



As you stroll the river-embankment, watch out for overtaking ducks! The Rhymney has doubled up as the fast lane. It's been racing full pelt from September onwards this winter, with huge volumes of water pounding over the weir, from the never-ending rains. The ducks simply ride the flow, like expert kayakers before backing into a favoured lee out of the current.



*Yellow brain*

Whilst this weather maybe water off a duck's back, yellow brain might be an apt description for someone who has been getting a soaking too often. However, this is the name for a superb bright yellow jelly fungus I spotted growing on a dead oak limb near the wildlife refuge area. With the sun behind it, the yellow brain fungus was glowing and appeared to be re-

charging its soft cellular mass in the sun's radiating winter rays; they really are quite alien like.

During the dormant season the hedges are given their annual winter crop-top haircuts. I try to leave the occasional shrub of rose hips or guelder rose berries for the birds and mice to help them through harder times. From Christmas on, I've been accompanied by the beautiful unabashed singing of our resident mistle thrushes. Who unlike me carry on singing while I retreat to the vehicle as another squally shower sweeps through. Delightfully, the pair of mistle thrushes decided to hop down to pick and probe for some worms in the short grass in front of the vehicle. Their bold upright stance and purposeful bounce is a good match to their strong operatic singing performance. Each bound brought them closer, until the bold brown spots on a white breast were clearly distinguishable as small arrowheads.



*Mistle thrush*

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Well, I'd best get on with the rest of the hedges.

Bye for now.

*Kerry*

Countryside Ranger