



TAUNTON & SOMERSET BONSAI CLUB

Covid-19 Bonsai Newsletter May 2021

New Website

Well I expect the more eagle eyed amongst you may have noticed by now that something has changed. Not only are we now into our second coronavirus Spring but in addition to that pest of a pandemic we have also been attacked by some evil and annoying hacker who has conspired to make things very tiresome, to put it rather mildly.

Fortunately amongst our number we have Nigel Wright, an old friend of the Club and now a member, who also happens to be a professional website designer, listing among his clients FoBBS - The Federation of British Bonsai Societies. I had been cobbling together these monthly reports etc now for six years without too much trouble and tribulation, but this technical invasion reduced me to a seething, shouting and swearing old grampus before eventually descending into a state of exhausted desperation before Nigel came to my rescue and created this new website. Thank you Nigel

www.somersetbonsaiclub.uk



Spring time in Somerset 2021 finds us still getting together via Zoom to exchange news about our trees and tap into the Bonsai Bank of Knowledge that some of our most experienced members have acquired over the years.

Trying to freeze the screen and grab a clip of the trees being shown is quite difficult at times if the member moves of from tree to tree at speed fortunately Alistair has been kind enough to provide a text to accompany his trees and make things a bit easier for me.

Alistair Scots Pine No.1

This is a collected Scots pine that I dug up at an undisclosed site on the Somerset/Devon border in 1990. I grew it in a washing up bowl for the first couple of years then transferred it to a mica pot. I did nothing with it other than needle plucking and candle pruning to build up the density of the branches. In 2016, I finally got around to wiring it for the first time. Image 1 is before wiring.



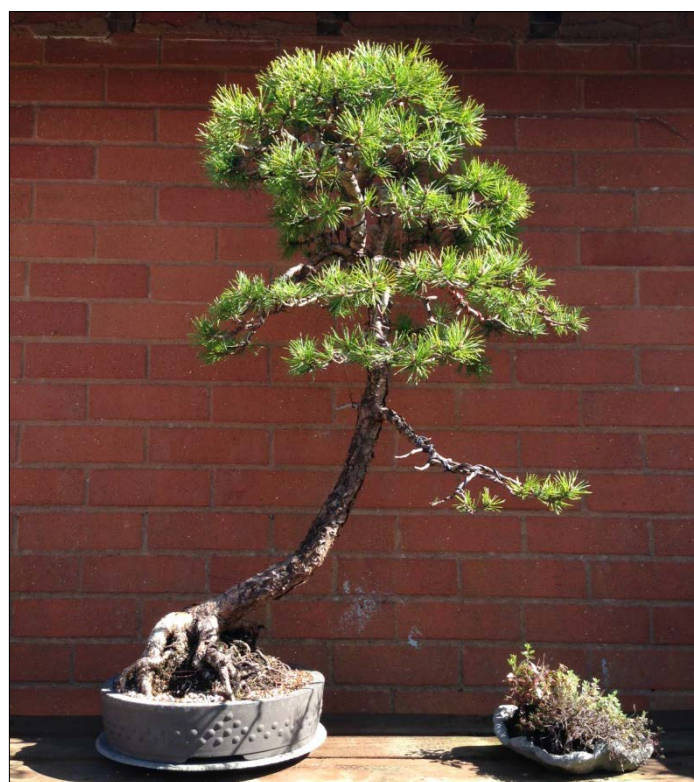
Image 1 is before wiring



Image 2 is after wiring

At some point between 1992 and 2016, I repotted it into a shallow Erin pot, as seen in these pictures. The following year I slip potted it into a deeper round Tokoname pot. Sadly this pot got destroyed during the "beast from the East" so it was back into its old mica pot.

The third image is May 2021. I rewired the whole tree and reduced the branches by a quarter. At that time the candles were not ready to work on but over the next few weeks I will start candle pruning and selected needle plucking to promote budding. I will also need to find a suitable ceramic pot for it, slightly larger and deeper to balance its height.



