

Country Notes for October 2017

As we move into October it becomes much clearer that autumn is really with us. Days are shorter, there can often be an early frost and on some days there can be a noticeable chill in the air. However some days can feel quite summery - and wouldn't it be nice if that happened this year after such a disappointing second half of summer.

One of the real joys of autumn is watching the trees as they move into the magnificent glory of their parting act before lying dormant through the winter months. Most deciduous trees provide colour as their leaves prepare to fall, but some are more glorious than others.

The best trees include beech, which mysteriously hold their leaves through the winter when they are in hedges. However the leaves of beech trees fall in the autumn and can often turn flame red all together, providing a stunning spectacle. Spindle trees, which may be a little more difficult to find, become yellow and red before finally dropping their leaves in a wonderful carpet on the ground.

Another autumn favourite is the rowan, grown by many a cottager's door in the highlands of Scotland to ward off the devil and protect the residents inside! Not only do rowan trees have glorious red berries, loved by the birds, but their leaves also turn a beautiful red before finally dropping to the ground, perhaps in one of autumn's storms or maybe one at a time on quieter days.

Birch trees, on the other hand, turn a golden yellow - and if this happens all at once the spectacle can be truly stunning, especially where there is a large group of birch trees together.

No one needs an excuse to get out and about on a beautiful autumn day - and what a treat is in store for those who do!

Andrew Snowdon