

# UK Bonsai Association

[www.ukbonsaiassoc.org](http://www.ukbonsaiassoc.org)



## Bulletin Dec23

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Welcome to this month's Bulletin.

Hope you are keeping well, putting together this months bulletin was a real test of personal abilities. Mingchen and myself have been on holiday, firstly visiting Japan then moving onto Taiwan, this meant putting the bulletin together on the go. Luckily this time of the year is generally one of the quietest periods for bonsai in the UK, but even so people still have some important information to communicate. It was our first time back out to the Far East since prior to covid shutdown, there were still people wearing masks, caution is still the word, but normality has returned to daily life and bonsai shows.

During lock down I up dated by phone and on this my first trip abroad with my new phone experienced some of the impressive benefits it gave me. I could communicate instantly through whatsapp with text and photos to people back home, the phone has opened up a new world with the translation app. Very few of the older generation that make up the bonsai community in Taiwan speak English, it has been a game changer. I am sure I am just touching the tip of the iceberg as to what my new phones capable of, but so far I have been very impressed.

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 02Jan24 at 1900.hrs.

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## Bonsai Events

Dec23 & Jan24

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14Jan24 (Confirmed)  
Ayrshire Bonsai Club Winter Image Show

Alloway Village Hall, 36a Alloway,  
Ayrshire. KA7 4PY.  
Adm: Free. Times:1330-1700.hrs  
Contact: Jeff Banning 07799.477895  
Email: jeffbanning@btinternet.com

20Jan24 Sat (Confirmed)  
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

We would remind people the status of all events is marked in brackets ie, provisional, postponed, confirmed or cancelled. Whenever visiting an event please 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

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## Bonsai Event Reports UK

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

Unfortunately there are no UK bonsai events in the month of November to report on.

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## Trips & Shows Abroad

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

03-05Nov23

The 31st Shuga-Ten, Tokyo, Japan



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19-23Nov23

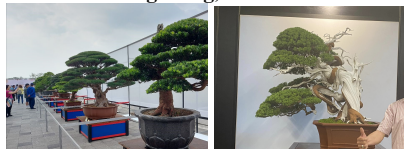
Flower & Fruit Bonsai show  
Taiwan.



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23-03Dec23

The 28th Hua-Fong National Bonsai Exhibition  
Ping Dong, Taiwan.



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## Club Speaker Nights

Unfortunately there are no speaker nights in the months of Dec23 & Jan24 to advise of.

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## Notice Board

06-27Feb24

Japan Bonsai Tour 2024

If you are interested in visiting Japan on an organised tour basis, please immediately contact James Greenfield 020.80642771  
Email: info@japanjourneys.co.uk

14Apr24 Expo Bonsai UK

Submissions to exhibit at ExpoBonsai UK 2024. If you are contemplating submitting a large tree for the selection process then it may be worthwhile to do it sooner rather than later. We have a set number of 'deep' display spaces and they are fast being allocated. Once gone, they're gone. thanks Steve.  
For full details of how to submit please contact ebuk18@gmail.com. Submissions will finally close on February 5th, 2024.

15&16Jun24 Sat & Sun (Confirmed)

Mid-Herts Bonsai Society Show

Due to unforeseen circumstances this show originally marked on the diary as 07&08Jun23 (Provincial) has now been re-scheduled for the 15&16Jun24 and now confirmed.

Kingsbury Barn, Branch Road,  
St Albans, Hertfordshire. AL3 4SE.

Adm: Free. Times: 1100-1700.hrs

Contact: Geoff Conybeare 07396.732817

Email: info@midhertsbonsaiclub.co.uk  
www.midhertsbonsaiclub.co.uk

07Jul24 Sun (Confirmed)

New to the events diary this month

Bristol Bonsai Society Show

Failand Village Hall, Oxhouse Lane,  
Failand, Somerset. BS8 3TS.

Adm: £5. Under 16s Free.

Times: 1000-1600.hrs

Ctc: Mark Wood 07964.249279

Email: bbs-site@outlook.com

www.bristolbonsaisociety.wordpress.com

13Oct24 Sun

13th Heathrow Bonsai Show

Following the success of this year's show and the new club display areas being trialled out for the first time, we can confirm that many clubs preferred the smaller areas. The good news is this allows us to accommodate more clubs, so if your club would like to join us for the show next year, please let us know.  
Thank you.

Contact: Mark Moreland 07850.771201

Email: ukbonsaiassociation@gmail.com

www.heathrowbonsai.weebly.com

UKBA Membership

Thanking you for your support, today 1Dec23 UKBA membership stands at a total of 2892, expanding daily

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## Monthly Tasks

Below is a list of bonsai tasks to be carried out during the month of December, 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 December

Winter is here and your deciduous trees should have a beautiful tracery as you can now see all the branches and twigs. While your evergreens may be starting to tone down their bright green or dark green foliage to a duller tone. All your trees needing winter protection should now all be protected for the winter and here is a quick generic guide to bonsai in December as the colder weather has set into the UK.