Alistair Scots Pine No.2

First image, spring 2016

The tree has grown considerably and is now dense enough to start working on. I had not really paid any attention to it so I had not picked up on the planting angle. The tree has a definite lean and was a bit two dimensional so I decided on a change of angle and a bit of wiring.



Image 2

Half way through the wiring and with its new planting angle, the lean is starting to complement the shape rather than detract from it.

March 2020, at our last club meeting I repotted it into a drum style pot, obtained at great expense from Mr Chan at Herons bonsai. I choose the pot for its red colour, as I feel this complements the reddish bark that is starting to develop as the tree nears its half century.



Image 3

Late April 2021 and like the previous tree a regime of needle plucking and candle pruning has resulted in a dense crown and sufficient ramification to start restyling the tree.



Image 4

After 6 hours of work rewiring, pruning and working on the deadwood the tree looks much better and is now ready to enter the refinement stage. The wire will stay on for a couple of years and I will continue the regime of candle pruning and needle plucking which should hopefully increase the density of the tree and reduce the needle size, not that the needles on this particular tree have ever been large. The tree is 26 inches tall and the needles average about one inch.

Thank you Alistair a set of progressives like that is always an interesting source of tips and ideas.

A new Website for Bonsai enthusiasts

Nigel Wright a long-time friend of the Club and now a member is a professional website designer and numbers EBA and WBFF among his clients. One of his latest projects has been to convert a book into a website full of information about bonsai, the trees, their care and their history etc.

Nigel Wright

I was approached to convert the 'RHS Little Book of Bonsai' published in 2016 into a website. The result is a guide for the absolute novice to a level of high skill and capability in bonsai. To achieve this breadth of knowledge there are hundreds of images and illustrations to augment the highly detailed text, gleaned by the authors that amounts to over 80 years in total.

The website covers the basics from how to start out and the requirements for a successful entry into the hobby, to advanced techniques, styles and propagation along with necessary seasonal maintenance. A major element of the website is the highly detailed Species section; this covers the vast majority of almost one hundred types of material that can be trained into bonsai, in a climate such as that in Britain. The final Glossary section describes many of the particular words that we used in bonsai.

The link is www.bonsaiforeveryone.com



Another kind member who has supplied the notes for his trees that evening is Tony who showed us three of his trees

Tony

I showed a Sweet Chestnut, which I grew from seed, sown about 7 or 8 years ago.

Followed by the Hornbeam, which was my first ever nursery stock conversion, 11 years ago. I showed it on Zoom last year, when I thought it was dying. The leaves had gone black and were dropping, in the middle of summer. John explained last night that it was probably following a very hot sunny day. He recommended dappled shade, for both Hornbeams and Beech. I think Alistair had a similar problem with a Pine about the same time.

The final tree last night was the Larch, which Geoff and I dug from Dundry about 8 or 9 years ago, and as you heard from John, it benefitted from a couple of John's workshops, particularly the carving. It looks very well fed, but it's no better fed than any of my other trees, it just seems like strong stock!

Ade

The colour of the evening was supplied by Ade with some most impressive photos.

Laburnum is one that you don't see very often and brings back memories for me when first married we lived near Hitchin in Hertfordshire and at a village near there, Pegsdon I think, there was a Laburnum Mile where a number had naturalized into the woods each side of the road on the way to our cottage at Barton Le Clay.



Ade also displayed a number of his other fine trees, a selection of Acers



Bonsai Club News

I enclose part of a letter from Dave G which may be of interest to you

"It's with a heavy heart that I now have to sell my collection (moving to live on a narrowboat). Very kindly Adrian came over to me and helped me price them up, I'm currently in the process of taking photographs, one of the things that would make losing the trees slightly more bearable would be the knowledge that they were with people who would care and appreciate them.

