

# Lyvennet Red Squirrels

Winter 2023-24



**Barnskew, 22<sup>nd</sup> December – photo Darren Rogers (trail camera)**



The main news being:

- Despite a larger number of greys than before encroaching into our area, we are just about keeping on top of them - since mid November we have now despatched 15 greys from Crosby Ravensworth village itself and the woods between the village and Maulds Meaburn.
- At the end of the period I am only aware of one grey in 'my' area that remains outstanding (Barnskew).
- In the wider area the picture remains fairly constant; plenty of reds, but with greys constantly popping up
- There was a significant squirrel pox outbreak nearby at Rutter Falls
- Now back in a number of woods following the end of the pheasant season and it is broadly fairly quiet

## General

X 14 Greys Despatched

Year Total (2023) = 110      2024 Total = 9



Reds with S/Pox despatched this year in locality = 1 (2023)

## ROAD DEATHS



= 0

Year Total = 0      (2023 = 3)

Other Deaths – none

Year Total 2024 = 0      (2023 = 3)

## Report

I wouldn't ordinarily start with a location outside of the 'Lyvennet Catchment', but Rutter Falls is nearby and at the end of January, start of February it suffered from an outbreak of squirrel pox that virtually decimated the red population there.



Images like the one aside are not what we want to see and I guess why we keep pushing the boulder uphill.

That 'boulder' does seem to be getting a little heavier though and with *'the solution'* still *'at least five years away'* the summit of that hill is still yet to come into view.

But to do nothing is not an option.

Since mid November from a mix of Crosby Ravensworth village itself and the woods that lay in between it and Maulds Meaburn, 15 greys have been despatched – that is far more than I have ever known, but at least at the timing of writing I can say that I am not aware of any others in this area; but it won't be long.

The one grey that I am aware of is at Barnskew and boy is it proving hard to get! It is very 'trap aware' and by crikey there is a lot of work being put into getting just this one (although another two have been shot there).

So often the last one can be the hardest one to get.

But Barnskew has a decent and seemingly thriving population of reds and so popping up there twice a day to check traps, etc is worth it, even if the wife tells me to buy a tent and 'move into the woods'!

Following the end of the pheasant season I am now back in the woods around Flass and of those 15 greys mentioned above, two have already come out of



Three Cornered Wood and another up at Longhill Wood during February. However, whilst there are reds in all of these woods, activity is a little somewhat subdued at present.

And that has been the case to some extent across the board, although not everywhere and now there are signs of increased activity from our reds.

Three Cornered Wood remains an enigma – barely big enough to be called a wood, but with a pair of reds and yet somewhere that greys always seem to gravitate to. I've never understood why and probably never will, but as soon as a grey pops up there, it takes priority.

A couple of times this winter I have been sat in a wood waiting for a grey to turn up and then both a red and a grey turn up at the same time and what happened next was intriguing.

With the food that I have put out being close by, on each occasion the grey has aggressively chased the red away from the food, making sure that it couldn't have any.

Not to worry me thinks, the grey will now come back and I'll be able to shoot it, only it didn't come back!

I don't know why, but very frustrating.

Why when I go to places that only have greys do I stand there thinking "*even I couldn't miss, I could have shot three in a minute*", yet here they seem to taunt me and have that sixth sense?

**New Feeders** – in this period I have put an additional feeder up in Morland Bank at the rear of the duck ponds and ventured through to Postage Stamp Wood and put one in there.

Both are doing well with reds now frequenting both – if you don't know where Postage Stamp Wood is, check the Reagill section.

But speaking of Reagill, at present I have 'lost' four feeders up there due to Wyegill Plantation being clear felled and Pithills Plantation due to be 'thinned'.

Once the work is done I will go back and see how things look for reinstating some feeders.

This work will obviously cause some displacement for the wildlife in them and we wait to see how it all pans out.

Two extra feeders have gone in at Barnskew as well.

This season I have very few reports from Morland and Kings Meaburn, so if you do live there do please send in any sightings, news, etc

**Cumbrian Red** – if you are not aware is the new film from Terry Abraham and it will be shown on the BBC in late spring; not to be missed.

No doubt once the date is known it will be updated on both Terry's and the P&DRSG Face book pages and I might even send an e-mail out to the group as well.

**Sightings of greys** – if you do see a grey could I ask that you don't delay in reporting it.

All sightings are acted upon and your sighting might just be another piece in one particular jigsaw.

Gary can be contacted on 07974 788 434

Jerry on 07736 779 965

Even me, on 01931 715 575

If you can give a 'what3words' location as well then that would be fantastic

**Money raised** - this one is on me this time.

From two 'Tea Talks' to local WI's I have raised £60.00

I do like tales of **dedication** –Liz, who looks after the reds at Oddendale being one obvious example, but it was from Liz that I learnt of a chap with similar levels of dedication; see the entry for Oddendale for 15<sup>th</sup> December.

Finally, just my usual plea to keep sightings coming in and to send me any photographs – any of reds that are not sat on feeders are especially welcomed.

**Also if you are not already a member of P&DRSG please join – they really do need more members, follow the link to the website below - thank you**



Keep up the good work.

[www.penrithredsquirrels.org.uk/](http://www.penrithredsquirrels.org.uk/)

[www.facebook.com/PDRSG01](http://www.facebook.com/PDRSG01)

Below is a chronology of **sightings of greys** over these last three months:

Also refer to the relevant section within the report for more details

## Dec'

- 7<sup>th</sup> - **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – X1 Maulds Meaburn  
(Between Orchard Wood + Three Cornered Wood)
- 10<sup>th</sup> – Drybeck lane end on the Appleby to Orton Road
- 12<sup>th</sup> – **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – X1 Maulds Meaburn  
(Between Orchard Wood + Three Cornered Wood)
- 14<sup>th</sup> (approx) – **Morland Bank** – on the road towards Reagill
- 15<sup>th</sup> – **Barnskew – BW1**
- 16<sup>th</sup> – **Reagill** – in the wood 50 metres south of High Green
- 27<sup>th</sup> – **Crosby Ravensworth** – Bank Lane
- 29<sup>th</sup> – **Crosby Ravensworth** – south end of village in field above the penfold  
**Barnskew** – possibly – in BW1
- 30<sup>th</sup> – **Barnskew – BW2**  
**\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** - **Crosby Ravensworth** – The Bank, Coppice  
**\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – **Maulds Meaburn** – Hulls Wood

## Jan'

- 11<sup>th</sup> – **Crosby Ravensworth** – south end of village in field above the penfold  
**Maulds Meaburn** – Three Cornered Wood
- 13<sup>th</sup> – **Newby** – no other detail
- 17<sup>th</sup> – **Morland Bank (Blind Beck)** – Near Caravan Wood  
Also in the verge opposite Hard Bank
- 18<sup>th</sup> - **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – **Crosby Ravensworth** – trapped in field back of  
Well Head at 08h
- \*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** - **Crosby Ravensworth** – same location, in the afternoon

21<sup>st</sup> – **Crosby Ravensworth** – The Bank, Coppice – they just keep turning up.

24<sup>th</sup> – **Morland Bank** – road side just before the Reagill turn-off

## Feb'

1<sup>st</sup> – Colby Moor Road – near Burwain Hall

6<sup>th</sup> – **Maulds Meaburn** – Three Cornered Wood

7<sup>th</sup> - **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – Maulds Meaburn – Three Cornered Wood

**Maulds Meaburn** – Longhill Wood

10<sup>th</sup> – **Maulds Meaburn** – Orchard Wood

13<sup>th</sup> - **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – **Maulds Meaburn** – Longhill Wood