### Watering:

Your bonsai trees will still need watering but not as often as their growth rate has slowed right down so the water uptake has also slowed down and the trees are in winter dormancy. At this time of year if your trees are still outside, they will be getting watered naturally by the rainfall, morning dew and melting frosts. However, monitor the moisture level to ensure your bonsai trees are not water logged as this can cause roots to rot.

If your bonsai trees are under cover check daily and water if required to keep the soil damp / moist but not soaking wet.

Any bonsai being kept indoors should be watered regularly but this will have slowed down from a daily watering. They will be losing moisture due to the higher temperatures inside drying out the soil and the tropical species still tend to grow during the winter period inside. Ideal time to water is in the morning to allow the water time to dissipate and to reduce the surface water should the temperature cool down overnight or there is a frost.

### Re-potting:

If the weather is mild repotting can be undertaken but avoid early repotting if you have no protection for the tree like a cold frame or green house if frosts are likely. Otherwise prepare for repotting by checking soil supplies and also that if you are looking to change the pot that you have the correct pot size to repot into.

### Feeding:

Generally feeding in December is not required for either tree types as broadleaves trees are dormant and without leaves and conifers or evergreens have slowed down on growth during this period.

### Pruning:

This is a great time of year to review your bonsai trees and check the structural image of the tree as well as the tracery and branch placement. Broadleaved trees are especially easy as they have for most species lost their leaves and are dormant. You can remove unwanted structural branches but remember to cover the wounds with wound paste or sealant as the trees are dormant and will not be able to respond to the pruning as effectively. Otherwise just mark the branch(es) to remove and wait till the Spring to then remove them.

### Trimming:

This is not required to either broadleaved or coniferous trees in December. However, you may still need to trim the new shoots off tropical trees that are growing indoors to control the growth and develop ramification.

### Root pruning:

Carry out root pruning if you do start to re-pot now as part of the re-potting process and check for soil borne pests, root rot and other root problems and address if any issues are found. Given that the frosts have started though avoid repotting now until the spring.

### Insects and pests:

Continue to check your bonsai trees over fully for pests, insects and diseases as some insects can over winter on or in your trees like red spider mite, scale insect.

Pests are also likely if the weather is mild so worth checking to avoid disappointment in the spring when buds or leaves fail to flush due to pest attack. Typical pests still around include scale insect, mites, aphids and soil borne larva, vine weevil and beetles.

### Moss and weed control:

This should have been done in the previous months but check for any new moss forming.

### Wiring:

None required.

### Protection:

Continue to check all your bonsai trees for health over the winter and review any that are not under protection in case of extreme cold weather or snow. If there is the chance of snow then make sure the branches do not get an excessive build up of snow that could cause them to break.

### Assessment:

This is also a good time to photograph your bonsai trees and update their records for re-potting timings, feeding regimes, soil type etc as it is sometimes hard to keep track of what you do for each tree when you start increasing your collection. Keeping a photographic record does come in very useful over the years to see the trees development and your progress.

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## Interview

UKBA Interview With  
Miroslav Kolar  
UK Bonsai Artist



### How did you get started?

As with many guys I was obsessed with martial arts for a number of years and don't know why but I always loved Japanese culture. The style of the living, behaviour, buildings, everything. I watched Karate Kid many times, not for the bonsai but because of the martial arts. One day I was reading some magazines and there were pictures and narrative about bonsai. It was 1998. It was as if lightning struck from clear sky. I tried to find out anything about this art but at that time it was really hard. I did manage to find an old book about it and there was some information within about yamadori. Straight away I ran into a local forest and dug up some small trees. After about two weeks they sadly died in my living room 😞 and so I started to look more into it and began to understand.

### How did you learn about bonsai?

I was trying to get as many books as possible. At that time I did not have access to the internet. If I can say, I was self taught. Trial and error. I didn't have any special soil at that time so I was using just common garden soil mixed with sand. The trees lived. I was trying to bring the shape just with cuts. I had no idea about wiring. Everything was still new to me and I never met another person with experience of bonsai.

### Who was your teacher?

Actually I never had just one teacher or spent time as an apprentice with some bonsai master. In 2001 I moved back home to Slovakia from The Czech Republic where I was still continuing on my own. I tried to find some club or person practising this hobby but no luck. I am from central Europe and my city is between mountains. At that time there arrived better chances and choices to obtain magazines about this art and I bought nearly every one I could. There was plenty of information about styling, care and, of course, yamadori. With my position close to mountains I had great access to them. I started collecting some trees and they are still alive in my parent's garden plot. One magazine mentioned Graham Potter and Bryan Albright and it really was my dream to meet them which actually was to happen later on.



