



Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group

Newsletter Jan 2018

New Woodland to benefit Red Squirrels

The future of Red Squirrels in the Penrith area was given a boost in late November with the announcement that the Lowther Estate is to embark on one of the largest new commercial woodland creation schemes in England for the last twenty five years.

A total of 165 hectares of new woodland is to be planted on the southern part of the Lowther Estate in 2018. The new planting



will also join together a further 85 hectares of existing diverse woodland blocks effectively creating a 250

hectare forest which has further linkages south towards Shap and North and East towards the Red Squirrel Reserve at Whinfell Forest.

In total 214,000 trees will be planted. 58% of the new woodland will be productive conifer species, 11.5% productive broadleaves, 11.5% non-productive broadleaves and 19% open space. As it matures the whole of the woodland will become a wonderful haven not just for Red Squirrels but there will be other ecological benefits as well. A large new lake has been incorporated into the design which will restore a body of water which used to be part of the landscape as long ago as 1770. This along with the re-creation of a meandering stream will help with the quality and flow of water entering the nearby river Leith.

The Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group were consulted early on in the process and gave the scheme their support.

The new woodland is to be named Jacks Wood after the recently retired Estate Forestry Manager Ian Jack who was the driving force behind the design and success of the whole scheme.



Ian, who is also a trustee of Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, worked with local officers of the Forestry Commission and bodies such as the Eden Rivers Trust and Natural England to ensure that the design of the woodland fulfilled the multipurpose role which is expected of modern forestry. Thus as well as providing habitats for red squirrels and other important ecology the woodland will help to meet Cumbria's future timber needs, provide jobs, blend seamlessly into and improve the landscape and improve the quality of water for downstream communities.

Along with the new woodland at Lowther another even larger project is planned in the North East at Doddington Moor. Like Lowther this will be a mostly conifer woodland and will encompass 300 hectares with 600,000 trees being planted which will also create wonderful and much needed new Red Squirrel habitat in Northumberland.

Wesley Squirrel gets "Reet back amang it" as he is finally set free.

Since we featured the story of Wesley the injured red squirrel in our last newsletter, hundreds of people have followed the very happy ending of his rehabilitation in the care of P&DRSG's Sarah McNeil and Jerry Moss.



As many of you may remember, Wesley came into the couples' care after he was rescued from the clutches of a cat.

We took you through the challenging stages until he was finally set free. Wesley encountered a few struggles and was hand fed nuts and seeds as he was unable to feed himself let alone walk or keep his balance.

After regular leg massages by Sarah, he eventually began to build up enough strength to pull himself up onto the wire walls of his large indoor cage.

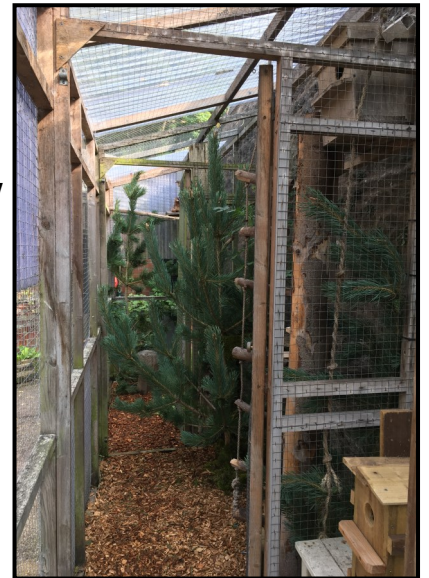
Wesley came on in leaps and bounds and the day came for him to be transferred into a much larger purpose built outdoor pen, and the last stage before final release back into the great outdoors.

The pen which mimics a woodland setting, contains a flip lid feeder and a choice of two nesting boxes. The roof is partially covered so he can once again experience rain on his back. He could also find shelter amongst the branches of Scots Pine in there.



Wesley enjoyed his time in his new home and flourished well. He started to become very elusive without human contact and had soon developed a wild streak once again which was just how Sarah and Jerry preferred it. Long gone was the vulnerable red who desperately depended so much on his carers.