19<sup>th</sup> – **Maulds Meaburn** – Three Cornered Wood and also Barnskew

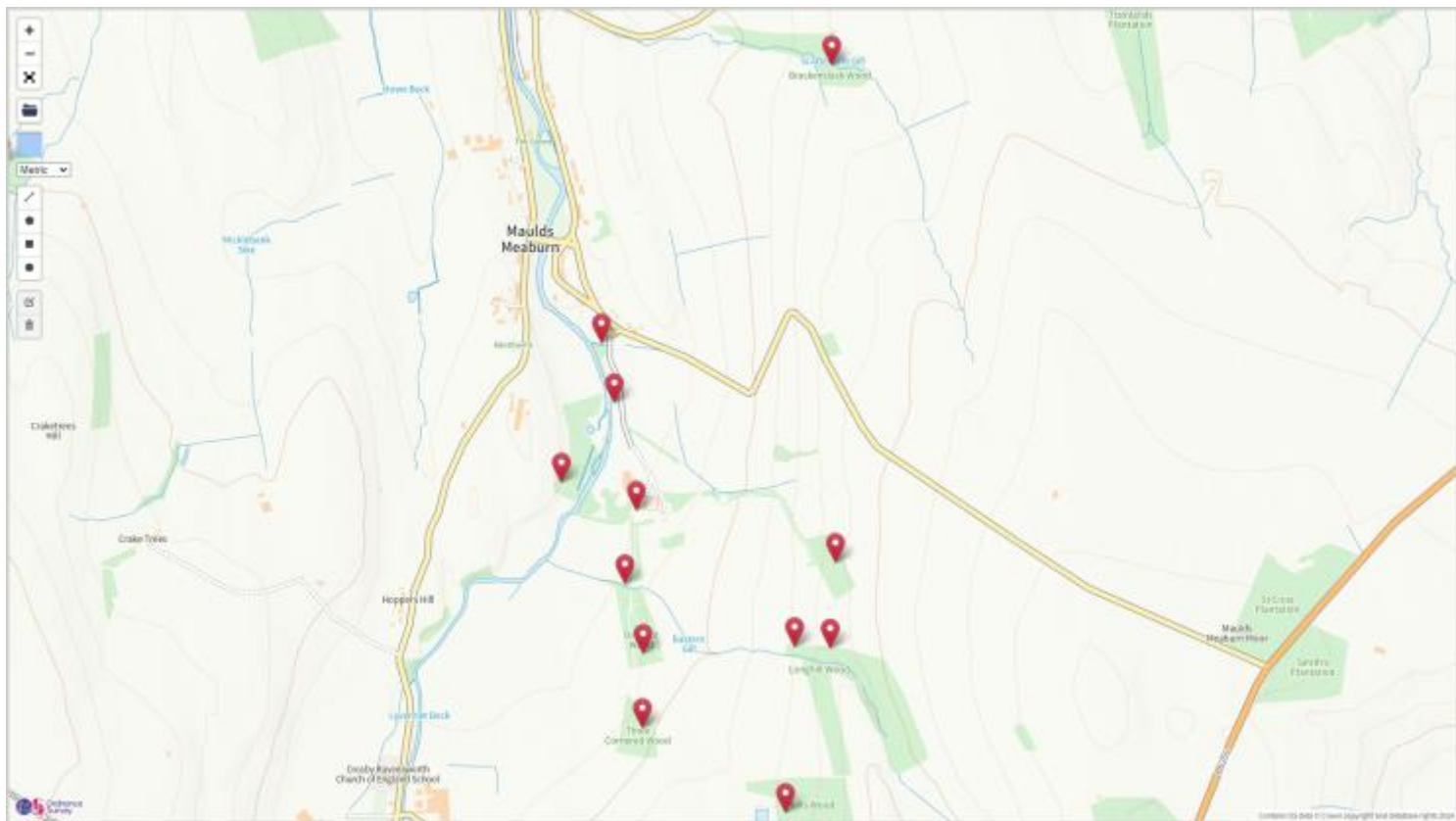
20<sup>th</sup> – **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – **Maulds Meaburn** – Three Cornered Wood

22<sup>nd</sup> – **Kings Meaburn** – Keld Farm

23<sup>rd</sup> - **\*\*GREYS DESPATCHED\*\*** – **X2 Maulds Meaburn** - Barnskew

24<sup>th</sup> – **Maulds Meaburn** – Barnskew – still at least one more

27<sup>th</sup> - **\*\*GREYS DESPATCHED\*\*** – **X2 Kings Meaburn** – Keld Farm



**All of the feeders that I look after in Maulds Meaburn**

**12 feeders in 10 different locations**



# Maulds Meaburn



**Longhill Wood – Photo Darren Rogers**

At the beginning of the period things were not too bad with reds present in virtually all the woods bar Brackenslack.

Grey(s) were somewhere '*back of Flass*' (*Three Cornered Wood*) and would make the occasional appearance.

Brackenslack Wood and further along up to Trainlands is always susceptible to greys turning

## **Flass (FL) and Lyvennet Bank (LB)**

**FL** – X1 feeder up at the folly and not viewable to the public

X1 feeder at **The Tunnel** – on a tree, on the left, immediately prior to the tunnel

**LB** - X1 feeder looking out over the green (**LB/GF**)

X1 feeder on a tree in the main garden next to the river (**LB/RF**).

All feeders are visited on a regular, daily, basis.

## December

10<sup>th</sup> – apart from the feeder at the tunnel, it has been a very quiet week on all of the feeders

23<sup>rd</sup> – and it remains very quiet on all feeders in Lyvennet Bank and Flass

24<sup>th</sup> – more food has gone over the last 24hrs

## January

6<sup>th</sup> – really quiet in Lyvennet Bank and we can go a few days without any food going.

7<sup>th</sup> – I just have this nagging doubt.

Food is going quite well from the tunnel, but everywhere else, not at all.

And then this morning I saw something move in the undergrowth but much further back along the path towards the main entrance to Flass.

But have popped a camera up tonight.

9<sup>th</sup> – looks like I was worrying over nothing, only red(s) at the tunnel

19<sup>th</sup> – I had popped a camera up at The Folly yesterday and only red(s)

After a quiet spell it seems that visits to feeders are picking up again

21<sup>st</sup> – more food is going from all of the feeders

26<sup>th</sup> – red in Lyvennet Bank this morning, LBGF and the garden

## February

4<sup>th</sup> – food seems to be going quite well now and from all feeders

9<sup>th</sup> – food is going very well from the feeder at The Tunnel

17<sup>th</sup> – I've been away for five days and upon my return not a lot of food has gone, from all of the feeders

21<sup>st</sup> – more food going now and saw a redd in Lyvennet Bank this morning

24<sup>th</sup> – food going from all feeders now and saw x2 reds in Lyvennet Bank this morn'

29<sup>th</sup> – food going well from all feeders now, especially at the tunnel.

Have had a camera up at The Folly for a few days and only reds.  
They know how to use a feeder!



Key to map below:

F – Flass    1 – The Avenue    2 – Orchard Wood    3 – Three Cornered Wood  
H – Hulls Wood    L – Longhill Wood (LX – Where the feeders are)    4 – Ewe Close



## Orchard Wood and The Avenue

X2 feeders here – one just past 'The Avenue' and near to the gate out into the field (with the footpath through to Crosby Ravensworth).

The second is at the far end on the Three Cornered Wood side – no access to this during the pheasant season!

At the start of the period I was missing two greys!

They have made the occasional visit through to 'The Avenue', but strangely haven't been picked up on the camera.

## December

4<sup>th</sup> – GREY – a.m. at on the feeder at 'The Avenue' – and today I began my quest to find them! Not easy due to the lack of access.

However, only took a few minutes to find them – got to get rid of them now!

It was in the field (hedgerow) between Three Cornered Wood and Orchard Wood.

4<sup>th</sup> saw one - 5<sup>th</sup> saw two – each time in the trees in the middle of the field and out of my range (black rectangle on map).

I'm sat just up from the blue circle, against the fence line of the wood, where I have



scattered food (in the field, but about 10 yards from the feeder on the tree in the wood). They may have been too far away to shoot, but I've still seen them running the fence line at the bottom of the field, where the two red crosses mark the traps.

**7<sup>th</sup> - \*\*GREY**

**DESPATCHED\*\***

adult male in one of the traps.

Tonight had to pop back to check the traps and to move one of them. It was pitch black, rain teeming down, rivers where there shouldn't be rivers ... and the traps were empty – but I'm confident.

Have had a camera on the scatter feed and this:



A grey there both before and after the one that I shot today ... and where was it that I moved one of the traps to?

Here. Fingers crossed for tomorrow.

8<sup>th</sup> – it's been here three times today and this morning it virtually had its head through the door to the cage ... but it hasn't gone in.



**10<sup>th</sup>** – due to pheasant shooting had to miss yesterday, but this morning saw a grey running along 'The Avenue' and then shortly after along the track in Orchard Wood. Presumably it was the same one.

Scattered some feed up near Three Cornered Wood and returned just after 15h and just as I was leaving a grey turned up.

Didn't manage to get it though – and the scatter feed had gone - trap left

**11<sup>th</sup>** – no sign of the grey today

**12<sup>th</sup>** – **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – another adult male – trapped

It finally turned up at 15h, had a good look around and even went in and out of the trap three times before the food on the 'pedal' proved too tempting at 1527h.

I'll leave the trap in-situ for a day or two but I don't think there are any more.

**20<sup>th</sup>** – only reds

**28<sup>th</sup>** – only reds



## January

12<sup>th</sup> – still only reds and a pair of them on the feeder today

21<sup>st</sup> – still only reds

26<sup>th</sup> – still only reds



## February

1<sup>st</sup> – end of the pheasant season so filled up the main feeder in the wood and popped a camera with it. Red in the other feeder this morning.