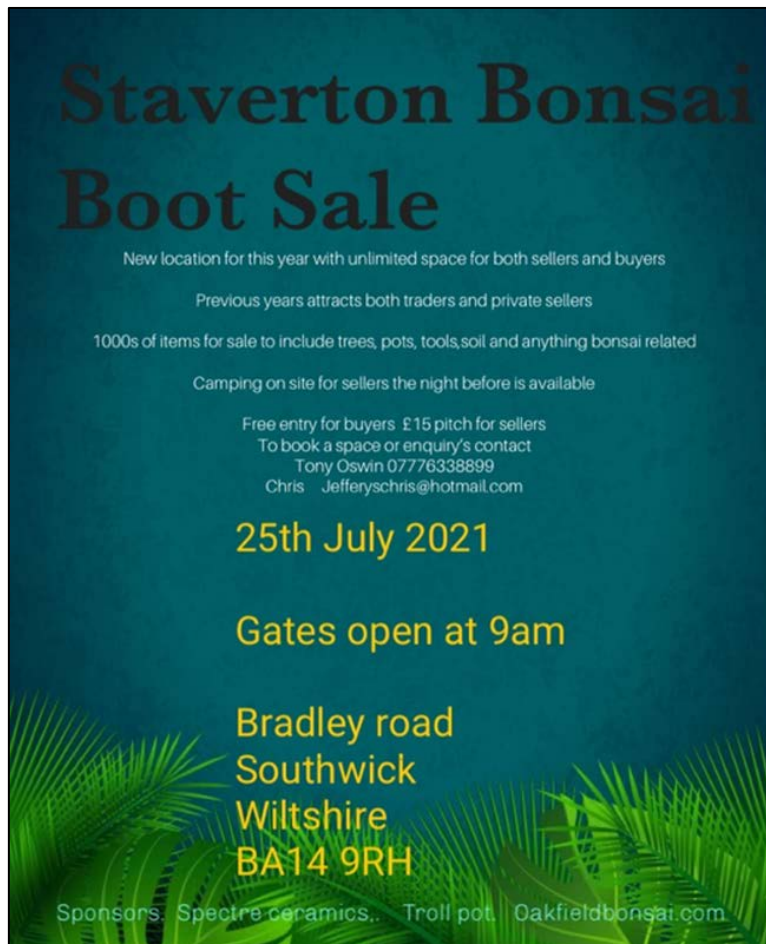
To that end I thought I would offer them first to club members (ours and Geoff's). I also plan to go to the Staverton Club car boot (25th July).

I have:- hornbeam, pines, junipers, oak, maples, cotoneaster and taxus in various stages of development.

As soon as I've got the photos done I'll be able to send them if anyone's interested.

*Kindest regards
Dave"*

Well there you are, it's always rather sad when someone has to part with their trees but I hope that this is perhaps Dave and Sara moving onto other things and I'm sure we all wish them well on the narrow boat.

A poster for the Staverton Bonsai Boot Sale. The background is a dark teal color with a pattern of green bamboo leaves at the bottom. The text is in a serif font, with the main title in a larger, bold font. The text is white and yellow.

**Staverton Bonsai
Boot Sale**

New location for this year with unlimited space for both sellers and buyers

Previous years attracts both traders and private sellers

1000s of items for sale to include trees, pots, tools, soil and anything bonsai related

Camping on site for sellers the night before is available

Free entry for buyers. £15 pitch for sellers
To book a space or enquiry's contact
Tony Oswin 07776338899
Chris Jefferyschris@hotmail.com

25th July 2021

Gates open at 9am

**Bradley road
Southwick
Wiltshire
BA14 9RH**

Sponsors: Spectre ceramics, Troll pot, Oakfieldbonsai.com

STOP PRESS

Since Nigel set up the new website for us there is another item of T & S B C interest.

If you open the UK Bonsai Association Bulletin for June and scroll through the Virtual Bonsai Show entries I think you may spot a member's tree, well done Ade, it's a beauty.

www.ukbonsaiassoc.org



Don't forget our next Zoom Meeting on June 9th at 7.30pm