

Penrith and District Red Squirrel Group

Newsletter

Summer 2009



Welcome to our second newsletter and what a lot has happened since our first one.

Newsletters are sent out to members, volunteers and sponsors and those who make donations. If you have received this as someone who has helped or expressed interest in the past, we will be pleased to continue to send it to you via email but I am afraid we cannot guarantee to print and post them out to everyone in future. Please accept this not so subtle plea and sign up and join or re-new your membership today. Membership and standing order forms are on the back page.

As you know, we embarked on our recruitment campaign last year and we are pleased to report that we have now over 100 fully paid up members on our books. Membership revenue from our first year is over £1000. And we have also received a magnificent £1,500 in private donations. We hope to continue to build on this but what a great start and if everyone renews this regular income is a wonderful re-assurance that we can continue with and expand our charitable work.



© Dave White

In this issue

**New charity launched by Prince Charles.
What a difference a legacy can make.
P&DRSG Goes Online.
...and much more, too!**

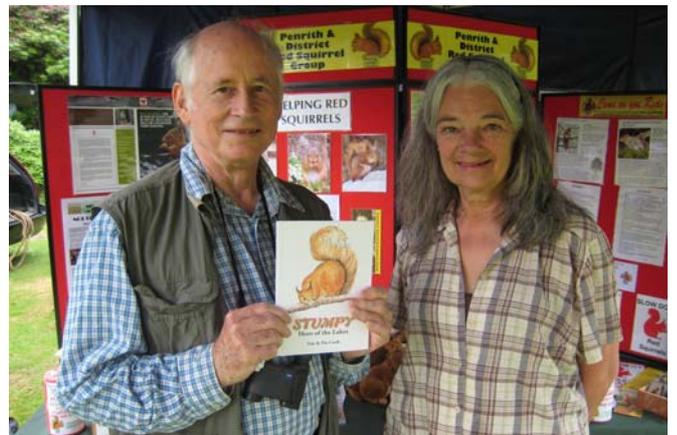
Stumpy, Hero of the Lakes

We wrote in the last issue about Stumpy, written by Pat and Tim Cook our Patterdale coordinators, a children's book inspired by a red squirrel that visited their feeder for about six months.

The book has sold very well and Pat and Tim have now raised £1,000 of which £800 is coming to us and £200 to the RSST.

A huge thanks to Pat and Tim.

If you have not yet got your copies of Stumpy they are still available for just £6.99 at Patterdale Post Office, The Birds' Bistro, Penruddock,, Bluebell bookshop, Penrith and from Centre Parcs.



Stumpy's creators, Tim and Pat Cook

The bulk of profits are donated to red conservation. For further details contact Tim and Pat directly.

Email: patimco@btinternet.com

Date for your diary

"PICNIC IN THE PARK", Sunday 13th September, Hutton in the Forest 12 - 4pm All members and volunteers are invited to join together with the other groups in Cumbria to celebrate the red squirrel and provide the opportunity to meet and share ideas with friends you have yet to meet. Guest speakers, children's activities, free prize draw and more. Entrance is free, but please contact Richard Dyke if you would like to attend, as spaces are limited. His contact details are on the last page.

Raising Funds and Awareness



COLLECTING BOX SUCCESS

The Group began distributing charity collecting boxes to local businesses last summer and we now have approximately 50 situated around the area.

We have been delighted with the success of this scheme and total receipts are now over £500. We know that demand for space on shop counters for charity boxes is great but we have been really heartened by the response of businesses to our appeal and by how much we can raise from 'loose change'.

This is destined to become a significant and regular part of our income and we would like it to build on this excellent start.

Please contact Richard Dyke on 017684 83100 or Marian Whitwham on 01931 712499 should you wish to have a collecting box at your business or know someone that would.



COAST TO COAST WALK RAISES £1,000

Denise Beeston (right) and Penny Sutton (left) took time off from the Birds' Bistro in April and walked the 194 miles from St Bees Head to Robin Hood's Bay in twelve days. They raised a magnificent £3,000 for local charities in the process.

This has been split equally between Hospice at Home, The Air Ambulance and Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group.

They were very fortunate with the weather, stayed fit and well and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. We are absolutely delighted with this most generous donation and would like to thank these two intrepid walkers and all those who sponsored them.