4<sup>th</sup> – nothing at all yet on the main feeder, but the food is still going from the feeder at 'The Avenue' .

9<sup>th</sup> – they've found it! Today reds on the feeder in the wood and the food is still going from the feeder on 'The Avenue' .

10<sup>th</sup> – GREY – on the feeder in the wood early a.m.



**17<sup>th</sup>** – I've been away for five days and upon my return the food has gone, but not a lot of photos.

A Grey was shot in Longhill Wood on the 13<sup>th</sup> and hopefully it may have been the one seen here?

**18<sup>th</sup>** – red on the main feeder this morning and feed going from both.  
camera removed to Edge Close

**21<sup>st</sup>** – last year I moved the main feeder to a different tree, one which I had to climb to get up to it, due to the fact that the horses from Flass kept getting into the wood and knocking the feeder off to get at the food.

The other week I moved the feeder back ... and today the horses have got back in and knocked the feeder off!!

**24<sup>th</sup>** – I put a new feeder up in the wood on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and today food had gone

**29<sup>th</sup>** – all seems fine and food going from both feeders.

## Three Cornered Wood



**In many ways this photo sums up the position in this wood – photo from 2022**

Due to the pheasant season I didn't have access to the wood until 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb  
As of 4<sup>th</sup> August it was grey free.

**8<sup>th</sup> Jan** – have scattered a little feed nearby and popped a camera with it  
This is with the grey having been shot at Hulls Wood recently

The section above in Orchard Wood for December that saw x2 greys having been shot, could really have been in this chapter as one of those greys was trapped just on the other side of the fence line behind the tree in this photo.

I've said it many times before, but there is just something about this wood.  
It had/has a pair of resident reds, but for some reason greys are just attracted to it as well.

They then hang about and set up home as well – and it is such a small wood.

The amount of time that I have spent in here over the last few years is far in excess of anywhere else!

Anyway, in December I hadn't seen any trace of reds and I was a little concerned, but this week it was only birds visiting the scatter feed on the 9-10<sup>th</sup> and then I didn't get here on the 11<sup>th</sup>; returning on the 12<sup>th</sup> to check and remove the camera.

I really shouldn't be surprised but it is disheartening.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> we had this at 1210hrs for 20 mins:



but then an hour later ... a grey  
and again today at similar times to yesterday, both were back



trapping the greys was fairly straightforward in December as no reds showed up,  
but this time ...!



**14<sup>th</sup>** – visited at 10h and scattered more food.

Returned 12h only to see a grey chasing a red away from the scatter feed.

It chased it round and round and they both disappeared into the wood – but then the grey didn't come back.

It did venture in the trees further back in this photo, but no closer. Whereas the red did come back!

Or was it a second red?

The one that 'came back' did then go away and then (another one) did come back and curiously going via the squirrel feeder which is on a tree about 10 yards to the left of the fence, having a look inside as it went past.

**15<sup>th</sup>** – returned at 12h and was it cold, and nothing turned up.

Scattered more feed which at 1530h had gone (scattered more) but nothing showed in the 30 mins I was here – and somewhat annoyingly the camera that I put back yesterday hasn't taken any photos!!!

**16<sup>th</sup>** – hmmm! Had another 70mins here this morning from 0930h and nothing showed up. Even though it was snowing it wasn't as cold as yesterday. When I got the SD card home not a single squirrel has visited the food. And had to bring the camera home as well as the second SD card just wouldn't work – but it did when I got it home!

**17<sup>th</sup>** – popped back this afternoon to scatter more food and put the camera back

**19<sup>th</sup>** – as I walked up to the wood this morning I saw a red climbing up the tree with the feeder.

It then sat on a branch as I scattered more food about – the camera showed that the red turned back up yesterday and had been here this morning as well.

As for the grey ....?

**24<sup>th</sup>** – food is going (by the birds), but no show from any squirrels

**26<sup>th</sup>** – red is back, no grey. Wonder what has become of it?



## February

1<sup>st</sup> – nothing has been showing up on the scatter feed, but with today being the last day of the pheasant season I topped up the feeder and popped a camera with it.

4<sup>th</sup> – not a sausage yet.

6<sup>th</sup> – I didn't get here yesterday, but at 1350h a red was on the feeder, but today from 0750 to 1150h this:



Curiously I had arrived here at 12Mh as well and saw nothing. Popped back at 1525h for 40 mins and only got cold

7<sup>th</sup> - **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – adult male

Had about 90 mins here from 0920h and after 20 mins of nothing I topped the feeder up and scattered some food about, which really got the birds going. About 10 mins later, a red and then a second red, doing their own thing and going in opposite directions.

Then a grey – but just didn't come to the feeder and was often out of sight, but finally sat on a branch about 20 yards up and 35 yards away with a clear shot.

8<sup>th</sup> – back this morning and the camera only shows red(s).

However, have discovered that there is a grey up in Longhill Wood which is a 5 minute walk away.

9<sup>th</sup> – only reds visiting the feeder

11<sup>th</sup> – this camera does this sometimes and takes no photos – visited a.m.

17<sup>th</sup> - I've been away for five days and upon my return the food has gone, but not a lot of photos.

19<sup>th</sup> – **aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!** Just what is it about this wood?

Went back this afternoon, all quiet, but when I got home and checked the camera

There was only a GREY.

Arrived on the 17<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon and was there again early on the 18<sup>th</sup> and once again the camera played its trick of then not taking any more photos

Went straight back out and at 1640h as I approached the wood, saw the grey jump of the feeder and leg it – it didn't return and I didn't pick it up on the thermal.

X2 traps left for it in the morning – and I had intended to go to Barnskew this afternoon.

20<sup>th</sup> - **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** – adult male

Sat in the trap this morning waiting for me.

21<sup>st</sup> – a little food has gone, but the camera hasn't taken any photos!

24<sup>th</sup> – flaming camera! Hasn't taken any photos, but then not too much food has gone.

Swapped the camera for a different one – I just wonder if that camera doesn't like being too close to its subject, as when I put it up in Hulls Wood shortly after it worked fine!

27<sup>th</sup> – only red(s) and it looks quite young and it is arriving before 7 and staying

through to lunch and even then it didn't seem that that much food had gone!



29<sup>th</sup> – only red(s)

# Longhill Wood and Hulls

## Wood

This wood is the main one used for pheasant rearing – there is a ravine that runs through it with the main pheasant pens on the hill to one side. The X2 feeders are on the other (left) side of this ravine, about 125 yards apart.

The original feeder (F1) is lower down the second feeder (F2) is further into the wood.

A feeder was put up in Hulls Wood (HW) for the first time during May 2023.

All feeders are popular and visited daily.

Due to the pheasant season access is currently denied (until 2.2.24.)

Regrettably when the wood was 'left' on 4.8.23. there was a grey in Longhill Wood and even worse is that it was a pregnant female (able to tell from the camera).

What it will be like come February ...!



**30<sup>th</sup> Dec - \*\*GREY DESPACHED\*\*** - by the slurry pit at Hulls Wood.

by the pheasant shoot

**8<sup>th</sup> Jan** – following the above, I have scattered some feed nearby to Hulls Wood and popped a camera with it.

**12<sup>th</sup>** – maybe I was just too subtle with where I scattered the feed, but nothing at all this week, but by now you will have read about Three Cornered Wood

## February

**4<sup>th</sup>** – visited today - topped up F2 in Longhill Wood and put a camera with it.

Put a small handful of monkey nuts in F1

**6<sup>th</sup>** – popped up from about 11h today and saw absolutely nothing.

The monkey nuts had gone from F1, but nothing out of F2, but then when checking the camera there was this:

I'll give it to the end of the week (10<sup>th</sup>) for a grey to arrive





7<sup>th</sup> – always happy to say that I was wrong ...



This is going to be without end.

Got back on the 8<sup>th</sup> and discovered the grey once I had checked the camera, but no food has gone from either feeder.

Red was here on the 6<sup>th</sup> – the grey was here at 0905 on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but as with the 7<sup>th</sup>, only the one photo so it isn't hanging around ... yet.

If it moves on it will only go to one place ... Three Cornered Wood

9<sup>th</sup> – no grey! A red though and it is now taking food

11<sup>th</sup> – **GREY** – walked into the wood this morning to F1 (empty) and a grey was on the ground, probably under a pheasant feeder and ‘walked away’ as I approached. I was with the dog and hence did not have my rifle with me – because I am going away have asked Gary to visit.

However, up at F2, no grey!!

12<sup>th</sup> – I go away today ... but

had just over a hour in Longhill Wood this morning, from 08h.