Sarah and Jerry were now comfortable enough to talk about his release back into the wild.



Celebrity Release

The release was talked about around the same time as the local music festival 'Kendal Calling' (end of August) and one act on stage there was Cumbria's own **Local Celebrity** - Funnyman and all round Entertainer 'Dicky Dippinson'.

Dicky is a pianist who sings and raps about his love of sheep farming in Shap.

Sarah and Jerry happen to be huge fans of this well loved comic and chatted with him in general. They mentioned that the squirrel in their care slept in a black bobble hat just like his which he wears in his performances.

Dicky was amused to hear this and he instantly took a shine to Wesley after he was shown a photograph of him. A keen conservationist himself, Dicky was delighted when the couple suggested that he release squirrel Wesley.



A date was quickly set and Wesley's nest box and feeder were placed at the release site. The area was monitored well for both reds and greys on the run up to the day. This local area has a good population of reds so the perfect place!



The day of the release arrived and 'Dicky' came out for the day in full character costume which includes his rather large un kept yokel teeth, black bobble hat and green wellies.



With Sarah, Jerry, Hagen and Theo all in place and armed with cameras they watched on as Dicky cradled the nest box containing Wesley. He slowly crouched down and gently removed the lid of the box. Time stood still for a couple of minutes until eventually Wesley made a bolt for it. The group looked on as a flash of red ran along the woodland floor



before suddenly scaling a nearby spruce tree. The speed was absolutely incredible compared to the sorry state of him when he came into Sarah and Jerry's care.

Dicky helped fill up feeders and placed others in the forest. Wesley, at this point was sat right at the top of the tall spruce.

The group moved to another area where Dicky would climb into a squirrel costume to raise more awareness for our lovely reds.



Dicky kindly compiled a touching video of the story of Wesley which you can see on our Facebook page. We would like to say a huge thank you to Dicky for all his help on the day. Follow Dicky Dippinson on Facebook, Twitter and on his YouTube channel where you can watch him playing the piano, singing and rapping in our lovely Cumbrian dialect.

How are we doing?

Andrew—P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Hutton area



After a hectic few months with very high grey squirrel numbers I'm glad to say things seem to have quietened down on the grey front. I was a little worried as I was getting increasing numbers of greys in areas where I had not seen many for a while but it seems it was a temporary boost as the numbers are well down again. Reds have done very well in my areas and all my populations seem steady and increasing.

I'd like to thank everyone that has contacted me about greys and all my supporters that help me do what I do, your help is invaluable.

David—P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Dalston area



Having devoted over 5 years controlling grey squirrels in woodlands along the River Caldew, I am very familiar with those that offer the most attractive refuge for squirrels and can focus control effort accordingly. However, it only takes a small group of trees to harbour a breeding population of greys that periodically disperse and re-colonise woodland previously cleared. I am keen to winkle out the more furtive specimens and I appeal to anyone reading this manuscript to be more pro-active in reporting grey sightings. I have been heartened by the persistence of the red squirrels in my area and I am looking forward to some successful breeding this Spring. My regular camera monitoring over Winter has provided encouraging evidence that we do have a modest population of reds which, given a chance, will thrive and re-colonise areas previously abandoned.

Finally, I must pay tribute to those who have helped me over the year.

Gary—P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Upper Eden Valley area



2017 has been a great year for reds in the Upper Eden Valley with reds appearing in many other areas of Stainmore, Brough & Appleby and with up to 12 in one garden. Reds are surviving thanks to you reporting grey sightings so we can act on this information swiftly and with more volunteers helping to trap and shoot the Brough area, this has given me more time to check new woodland areas. Thanks for your help and support and your red sightings and photos.

We need funding urgently to carry on the good work the rangers are doing, if you can help with this, please do

John— P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Northern Eden Valley area



Both reds and greys have had a very good start to the year with red sightings up but the greys have also thrived unfortunately; October seeing a record number of grey sightings and kills. However this has now slowed down considerably with November and December being much quieter overall. I am also seeing a good number of reds in various locations throughout the Northern Eden Valley. Working with the Pulsar thermal imaging unit has benefited me a great deal allowing me to locate and dispatch grey squirrels that would otherwise have been overlooked, it has proved itself to be a valuable tool to me.