WHAT COULD YOU DO TO RAISE MONEY FOR US?

Would you like to organise a fund raising event for us? It doesn't have to be as energetic as the Coast to Coast walk – you could always cycle!

It could be as simple as a coffee morning, open garden or garage sale, for example Martin Powell raised a generous £62 with a pub quiz at the Old Crown, Hesket Newmarket – Many thanks Martin. Please contact Richard Dyke on 017684 83100 if you need any assistance, he will be pleased to provide you with leaflets, display material and merchandise.



The picture shows Jackie Ashton-Taylor, one of our members from Reagill, who takes squirrel feeding to a whole new dimension! Please send us pictures of your squirrels, the best will go in future newsletters.

Breaking news – Hesket Newmarket Brewery committee have just awarded PDRSG £200 – thanks to everyone at the brewery!

Our Red Squirrels On the Web

www.penrithredsquirrels.org.uk

David Gaskell from Ivegill, through his business **Cumbria Open For Business**, has donated a website to us completely free of charge. We were a little taken aback by his generosity but are absolutely thrilled with the end result.

Please take a look at our new site to see what a professional job he has done and we would urge you to support and promote his business wherever possible.

It is absolutely marvellous that all our information - grey sightings contact numbers, membership forms, donation options and newsletters are now always to hand, on your own computer.



Donating Online - Simply a 'Click' Away

There are now a whole host of ways you can support us online



You can now make a donation with your credit card by simply clicking on the 'Donate Now' icon on our website's Donations page. Charity Choice provide this service free to us and ensure that we get every penny of your donation as they cover the credit card charges. You can also Gift Aid your donation too!

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If you buy or sell on Ebay you can donate a proportion of the sale to P&DRSG. Ebay is the world's best known auction site. If you have not visited it, yet why not have a look? There are bargains galore!



Hidden in many investment, pension and insurance policies are charges that can be claimed by an adviser. If you don't have an adviser for your policy, you're paying for something and getting nothing. Your money stays with the insurance company and cannot be cancelled or refunded.

Cleversquirrel is authorised to reclaim these charges and donate them to charity, making the most of money you've already paid. You don't need a policy to fundraise for P&DRSG because we receive a donation when people you introduce to Cleversquirrel have charges on their policies reclaimed. Half the money goes to their favourite charity. And half goes to yours. Introduce lots of people who may have lots of policies and you could raise a pile of cash for P&DRSG.

Register with Clever squirrel at www.cleversquirrel.com and you can help make a free donation to us, yes that's right a free donation!

RSST Launch Special Feature



Sarah and Jerry with Prince Charles



Left to right
Wendy Martin, Robin Page and Sarah Mcneil
Back row: Richard Dyke, Jerry Moss, Robert Benson and
Gary Murphy.

The members of this Group; Robert Benson – Chairman, Richard Dyke – Secretary, Wendy Martin – Volunteer, Gary Murphy – Volunteer Jerry Moss – Red Squirrel Ranger and his partner Sarah Mcneil – photographer were introduced to Prince Charles who showed great interest and was very knowledgeable about our voluntary work. He was delighted to hear that we had been the first Group in Cumbria to receive a grant from the new trust to fund grey control projects at Hartsop and Wreay. The Prince said that he hoped that the RSST would help co-ordinate “all the remarkable local charities and groups which are battling on the front-line to save the red squirrel.”

Also in attendance was journalist Robin Page “the Vocal Yokel” who is incredibly supportive of red squirrel conservation and is very well known to the Penrith Group. He was particularly pleased to meet with us and be given the latest update on our work. In an extract from his Mail Online blog writing about the launch of RSST, said “Prince Charles was absolutely brilliant – I can use no other word. Interestingly the fight to save the red squirrel has come from the locals themselves – small local groups putting to shame the National Park, the National Trust, the RSPB , DEFRA, and of course the BBC as on Countryfile this live issue, complete with launch, was ignored totally.”

PDRSG are pleased to work closely with RSST for our mutual benefit and the protection of red squirrels. For more information visit www.rsst.org.uk



Leave a Legacy of Hope for our Reds

It makes sense to make a Will.