Didn't get it, but ... I was sat on the feeder at the bottom and after 25 mins it appeared down the bank on the right (coming out of the main bit of the wood). It went onto a fallen tree to cross the stream and jumped down into the stream half way across.

I then didn't see it for another 10 mins, when

A red appeared down the left side and as it approached the tree with the feeder, the grey jumped out and chased it off – and then I never saw either again!!!

I'm guessing that there will be more than one grey in there.

13<sup>th</sup> - **\*\*GREY DESPACHED\*\*** – adult male (by Gary)

He didn't see any other greys or reds whilst there

17<sup>th</sup> - I've been away for five days and upon my return the food has gone from both feeders, but not a lot of photos from the camera on F2.

Filled the feeder in Hulls Wood for the first time

19<sup>th</sup> – only reds on F2 and food going from both

21<sup>st</sup> – on the 19<sup>th</sup> no food had yet gone from the feeder in Hulls Wood, today quite a bit has gone; will now pop a camera on it.

In Longhill Wood very little food has gone and barely a photo at F2

24<sup>th</sup> – not much food gone out of Hulls Wood – camera put up

As for the two feeders in Longhill Wood – hardly been touched, but at least it was a red that did do the ‘touching’

27<sup>th</sup> – hardly any food gone from either feeder, just the monkey nuts and next to nothing on the camera - a little bit more activity in Hulls Wood and by red(s)

29<sup>th</sup> – only visited Hulls Wood today and only red(s) visiting



**Edge Close – (Ewe Wood) above Flass Pasture NY 632 146**

Due to the pheasant season there is no access until the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024!

On 4.8.23. when the wood was left there were no greys, but they had been popping over from Longhill Wood.

**9<sup>th</sup> Feb** – popped some food in the feeder for the first time yesterday – still there Today

**11<sup>th</sup>** – visited a.m. and looked like a little food had gone.

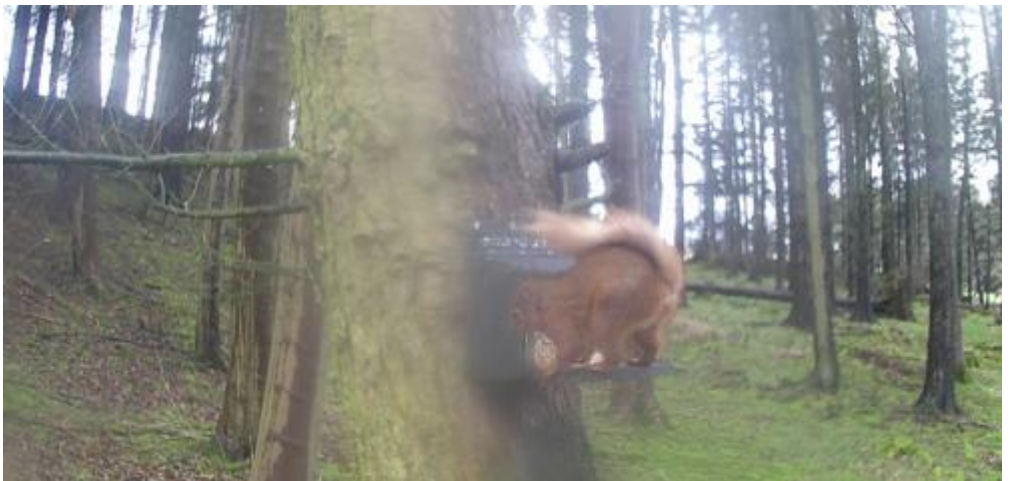
**12<sup>th</sup>** – walked by at 0915h and food had gone

**17<sup>th</sup>** - I've been away for five days and upon my return the food has all gone.

**18<sup>th</sup>** – brought the camera from Orchard Wood up here this morning and found that the food that I put in the feeder yesterday hadn't been touched!

**19<sup>th</sup>** – all the food had gone and only a red has appeared on camera

**21<sup>st</sup>** – red wasn't here yesterday, but popped back today



24<sup>th</sup> – steady, but still some food left

27<sup>th</sup> – not much food gone, only the monkey nuts

## **GREEN ENDS / THWAITES COTTAGES + ‘Arthur’s Cottage’**

### **February**

W/c 12<sup>th</sup> – red in the garden at Thwaites Cottages

## **BRACKENSLACK**

This is a wood also used for pheasants, but which has a public footpath running through it – the feeder is above the top of the ravine on the R/hand side of the footpath and is viewable from the FP

Because it is a wood with no reds, I only used to pay it passing attention, but an incursion of four greys at the end of March and again over autumn 2023 has seen me visiting more often.

At the start of the period the wood was clear

### **December**

13<sup>th</sup> – food from a while back still there (removed). Wood appears clear.

### **January**

3<sup>rd</sup> – food still in the feeder

19<sup>th</sup> – food still in the feeder

### **February**

18<sup>th</sup> – food still in the feeder, mouldy – replaced and feeder disinfected.

**Other sightings from the village: None**



## Trainlands Wood,

## Holesfoot

## Sideway Bank

## Crabstacks +

## Hawkrigg

Trainlands (TW) is the wood at the point where 'Little Beck' rises.

From MM – go past the entrance to Holesfoot and

down into the dip, the wood is on the left - Feeder is on the R/hand side of beck, 50 yards in.

I did top the feeder up every 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> day and the food was always gone, but a while back now Gary 'borrowed' the feeder as he needed it for Holesfoot and I really need to put a new one up.

**Holesfoot** – the large country house on the opposite side of the road

They have ten feeders out for guests to be able to see.

**Sideway Bank** - is a farm on the left when going towards Kings Meaburn from the Appleby Road

**Crabstacks** is a farm on the left after Sideway Bank when going towards Kings Meaburn from the Appleby Road

**Hawkrigg** is on the Colby Road – turning right just past Crabstacks

## February

1<sup>st</sup> – **GREY** - Spotted a grey on Colby Moor road this morning about a quarter of a mile past Burwain Hall towards Appleby Regards – Colin Gary informed

21<sup>st</sup> – I really need to visit and put a feeder up in TW, but just keep getting pulled away to other things.

\*\*Finally put that feeder up on the 1<sup>st</sup> March (red on it 4<sup>th</sup> when I returned)

## Morland Bank (Inc' Caravan Wood and Mains Wood)

There is a feeder in what is left of Morland Bank wood, two in Mains Wood and another in 'Caravan Wood' – see entry for 14<sup>th</sup> December re a fourth.

At the start of the period x3 greys had been shot in Mains Wood on the 30<sup>th</sup> Nov', but one/two more had been seen (one shot but not found) .

Potentially there was also a grey floating about in Caravan Wood.



Two greys had been shot in Morland Bank over the autumn.

There are 3 reds in Mains Wood, up to 4 in Morland Bank and 2 in Caravan Wood

### **Mains Wood – Arthur Clegg**

## December

**1<sup>st</sup>** – having just shot three in Mains Wood yesterday, Jerry was back here at first light. No greys turned up, but there were three reds

I came back 1030-12MD and again nothing

Jerry came back this afternoon and only saw x1 red – is it possible that I did hit and kill it yesterday?

**3<sup>rd</sup>** - They were shooting there yesterday so only got to go this afternoon. Have popped a feeder and camera up, about 20 yards to the left of the gate – and scattered some more food near the left gate post.

I didn't see anything whilst there. My 4x4 car failed – got past that final r/hand bend and was only about 70-80 yards short and it just wouldn't go any further. Had to reverse all the way back to the road!!!

4<sup>th</sup> – Jerry had 2 hrs this morning and me a hour this afternoon and no greys.  
And only a red(s) on the new feeder.

6<sup>th</sup> – only seeing reds in both Mains Wood and Morland Bank  
Beginning to think that on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov' I did in fact hit one of the two(?) greys in  
Mains Wood and that it has gone away and died.

9<sup>th</sup> – not too much activity over the last few days in Mains Wood and no greys.  
Reds are visiting daily though

13<sup>th</sup> – **Mains Wood** - still just reds been captured on the camera.  
**Morland Bank** – still just reds captured on camera

14<sup>th</sup> – popped a new feeder up today on a different part of 'The Bank' – if this one  
becomes permanent, ie: squirrels start using it, it will be called:  
**Morland Bank Duck Pond** - basically with greys seemingly floating about the  
wider area here, it's worth a punt.

The following map shows the locations of all our feeders (inc Barnskew) in  
the Morland Bank area.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> was told of a grey (approx 14<sup>th</sup>) running along the road off  
Morland Bank towards Reagill



16<sup>th</sup> – did all the  
woods this  
afternoon and only  
reds.