### Do you belong to a bonsai club?

When we moved to the UK in 2004 I was at first based in Birmingham for a couple of months and then we moved to Norwich/Wroxham. The first two years I just had some garden material which I tried to maintain. Finally, around 2007 I think, I found out about Norwich Bonsai Club. At my first visit I was overwhelmed. At that time, because of the language barrier, I didn't understand everything but for me it was enough just to look. As the years passed, my English was better and better and I started to understand more and more about this beautiful art. As I mentioned before until then I didn't have any teachers but guys at the club soon became my first ones. I started to gain more friends and a little bit more knowledge. As soon as possible I went for every workshop I heard about and it was there that I learned from the best (Tony Tickle, Pavel Slovak, Terry Foster, Enrico Savini, Will Baddeley, David Prescott and many more) At present I still belong to Norwich club although I have not spent as long there as I would like due to my work hours. Hopefully I will start to get there again very soon because it is like my second family.



**Your thoughts on bonsai or dreams?**

Surprisingly I am quite shy. I am very well aware that in UK there are many very talented bonsai teachers but it has always been my dream to do bonsai work. Workshops, demonstrations, etc. I have already had some workshops with some of my local friends. I know my beginning so I am very tolerant and easy to talk to. Bonsai appeal to many people and no one should be afraid to start or ask many questions.

**Do you consider Bonsai an art form?**

Most definitely. Also a living art. When you practice stone sculpture or anything else it leads to a finished item if I may say. A bonsai tree however is still growing, changing and practically never finished. There is always some work that needs to be done.



**Do you have a favourite species or size?**

Definitely Taxus is my favourite species. It doesn't have fantastic spring or autumn colours but the harmony between dark red bark, green foliage and deadwood, if there is some, is fantastic. Of course I like any trees but Taxus is my favourite. Size ...I used to be a big trees guy but slowly inclined towards smaller sizes. I have a few big trees and they are a nightmare to move on my own.

**Why do you practice bonsai?**

As I said before I grew up between mountains and I explored there nearly every weekend from a very young age. I didn't think about bonsai at that time but was always fascinated by trees growing from the cliffs and by all the scenery around me. I was always doing something in my free time. Small diorama, painting, visiting art school so something was always inside of me and later on the bonsai won. And now I am attached to my trees!

**Do you have a favourite bonsai?**

All of my trees are favourites for me even when I know that some of them are better and some just at the beginning. I always imagine how they may look in the future or what I can change to be better.



**Do you have a favourite potter?**

Until I moved to the UK I had no idea about potter's and their work. The first one I met was Bryan Albright and his work was fantastic. I even had a few weeks with him to teach me how to make pots. Now there are many fantastic potters and it would be very hard to mention them all. I don't choose between European or Japanese. I must like the pot even if I don't have any tree for the pot just now.

**What mistakes have you made?**

I am sure that I made many mistakes both at the beginning and later on as well. Probably the biggest one was rushing the trees into small pots. I had a tree cemetery and I know why! Also the watering regime wasn't always the best but in time I learned the tree's needs.

**Have you experienced bonsai abroad?**

Not really. Just once I visited The Trophy in Belgium and this year went to a show in both Czech Republic and Slovakia as I was already there.



**Can you recommend one or two books?**

My first book was from Harry Tomlinson which I would recommend for the beginners. I had the John Naka bonsai techniques book but I gave it to someone. I don't read many books even though I have many. One of the latest ones is from Harry Harrington/bonsai inspiration/ which I would recommend as well. I am sure there are many books which you can learn from.

**What is your best achievement?**

There are a few. After many years I had trees accepted for The National show in 2019 and Expo in 2021. It was a privilege to be part of this show and the feeling was awesome. Also in 2019 I won the UK new talent contest and in April 2023 I finally had the opportunity to represent the UK at the European final in Olomouc (Czech Republic) where I finished in third place from amongst 13 European contestants. It was a very happy moment. I am also a proud EBPC member with my wood work.



**Do you have any future ambitions or goals?**

As already stated I would be very happy to be part of demos or workshops but that is in the star's. In the meantime I will definitely work on my skills and spend time with my trees.

**Over the years what has been your favourite bonsai show?**

As said before I visited the Trophy just once and it was an unforgettable experience. At the moment my favourite is probably Expo UK

which I attended I think two or three times and the next one is in the calendar of course.

**Do you have any other interests or hobbies?**

Not really. Probably just hiking. Although I started carving root stands about three years ago and still continue. Very happy to work with wood and think about the challenges. Just to be better and better. However, you never know what you would love to do tomorrow!

--- Miroslav Kolar

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**Collectables  
Pin Badges**

Unfortunately, there are no new pin badges in the month of December to add on 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

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**Books**

Unfortunately, there are no new books in the month of December to add on 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?

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**UKBA Quiz Dec23**

Word Su Doku  
ENJOY CHRISTMAS

Use these letters to solve this month's quiz)

	Y			N		X		
	E			O	X	N		
N		S						Y
		N						A
			S	M	O			
S						M		
E						J		M
		J	M	S			N	
		M		E			X	

**Answer to Nov23 Quiz**

Dan Barton  
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For bulletin queries: 07850.771201  
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