



REDDITCH BONSAI

Edition of August 2023.

Editor's Note.

We haven't seen anything of member Peter Stidworthy for a long time. We do try and keep in touch with absent members however and as a result of our contacting him here's some news which he has sent along to us:-

I haven't managed to get to any Bonsai meetings this year, neither MBS or Ambion. On the nights when I haven't been working, I have tended to nod off around 5pm until around 7:30. The other problem I have now is that Leicester Lions have moved up into the premiership & now race on Thursday nights. They raced on Monday night this week against Sheffield. Both clubs are owned by the same family & both were pipped last year to their respective league trophies. Dan Gilkes (no relation - Ed.) rides as a "rising star" and came last in his first two races. He won his third race but was then replaced in his next outing by a tactical substitute. A man sitting in front of me said that must feel like a slap in the face after winning his previous race & can't have done much for his confidence. I was especially pleased when his replacement came last. Dan couldn't have done any worse & after winning his third may have done better than his tactical substitute. Leicester won by 10 points but the score was misleading as they had to fight a strong team to achieve their victory. Whether I will manage to get to any Bonsai meetings this year remains to be seen, but I wish you all well.

I had a nightmare earlier this month as it took me ten hours to return home from a speed way meeting in Manchester. First, the motorway was closed for road works, then it took an hour for the rescue to answer my call when I sustained a puncture. I then had restroom 2:30 + another hour for someone to come with a replacement tyre. It then took another hour to remove the Rockingham networking tool to remove it. I returned home at 8:05 to a terrible smell + heat from my neighbour. He had at in front of his fire with the heat full on & had been dead for possibly four weeks.

I have just returned from 4 days in Prague seeing the beautiful City whilst incorporating 2 speedway meetings; round 3 of the SGP & GP2. I have been suffering with our old friend Arthur recently, Arthur Itis. My left knee gave way in 1977 whilst dancing to Elvis Presley singing 'Don't be cruel' & then again in 1987 whilst sparring at Kickboxing which resulted in keyhole surgery to remove a torn cartilage.

If you wish to put something in the Newsletter, feel free. I hope to visit at some point this year when I am not working, can stay awake in the early evening and that it doesn't clash with a speedway meeting. Best wishes to you & all. Peter.

Well, Peter certainly seems to be keeping himself busy! Let's hope that we see him again in the not too distant future. Ed.

MUSINGS ON THE SHOW.

During the presentation of the prizes at the show the Starter Tree Trophy was presented to Brian Cooke who had swept the board with his trees. We were very grateful to him for making the effort to bring along trees which showed that Bonsai is not all about expensive 'prima donna' trees. After all they have to start somewhere.

Brian was obviously surprised to be presented with a trophy. We think that not everyone heard his comment as he clutched the cup. He remarked that "this was the first time that his family had got its hands on a piece of silverware since his great grandfather had stolen the F.A. Cup at the turn of the last century!" Now Brian's relative went by the name "Mad Jack Jenkins". This revelation has prompted us to look into this remark in a little more detail. Here's what we found out.

Aston Villa won the F.A Cup in 1895 but following the presentation it was stolen!

The club won its second FA Cup in 1894-95 which was then followed by back-to-back League titles in 1895-96 and 1896-97. But after the West Midlands club's FA Cup win in 1895, **Villa** lost the trophy itself, which resulted in the FA ordering the club to make a replacement. The irony of that was that the replacement apparently had far more silver in it than the original!

The team won the 1895 final, beating West Bromwich Albion 1-0 at Crystal Palace in London. During the celebrations which followed, the trophy was paraded through the Aston area of Birmingham, and it was reserved to be held in sports shop owned by businessman William Shillcock in the local area. (although some apparently described him as a cobbler and supplier of leather goods and sports clothing to the club). But in the days that followed, the prestigious trophy went missing. It's believed that the trophy had been stolen in a burglary during the night of September 10, but no arrests were ever made and the trophy wasn't found.

The case remained a complete mystery for 60 years, until 1985, when The Sunday Pictorial published a story with the headline 'soccer's biggest riddle' A man called Henry James Burge, an 80-year-old man at the time of the article, claimed that he had committed the burglary at the shop. The burglar even posed for a photo revealing how he broke into the shop for the story. He claimed he carried out the robbery with two other men and also took pairs of football boots as well as the prestigious trophy. The cup was replaced by a copy of the original, made by [Howard Vaughton](#), the former [Aston Villa](#) player and England international, who had opened a [silversmith's](#) business after his retirement from the game.

Now the man Burge was not Brian's great grandfather. It's even apparently suggested that Burge made up the story of his involvement in the theft/burglary. However, what has remained a constant through the years is the story within Brian's family that Mad Jack was in some way involved in the enterprise although Brian accepts that it will never be proven!

We are indeed grateful to Brian for having agreed to our publishing this item.

On a separate note we were pleased to hear that the Botanical Gardens had been awarded many millions of pounds in grants to allow them to begin the refurbishment of the premises, which were certainly noted to be in a sorry state after many years of decline.

COMING UP AT THE MBS.

The July meeting proved to be a bit of a disappointment when, despite best efforts of those involved, we could not get through to Nigel Saunders in Canada. Although we could see him we could not hear him! Teanah had checked out the cricket club's systems a few days before the meeting but, unfortunately, on the day a problem arose which could not be fixed. So, as a result, the executive decision was made that the club would buy a Bluetooth speaker for its own use. (this had been the problem with the cricket club's systems) Nigel has agreed to join us again on the 3rd August when we shall incorporate a workshop as well, as originally intended. Display table will be any native species.

The September meeting will feature David Cheshire. Subject to be confirmed. Display table will be Show Winners, please.

COMING UP AT REDDITCH BONSAI.

PLEASE READ THIS ITEM AS THERE HAS BEEN ANOTHER CHANGE TO THE PROGRAMME.

There will be no meeting at Redditch in August as the hall is being renovated in some way. There is a further change to the September meeting. This was originally intended to be a presentation by Judith about "The History of Bonsai". We then had a large number of items DONATED BY the family of the late John Clarke. The programme for September was therefore changed to allow the sale of these to members, but, as most items have been sold and/or Redditch members have not expressed further interest in the balance of items the committee has decided to retain the ORIGINAL programme FOR September and November.

GARDENING TIP OF THE MONTH.

Hopefully you will already have sown your biennials such as foxgloves and sweet williams. These can be set out in the autumn to overwinter in their flowering positions. I set out some basil on the allotment but these plants have really suffered in the recent colder and wet weather. We are now relying on the pot I have on the kitchen window ledge! On the other hand the parsley is doing well so I might sow some more seed to overwinter. Keep side shoots removed from your tomato plants.

BONSAI TIP OF THE MONTH.

You may have noted that I brought an Acer Palmatum to the club in July. A decision was taken that it should be defoliated due to a large amount of what I think was wind burn on the leaves, which made the tree look very sad indeed. Following the "operation" Mark Skan has advised me to keep the tree in sun rather than shade to encourage the development of the new leaves.

Do watch out for vine weevil. I treat pots regularly.

Richard Gilkes. 31st. July 2023

