Saikei International

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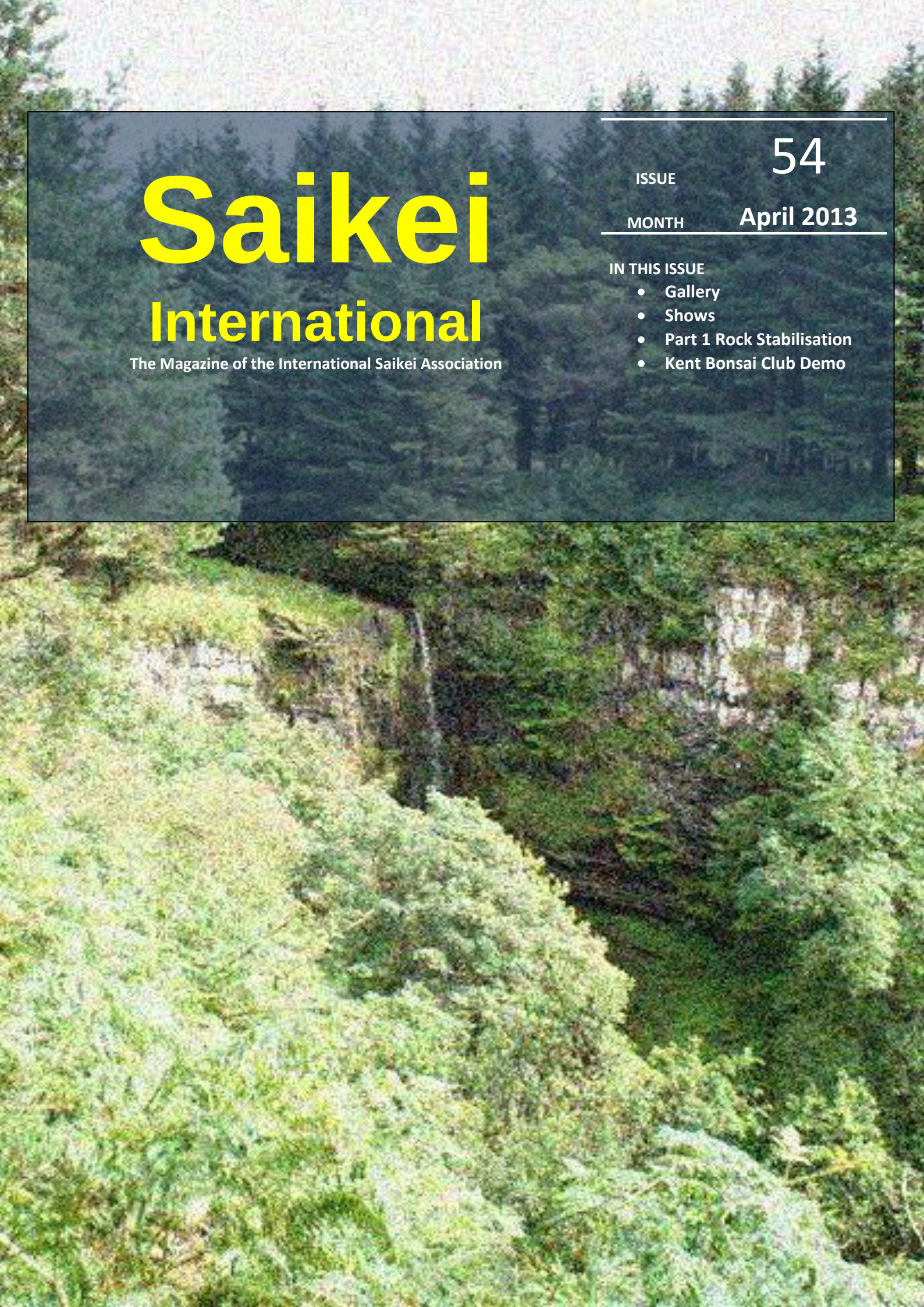

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General News

Just a reminder that we will be attending the Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Show on the 22nd of June at Stone Cross Hall Eastbourne. There will be a demonstration of Saikei in the Afternoon by our President David Penny he will also be doing a workshop for anybody interested in the morning.

