



SRGC

Bulb Log Diary

ISSN 2514-6114

Pictures and text © Ian Young

BULB LOG 02 13th January 2021





Narcissus 'Mondieu'

The snow from last week quickly thawed but was soon replaced by another light covering as freezing temperatures returned again. This process of freezing and thawing has become more typical of our winter weather – gone are the days when the cold came in November and lasted until April. Our seasons are no longer clearly defined so the plants, wild life and the gardener just have to adjust accordingly. Plants do not look at the calendar to know when to flower but respond to conditions, mostly the temperatures, so increasingly we get some plants being lured into flowering much sooner than they did when we started gardening all those years ago. As I write on Monday 11/01/21 the weather has changed, the snow has gone and it is raining again so I am once more confined to working inside and the cover picture includes the

subjects that are occupying me. We have been in isolation since last March when Covid struck and all my travel and lectures were cancelled and now many are back in lockdown that will last well into the year when the roll out of the vaccines offers some protection. The cover picture shows the Narcissus flowering in the bulb houses which I do check every day whatever the weather but the cold and very low light levels make it difficult to get pictures of the quality that I desire. I am also revising my talk on Troughs, which are also shown on the cover, for a Zoom presentation that I am giving early next month. I have given a number of Zoom talks since lock down and while it is not the same as being in front of an audience it is a good way to sustain our interests until it is safe for us to travel.



Group of Narcissus seedlings growing in the sand bed.



I like the flowers with a crenulated corona such as this nice yellow seedling.



Narcissus 'Craigton Chorister'



This small pot of *Narcissus cantabricus petunioides* shows that these flowering bulbs have just a single leaf, the flower stem will also act in a similar way to a leaf and feed the bulb as well as supporting the flower.



A pot of my own hybrid cross of *Narcissus x Susannah* - a naturally occurring hybrid between *Narcissus triandrus* and *Narcissus cantabricus*, note these flowering bulbs also have but a single leaf – inherited from its pollen parent.



When I venture out to check on the bulb houses I usually take the long way back around the garden.



The cobble bed under a thin covering of snow is one of a number of beds that will feature more in the months to come.



A cold coloured scene looking across one bed that will provide the earliest colour - it is fascinating to think of all the bulbs in the ground just waiting for their turn to burst into flower and growth.



The Pieris and Rhododendron bring some warm colours to another cold scene.



Even a light covering of snow makes the hard landscaping and evergreens in a garden stand out.



On the raised wall the small pines make a big statement especially at this time of year when there are few other subjects to distract your eye.



Here I look forward with eager anticipation to the small treasures that will appear in the new bed beside the pond over the coming months.



The adventurous growth of some bulbs in the Bulb bed has been visible for some time now with the first few snowdrop flowers and many more buds being visible.



Snowdrops respond to being frozen by collapsing on the ground as the frost lifts their flowers will rise up again unscathed. The erratic weather we have in our area means that they will go through this process many times as the cold comes and goes all through the winter and spring – we have even had frosts and snow in early June.



Cyclamen hederifolium leaves also curl and collapse in the frosts as the plants withdraws water from them to prevent damage – this reaction is shared by many plants that have evolved in frosty climates.



This is a silver leaved form of **Cyclamen hederifolium** but the silver is hidden when it is frozen.



