.com

13Sep23 Wed (1930.hrs)
Talk by Mark Moreland
Subject: Propagating & Miniature Bonsai.
Kent Bonsai Society Show
Dunkirk Village Hall, London Road,
Dunkirk, Kent. ME13 9LG.
Contact: Adrian Long 07710.615861
Email: adrian58@long@btinternet.com

13Sep23 Wed (1930.hrs)
Talk by David Cheshire
Subject: Root Over Rock
Berkshire Bonsai Society. Barkham Village
Hall, Barkham, Berkshire. RG40 4PL
Ctc: Keith Winter 07802.214150
Email: berkshirebonsaiclub@gmail.com

16Sep23 Sat (1000-1300.hrs)
Talk & Workshop by Tony McKenzie
Subject: Wiring
Middlesex Bonsai Society. South Harrow
Methodist Church, Walton Avenue, South
Harrow, Middlesex. HA2 8QU.
Ctc: Mark Moreland 07850.771201
Email: markmoreland@live.co.uk

19Sep23 Tue (1915.hrs)
Talk by John Hanby
Subject: tba
Tees Valley Bonsai Society
St Marys Church Hall, Norton Green,
Norton, Stockton On Tees. TS20 1DT.
Ctc: Neil Crawford 01642.763720
Email: milesaxy@hotmail.com

19Sep23 Tue (1930.hrs)
Talk by John Armitage
Subject: Styling Junipers

National Bonsai Society
Banks Leisure Centre, Greaves Hall Avenue,
Banks, Southport, Merseyside. PR9 8BL.
Ctc: Stephen Holland 01519.338757
Email: sholland19547@gmail.com

21Sep23 Thu (1930.hrs)
Talk by Judith Davis
Subject: History Of Bonsai
Redditch Bonsai Society
Webheath Village Hall, Heathfield Road,
Redditch, Midlands. B97 5SQ,
Ctc: Richard Gilkes 07803.593024
Email: ragilkes@blueyonder.co.uk

24Sep23 Sun (1430.hrs)
Talk by Neil Hutchings
Subject: Early Autumn repotting of Pines
Exeter Bonsai Society
Woodbury Salterton Village Hall, Stony
Lane, Woodbury Salterton, East Devon. EX5
1PW.
4th Sun Monthly 1430.hrs
Ctc: Brian MacKichan 01392.437525
Email: brian.mackichan@mypostoffice.co.uk

27Sep23 Wed (1930.hrs)
Talk by Pete Goodhead
Subject: Food For Thought
Derby & District Bonsai Association
Grange Hall Community Centre, Park Lane,
Littleover, Derbyshire. DE23 6FX.
Ctc: Tony Lloyd 01332.679584
Email: tlloyd98@gmail.com

28Sep23 Thu (2000-2200.hrs)
Talk by Peter Warren
Subject: tba
Sutton Bonsai Society
4th Ewell Scout Hall, 1 Bluegates,
London Road, Ewell, Surrey. KT17 2SA.
Ctc: Andy Jordan 07958.372101
Email: antique.netsuke@gmail.com
www.suttonbonsai.co.uk

28Sep23 Thu (1915-2115.hrs)
Talk / Critique by Caz Scott
Subject: Pines / Junipers
South Yorkshire Bonsai Society
Deepcar Village Hall, Helliwell Lane,
Deepcar, Sheffield, South Yorkshire. S36
2NH.
Ctc: Graham Morris 0114.2888027
Email: info@southyorkbonsai.org.uk

If your club is holding a speaker night open
to non-members please advise us of the
details.
thank you

Notice Board

13Aug23 Sun (Confirmed)
Open Garden of Tony Tickle
Near Ramsbottom, Greater Manchester.
Visit the new bonsai garden of Tony Tickle
bring a tree for an appraisal/advice.
Relax chill in the garden, read a
book/magazine from the bonsai library.
Browse the pots & yamadori for sale.
Drinks & refreshments available.
contact Tony for full details & address
email: tonytickel@gmail.com

19Aug23 Sat (Confirmed)
Japanese Garden at Cowden
Upper Hillfoot Road, Dollar,
Clackmannanshire.