Website

International Pages - we would like to start to build on the international pages within the current website structure so if you are aware of local groups either bonsai or Saikei we would like to list them on the pages and include links to their websites so that we might provide more information to visitors to the sites. If you are aware of any local shows we will also like to hear about these so they can be listed on the show page and international pages.

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SHOWS

If you are aware of any shows concerning Bonsai and Saikei we will be delighted to hear about these and we will of course put them in the magazine so that all members are aware. In order to enter an event we only need to know the name of the event, where it will take place, dates and times and contact for further information.

Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Club Annual Show 2013

Stone Cross Hall, Stone Cross, Eastbourne.
22nd of June 2013
Bonsai, Saikei, Demonstrations, Pot Making, Bonsai Related Items for Sale, etc…

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BACK TO BASICS – ROCK STABILISATION

INTRODUCTION

In Saikei it is important that we stabilise all rocks to prevent movement and the subsequent change from our original image for the composition. During construction of our Saikei we must ensure that the stabilisation is secure and friendly to the planting we will do. Rocks are used in Saikei for their look and their structural capability and we will explore this during this article.

WHY STABILISE

As mentioned in the introduction stabilisation is important due to the need to produce an image which is fixed, in Bonsai the tree is tied into the pot this is to ensure that the tree does not move damaging roots but also to make sure that the tree once designed remains at the artists angle and it does not shift throwing the design off balance. Saikei artists spend much time finding the face* of the rock and to lose that precious angle July damage the quality and design of the composition which brings us on to the second reason why we stabilise rocks, this reason is purely artistic and it is too change the angle of the rock to suit the composition. This means that it is possible through stabilisation methods to put an angle on a rock that under normal circumstances would be impossible due to balance and that old enemy of Saikei enthusiasts, 'Gravity'. It is important to remind everyone that Saikei are natural so the cutting or shaping of rock is not encouraged, this is due in part to the fact that if you take the planting apart you will have potentially ruined that rock for future plantings. The last reason that we stabilise is to provide a structural element that can be used to provide support for planting. These rocks will not normally have a face but we would warn against using a different type of rock due to the annoying habit of these rocks to end up showing in your composition.

So to recap there are 3 reasons why you use and stabilise rock:

- To ensure a solid design that will not move.
- To overcome the design limitations placed by the shape of the rock.
- To provide a solid structural element to support planting.

STABILISATION METHODS

Because we July wish to take the Saikei apart at some stage we avoid the use of permanent fixing methods favouring those that allow some flexibility. It is worth mentioning that there are 3 levels of stabilisation with 3 methods commonly used for stabilisation.

- Companion rocks that do not require any support.
- Feature Rocks that July only require limited support.
- Structural Rocks that require full support.

COMPANION ROCKS

Companion rocks are used to support the look of the composition but serve only an artistic role in the Saikei.

Rocks of this type do not normally require secure stabilisation and can be placed on the growing medium. A word of caution always make sure that the rock is partially embedded as this will help to portray the weight of the rock and add to the feeling of age.

FEATURE ROCKS

Feature rocks are the face of the rock element in the Saikei they provide the foundation of the image and will often dictate the style of the Saikei. These rocks must be securely stabilised in order to prevent the composition from changing due to rock shift, we recommend the use of sand or clay depending on the size and shape of the rock.

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We make up our own clay composition as follows:

- 6 parts Garden Clay
- 2 parts Organic Compost
- 2 parts Fine Sand

The sand and organic compost is there to help the roots to penetrate the clay. The mix should be gradually hydrated until it forms a sticky but mouldable mass, you can now roll into balls ready for use. When you want to place the rock in the tray spray the base of the pot lightly with water then place clay ball in position and push the rock firmly into the clay ball spreading the clay outwards, you July need to firm the clay around the base of the rock to ensure stability.

