

Despite the day being in August and rather sunny a good number of folk came to the meeting in the spacious facilities of Venn Valley Vineyard (between Landkey and Swimbridge) EX32 0NN. Ali and Tony (the owners) now offer drinks and their superb cakes for sale, although we did come across a rumour that ice cream may also be found!

Again this month we had several new people to our horticultural excursion into all things bonsai.

Our next bonsai meeting will be on **Wednesday, 4 October** at the vineyard, at 2:00 pm. I was asked a little time ago to discuss the merits of big bonsai so this is the one!



It has become a welcome tradition of this group that people bring along trees to discuss, with the view to developing them into a decent bonsai. Maggie has kindly extended this idea by bringing along a dozen bonsai pots that she has created. This juniper 'Tanuki' style was brought to demonstrate how the combination of a particular type of tree with one of Maggie's pots can create a rather appealing overall presence.

For some delightful reason several Oaks of varying age were brought in, each with their own intricacies that needed to be overcome to set the tree on the path to become a Bonsai.



This image shows a hawthorn that had not long ago been growing in a hedge. It was felt that an image of Exmoor was being evoked, where the tree had been eaten by sheep and deer, so it was bent as if layered in a hedge. This also gives the possibility of creating a 'Windswept' style of tree if wanted later on.



Another aspect of becoming an expert bonsai artist is the little known need to also be a ballet dancer. This is necessary to gain as broader view as possible of all sides of the tree.

Maggie last month took up the challenge of creating an interesting image from an ordinary Christmas tree – Norway spruce.

The picture here is Maggie explaining her thinking and with the aid of some wiring of branches and guy wires showing the direction she wishes to take this tree.

A table of some of the trees we discussed. In particular, in the foreground, is a rather scruffy Cotoneaster that has been left to grow on through the summer. It was originally a very large shrub with 5 trunks being about a meter square in all three directions. I dug it up from my mother's garden just before we sold her house.



It is now down to just two trunks with five 'pom-pom' arrangements of leaves and berries. This has all happened in about seven years.

It can be seen from Maggie's Christmas tree and my Mum's Cotoneaster that the most unpromising material when collected can 'with a little help' be

trained into a rather pleasant Bonsai image.

This notion of starting with collected material (known as 'yamadori' in Bonsai circles) does offer splendid mature material to both learn techniques and create a fine tree.

Our next meeting is on **4 October** at the usual venue of Venn Valley Vineyard @ 2:00pm.

Please bring along any tree that we could discuss as a group; this process gives a broader insight to possibilities across a wider range of material and is also a lot of fun of course.



Further details of bonsai help can be found at www.bonsaiforeveryone.com

Any queries or help needed please email or phone me:

E: nigel@nysys.co.uk

T: 07974 998032

Nigel