Scotland. FK14 7PL.
Adm: £8.50. Times: 1030-1700.hrs.
If you would like to be part of this event,
please contact Marina Miller immediately.
Email: president@scottishbonsai.org

2&3Sep23 Sat & Sun (Confirmed)
New to the event diary this month
Dragon Bonsai Workshop & Auction
Cwmaman Resource Centre, Station Road,
Glanamman, Wales. SA18 1QL.
Adm: Free. Times:
Sat Workshop & BBQ 1000.hrs-Late
Sat night Bunkhouse & Breakfast £25
Sun Auction 1100-1400.hrs
Contact: Chris Thomas 07798.798194
Email: chris.thomas1@sky.com

7&8Oct23 Sat & Sun (Confirmed)
New to the event diary this month
Dragon Bonsai Autumn Show
Open workshop & Clinic
Masion Aberglasney Gardens, Llangathen,
Carmarthenshire, Wales. SA32 8QH.
Adm: £9.50 Children Free
Times: Sat 1000-1600.hrs Sun 1000-
1500.hrs
Contact: Chris Thomas 07798.798194
Email: chris.thomas1@sky.com

20Jan24 Sat (Confirmed)
New to the event diary this month
Middlesex Bonsai Society Winter Show
South Harrow Methodist Church,
Walton Avenue, South Harrow,
Middlesex. HA2 8QU.
Adm: Free. Times:1000-1300.hrs.
Ctc: Mark Moreland 07850.771201
Email: markmoreland@live.co.uk
www.middlesexbonsaisociety.weebly.com

04-05May24 Sat & Sun (Confirmed)
New to the event diary this month
Sutton Bonsai Society Show
Wisley Gardens, Wisley Lane, Surrey. GU23
6QB
Adm: £ tba Times: 1000-1630.hrs.
Contact: Andy Jordan 07958.372101
Email: antique.netsuke@gmail.com
www.suttonbonsai.co.uk

27Oct24 Sun (Provisional)
New to the event diary this month
Blackmore Vale Bonsai Group Auction
Charlton Remembrance Hall,
Charlton, Shaftsbury, Dorset. SP7 0PL.
Adm: Free. Times: 0830/1100-1700.hrs.
Contact: Geoff 07837.781744
Email: m5eay.geoff@btinternet.com
www.blackmorevalebonsaigroup.com

06Sep26 Sun (Provisional)
New to the event diary this month
East Anglian Bonsai Show
Kesgrave War Memorial Community
Centre,
Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, Suffolk. IP5
1JF.
Adm: £4.Under 16.yrs Free
Times: 1000-1530.hrs.
Contact: Dave Fryer 07449.801297
Email: daveafryer@aol.com

05Sep27 Sun (Provisional)
New to the event diary this month
East Anglian Bonsai Show
Kesgrave War Memorial Community
Centre, Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave,
Suffolk. IP5 1JF.

Adm: £4.Under 16.yrs Free
 Times: 1000-1530.hrs.
 Contact: Dave Fryer 07449.801297
 Email: daveafryer@aol.com

Ambion Bonsai Society
 From immediate effect the main contact for
 Ambion Bonsai Society will be Peter Fielding
 Tel: 07976.271159
 Email: peterfielding1@hotmail.co.uk

Bonsai-Bespoke
 New to the traders list this month
 Maker of outdoor bonsai display benches
 and tokonoma's to order.
 Contact: Paul Smith 07947.413563
 Email: bonsai-bespoke@outlook.com

Bonsai Focus Magazine 2023 Jul/Aug 183/206
 Contact:www.bonsaifocus.com
 Latest edition highlighting:
 Takeo Katsumata of Japan styling a forest
 planting. Giuseppe Lombardo of Italy talking
 about his passion for ceramic pots. Report on the
 Expo Bonsai UK Show on the 16Apr23.
 Hugo Berther of Germany case history of a very
 old spruce.
 Ruben Ciezar Villanueva of Spain talks about his
 bonsai passion. Report on a new art exhibition at
 the Pacific Bonsai Museum in US. Jerome
 Kellerhals of US step by step guide how to make
 a forest planting. Masayuki Fujikawa of Japan
 takes things further by transforming a
 masterpiece. Report on the Arco Bonsai Show in
 Italy on the 6&7May23. Hiroki Miura of Japan
 works on a double-trunk pine.

