



Christmas 2021 bulletin



Simon Howes, Atlantic rower

Local red squirrel lover, Simon Howes, is rowing the Atlantic solo. That is, crossing a staggering 3000 miles at sea on his own. What a hero! He is paying all expenses himself and donating all money raised to partner group, The Isle of Wight Red Squirrel Trust, to buy a woodland for our red squirrels. Simon leaves on December 12th, so watch out for updates on Wight Squirrel Project and The Isle of Wight Red Squirrel Trust Facebook pages re his progress. Bon voyage Simon! To donate visit : www.atlanticrower.com and follow the links.

Heaven Made

The BBC are broadcasting a programme called Heaven Made on the 12th and 19th of December at 11.30am. Quarr Abbey features in the programmes which includes red squirrels. We had fun filming, with a stuffed squirrel stealing the show! At least it didn't wriggle, so features such as teeth and claws can be seen in close-up. General manager Matt kindly suggested adding red squirrels to the programme as Quarr is a hotspot for them. Thanks Matt. I don't know which date the squirrels are featured.

Workshops for volunteers

Launching on January 21st, which is Red Squirrel Appreciation Day, is an invitation to become a volunteer. Training workshops will be held on March 21st (International Day of Forests) and during Volunteers Week, 1st –7th June. I am very keen to get a crack team together to gather data and go to shows to promote Wight Squirrel Project.

New recruits Cath and Simon are experts with data input and analysis, so together with expert Ian, we will put together a plan to make reporting squirrel sightings much easier. If you would like to comment on your experiences of reporting squirrel sightings to Wight Squirrel Project or have helpful suggestions, please email Helen—wightsquirrels@hotmail.com. The team will look at all suggestions and work on a new system.

Calendars

Coat colour variation in Isle of Wight red squirrels is the theme and copies are limited, so if you want a calendar, don't delay! Volunteer Debbie is willing to distribute calendars from her home, so please ring her on 07741 489 549 to make arrangements. Debbie will collect the cash as well. The Christmas cards sold out weeks ago thanks largely to Debbie's Facebook page.

A big thank you to Karen for choosing Wight Squirrel Project as the charity to support through online shop Wight Originals. We do have our own products on Wight Originals so check out the website: www.wightoriginals.com. Just type in 'Wight Squirrel Project calendar' to buy a copy online.



Publication progress

The chapter about corridors was finished some months ago and is currently being proof-read and reviewed. Another batch of chapters is ready, so keep a watch on the website. Section 3 is information reported by you, that is, citizen science. So thank you for reporting your squirrels. The next section is population dynamics and anthropogenic influences, which will take at least until the spring to complete.

Talking of anthropogenic influences, I've been told there is a cat regularly killing red squirrels in Cowes, near the golf course. If you have a cat with a taste for red squirrels, please, please put bells on it. The old problem of rat poison is still with us. I had a poor squirrel in a few weeks ago, which had ingested rat poison and died in agony. It is so distressing to see and should be stopped.

Online auction

A big thank you goes to Karena and Julia for not only running Wight Squirrel Project Facebook page but raising another £615 through an online auction. Thank you also to people who generously donated items for the auction. Funds will go towards one of our monitoring projects.



That's all for now but please follow us on Facebook and look for updates on the website. And don't forget you can pick up a free book or DVD at Ryde Heritage Centre in the Arcade, Union Street, Ryde.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year *Helen*