

Autumn Fascinates Countryside Ranger

Deadwater Valley Trust countryside ranger Adrian Brockless enjoys autumn.

He said: "It's all change for wildlife. Autumn is a time of great beauty and wonder in the natural world.

"The changing colours of plants and trees, combined with early morning mist, are always special and thoughts turn to picking blackberries and ripened apples.

"For me however, it is always a time tinged with sadness. The fre-

netic, urgent days of the breeding season are over.

"Much of the wildlife is preparing for hibernation and the swallows and martins - those iconic birds of summer - are beginning their epic migrations to Africa.

"Those little birds which nest in barns and under the eaves of our houses fly all the way from the UK to spend the winter thousands of

miles away in the southern hemisphere, where it is of course summer.

"Yet my sadness is always tempered by the anticipation of winter arrivals.

"Species such as fieldfare and redwing are preparing to leave their own breeding grounds in Scandinavia and journey across the North Sea to spend winter in Britain feeding on the berries of hawthorn and rowan.

"And the winter also provides great opportu-

nities to observe those mammals that can no longer hide in the summer vegetation, such as badgers.

"Take a visit to any rural location at this time and you're sure to see various kinds of fungi.

"Over 4,000 kinds of fungus have been recorded in Britain - these include toadstools, mushrooms, puffballs and clubs.

"A brightly coloured toadstool that you are likely to encounter is the Fly Agaric, with its

bright red cap dotted with white spots.

"This species, like so many other kinds of fungus, is highly poisonous, so it is inadvisable to try any unless you are in the company of an expert."

October 30 sees the launch of the Big Bordon Birdwatch.

This is the first year it will have been run and the aim is to gain data about birds in the town.

To take part visit www.deadwatervalleytrust.co.uk.