Lost & Found
 No matter how many or how big or small your
 bonsai are, if they ever get stolen it hurts. A
 member has reported having 21 small bonsai
 stolen from their back garden in the Bournemouth
 area weekend of the 21/22Jul23.
 Please keep an eye out in the physical world or
 the virtual world for anyone trying to sell these
 trees, if you do see anything suspicious please let
 us know and we will advise the owners. Thank you



Watering:
 Continue to check your trees daily and
 water as required and you will have
 noticed they will still be taking up more
 water and dry out quicker in the hotter
 weather. Continue to maintain a higher
 level of watering at this stage. Water in the
 mornings ideally and if necessary water
 more than once a day.

Re-potting:
 None required unless emergency repotting
 required where the pot is damaged or
 there is a pest concern or drainage issue.
 Try not to damage the roots during an
 emergency repot and just place the tree in
 another pot of the same size or larger for
 the time being until the correct repotting
 season without root pruning or
 disturbance.

Feeding:
 This is the time to continue feeding while
 the trees are actively growing before they
 start to go into autumn.
 Organic feeds are preferable to chemical
 feeds including products like liquid
 seaweed and this can be fed daily as part of
 the watering regime or less often
 depending on the stage of development of
 the tree.
 Ideal feeding at this time is liquid feed as
 the watering regime has picked up and you
 can feed with each watering, and the
 general rule is little and often.

Pruning:
 This is the time to prune back all excessive
 growth on deciduous trees and start to
 work on removing the larger leaves on a
 regular basis in preference of retaining the
 smaller leaves forming after the larger
 leaves have been removed.

Trimming:
 Continue to trim long extension shoots to
 maintain the shape through regular
 trimming and remove the terminal shoot
 in some species to aid with creating a more
 compact form.
 Continue to prune tropical trees to
 maintain their shape and trim the new
 shoots.

Root pruning:
 This is not applicable at present unless any
 trees are being repotted but for the
 majority of species they should already
 have been done.

Insects and pests:
 Check for the repeat infestations of bugs
 and pests like green and black fly, red
 spider mite, scale insect, mealy bug as well
 as vine weevil beetles. With the warmer
 weather insect pests can start to build up
 numbers and are more likely to appear on
 the shoots and leaves and start causing
 foliage damage.

Watch out for the on set of mildew and
 prune out any damaged leaves or treat any
 infestations if found. Spray with insecticide
 as required or once a month for pest
 prevention using products like SB
 Invigorator. Methylated spirits cotton
 buds are an effective method of removing
 scale insects from branches.

Moss and weed control:
 Continue to keep this in check and treat or
 remove unwanted moss and remove any
 newly forming weeds.

Wiring:

UKBA Membership

Thanking you for your support, today
 1Aug23 UKBA membership stands at a
 total of 2678, expanding daily

Monthly Tasks

Below is a list of bonsai tasks to be carried
 out during the month of August, it must be
 adapted to your localised conditions and is
 meant only as a general advisory list of
 tasks for the bonsai enthusiast.

Bonsai in August

We are now coming towards the latter
 stages of summer and the trees are starting
 to slow down their active growth in
 preparation for autumn and the onset of
 changes to their leaves if they are deciduous.
 Here is a quick generic guide to bonsai in
 August but for individual species you may
 need to adjust the guidance as well as for
 the developmental stage your bonsai trees
 are at.

Wiring can be started on some of the larger branches if the tree has been defoliated but otherwise it is not a good time to wire as the process can damage the foliage.

Protection:

Protect from the heat of the sun if the trees have a thin bark like Japanese Beech and provide additional shade and wind protection to avoid leaf scorch or wind burn of the leaves.

Assessment:

Continue to update your bonsai records and photograph your trees to record their progress.

Tools:

This is something everyone should do each time they use their tools but often it is not easy to do depending on how often you are using your tools. However, it is good practice to clean and sharpen your tools after use and this is a good time to go through your tool kits and clean them up before the start of the pruning season.