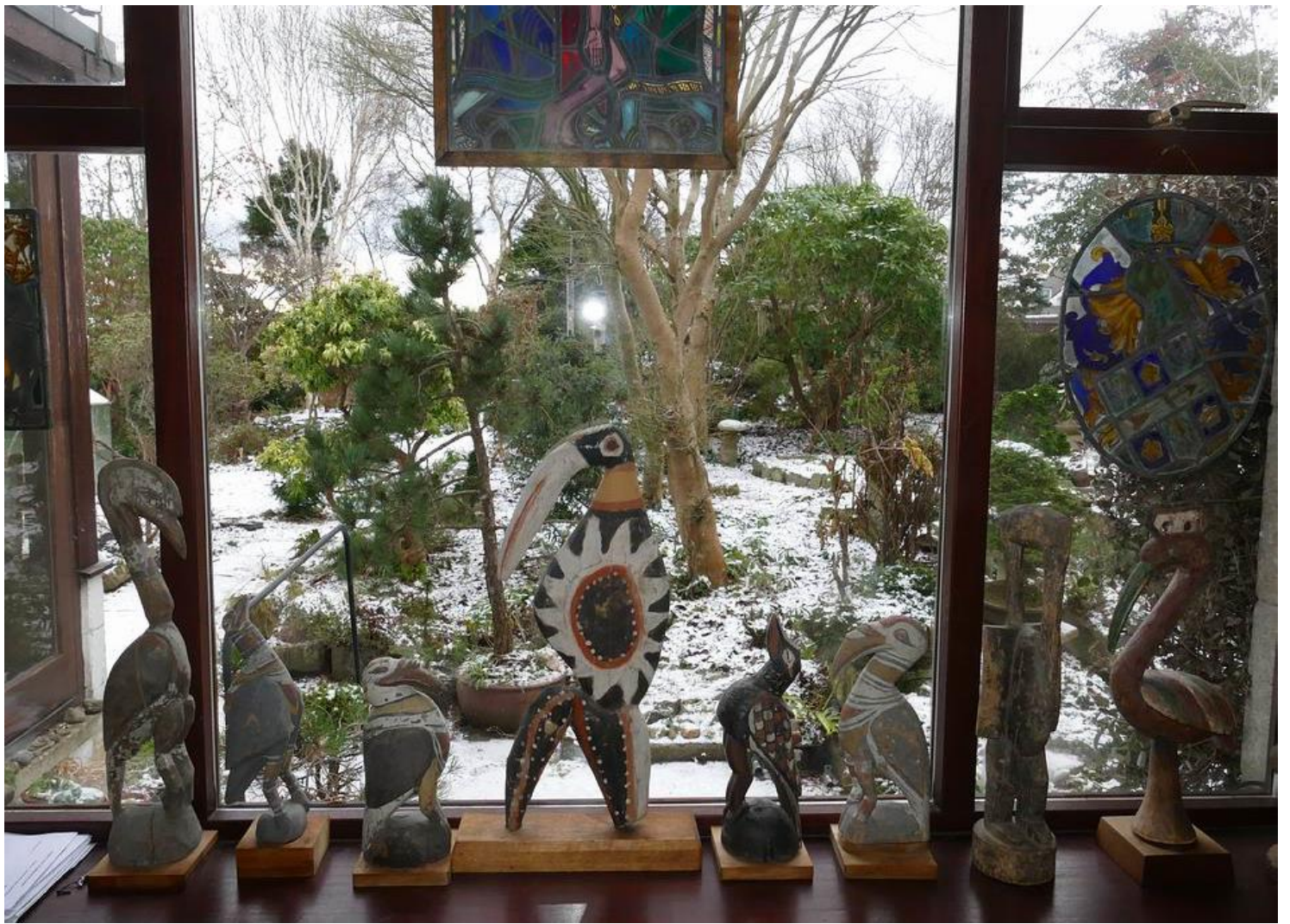
Making, landscaping, planting and maintaining troughs is the topic for my next Zoom lecture and I have been enjoying going through all the trough pictures I have taken over many years.



Even the tiny troughs that I made and landscaped at workshops have proved to be hardy in the snow provided you choose suitable plants.



View across the troughs and slab beds which are like giant troughs and also feature in my talk.



As I get older I am less willing to work in the garden when it is this cold so much of our time is spent inside looking out at and photographing the plants and birds through the windows.



The remaining pictures, such as these Goldfinches on one of the feeders, were all taken from the sitting room.



Cyclamen, Blackbird and Galanthus pictured through the window.



This is always the first Snowdrop to flower for us.



The birds enjoy the trees as much as we do and they have already stripped all the Sorbus berries and most of the easy to get Cotoneaster ones - these dangling ones are more difficult to get and it is fun watching the acrobatics of the birds trying to get them.



A flock of around 100 Fieldfares with some Redwings has been visiting since the start of this cold period.



I round off for this week with the view from where I sit to read, write, draw and watch the birds.....