It means you decide what happens to your money and belongings. Without a Will a Court can decide and there is the possibility that the Government could take it all. There are also tax benefits for bequests to Charities so ask your Solicitor to include P&DRSG in your Will.

There are many ways to give, two of the most popular and effective are:

A RESIDUAL LEGACY. You make specific bequests to family and friends etc and leave what is left to us...

“I bequeath to P&DRSG (Registered Charity No.1117418) the residue of my estate absolutely and that i) the assets comprising such residue may be used for the general purposes of the said Charity and ii) the receipt of the Treasurer of the said Charity shall be a good discharge to my Executors in respect of a payment or transfer of such assets to the said Charity.”

A SPECIFIC LEGACY, a gift of money or specific item or items of value...

“I bequeath to P&DRSG (Registered Charity No.1117418) the sum of £..... (or a description of the non monetary bequest) to be applied for the general purposes of the said Charity and the receipt of the Treasurer of the said Charity shall be a good discharge to my Executors in respect of a payment or transfer of such assets to the said Charity.”

AGM Report



On 5th February 2009 the Annual General 'Public' Meeting of the Group was held on a very cold and wintery evening in Askham Village Hall.

In addition to eight committee members there were 25 members or members of the public present and seven apologies for absence, including Mr Robert Benson our Chairman who had been taken ill.

The business of the evening was brief as the re-election of committee members and officers plus the accounts approval had, as our constitution permits, all been agreed earlier in committee. The main aim of the meeting was to provide members with a review of 2008, the successes and challenges, the current situation and a look forward to 2009.

The secretary gave a resume of the Chairman's report in his absence and his own the majority of which are to be found throughout this newsletter. Jackie Foott the Cumbria representative of Northern Red Squirrels (the umbrella group for all the volunteer groups) spoke on how the various squirrel groups interacted.

Treasurer, Marian Whitwham reported that income for the year was £3,852 against expenditure of £4,366 resulting in a deficit of £514. Cash reserves however stand at £3,327.

Charlotte Widgery and Simon O'Hare gave a very interesting slide show talk and the meeting ended with a question and answer session followed by refreshments.

Next year's Annual Public Meeting will be on Wednesday 10th February 2010. More details will be announced nearer the time.

Slow Down Red Squirrels

New Signs to Warn Drivers of Need to Slow Down



As we all know red squirrels are absolutely hopeless on the roads and we loose far too many as road kills. In an attempt to alleviate this, the Group produces and distributes a number of 'slow down' signs for those who feel there is a need.

They are A5 in size and made of a stiff but flexible plastic with a screen printed permanent image and cost £1 each. Although small, we chose A5 as being the most versatile and unlikely to be of concern to the authorities. We do, however, recommend that they only be positioned on private land with permission of course.

For those who wish to create a bigger impact we can obtain full 'road sign' size triangular signs which cost approximately £25.00. These are usually purchased after permissions have been obtained.

For example, Morland Parish Council recently purchased two, after local resident, and squirrel activist, John Turner contacted them for help after five reds were run over during the Autumn/Winter of 2008/09.



Photo shows (L to R) Stephen Wilson – Chair of Morland Parish Council, John Turner and Mike Addison of Morland Parish Council.

Mr Turner said, "We are fortunate to have a very active red squirrel population in this area of Morland, but the numbers being killed on the roads are increasing. It seems somewhat ironic that we are working hard to keep out the greys, but the last five reds have died at human hands".

We Also Work With Other Organisations

The Cumbria team can be contacted at :-

Sergents Barn, Lowther, Penrith,
Cumbria CA10 2HH

Simon O'Hare
Conservation Officer
Tel: 01931 711025

Charlotte Widgery
People and Wildlife Officer
Tel: 01931 711026

SoS has the remit to deliver red squirrel conservation, information, and access projects in Northumberland, Cumbria, North Yorkshire, and North Merseyside.

The project's headquarters are in Newcastle with regional offices hosted by The Wildlife Trusts in Cumbria and Lancashire. Simon and Charlotte have standing invitations and regularly attend our committee meetings for which we are extremely grateful.

www.saveoursquirrels.org

In addition Charlotte does a magnificent job of putting together the scrambled musings of your newsletter editor - a fine example of cooperation in action.



