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## TAUNTON & SOMERSET BONSAI CLUB

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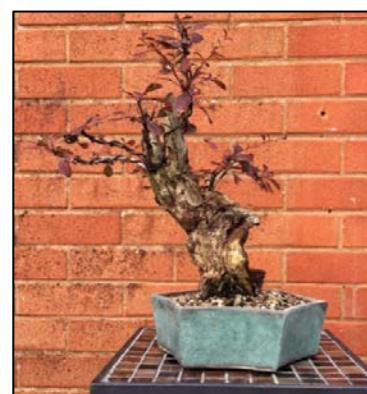
Bonsai Newsletter August 2021 – by Zoom



Eleven members zoomed in for our final online gathering. It was another lively meeting with lots of trees to discuss and a fair bit of the usual banter and a few terrible jokes! There is something that we have gained from the Zoom meetings in that the format encourages a lot of good discussion about members' trees and all participants get a chance to have input. It's different to our usual club night workshops as we tend then to have our heads down "doing" things with trees with less discussion. Perhaps we can try to continue this approach in our workshops.

Several members had been to the Staverton Bonsai Sale and were keen to talk about their new acquisitions. **Pam** was first in with this lovely little purple-leaved Berberis that she had bought along with a pretty six-sided blue pot. She was clearly very pleased – so much so that she couldn't wait and repotted it immediately! Obviously it did no harm as it was already making new growth. We weren't totally sure, but we thought that the pot was made by Chris Jefferies (Spectre Ceramics) who has recently started making some nice pots. Anyway, all thought the purple tree/blue pot combination was a winner and there was lots of potential to carve the deadwood into a feature.

Pam



**Mike** and Ade had already spent an hour discussing Mike's trees over a cuppa earlier in the day and had some thoughts to discuss. Firstly, "Jack's Beech" is coming on very nicely, well at least from the trunk upwards! It's looking very healthy with quite small leaves and nice branch structure...but that ugly root is spoiling the tree. Can it be removed? Yes, but best wait until the spring.



Mike took us through the development of his big Juniper since 2017. The lower branch, kept as a feature of the tree at the outset was now looking straggly and rather out of kilter with the rest of the tree. We took a photo earlier in the day and Mike did a bit of photo editing to see how the

tree would look without the lower branch, leaving just a small jin. All agreed that the tree looked better without the branch, though it would need a change of planting angle and, according to Ade, a smaller pot! Quite often with bonsai, less is more and trees evolve as they develop. Perhaps if Mike gets the Juniper into a smaller pot, he'll be able to get it along to a club night to show it off after four years of work on it.



Mike had been having further thoughts about his White Pine we discussed in July and again the theme was about chopping stuff off only this time there were different views on this. The tree has a

very dominant lower branch that comes well forward while the rest of the tree slants away. The tree just doesn't look right and Mike was considering removal of the large protruding first branch and bringing a smaller back branch forward to take its place. John T wasn't at all happy with this and promised Mike that he could sort the tree out with some 6mm wire! If Mike can get the tree to our September workshop John is confident that he can bend the apex forward to get a more balanced image. No doubt that will improve the tree but if the lower branch still offends, then it can be chopped!

**July 2021**



**Nigel** was needing help with his problematic scotty. It was straggly and in need of wiring to give it shape, which could be done at the September workshop. A straggly pine needs back-budding to make it more compact and two tried and tested approaches were suggested. First, he could cut back this year's growth to just a few needles; doing it at this time of year generally produces buds further back down the branches next spring. Alternatively, leave as it is and rub out buds in February to get back-budding later in the spring.



**John T** showed us several 30 year old Blaaus Junipers that he had been working on – tidying them up to give more compact images.



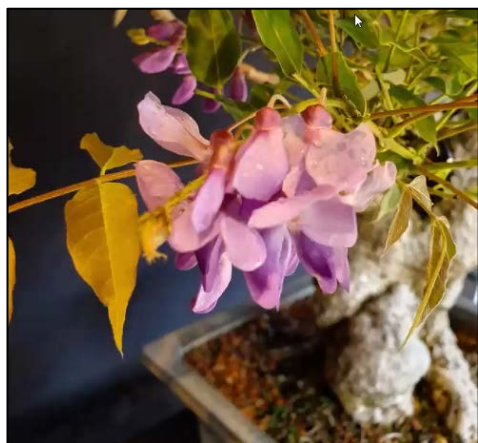
He then moved on to discuss pruning of Satsuki Azaleas that he has been doing. Don't be frightened to cut back hard when they become overgrown as they tend to do. This is best done in July and the photos show the new growth that has now appeared.



**Ade** was considering the removal of an ugly root on his crescent Larch. Firstly, it doesn't have the craggy bark that the rest of the tree has. Secondly, it appears to be propping the tree up when the aim is to make the tree look as though it's growing out of a rockface. Complete removal leaves an unattractive space, while making the root into a second jin provides a far better solution. John T also suggested that some further pieces of matching ceramic could be placed around the base of the tree to enhance the "rockface" feel.



After last month's discussion about trimming Wisteria, Ade had rushed out that same evening and followed John T's advice, cutting back shoots to 2 leaflets. New shoots quickly popped out all over and although initially these appeared to be flower buds, most of those have now dropped off leaving lots of nice new leaves. We'll see what next spring brings! Lots of flowers hopefully.





At a previous Zoom folks had suggested taking off a main branch from this Berberis as it conflicted with the secondary tree. Well, here it is now looking better with the branch gone.

Ade also showed his Big Scots Pine. It doesn't get out much to events as it's 5 feet high and won't fit in his car! Bought in 2016 from Mike Jones, a previous club member, he has been working on breaking up the foliage pads but it's a lot of work!

And finally, Ade showed off his acquisition from the Staverton sale. The big beautiful Acer shown at the top of the report.