Display areas:

If you have trees out in display areas check that they are not drying out or getting too much sun and ensure they have shade if required as the temperatures during the day currently are fairly hot.

Propagation:

This is a good time to take semi ripe cuttings from this years growth.

Interview

UKBA Interview With Simon Temblett
UK Bonsai Artist



How did you get started?

The two major themes of my life have been a fascination with the natural world and art, or more accurately, a desire to create things that possess the quality of beauty, whatever that is. I got hooked on growing things in my early teens. Cacti, air plants, insectivores and just about anything else with an unusual or interesting appearance. My first experience of bonsai was through watching the Chelsea flower show on TV in the late seventies and I still remember being enthralled by the images of miniature trees. I guess these may well have belonged to Peter Chan. I hadn't really thought any more about them until I came across a bonsai book written by Paul Lesniewicz at my local garden centre. Thumbing through his book I realized that bonsai was a combination of both of my favourite pastimes and I pretty much decided on the spot that this would be a good thing to spend my life doing.



Beech

This tree began as a very poor piece of material but is now one of my best trees. The pot is by John Pitt

How did you learn about bonsai?

Initially I bought and read, cover to cover, every bonsai book I could get my hands on. These included books by Peter Chan, Ann Swinton, Dan Barton, Peter Adams, Harry Tomlinson, whose trees I particularly admired and John Naka. I joined the Bristol bonsai society briefly in the late eighties but at the time it had around 270 members and the meetings were, by necessity, rather formal and so I drifted away. I do remember Dan Barton being very encouraging, and I am still grateful for the determination this gave me to persevere at a point where I thought I might never get the hang of it. At that time I was in my early twenties and struggling to keep my trees alive and healthy due to the demands of my other commitments, mainly girls and alcohol. Trees in pots I discovered, were not nearly so forgiving of neglect as cacti and air plants. Much of the material that passed through my hands in those early years proceeded swiftly on to the great forest in the sky.

Who was your teacher?

I usually say that I am self taught, mostly through a great deal of trial and error. A painfully slow process, but it has led, I think, to my trees being relatively unique. To begin with I was very reluctant to allow anyone to see my trees until I felt they were good enough to merit some attention. So for almost twenty years I avoided showing my trees to anyone. I don't suppose I am the only person who does not relish the thought of having my much-loved bonsai pulled apart aesthetically after devoting years of time and energy to their care and training. And bonsai enthusiasts are quite a tough audience. This is not a complaint. Although I doubt I will ever accept criticism kindly I have learned to use this character flaw on my part to my advantage. The knowledge that any unharmonious arrangement of foliage, unconvincing branch-work or ugly focal point will be pointed out is quite aggravating, but it can also be as effective a tutor as any harsh master might be. I have an informal rule I like to follow. If three separate individuals make the same identical criticism of one of my trees then I will consider doing something about it. So I guess you could say I have been tutored to some extent by the bonsai community as a whole.



Boulevard
This tree is an attempt to recreate a giant redwood

Do you belong to a bonsai club?

These days I belong to the South Devon bonsai club. It is fair, and hopefully also polite, to say that there is probably several centuries worth of experience within the club. Even after forty years of growing bonsai I learn something new every time I go. The value of the bonsai that are grown by enthusiasts at a club level is not fully

appreciated. I find it fascinating to see and discuss trees with other members and to discover how a tree arrived at its current form, often over many years and frequently via an unintended path, the end of which is still ahead of it. I think this continual balancing act between intent and accident is what makes bonsai really interesting and what sets it apart from other arts. When working with a living medium the outcome of our efforts cannot be known with certainty. Those who grow bonsai this way, over many years and simply for their own satisfaction, free of the necessity to make money from their work, practise a form of bonsai that is probably truer to its likely origins among the Buddhist monks of the East.

Your thoughts on bonsai or dreams?

