

## **Article for the Autumn edition of the Bridge**

### **Red Squirrels resurgent at Wallington Hall**

Grey squirrels were first introduced into the UK from North America in the 1870's by Victorian landowners who thought they were more robust, tame and exotic than the reds. There are now thought to be in excess of 3 million greys in Britain.

However, our native red squirrels are now in the ascendency at the National Trust's Wallington Hall estate. The reds had been almost wiped out in 2011 when rangers started culling the greys there.

Six years on, across the extended estate and farms at Wallington, there are now 170 reds, and this is increasing by about 30 a year. According to a spokesperson (See Times article 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2017) , there are regular small invasions of greys depending on the time of year but this rarely exceeds more than a handful each month. The situation is being monitored and controlled by the National Trust's first dedicated red squirrel ranger, Glen Graham.

Nearer at hand, your local group, Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrels, is receiving encouraging reports of increased red squirrel sightings, particularly in the Swarland area.

We depend on members of the public to report any sightings of reds or greys on our website – go to [www.lcreeds.org.uk](http://www.lcreeds.org.uk) and look for the sightings page. This helps us to monitor the situation and to do what we can with our limited resources to control the greys and help the reds re-establish themselves.

Thank you to everyone who takes the trouble to report a squirrel – of either sort – this is invaluable information in maintaining an overview of the situation. And if anyone would like to help us further, please get in touch or come to one of our regular meetings and learn more.