Nothing on the  
new feeder yet  
and popped a  
camera into  
Caravan Wood

18<sup>th</sup> – nothing yet  
at Morland Bank  
Duck Ponds

22<sup>nd</sup> – position remains the same as 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>

**I am now going to take x1 despatch of grey - this is for the one from 30<sup>th</sup> Nov' which I hit, couldn't find, but which hasn't been seen since**

26<sup>th</sup> – Mains Wood and Morland Bank all fine. Not too much activity at the feeder in Mains Wood, but plenty in Morland Bank

## January

3<sup>rd</sup> – on the 1<sup>st</sup> a red finally appeared at Morland Bank Duck Ponds!

It was also there on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and also today – not eaten a lot yet and the visits aren't long, but ...

4<sup>th</sup> – all good in Morland Bank itself – Mains Wood seems to have tailed off in terms of activity and have moved the camera down to the other feeder in Mains Wood.

7<sup>th</sup> – only reds and removed the cameras from Mains Wood and Morland Bank

9<sup>th</sup> – all the food has now gone from the feeder at Morland Bank Duck Ponds.

The wife's not sure if it was a grey that crossed the road this morning on the straight bit before you get to the Reagill bends

13<sup>th</sup> – did the tour today and whilst I have no cameras out at present on any of the feeders, it generally seems OK.

Food had gone from all the feeders, a little slower at Morland Bank Duck Ponds and because Caravan Wood has been a little neglected this last month, I popped a camera in.

16<sup>th</sup> – popped to Caravan Wood and none of the food had gone and nothing on the camera

17<sup>th</sup> – **GREY** - someone has popped on Facebook that they saw one at Blind Beck; effectively this is Caravan Wood – have let Jerry know

One also seen in the part of Morland Bank that has been felled – in the hedgerow

24<sup>th</sup> – did a tour of all the feeders, which were all empty. Popped a camera into Morland Bank.

GREY was seen on the road near to the Reagill turn-off – Jerry informed



**26<sup>th</sup>** – only reds in Morland Bank (but the camera seemed to stop taking photos during the 24<sup>th</sup>) and some, but not a lot of food has gone from Morland Bank Duck Ponds.

Visited Blind Gill and had a walk around (opposite side of road to Caravan Wood), quite steep down, but opens out at the bottom – saw nothing to excite me and saw no squirrels.

Scattered a little food but don't expect anything.

**28<sup>th</sup>** – it looks like the food at Mains Wood is starting to go more quickly now. Will pop a camera in (did so 29<sup>th</sup>) and still only reds in Morland Bank, but again looks like the camera took a day of photos and then stopped.

**31<sup>st</sup>** – looking good in Mains Wood



# February

**1<sup>st</sup>** – camera in Morland Bank is playing up and no photos on it.

Food has gone well from Morland Bank Duck Ponds and in Blind Beck the scatter feed has gone but I'm convinced it will be birds so I won't be sticking a feeder up, not yet at least!

**3<sup>rd</sup>** – all seems good. The camera in Morland Bank again seemed to stop taking photos after a day, but have removed it as needed elsewhere.

**5<sup>th</sup>** – all red in Mains Wood.

Moved the camera today to 'Postage Stamp' wood – fairly nearby, but see the Reagill section further below.

**7<sup>th</sup>** – food gone from all the feeders and that includes all of the feed from Morland Bank Duck Ponds

**10<sup>th</sup>** – all the food gone from all of the feeders – Morland Bank Duck Ponds looks like it has been truly 'found' now. I'm away now for a week, but will put a camera on it upon my return

**19<sup>th</sup>** – **a.m.** – was away last week due to ½ term, but back this morning and all seems OK.

Visited all feeders, including Caravan Wood where I must confess I've not been to for a while.

Moved the camera from Postage Stamp Wood to Morland Bank Duck Ponds .  
Needless to say all feeders were empty.

**23<sup>rd</sup>** – visited all feeders today. All seemed fine and the food has gone from all of the feeders, although not quite all at Caravan Wood.

Morland Bank Duck Ponds – not sure if it is one or two reds, but they are now hammering the food there, spending a couple of hours a day on the feeder.

Camera moved from here and put up in Morland Bank and a camera put into Caravan Wood as well.

**25<sup>th</sup>** – just popped into Caravan Wood and Morland Bank to swop the SD cards in the cameras and top those feeders up – reds all the way in both woods

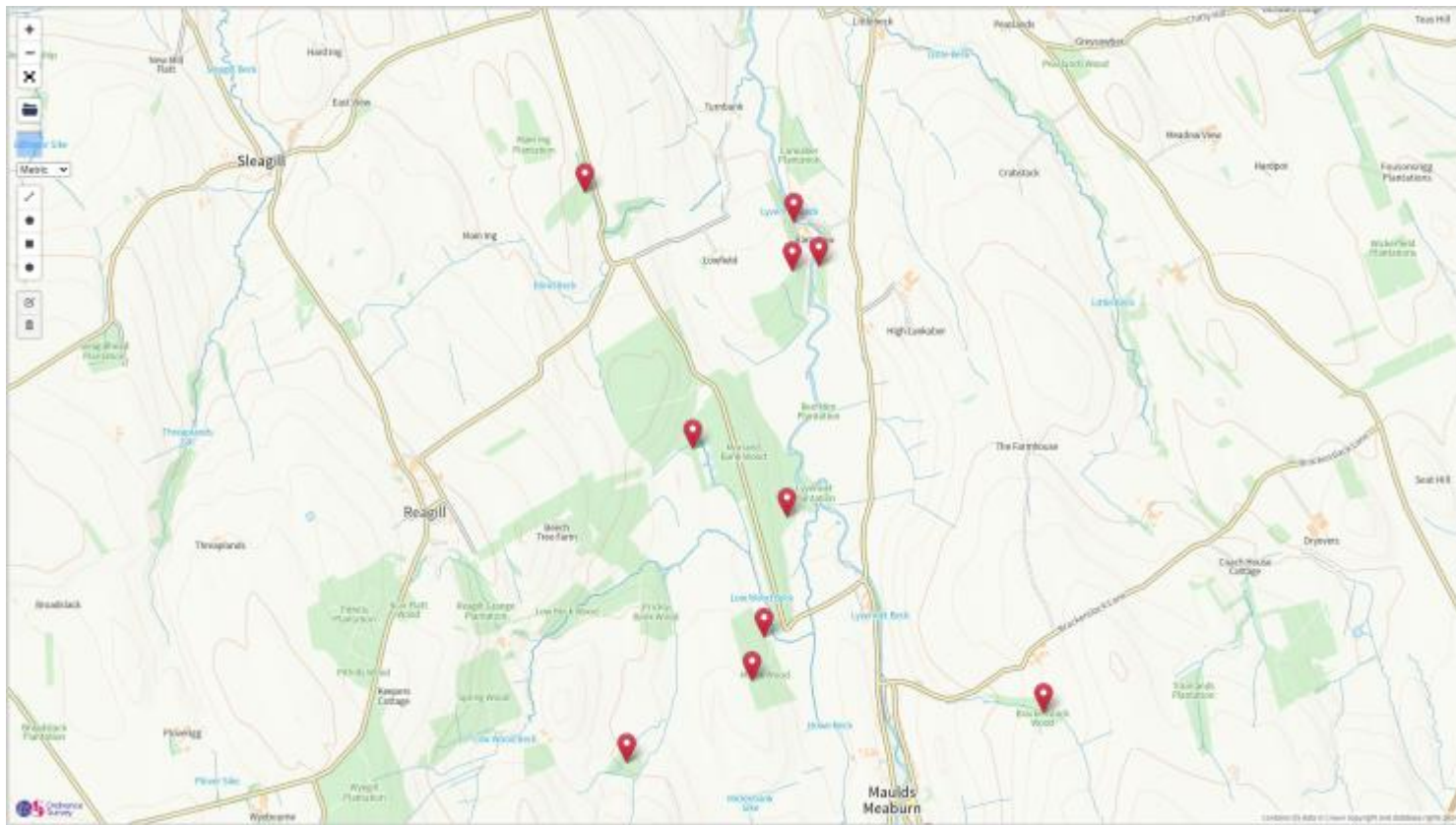


**28<sup>th</sup>** – visited all woods today – only reds on camera in both Morland Bank and Caravan Wood and Mains Wood seems fine as well.

Saw x1 red on the thermal at the bottom end of Mains Wood.