Northern Red Squirrels

Northern England's Independent Red Squirrel Conservation Group



www.northernredsquirrels.co.uk

Northern Red Squirrels is an independent voluntary umbrella group, set up to bring together all voluntary groups and individuals who are interested in saving red squirrels. Our aims are to encourage united voluntary action and cooperative working relationships with all funded groups, organisations and government bodies. As the "voluntary voice" for red conservation we welcome all volunteers to join us!

Visit this website for details of volunteers to contact with grey squirrel sightings outside the Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group area.



PDRSG are pleased to work closely with RSST for our mutual benefit and the protection of red squirrels.... RSST have already funded PDRSG projects in Wreay Woods and Low Wood, Hartsop which allowed us to spend much more time in difficult terrain than we could normally afford to.

Thank you!

Feeder Traps now in stock

Successful fundraising has allowed the Group to purchase 10 specialist feeder traps - which have a current price of £125 each! Developed and manufactured by red squirrel volunteer Alan Beck from Keswick these substantial traps have been specifically designed to allow red squirrels to feed from them without hindrance however, should a grey squirrel enter, it's heavier weight will spring the trap and capture it.

The huge advantage of this trap is that in predominately red squirrel areas, or where people feed reds but have spotted a grey, the reds are not getting trapped themselves and suffer any of the associated stress.

The traps do of course still need to be checked regularly, as per our code of conduct but can save our volunteers much valuable time releasing reds.



Ways to help P&DRSG

Members, Volunteers and Supporters may wish to help us achieve our priorities by:-

- ✓ Promoting the view that red squirrel conservation is predominately about grey squirrel control
- ✓ Promptly report sightings of grey squirrels to group contacts – list on last page
- ✓ Promptly report sighting of sickly red squirrels
- ✓ Report grey kills by you or others in or outside of the group with location
- ✓ Recruitment of new members
- ✓ Encourage donations
- ✓ Fund raising – coffee mornings, garden open days, selling raffle tickets etc. etc.
- ✓ Sponsorship – to help with cash or "in-kind" work
- ✓ Host or a find home for one of our charity collection boxes
- ✓ Raise awareness locally – schools, organisations, parish councils / magazines etc. & talks to groups

Adenovirus; A New Threat?



Simon O'Hare, SoS Conservation Officer explains more



There is relatively little known about adenovirus in red squirrels, but there is no doubt that it may prove to be a serious threat to their long-term survival locally. The disease was first identified in reds in Thetford Forest, Suffolk in 1997, and recent testing by the VLA at Weybridge has revealed that the virus is more widespread.

The problem is that reds show no external symptoms, apart from some evidence of scouring (yellow diarrhoea) on close inspection, unlike the very definite lesions of squirrelpox virus. However, it is likely that this virus can be just as lethal, and can be passed from red to red causing respiratory or enteric infection (in the intestines).

This may well be a naturally occurring virus within our countryside (unlike the introduced squirrelpox virus) and it may have killed many red squirrels historically. Nevertheless, it is worth further research, particularly as recent

cases have been confirmed in areas with either problems with squirrelpox, or where greys have been seen.

There may not be a direct link between these occurrences, but it could all add up to more pressure on reds leading to them being more susceptible to infections such as adenovirus.

Within the last couple of months alone there have been cases at Dalemain, Pooley Bridge, Bampton and Greystoke Gill.

The clear message is that, particularly with the lack of external symptoms, **any dead red found should be tested!**

Please send or hand them in to Paul Duff, Veterinary Investigation Centre, Merrythought, Calthwaite, Penrith, CA11 9RR. It's north of Penrith on the A6 just past Plumpton.

For details on packaging dead reds for postage go to http://saveoursquirrels.org/pgelcms_uploaded_files/preparing_dead_reds_for_postage.pdf



Greys/Pox Update

Following a very quiet winter, our volunteers on the ground have been brought back to reality with a jolt this summer with grey squirrels popping up all over our patch. In fairness, this is not unusual as young squirrels are encouraged to find their own territories and can travel up to three kilometres a day but I suppose we always hope that we'll have a quiet year.