Thanks also to all the volunteers who have helped with trapping etc. and to all the land owners for allowing me to work on their land; without their help my work wouldn't be possible.

Justin—P&DRSG Red Squirrel Ranger - Ullswater area



Since commencing Red Squirrel Ranger duties for the Ullswater area in November 2017, I have been very busy making contact with many of the local landowners, farmers and residents. There have been lots of people getting in touch with me confirming sightings of both red and grey squirrels. I've had significant numbers of grey culls, mainly in the Glenridding/Patterdale area. I've also had some success reducing greys around Dalemmain and Dacre. I am seeing quite a few reds up and down the valley which is very encouraging.

I would just like to thank all the landowners that I've met in the past few weeks for granting me permission to carry out this vital work for the survival of our native reds.

Jerry—Center Parcs Red Squirrel Ranger - Whinfell area



The early Autumn and into Winter months have been busy with grey squirrel numbers. Many greys turning up in woodlands along with reports from members of the public with sightings. Squirrel pox outbreak in the Penrith Beacon area took its toll but at the time of writing this, I am pleased to report that I have started a few feeders going with trail cameras watching them and there are red squirrels still present in the Beacon area.

Whinfell sees a steady increase in red squirrel numbers after the pox outbreak of two years ago. Red squirrels being seen in all woods and forests I look after. As we head toward Spring again, only time will tell what will show up.

How are we doing?

P&DRSG Summary 2015—2017	Red Sightings	Grey Sightings	Grey Kills	No. Pox Cases
HUTTON, DALSTON & GREYSTOKE (3 Rangers)				
Area Total 2015	946	360	778	9
Area Total 2016	1721	313	837	3
Area Total 2017	1932	394	1095	4
3 Year Totals	4599	1067	2710	16
ULLSWATER (1 Ranger)				
Area Total 2015	313	104	332	2
Area Total 2016	320	47	168	0
Area Total 2017	305	51	197	1
3 Year Totals	938	202	697	3
NORTHERN EDEN VALLEY (1 Ranger)				
Area Total 2015	322	132	588	3
Area Total 2016	249	97	532	3
Area Total 2017	194	116	813	11
3 Year Totals	765	345	1933	17
WHINFELL (1 Ranger)				
Area Total 2015	574	70	175	5
Area Total 2016	394	57	91	30
Area Total 2017	362	71	290	16
3 Year Totals	1330	198	556	51
UPPER EDEN VALLEY (1 Ranger)				
Area Total 2015	472	120	265	24
Area Total 2016	622	91	178	9
Area Total 2017	587	156	171	2
3 Year Totals	1681	367	614	35
Grand Totals 2015 - 2017 (7 Rangers, 5 of these are P&DRSG Rangers)	9313	2179	6510	122

If you see any squirrels don't delay, contact your area Ranger today!

Andrew	07983 459918	silverhodge@hotmail.com
David	07542 191865	dec@davidcowen.co.uk
Gary	07974 788434	garymurphy2408@btinternet.com
John	07841 449648	john.lisle@btinternet.com
Justin	07388 831150	info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk
Jerry	07736 779965	jmossjerry@aol.com

For Greystoke area please call RSNE Ranger Matthew 07949 366334

**To report any squirrel sightings outside the P&DRSG's area, please report to
www.northernredsquirrels.org.uk**

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group. Woodside, Armathwaite, Cumbria CA4 9SX. Registered charity number 1117418.

The Administrator can be contacted on 07788 264571 e-mail: info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk

www.penrithredsquirrels.org.uk [facebook.com/Penrith-and-District-Red-Squirrel-Group-487229667979369/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/Penrith-and-District-Red-Squirrel-Group-487229667979369/?fref=ts)

Raising awareness & funds

Shows and events

Raising awareness & invaluable funds at shows and events each year is very hard work but thoroughly enjoyed by all and we thank each and everyone who pops along to our stand for a chat, a brew and sometimes a scone or two!