**End of Period: never like to tempt fate, but seems ok**

Below is a map showing all of the feeders that I have around Morland Bank and Barnskew



## Barnskew, Lankaber Wood and environs

Between Maulds Meaburn and Kings Meaburn

1 = Barnskew Wood No.1 (BW1)

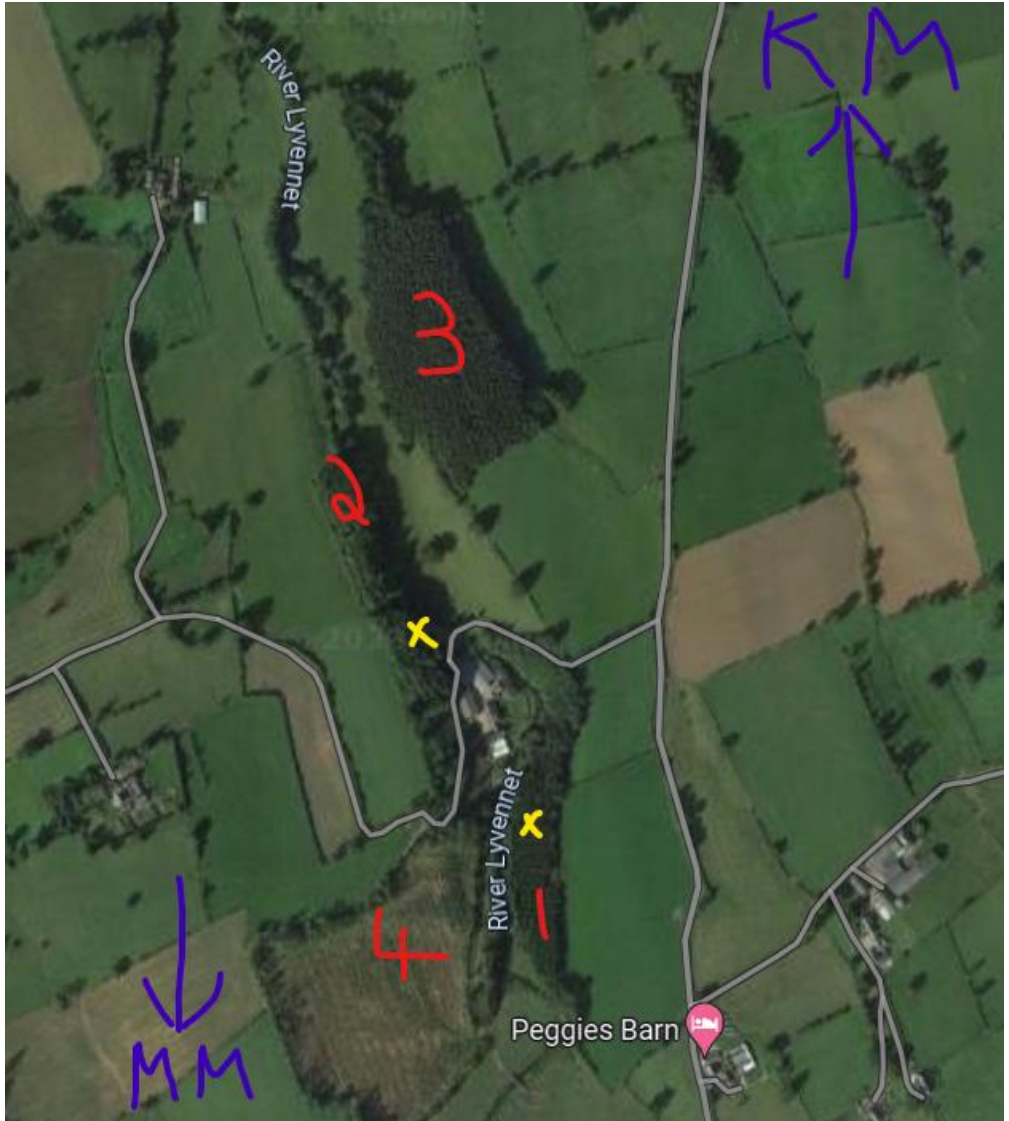
2 = Barnskew Wood No.2 (BW2)

3 = Lankaber Wood

4 = Barnskew Bank (BW3)

The yellow crosses mark the feeders.

From a walk around 3 it was decided not to bother with a feeder



Start of the period - one grey in BW1 had been shot and no greys were now being picked up on camera.

There are at least one pair of reds in each wood.

I had taken a walk-through of Lankaber, lots of cones on the ground, but none had been eaten. Therefore, decided against putting a feeder up and especially with it being supposedly felled this year.

During this period I would become more acquainted with Barnskew Bank (BW 3)

## December

**3<sup>rd</sup>** – only reds in both woods. However, pulling the camera out on the 13<sup>th</sup>, a grey was here very briefly today for just x3 photos

**13<sup>th</sup>** - should have been here before now, but reds. Maybe should put a camera in BW2 as well

**14<sup>th</sup>** – up to 12Md only reds

**15<sup>th</sup>** – a grey at 1010h but only in x2 photos and with the food still in the feeder!

Otherwise a pair of reds – will need to see that grey far more often before I start going to sit up on it.

And I chose against popping a camera in BW2 as well! Most, but not all of the food had gone from here.



17<sup>th</sup> – camera popped into BW2

18<sup>th</sup> – only reds in BW1 and it was looking so good in BW1 with reds



But then this was here all afternoon – guess I know what I will be doing tomorrow! except due to various reasons I didn't get back until the 21<sup>st</sup>



21<sup>st</sup> – there is a story!  
But I will only do the short version – shot x1 grey in BW2 late afternoon.  
However, I then couldn't find it – it may not have been a clean kill!  
If it hasn't turned up by the end of the year I will claim its despatch.

**22<sup>nd</sup>** – no grey today has visited the feeder in BW2!

Meanwhile a very pleasant surprise in BW1, apart from there being no greys



**23<sup>rd</sup>** – no grey today (up to 1445h) in BW2

**24<sup>th</sup>** – still no greys, all red.

**26<sup>th</sup>** – still no greys, all red. Looking good for having despatched that grey.

**29<sup>th</sup>** – hmmm! Tonight popped in at dusk to BW 1 and saw what was probably a grey in the tree above the bridge, but just can't be sure and then sods law, the batteries in the camera ran out at lunch on the 27<sup>th</sup> (now replaced), but it was only reds up to this point.

If it was a grey it has only arrived very recently.

Still only reds though in BW 2 – will be claiming that despatch soon!

**30<sup>th</sup>** - typical of my luck - Just after mid-day thought I'd have a look at BW 1 where I thought I saw the grey yesterday.

But as I drove down the hill to the farm it was sat on the feeder in BW 2.

Parked up, opened the back door to get my rifle – it's still on the feeder – get rifle out and as I turn round it's walking off



No matter me thinks, it will give me chance to settle and it will come back.

5 mins later the pheasant shoot turn up, about 20 cars – I didn't know that they came down this way – they don't go in the woods were I have feeders, but it was enough to disturb things enough for me to pack up.

After my disaster at Crosby Ravensworth earlier today, maybe 2024 will be better!

**Went back tonight and checked the camera, that grey was only there for four minutes and hasn't returned -- also it hasn't been in BW 1**

## January

2<sup>nd</sup> –was at Barnskew at 4 p.m. and Jamie stopped me to tell me of a grey that he has been seeing last couple of mornings.

The red cross marks the spot – I had a spare trap with me so have popped it in.

Grey had been in BW 2 again on the 31<sup>st</sup> for 15mins at 14h, but not since.

Doesn't seem to be bothering with the main wood across the river from the house



4<sup>th</sup> – the grey seems to have disappeared and certainly hasn't been in BW 1 or 2

The trap – nothing yet, but this morning a red was there!

I will only trap it once before I remove it and then go to scatter feed monitored with a camera.

Gary Hunter who does game-keeping for the Reagill shoot and who have pens in the felled plantation where Jamie has seen the grey, tells me:

*"I've frequently seen reds upstream of Barnskew farm past the footbridge."*

5<sup>th</sup> – trap removed!

Red in there this morning (not for long and quite large and healthy)

Daft thing is that whilst it was in the trap another red turned up and even after the one trapped had been released and with the door shut, another one turned up!

8<sup>th</sup> – it surely cannot just be me to whom the law of sod applies!

Having removed the trap on the 5<sup>th</sup>, a grey turned up on both the 6+7<sup>th</sup>.

There at 0815 each day, obviously only briefly – have asked jerry if he is available to sit up in his truck one morning.

Grey was in BW 1 on the 7<sup>th</sup> for a few minutes and in BW 2 on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

9<sup>th</sup> – popped a trap back in to the same place at 4.15 p.m. tonight – the plan being to check at 0915h each morning. If there's nothing in it, close it up and re-open at 4.15 p.m. ready for the next morning.

It's working on the law of averages!!!! Fairly quiet in BW 2, but just reds.