Bonsai appeals to all kinds of people of all ages who may not necessarily have any desire to own one, they simply enjoy seeing them. I think bonsai has a much larger potential audience than it currently reaches. I am a creative, I flit from one project to another like a butterfly from flower to flower, I do not possess the necessary commitment or endurance to organise a big show. But if I did I'd organise a 'Mini Worlds' exhibition which might include bonsai alongside, model railways, dolls houses, miniature artworks, landscapes in fish tanks and all manner of other tiny pursuits. I reckon you could easily fill the Birmingham exhibition centre with people who would like to see that. I feel that bonsai takes itself just a bit too seriously sometimes

Do you consider Bonsai an art form?

I'm an artist, I practice bonsai as an art and so for me it is an art. But like ceramics it can also be regarded as a craft. The mass produced, formulaic bonsai sold by garden centres are certainly not art, they are as far from the creations of Sandro Segneri or Kevin Wilson as a tea cup is from the works of Grayson Perry. But Grayson Perry and the machine that made the tea cup both do ceramics
I believe the central focus of bonsai as an art should always be to try to encapsulate the gravity and magnitude of a huge ancient tree in miniature, but at the same time I don't see why we shouldn't also push the boundaries a little. Bonsai translates simply as tree in pot. As long as it is comprised of a woody plant in a vessel of some kind, for me, it's a bonsai.



Yew
Graveyard yew trees are one of the UK's best sources of inspiration

Do you have a favourite species or size?

When asked if I have a favourite tree or species I always reply that my favourite is variety. My bonsai nightmare would be to

live in the tropics where bonsai often grow and require the same treatment all year round and then to own only fig trees. I think that scenario would quickly become very tiresome to me. I grow a wide variety of species in many styles and enjoy the challenge of working with different species. I have tried to make bonsai out of some unlikely material. Mostly these are duds but they still have a place on my benches and I always learn something from the attempt. In terms of size, the majority of my bonsai are between 60 and 90cm. I am attracted to this scale for two reasons. My bonsai have to be of a size that allows me to include sufficient detail and creative appeal and also of a weight that I can comfortably lift by myself. I regard growing really big bonsai as a kind of cheating as this largely avoids having to learn one of the most basic skills of bonsai, miniaturisation. Isn't that what it's all about? On the other hand I have never been interested in growing shohin or mame. For me, trees of this scale simply lack sufficient presence to hold my attention for long, however beautifully executed they may be.



Carved trunk
The form of a church yew has invariably been subject to human intervention, sometimes over thousands of years. The carving of this trunk hints at this fact.

Why do you practice bonsai?

I've dabbled in a few creative arts, horticultural curiosities and other practical skills during my lifetime but bonsai has been the only constant. The one thing that has always re-captured my attention. It is partly the continuous seasonal change that a bonsai undergoes and the potential for endless improvement in a tree's image and even, I sometimes think, the setbacks and disappointments one must necessarily experience when growing bonsai. These things continually renew my enthusiasm for the art, but the simple truth is that I still practice bonsai because I have become attached to my trees. After forty years in my care, often from seeds or match thick cuttings, they have become like old friends whose continued existence I am responsible for. As my living creations I find it very difficult to part with them. They will always be works in progress. It is this more than anything else that has kept me on the hook for so long. However, I am finding, as all life long bonsai buffs surely must, that I am confronted with the cold hard fact that whilst they continue to grow bigger and heavier, I am beginning to shrink. Recently, reluctantly, I have begun to think I may even have to start growing shohin..... Or maybe chuhin?

Do you have a favourite bonsai?

No, but I'd say that you could tell from the positions of trees on my benches who's currently in favour and which I'm trying to hide

Do you have a favourite potter?

I don't have a favourite potter, for me it's just about getting the perfect tree pot combination whilst also trying to avoid making the obvious choice. Even to me this sounds a bit daft as the

obvious choice is most likely the best pot for the tree. But I simply can't ignore the urge to explore new ideas and come up with novel combinations and this creative bent in me tends to override the sensible option. The result is that of the 30 or 40 presentable bonsai that I own only around half a dozen are in pots that I am completely happy with. One of the best things about bonsai in Europe is that we are willing to be inventive in our choice of pots. I learned to make pots myself almost 30yrs ago but until now I have not lived in a situation where I have been settled enough to really get stuck into making them.



Haw
This pot by Dan Barton is a perfect match for the tree

What mistakes have you made?