Particular mention goes to Jill Eastham and her team for hosting the Lazonby Xmas Craft Fair which raised a magnificent **£885** for P&DRSG as their nominated charity for the year 2017.



P&DRSG merchandise & feeders

Red squirrel themed merchandise is available to purchase all year round simply by getting in touch (see footer below). We always have a selection of badges, cards, car stickers, fridge magnets, key rings, pens & red squirrel soft toys in stock which make great gifts for all ages (prices from £1 to £5). Why not buy some today and make someone's day! Flip lid squirrel feeders are also available to purchase through the group at £15, make a reds' day by getting one today!

2018 P&DRSG Fundraiser

Wendy Rheam is holding a plant sale with home made refreshments in Sebergham Village Hall on Sunday 5th May 2018 from 2 – 4pm to raise funds for P&DRSG. If anyone can help with contributions of plants, cakes or on the day, they would be most welcome. Contact Wendy on 016974 76484 for further information.

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Raising awareness & funds

The Giving Machine



We have signed up to www.thegivingmachine.co.uk.

You can now help raise donations for Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group without you even leaving your sofa. And it doesn't cost you a penny!

TheGivingMachine is a fundraising organisation designed to help charitable causes raise money online.

By signing up and shopping online via The Giving Machine you will generate a free cash donation for us. With over 2,000 of your favourite retailers, including Amazon, Ebay, M&S, NEXT, Tesco, Sainsbury, John Lewis and Ocado, you are bound to find what you need and generate a donation.

In order to start raising free donations please go to www.thegivingmachine.co.uk and follow these steps:

Click join as a giver. It will ask you to search for a cause. Type in Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group in the search and then select from the list of results.

Click join and support and then enter your details. You are now signed up.

Make sure you never miss a donation and download the Shop&Give application.

<https://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/shop-and-give/>

It takes just a few minutes to install on your web browser and means that every time you click onto a retailer that supports this scheme you will get a prompt asking you to donate.

You can ALSO help us by

- Making a donation and/or becoming a member (see back page)
- Giving a gift of membership subscription (see back page)
- Organising a fund raising event
- Hosting a charity collection box
- Promptly reporting all squirrel sightings
- Sponsoring rangers
- Sponsoring feed costs
- Sponsoring administration costs
- Sponsoring equipment costs
- Recruiting new members
- Hosting our merchandise for sale in your premises
- Leaving a legacy in your Will



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Support

Celebrating 10 years of friendship & support

It was a chance meeting in a gift shop near Ullswater 10 years ago when P&DRSG's Sarah McNeil and Jerry Moss met Christine and Neville Cook from East Sussex.

The topic of conversation – red squirrels of course!

Christine asked the couple where she and her husband were likely to catch a glimpse of a red squirrel.

The couple didn't have to look far as they were invited to Sarah and Jerry's home where at that time they were caring for an injured red by the name of "Wendy"



Wendy instantly melted the visitor's hearts and there started a strong friendship between the two couples.

Over the years Christine has turned into a brilliant ambassador for the reds' cause and grabs any opportunity to raise awareness and raise vital funds for the reds. She along with her East Sussex supporters have raised hundreds of pounds over the last ten years through sales of Christine's jams, punnets of gooseberries, sales from raffle tickets, books, plants, bargain boxes, greetings cards, donations and her friend even sold a horse's saddle and donated the whole amount of £100 to the cause. Lots of equipment has been purchased through this which includes squirrel feeders, feed, trail cameras, road awareness signs etc.



'The Link' coffee shop in East Sussex have been an incredible help by filling their windowsill with Christine's produce and a sign saying "All proceeds to red squirrel preservation" so the

customers have been an amazing support too!

Many people have been touched by both the couples' correspondence and Christine told Sarah and Jerry that everyone who had seen their letters said how nice it was to be personally involved in a collection for our own endangered species, without going through a charity where you don't really know where the money goes.

Thank you for all your amazing and continued support Christine and the East Sussex supporters.

If you are inspired by Christine's volunteering we would love to hear from you.

