

## Country Notes for November 2018

As I write this in mid-October, after a day when we experienced temperatures in the mid-20s, when the heat of the sun seemed really quite hot in the middle of the afternoon and when the Kentish landscape seemed closer in appearance to late summer than autumn, it seems a long way from the depths of autumn that we start to experience in November. It is in this month that the leaves really start to fall from the trees, often helped by downpours of cold rain and strong November winds. By the end of the month the landscape will be starting to look more wintry than autumnal and the days will be shorter than the nights.

There is a stark beauty in the November landscape. Trees that for so many months have been clothed in green take on a new shape as their structure becomes more apparent with their lack of leaves. Trees which have stood in the landscape for hundreds of years and which must have many a story to tell, have a new beauty at this time of the year.

Birds too have seen a change. Gone are the last of the swallows and house martins and we have welcomed in their place redwings, fieldfares and bramblings from countries further north, taking refuge here from temperatures even lower than we will experience in the months to come.

Some flowers will try to hang on. There is always the odd rose in my garden that defies the frost and even some annuals in sheltered spots may bravely continue to flower throughout the month if the weather does not turn too fierce. However, even if heavy frosts do finish them off, the berries that replace them give a different colour to the countryside as long as the birds do not get to them too quickly!

One of the joys of our wonderful Kentish landscape is that it is constantly changing, giving us something new to look at as the days and weeks propel us ever onward, closer to the end of the year.

Make sure that you get out and enjoy this month, whatever the weather!

Andrew Snowdon