I've made too many mistakes to count but the things I got wrong are as much a part of the current appearance of my trees as the things I did right. In fact, if it weren't for the occasional cock-up with a chisel or horticultural disaster I suspect my trees might be quite bland. It is the solutions we find to the mistakes we make that become the story of the tree. Over hundreds or even thousands of years a wild tree is subject to countless attacks and misfortunes. Having endured them all, each of these unfortunate events is recorded within the structure of the tree and it is ultimately this that provides a great old tree with its unique form, its presence and its soul. The same is true for a bonsai. Short of killing your tree there are no unmitigated mistakes, only unexpected opportunities.

Have you experienced bonsai abroad?

I have had very little experience of bonsai abroad. However I do have some experience of wild trees abroad. I have always made a point of visiting old trees wherever I have travelled. I have had the privilege of seeing some of Africa's huge baobabs, climbing a 230ft karri in Australia and standing amongst the giant redwoods of North America. These are some of my most cherished memories.

Can you recommend one or two bonsai books?

The book I found most useful when I first got started was called, The Essentials of Bonsai. It was a translation of a book written by four Japanese authors if I remember correctly. I highly recommend this book if you are just getting started and are actually still able to get it. Its the book I always loaned to people I met who wanted to grow bonsai. Unfortunately I loaned it to someone, I have since forgotten who, and have never seen it again. The other book you'd have found my nose in over and over again was John Naka's, Bonsai Techniques

I. John took his inspiration directly from nature rather than from other bonsai trees. An approach I have always admired.



equally spectacular

Aborigine
This tree was styled as a result of a visit to Australia which involved some long walks in the woods. In Australia trees are burned rather than weathered but the results are

What is your best achievement?

I'd say the thing I am most proud of is having developed all my trees from scratch. I have never been able to afford to buy a bonsai I liked and I simply wasn't interested in buying one I didn't. So I used whatever material I could lay my hands on and just kept at it. I have never exhibited my trees to win prizes as I believe formal judging tends to restrict innovation and discourage creativity and inventiveness. But it does feel good to get a bit of recognition from time to time and I value most highly the people's choice awards as this seems a more democratic and less predictable way of measuring an art, if we must.

Do you have any future ambitions or goals?

In the long run I would like to expand the perception of what it is acceptable to exhibit at a bonsai show. I'm working on some original pot designs and new bonsai styles that depart a little from the accepted forms of bonsai but they're not quite ready to show anyone yet. If you are going to present people with something novel it must I think be executed to the highest standard one is able to achieve and with bonsai this takes a long time. I'm also in the process of writing a book focusing on some of the 30 to 40yr case histories of my trees and creative innovation in bonsai.



Haematite
This tree bends the boundaries of bonsai a little. The idea was to create something that might have some sculptural value after the demise of the tree

Over the years what has been your favourite bonsai show?

The show I never miss is the Winter Image. It began as the Swindon club's annual event, originally intended to show off the fine quality of the deciduous trees developed by its members but it has slightly reluctantly become a national show. It's been running for as long as any major show and I think the guys who have kept it going for so many years at no benefit to

themselves and in spite of a few setbacks, deserve a good slap on the back.



Juniper
This tree is a tanuki.
All it cost was time.
About fifteen years
worth of it.

Do you have any other interests or hobbies?

I have been an environmentalist for most of my life and I spent a few years living in trees or in protest camps during the 90's. These days I'm involved with some more positive projects. I organize a walking group where people can meet and share their knowledge of the natural world with others and I'm also a keen advocate of the quiet revolution that is presently going on within our gardens. Once my work mostly involved paving over the soil in some way or other, now I get asked to build wildlife ponds or living roofs and help to re-establish native flowers in peoples gardens instead of calling them weeds and trying to poison them. Witnessing this change in peoples thinking gives me a little optimism for our future.



Willow
This is my weeping willow
as it looked when shown at
the Noelanders Trophy
over ten years ago



Willow
This is the same
tree in 2022. It has
undergone more
transformations
than any tree I own
having been with
me for forty years

What is it you enjoy most about bonsai?