STRUCTURAL ROCKS

Structural rocks are used to form the planting area and July or July not show in the planting it is still important to use the same rock type as often, as a composition matures, I find that these structural rocks end up being seen. The stabilisation of these rocks is the same as that for feature rocks.

Editors Note

I have asked David Penny to do a pictorial demonstration of rock stabilisation for the next issue

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KENT DEMONSTRATION by David Penny

On Wednesday the 8th of May I travelled to Rough Common village hall to do a demonstration of Saikei to the Kent Bonsai Group. After a very interesting trip along some very busy roads I arrived at the village hall to be greeted by a number of the members who welcomed me and made me feel quite at home.

After setting up I had a number of conversations with various members about Saikei. After discussing the various points of business for the club I was introduced by the chairman and informed that it was around 16 to 17 years ago that last demonstrated at Kent bonsai. I started by outlining the major differences between bonsai and Saikei that being, the way we approach the two arts, I also covered some of the history of Saikei and showed a number of antique books that I hold on the subject, members were invited to take a look at the books during the break.

I started the demonstration itself by explaining what materials I have brought to work with and also some of my thought processes when I was thinking about the subject matter that the demonstration. The materials that I had taken with me was a Chinese hand finished pot, a number of pieces of rather descriptively titled 'Irish mud rock', five Cryptomeria japonica Yokohama, two small Juniper, Moss and soil. I started out the practical aspects of the demonstration by laying out the rocks on a bed of clay forming a planting area inside the confines of the right-hand side of the pot, the clay are used caused a great deal of discussion and I explained that I utilise a standard garden play mixed with organic matter to provide a sticky medium that will still allow roots to penetrate and water to pass through this bedding substance. I explained that the actual consistency of, this medium depended on the type of clay used and the quality of the organic matter, the best method for checking that the medium was suitable was to simply roll it into bowls and then to crush it slightly to identify whether it would fall apart or simply remould itself around your fingers the latter being the ideal consistency.

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Once I'd formed the rocks into a planting pocket I was then able to start adding soil and preparing the trees ready for planting. On this particular demonstration I was very keen to leave the trees as they would have been in the garden centre where they were purchased this was to show that these were ordinary trees and that they had not been prepared in any way prior to the demonstration. I continue to gradually add the soil until I had achieved a good planting area for the trees. The composition was starting to come together and at that point we broke for tea at which I was inundated by members asking questions about Saikei. After the break I then turned my attention to the trees themselves and started to work with the root systems explaining that I was not looking to work the roots beyond that required to place them into the composition. Upon completion of the root work I started to add the trees to the planting area raised by the rocks and added soil in to provide stability for the trees. I then turned my attention to the lower area on the left-hand side of the pot and put in three rocks to provide a bank for a small stream that was running at the bottom of the cliffs on the planting area to the right, adding the two other trees I then placed soil around them to provide a growing medium and stability adding Moss to further complement the composition. Unfortunately we ran out of time before I had a chance to style the trees and so I have promised to put pictures on the website of the finished composition so the Kent club members can take a look.

Trimmed and Dressed

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VIEWS FROM A LENS—GALLERY

A Beautiful Saikei – by Craig Jurd in Australia

A Coastal Saikei – UK Member

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CLUBS

Name	Telephone	Address	Day of Meeting	Website
Dai Ichi Bonsai Group (Essex)	01277 625 298	Shenfield Village Hall	1st Monday of each month call	
Eastbourne and Wealden Bonsai Club (Sussex)	01323 731 369	Hellingly Village Hall	2nd Monday of the Month	www.eandwbonsaiclub.co.uk
Eastleigh Bonsai Club (Hampshire)	01489 789 962 or 07795 187 632		2nd Monday of the Month	
Kent Bonsai Club	kentbonsaiclub@blueyonder.co.uk	Rough Common Village Hall	2nd Wednesday	www.kentbonsaiclub.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

If you would like to have your local club details added to this list please contact the newsletter team by e-mail newsletter@Saikei.co.uk

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