10<sup>th</sup> – had 40 minutes up with the trap this morning (empty). Red came along the hedge row, sat on top of the trap and then went off as towards BW1

11<sup>th</sup> – no joy yet with the trap.

However, about mid-day Jamie saw it again just further along the hedgerow

12<sup>th</sup> – another ... hmmm day!

Trap empty at 0915h, but had a stoat in it at 12Md, which seemed determined to bite my finger off!

Further along the track around the top of the wood (BW 3) there is a sheep creep up against the fence (60-70 yards away from where I have the trap).

Saw something move there and then a bit later it went back into the wood; I think it was a red -- But then my luck!

As I turned back to look where I have the trap, straight away a grey popped out of the undergrowth to the left of the gate, about 3-4 yards to the left.

It then went to the gate and underneath it and up onto the little bank behind and disappeared down the bank into the scrub not to be seen again – in all 4-5 seconds and I didn't get a shot.

Up this side of the valley you really do get to realise that the Morland Bank Road is only a few hundred yards away.

**13<sup>th</sup>** – ok hands up, it has taken me a long time to realise that any greys here are not actually resident in BW1+2, but are up in BW3 and just go out visiting.

Trap empty this morning and as today is a pheasant shoot day, it was closed up and I won't be back until ...? want to get the grey from Three Cornered Wood in Maulds Meaburn quickly

**17<sup>th</sup>** – back today and popped a feeder up in BW 3, just behind where I have had the trap.

No greys showing in BW 2 and when I checked the camera which I had left in BW3 out of 680 photos, none of reds and one of a grey.

**18<sup>th</sup>** – some activity today on the new feeder BW 3



**19<sup>th</sup>** – hmmm, not sure about this

At 12M went up to BW 3 but only a little food had gone, so went back down to BW 1 for a while.

Two squirrels turned up, possibly a third, but they were so high up in the trees and silhouetted against the sky, I can't be sure whether they were red or grey.

At times I was of the opinion that they were grey, others, not so.

And of course they stayed up in tree tops and didn't come to the floor or feeder.  
Popped back at 1530 - 1615h, one red showed up and I put a camera up

**24<sup>th</sup>** – back after the storms (and it has hit down here quite badly) and there is a grey floating about, but so rarely and indiscriminately.

The new feeder in BW3 is now being visited regularly ... by reds, no grey have turned up.

A grey visited BW 2 on the 17<sup>th</sup> after I had last visited, but only briefly and whilst I anticipated lots of photos of a grey in BW 1, one was only there for 2 minutes on the 21<sup>st</sup>

**26<sup>th</sup>** – only reds at BW 3. For how often they visit they don't take a lot of food!  
BW 2 still some food left – no camera here

BW 1 red on the feeder when I got there and for some reason the camera hasn't taken any photos.

Cameras are causing me issues at present.

**29<sup>th</sup>** – cameras have worked ok. BW 3 Reds on the 27<sup>th</sup>, but not since and I have removed the camera (want it in Mains Wood for a few days)

BW 1 a grey popped up for 4 minutes yesterday afternoon.

## February

**2<sup>nd</sup>** – steady away and the grey has gone missing

**8<sup>th</sup>** – visited at 4 p.m and all the feeders in all three woods were empty.

Only x1 camera here, which is in BW 1 and only reds.

**19<sup>th</sup>** – after a week away Barnskew was the last on the list to visit, to get back up to date with things and I was going today; but, when I got home from the Morland Bank round I had a message from Jerry.

Met up at 1230h and joined by Jamie who told us that he has been seeing at least X2 GREYS up the top at BW3 but further along the fence line.

Went up to BW3 – food gone and camera put up

Down to BW1 and as we approached the bridge over the river saw a grey in the tree-tops above the bridge.

It went towards BW1, but Jerry didn't see it again.

Extra feeder put up by the river and Jerry will be back early on the 21<sup>st</sup>

I was going to come back at tea-time and leave some traps, but instead went to a grey in Three Cornered Wood

Later when I checked the camera from BW1 a grey has only been on the feeder for seven minutes and that was on the 9<sup>th</sup>!

What are they doing and where?

**20<sup>th</sup>** - it's all been a little quiet since yesterday!

In BW1 still only reds on the feeder - the new feeder looks untouched

BW3 – nothing has visited.

Have put in x2 traps at the far end of BW3 and put a camera with them.

**21<sup>st</sup>** – At 0920h this morning a very small amount of food had gone from the new feeder.

Tonight at 17h a fairly decent amount of food had gone from it – and as I then walked into BW1 and making my way towards the feeder, about 20 yards past the feeder I saw a very quick glimpse of the back end of something that was white and fluffy as it went behind a tree.

Turns out that a grey was on the feeder for 2 mins at 1330h

I went up to check the traps, nothing, went back and sat up on BW1, but nothing showed.

They are obviously about, just seems a case of timing – I may move that camera from up in BW3 down to the new feeder at the bottom.

**22<sup>nd</sup> – this morning** - traps empty and moved the camera from BW3 down to the new feeder by the river, where some food has now gone.

Came back at 1620h for a hour in BW1 and saw nothing.

Trap empty.

Food going from BW2 and a red was back at BW3 today as well

**This evening** - Upon checking the SD card from the camera on the new feeder, it was only reds on the feeder, but then I saw this:

Bizarrely the grey never appeared on the feeder and it also hasn't been in BW1 either!!!



**23<sup>rd</sup> – success - \*\*X2 Greys Despatched\*\* - both adult males**

I was meeting Jerry here this morning, arrived at 0950h to find him up in BW3 going to the traps.

Informed me that he had been here a little while, but that as soon as he went into BW1 a grey was on the feeder and that he got it as it went up the tree.

We then saw that there was a grey in one of the traps!!!

Job's a good'un'

Closed the traps, but left in-situ with a camera to monitor.

Moved the feeder in BW1 out of the wood and down to its edge next to the river (moved about 20 yards)

Hopefully no more greys here .....?

**25<sup>th</sup> – I can't believe it!**

Went back at tea-time to change the SD cards and top the feeders up, but on the 23<sup>rd</sup> when we got the two greys, I didn't change the SD card in the camera with the traps – and hence tonight when I have viewed it there was this below

And we arrived less than five minutes later and it was gone!

It hasn't returned since, but at least I had opened up one of the traps tonight

And hopefully it was the same grey, but one turned up in BW1 for one minute this morning.



It genuinely isn't bothered about its friends impending fate.

**26<sup>th</sup>** - yet again, I cannot believe it!

Arrived this morning to find that the trap that I had re-set had somehow closed overnight – and what turned up at 0804h?

A photo of it pressed up to the trap looking at what is in there (food).

Spent a hour down at the river this morning (BW1) and another hour at tea-time and nothing turned up (apart from reds).

Hopefully in the morning with both traps re-set.....!

**27<sup>th</sup>** – you're meant to go in it, not on it!

it was back this morning from 0757 to 0838h and showed no real interest in going in the trap to have a look.

Jerry was having a little time here this morning.



**28<sup>th</sup>** – credit where credit is due and it's playing a good hand.

Turned up at 1313 – 22h today and showed no interest in the traps.

I think I might have seen it at 10h in undergrowth, but can't be certain.

Only reds in BW1 and saw a red in BW2 each time I visited today.

When will its luck run out?

**29<sup>th</sup>** – it turned up at the traps at 0825h, only one photo and not near the traps.

Have now put a third trap out!!!

Only reds at BW1 – saw two on the feeder this morning and picked up another two heat sources at the same time!

### **At the end of the period:-**

We have a really good population of reds down here and in good numbers and they seem to be doing well, but we have one grey left.

And as is often the case, the last one is always the hardest to get.

At time of writing (Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March) it remains at large and it also evaded me this morning at 0730h.

But where it comes from and where it goes and what it does when it gets there remains a mystery.

This is one very elusive, trap wary grey!



## Crosby Ravensworth



### **The Bank Coppice, Crosby Ravensworth -- Credit: Darren Rogers**

This is where I used to say “*I don’t get to Crosby Ravensworth much*”, but since November I have been able to spend much more time here.