Gary Murphy from Tebay has been busy protecting our southern border and has accounted for over 50 greys in the last quarter. The Ullswater valley volunteers have been on to every grey sighting and have been having great success but it does bring it home that greys are present throughout the area. Jerry Moss has been working tirelessly (as usual) in the Whinell Reserve and buffer zone with the Crossrigg/Cliburn area becoming a hot spot where 15 greys have been accounted for. He's extended his activities to work with Bernard Parker in the Greystoke and Penrith north area and it is disappointing to report that greys are becoming established in previously quiet areas with over 20 grey kills in Middlescaugh this year and lately 3 near Catterlen.

Red Squirrels in Penrith and District seem to be having a particularly bad time of it with disease this year. We're trying not to take it personally as no other area in Cumbria has reported any confirmed cases, perhaps it's because we have so many dedicated and vigilant volunteers. For example Barbara Thorpe, our coordinator for Armathwaite and her husband Bert are to be congratulated for sighting and then catching (with a friend's fisherman's keep net) a pox suspect red in their garden and getting it to the vets. It was pox and it was important to get it out of the system and halt any spread of this disgusting disease. The patient is blind, but will begin a new life with retired vet, Bob Bradley, in south Cumbria.

We know these things come and go but it is distressing for small communities to experience this and we have two recent examples. Greystoke Gill had two dead reds confirmed with adenovirus and Park Head had a dead red with probable SQPV. Most of the residents in both these hamlets fed and nurtured their red squirrels and both have now lost them all. Our message is, please do not give up, continue to be vigilant as we know that with continued grey control reds will eventually re-colonise.

To finish on a brighter note, following the outbreak of SQPV and the loss of reds in Caldbeck, two red squirrel sightings have been reported recently in the centre of the village - Hooray!



Contact Us and Support Red Squirrels



If you see a grey squirrel or a sickly red ... Don't delay!

Please call one of the numbers below immediately

Penrith East/Whinfell - Jerry Moss - 07736 779965

Penrith North/Greystoke - Bernard Parker- 01768 484277

Penrith South - Wendy Martin - 01931 713215

Ullswater North - Charlie Watson - 017684 86266

Ullswater South - Ken Ratcliffe - 017684 82238

Shap - Stuart Lewis - 07528 255861

Appleby - Sarah Banks - 017683 53759

Armathwaite/Lazonby - Ian Clemmet 07799 793841

Sebergham - Mal Hilton - 016974 76955

Tebay - Gary Murphy - 01539 624788 (M) 07974 788434

Dalston - David Main - 01228 711342

Kirkby Stephen - Chris Metcalf Gibson - 015396 23336

Ravenstonedale - Frank Chalmers - 01539 623638

Caldbeck - Rosemary Bailey - 01697 4 78575

For General Enquiries

Robert Benson, Chairman, Marian Whitwham, treasurer and Richard Dyke, secretary can be contacted via e-mail at

info@penrithredsquirrels.org.uk

or write to us:

**Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group,
The Estate Office, Lowther, Penrith,
Cumbria. CA10 2HG**

And in the absence of a telephone our friends at the Birds' Bistro will take messages on 017684 83100



Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group Standing Order Form



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

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society* Sort Code-.....-.....

Bank Address: Account No.

..... Acct Name

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 /..... /..... 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 return the original completed form to the address above

*Please tick this box if you are a UK income tax/capital gains tax payer and wish PDRSG to claim GiftAid on your donation. The Government will increase your donation by 28p for every pound. Please note the reclaimed tax must not exceed the amount of tax you pay this year.



Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group Membership Application/Donation Form



(Please tick all that apply)

I would like to become a member* Individual £10 Family £20

And/or make a one off donation* £5 £10 £20 Other £.....
(Cheques payable to "P&DRSG")

Standing Order from my bank* £2 £5 £10 Other £.....

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

Address:.....Postcode:

Phone:..... Email:.....

* Please tick this box if you are a UK income tax/capital gains tax payer and wish PDRSG to claim GiftAid on your donation. The Government will increase your donation by 28p for every pound. Please note the reclaimed tax must not exceed the amount of tax you pay this year.

Signed: Date:

Return this form to: Penrith & District Red Squirrel Group, The Estate Office, Lowther, Penrith, Cumbria. CA10 2HG