Feedback

P&DRSG received a call out from a local business recently regarding a trespasser on their property - a grey squirrel! We were happy to be available for service and an hour later, we received this feedback from the proprietor.

"I thought your service was very professional. The eradication of the animal was done with compassion and was a clean kill ensuring no suffering. You provide a fantastic service that is helping a national treasure survive in the face of great adversity. Although unpleasant in the act of killing a living creature, an understanding is needed that they don't belong here and removing them will save the lives of our much smaller reds. You should be very proud of the service and skill you offer and would come highly recommended"

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Members page

Julie's Reds Return

Visiting red squirrels succumbed to squirrel pox virus disease in January 2017 both in my garden and at local sites close by and I thought yet again that it would be a long time before any more would come back as this was the fourth time that local colonies of reds had been wiped out by the insurgent greys despite ongoing grey squirrel management however, I was hopeful that some reds may have avoided coming into contact with any grey carriers and had only dispersed as is often the case when greys move in.

On 12th August 2017 I saw what I thought was a red dashing past the window but told myself this was just wishful thinking and that I'd best make another appointment at Specsavers, until!



The very next day, it paid another visit and brought a friend along; They were both males and I guessed they were siblings. To my delight these two became three and before long there were more that I could easily differentiate between.

There are now four males and three females coming to my garden for breakfast,



dinner and tea and a certain three of them can quite often be seen all together and all day long, back and forth to feeders and up and down the cherry trees in the garden. Reds have also returned to local accessible



sites having not been seen for approx. nine months following grey squirrel management there too.

I am under no illusion that these resident reds won't be unnecessarily lost due to the virus or dispersal again as unfortunately, there are still source populations of local greys around in areas in which the landowners won't allow their control but for now I will continue to protect these reds and woe be tide any greys that dare to try stealing their nuts here!

A consistent watchful eye and a helping hand is what our native red squirrels need and I take this opportunity to appeal to everyone to please do what you can to help Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group whether you are a landowner, a business or a member of the community – together we can keep this area **RED!**



Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group **Membership Form**

Membership is for the calendar year, payable at any time - Please feel free to enter a higher amount should you wish to increase your subscription by including a donation

Standard Individual Membership is £20 ☐ By **Cash/Cheque** or £..... including donation
☐ By **Annual** Standing Order or £..... including donation
☐ By **Quarterly** Standing Order at **£5** or £..... including donation

Standard Family Membership is £30 ☐ By **Cash/Cheque** or £..... including donation
☐ By **Annual** Standing Order or £..... including donation
☐ By **Monthly** Standing Order at **£2.50** or £..... including donation

—— For those who wish to give a bit more, please join one of the tiers below ——



Bronze £50 ☐ **Silver £100** ☐ **Gold £250** ☐ **Diamond £500** ☐

By **Cash/Cheque** ☐ By **Monthly** Standing Order ☐ By **Annual** Standing Order ☐



Title/s: First name/s: Surname/s:

Company Name: (if applicable)

Address:

..... Postcode:

Phone: Email:

Signed: **Date:**

Please tick this box if you wish P&DRSG to claim **GiftAid** on your donation. ☐

If you are a UK income or capital gains tax payer **GiftAid** allows us to claim back the tax (currently 25p for every £1) on all of your donations. Please note the total reclaimed tax (on this or any other donations to charities or CASC's) must not exceed the amount of tax you pay in the current tax year.

Please return this form to: **Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group. Woodside, Armthwaite, Cumbria CA4 9SX**

Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group **Standing Order Form**

To the manager Bank/Building Soc. Sort code

Bank/Building Society address..... Account number

..... Account name

Instruction to your Bank / Building Society to pay by Standing Order

Please pay HSBC Bank, Market Square, Penrith, Cumbria CA11 7SN, Sort Code 40-36-10 for the credit of Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group.
Account Number: 01310968

the sum of £ (Pounds and pence) commencing on the /..... /20..... and thereafter every month/annually* on the same day until further notice in writing and debit my/our* account accordingly. (* delete as necessary)

Signed: **Date:**

Please tick this box if you wish P&DRSG to claim **GiftAid** on your donation. ☐

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