Bonsai is a dynamic art practised through time, not just a three, but a four dimensional art, it is a feedback system with an indefinite goal. Or to put it less cryptically, by trying to make art using a living medium, in this case a tree, we cannot know exactly what it is we are going to create. We are not fully in control and whatever we do create is but a fleeting image. In time the tree outgrows our designs and we must grow with it and reinvent our bonsai time and again over the course our lives or be left behind by them. Bonsai continually challenges us to find solutions to new problems. At its best bonsai is a kind of conversation in form. A question may be asked through the removal of a branch or by the thinning of winter buds, etc. and the tree answers by developing new growth in response to our actions. We observe this response, refine our actions accordingly and communicate our intent to the tree with a pair of scissors. I sometimes describe bonsai as a long silent argument with a

tree. It is by means of this conversation in form that a bonsai's development proceeds, creeping ever closer to some hazy unattainable idea of the perfect embodiment of an ancient tree. Bonsai is a process not a product, a direction not a destination. Getting your head fully around this concept is perhaps the hardest part of bonsai. Achieving it can help us to develop patience, perseverance, tolerance and reverence for the fragility of life, among other things. This I suspect is what interested those Buddhist monks who first practised it and it is this that I most enjoy about bonsai.

Collectables

Pin Badges

Please check out the pin badge section under collectables on the website, if you have any badges we have not listed, please send us an image of the badge and we will add it to the section. Thank you

This month we are highlighting pin badges from Belgium and US.

Badges



Noelanders (2) - BE
Image supplied by Neil Trigg



Centre Handmade
Bonsai Containers- US
Image supplied by Roger Binfield



Bonsai 2012 US National
Exhibition - US
Image supplied by David Swinhard



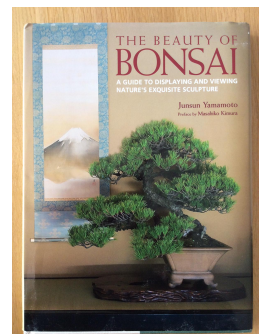
William N Valvannis (Red) - US
Image supplied by Simon Tudor

Books

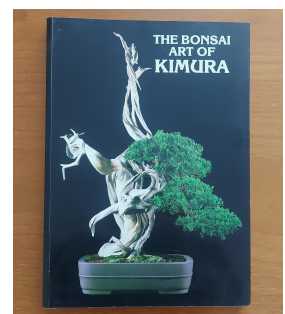
The book section on the website can be found in the knowledge section, we have nearly sixty books listed and ask kindly if you can recommend a book, old or new and we don't have it listed on the website, please email us an image, the title of the book, the authors name, the date published, the ISBN (International Standard Book Number) and of course can we use your name or do you want to be anonymous?



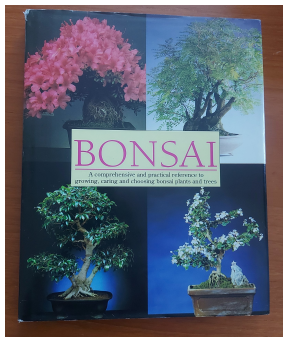
Andrea Meriggiola / Bonsai Maples
Published: 2020
ISBN: 9788896696828
Image supplied by Mark Warders



Junsun Yamamoto / Beauty Of Bonsai
Published: 2011
ISBN: 9784770031266
Image supplied by Keith Hartley



Katsuhito Onishi
Bonsai Art Of Kimura
Published: 1992
ISBN: 0963442309
Image supplied by Robert Stewart



**Luigi Crespi
Bonsai**

**Published: 1995
ISBN: 1898250510**

Image supplied by Robert Stewart

UKBA Quiz Aug23

How many?

A group of friends had a great day visiting a bonsai show in Belgium. Unfortunately, during the evening they discovered Belgium beer. A third of them were escorted to the nearest railway, by the local police, for raucous behaviour. The remainder managed to return to their hotel for the night. The next morning only half of the remaining group managed breakfast and they promptly departed. The last two, still worse for wear, staggered round the 2nd day of the show and then made their way home.

How many of them were in the original group?

Answers to Sept21 Quiz

Values relate only to vowels.

So

A = 1; E = 2; I = 3; O = 4; & U = 5

JUNIPER = 5+3+2 = 10

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