



BULB LOG 31.....30th July 2014



We have been enjoying some very hot sunny weather – too hot for this poor northerner to be able to do too much work especially in the glasshouses – so progress in the frit house has been slow. I have all the pots of bulbs stored on the lower staging of the other bulb houses, cut out the old very rusty staging and cemented in the bases to support the new benches. I have also got all the hedges cut, the cuttings are shredded and now composting so I have not been totally idle.

Fritillaria house

I have yet to start repotting in the bulb houses and as the September storm, when I soak them all to start them into their growth cycle, is only a month away repotting will have to take priority over the coming month. With all the other work I will not have time to repot every single pot so I will have to take an informed decision on



which pots to leave - this decision will be based on how crowded the bulbs are and when they were last repotted – something I record on the labels. It is essential to inspect your bulbs regularly even when everything seems to be resting underneath the hayfield-like dried leaves and stems.



On one of my daily inspections I was rewarded by this *Colchicum* flower and a few days later the single bloom had been joined by more. I do not know what the species is – I grew the bulbs from seed I was given by a friend who thought he was collecting *Colchicum szovitzii* – it is always the first bulb to start off the new season.





There are not so many flowers in our garden at this time of year, it is a time to appreciate foliage, but there are still a few if we look around. *Dactylorhiza* are still in flower and self-seeded *Meconopsis cambrica* also adds some welcome summer colour to one of the bulb beds. I must introduce some seed of the common field poppies in to the bulb bed.



They say 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' but who could not take pleasure in seeing this field of poppies and grasses.





Recently in Aberdeen there were letters in the paper complaining about areas where the grass had not been cut. Some people see long grass as neglect and want everything cut to look neat and tidy – I have never subscribed to that view and I am delighted to see the local authorities leaving areas to grow. In many cases it is budget cuts that reduce the frequency of cutting but in this site I suspect they have added wild flower seed mixes to create this wonderful sight that as well as cheering up at least this Aberdeen resident. This habitat will also benefit the biodiversity of the area supporting insects and birds.



Who could not take pleasure in the subtle colours of the grasses and Rumex.





Recently seeing the wild flowers on the grass verges as I walk the dogs has inspired me to try and express the sensation I felt of the grasses, flowers and leaves in the summer sunshine. It is only in the last few months that plants have become my subject for a series of mixed media drawings. Art makes you look in detail and think about what you are seeing also how you are seeing it. It was said that Leonardo da Vinci produced his ground breaking drawings of anatomy because he understood the subject but it is the reverse - he understood anatomy because he drew it – drawing forced him to look closely at and understand the detail. So by creating these works I am forced to look carefully at the detail but I am also exploring how we see things – we all understand how we listen in time but we also see in time. As we look at a subject our eyes dart about collecting information – we do not see the entire subject in sharp focus - at any one time only a small part of the scene is in sharp focus and the rest is seen out of



focus by our peripheral vision. Our brains then stitch all this information together giving us the impression that we see everything in sharp focus. I am trying to recreate one of these moments - forcing the viewer's eye to move around my images gathering information and filling in the details I have omitted for themselves. Shadows also fascinate me and inform my work – there is little detail in this image but I am sure that most of you will be able to

identify the plant represented by just its shadow.



Here again it is the shadow of a plant that is the main subject matter of this picture.

The complexity of shapes, colours and tones in these strawberry leaves are simplified to a single shape and tone in its shadow creating a striking image.





Actea rubra presents a complex image full of details but I aim to simplify it down to what my eye sees in one instant so, hopefully if I am successful, when you view the work your eye will be encouraged to move around the subject just it would if you were viewing the actual plant gathering information.



It is tempting to add in all the details to the leaves in my works but based on my observations of plant shadows and what a strong image they create I have chosen just to add hints of the details. I hope I can encourage some more of you to take up a camera, paints or pencil and use them in a creative way.



Not all is as it seems – looking like a plant you might find in Patagonia – this is a combined effort.



Seeing the whole scene shows that the searching flower stems of *Cyananthus microphyllus* have pushed into the tight leaves of *Potentilla pulvinaris* creating this very spectacular looking plant!



Cyananthus microphyllus



Dactylorhiza fuschii okellyi



My eye was captivated by the final image for this week when the sun briefly shone through the leaf canopy spotlighting these *Primula florindae* and a *Celmisia* flower against the dark background – within minutes this fleeting image had gone as the light had changed.....