



TAUNTON & SOMERSET BONSAI CLUB

Bonsai Newsletter February 2022



Ade's Cornus Mas also known as the Cornelian Cherry, just starting to flower.

In a departure from previous years, we decided to hold our annual auction early in the year rather than the usual autumn date. Why you may ask? Well there were a few reasons. Firstly, you can't do bonsai if you haven't got any material to work on and we all want to get back to working on trees. So we thought that if members had the opportunity to buy and sell material, get new pots etc, it would be a great motivator for them. We also thought that having missed two auctions, 2020 and 2021, members must be ready to refresh their growing benches. There is also the issue of buying material, particularly deciduous trees, in the autumn/winter - is it going to survive till spring? If it is alive now then it's your fault if anything goes wrong. At least that is my feeling.

So onto the auction. The doors opened at 18:45 for sellers to register their items and there was a steady stream of members eager to get their lots on the tables and start looking at what others had brought. As in previous years there was a wide variety of trees, ranging from basic starter material and seedlings, to mature specimens. A lot of pots; mame, shohin and chuhin right up to one you could have taken a bath in! Chinese and Japanese ceramic pots along with a few Korean mica pots were all represented and once the auction started they generated some competitive bidding. There were also a few display stands, some tool wallets and a couple of nice Chinese viewing stones. In total we had 60 lots and an eager audience ready to go.



Buyers and sellers, with cash weighing heavy in their pockets, eagerly await the start of the auction.

19:30 and it's time for the first lot. Our auctioneer for the evening was our President John and he was ably assisted by our Treasurer Roger, balancing the books and auction runners Richard and Dave, keeping the lots coming.

Our Auctioneer and Treasurer, wringing every available penny out of the buyers. Big pot anyone?



Auctions are always an interesting experience. You have your pot of money, unless you are one of the lucky people who don't worry about how much things cost, you have your list of things that you want to purchase and you know that other people are also interested in the same things. But how interested are they and how much do you really want to spend? If you are lucky and get your chosen items, all is good and you can relax and enjoy the rest of the show but when you are 'pipped at the post' or downright thrashed by other bidders then the panic starts in. You have to buy something, anything and that is when you end up going home with an odd assortment of items that are going to be difficult to explain to your significant others. All good fun.

But I digress. How is the auction going? The lots flowed across the auctioneer's table and prices were good. Several trees made appreciable figures, helped no doubt by having several bidders intent on getting them, whilst other items went for more modest sums but it all helps the club.



Don't move a muscle or you will end up buying something you didn't want!

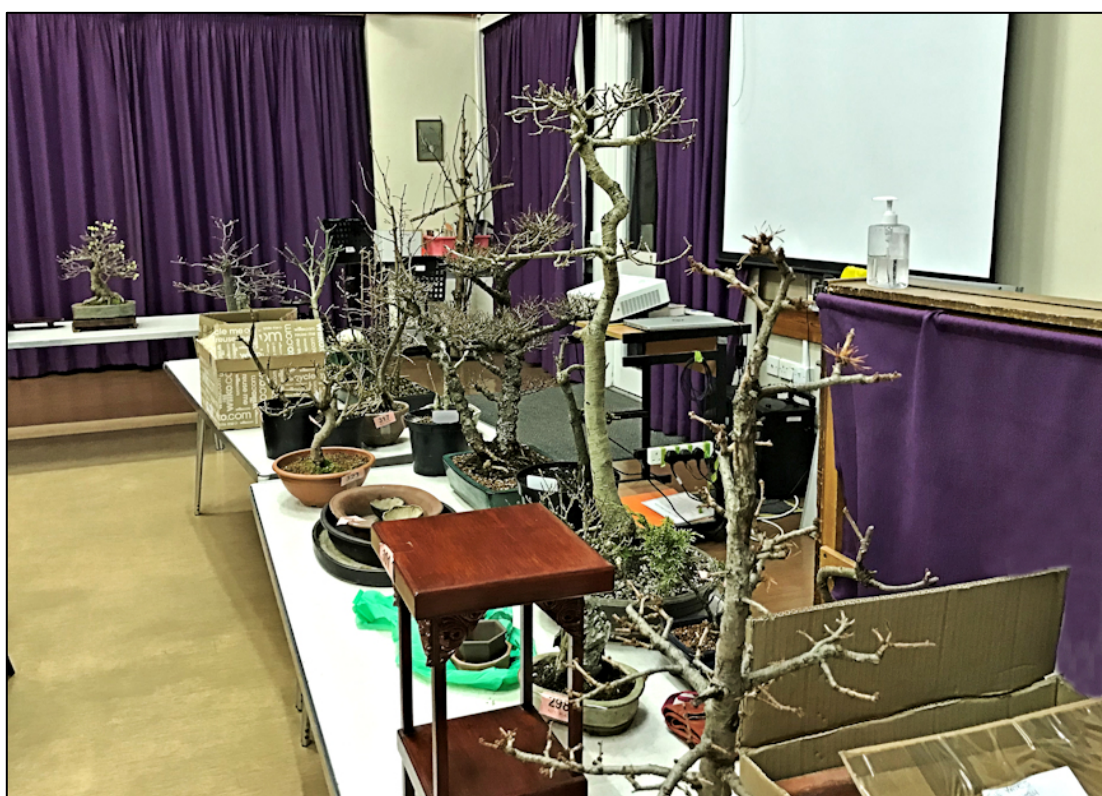
And so the night went on and the sold lots mounted up. A handmade wooden stand suitable for a cascade tree, a Spindle tree with an awesome nebari, a large box of Chinese training pots, a nicely styled Pyracantha that prompted a savage bidding war and yet more mame/shohin pots. So it goes on.



Auction runner, Richard, doing a valiant job of keeping the lots coming.

But all things must come to an end and by 21:00 the bidding was over. Now comes the intricate part of getting the money in and then paying the money out. This is a lot harder than you would think and I have to give credit to Roger who handled it without a hitch. Everybody was happy with their purchases and there were only three items unsold. Our auctioneer also commented that this is the first auction he has done where nothing sold for 25p. All items made at least a couple of pounds and a few made three figures.

Just a small selection of the sold items.



So what was the final tally? The club raised £380.25 consisting of £290 from club donation lots and £90.25 from the 10% commission on non-donation lots. A tidy sum by anyone's standards and it will help keep the meetings going for a few months and even pay for a guest speaker.

Well that's all for now. Next meeting is on the 9th March and will be a workshop, repotting and general winter maintenance, and the tree of the month will be back, with "Tree and pot combinations" as the topic. No doubt a few of the auction lots will make an appearance, I know mine will.

Till the next time, stay safe and "keep doing bonsai".

Alistair