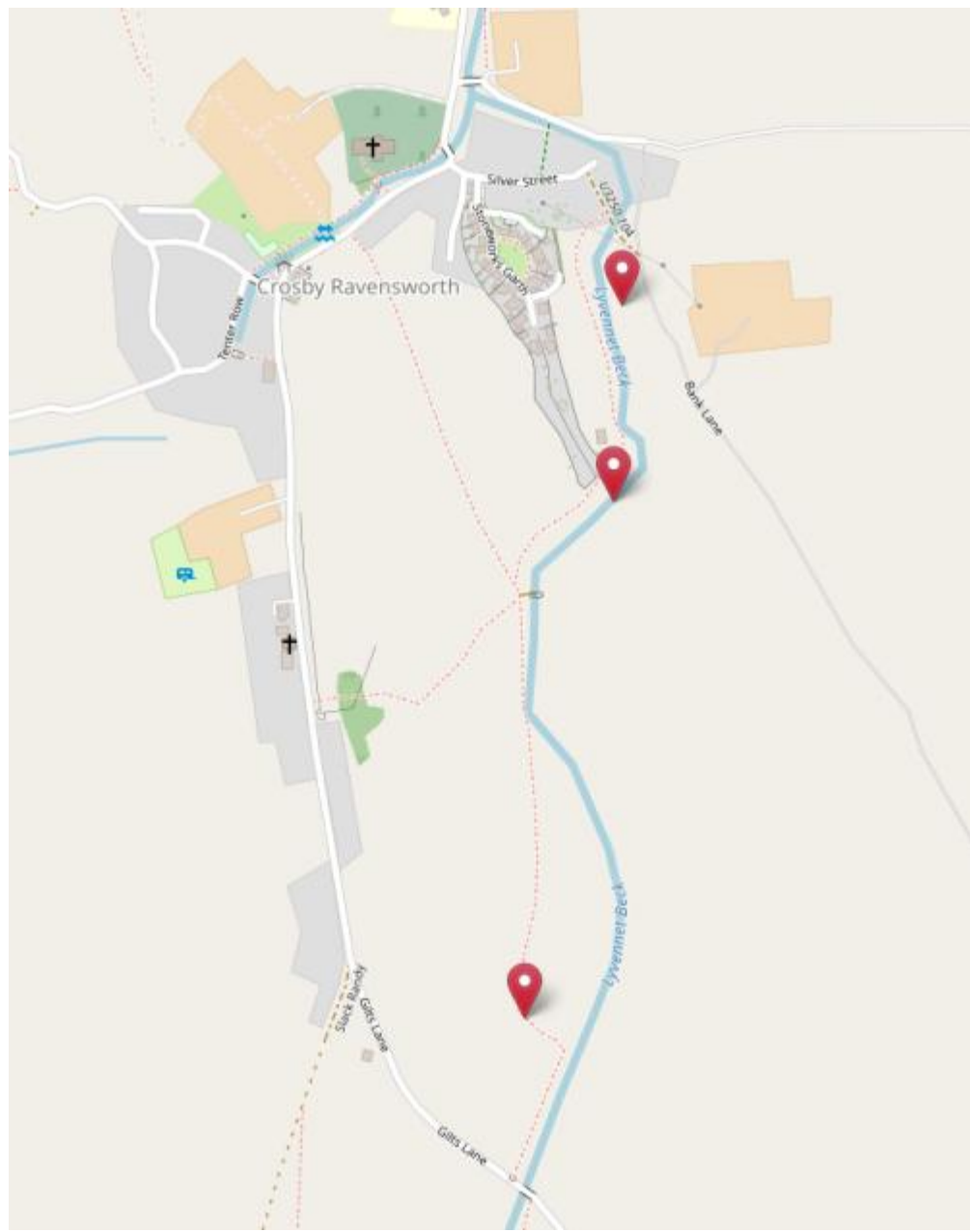
During November three greys around ‘*The Bank – Coppice*’ had been shot, but at the opposite end of the village a grey(s) were making the occasional visit to the fields at the back of The Haven/Well Head.

The frequency of the greys turning up in the village is becoming a bit of a concern

A feeder had just been put up in Crosby Gill – but was later removed as nothing had visited it.

Crosby Gill remains one of those places to explore further

The three feeders that I look after in Crosby Ravensworth are shown below



## Well Head + Anna Well + The Haven

**11<sup>th</sup> Jan – GREY** – mid-day. In the field at the rear of this group of houses.

Trying a trap again – which for the first time I am going to give it a go on top of the dry stone wall.

**18<sup>th</sup> Jan – \*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** - adult male in the trap, but ... a second grey was seen making off from the scene! Trap re-set and back in place

**\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** - what a result! A second adult male this afternoon in the trap – the one that ran off this morning must have come back for a look!

Still going to keep the trap in place for a while

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan** – still have the trap out and it is being checked a few times per day, but nothing since the 18<sup>th</sup> and it was finally removed later on.

## Crosby Ravensworth South – Gilts

**9<sup>th</sup> Dec** – food still in there

**23<sup>rd</sup> Dec** – food still there

**31<sup>st</sup> Dec** – food still there

**6<sup>th</sup> Jan** – food still there – I've now emptied it and will leave it awhile

**17<sup>th</sup> Feb** – dropped a few monkey nuts into the feeder

## Summer House

**1<sup>st</sup> Dec** – after a long period of no food having been taken, today I find that it has – topped up

**23<sup>rd</sup> Dec** – food still there

**29<sup>th</sup> Dec** – even though there are two greys floating about, the food is untouched

**31<sup>st</sup> Dec** – food remains untouched

**6<sup>th</sup> Jan** – food remains untouched

**21<sup>st</sup> Jan** – some food gone, but the rest was going off - replaced

**4<sup>th</sup> Feb** – all the food had gone – topped up.

**6<sup>th</sup> Feb** – some of the food had gone and I popped a camera up. I just want to see what exactly is visiting here

**8<sup>th</sup> Feb** – popped back today and only the monkey nuts have gone and by a red  
Yesterday -- the photos are just a bit too blurry to pop one in here.

**10<sup>th</sup> Feb** – today is good in Crosby Ravensworth.

The photos are not the best as it's not the best of cameras, but one brought a very happy smile to my face; first of all I was going to use this one:



Actually not to bad a photo as the red is close to the camera, but how about this one?



Two of them .....

Have now moved the camera back to The Bank, coppice

**17<sup>th</sup> Feb** – whilst I've been away I suspect that Mr. Kerr has topped the feeder up for me – thank you

### **The Bank Coppice (by River)**

It was from here the x3 greys were shot during November and it is believed that there was no more.

A temporary feeder had been put up during that time; I'll keep it for a short while.

**9<sup>th</sup> Dec** – the food in the temporary feeder was still there, but that in the original feeder had virtually gone; but just wonder if it could be mice.

**23<sup>rd</sup> Dec** – food gone from both feeders! Topped up.

**27<sup>th</sup> Dec** – **GREY** – seen somewhere on Bank Lane; will take a look tomorrow.

**28<sup>th</sup> Dec** – didn't take long to find it.

Went to the copse, topped up the empty feeders, walked along the river on the Stoneworks Garth side and just past the Summer House, saw it run across the field, up on to the sheep rail that goes across the river and then off into the copse.

Saw it again later in the copse making its way towards the feeders at the far end, but I had to go.

Now x2 traps in-situ, either end of the copse and when I came back late afternoon, the food in the feeder had gone.

Hope to get back tomorrow (other than just for checking the traps).

### 29<sup>th</sup> Dec – make that two!

See "other sightings" below re another grey which I rather hope is the second one here.

Unfortunately as the wife was shopping from 09-14h today, all that I managed to do was check the traps twice and of course the grey(s) have been on the feeder quite a lot -- Hopefully tomorrow!

### 30<sup>th</sup> Dec – **\*\*GREY DESPATCHED\*\*** - but why is it that there is always a story?

Shot x1 at 0944h off the feeder – how it managed to get up and scramble to a nearby tree I do not know, but so far, not seen again

Tonight, x1 grey in a trap –  $\frac{3}{4}$  grown male.

It did not have any other 'wounds' so I'm happy that it isn't the one that I shot this morning.

At 1121h there is x1 photo of a grey, which quite nicely shows me that it was most likely the one that fell for the trap – no other visits at all to the feeder.

I'm going to end up with x1 unconfirmed kill (to go with the other ones)

### 31<sup>st</sup> Dec – hmmmm!

At 0930h as I was arriving, saw a grey running away and off up a tree, presumably from the feeder.

Watched its Olympian efforts from afar and ultimately it came back into the copse and in the opposite direction to the feeder.



If this was the grey that I shot yesterday then I want to know who its GP is! And it hadn't been to the feeder and wouldn't turn up all day – but a red did briefly visit at lunch.

2<sup>nd</sup> Jan – last night I moved the trap from the far end of the copse and brought it

back to the end nearest the feeders and put it further along the fence line from the other trap, which is on the top fence line of the copse.

When I was putting some extra feed in the original trap I dropped my bag of food and spilt quite a lot.

This morning there was a red sat eating the food that I had spilt (right next to the trap) and which I hadn't managed to pick up – consequently I removed that trap. Still no sign of that 'Olympian grey' – came back for two minutes at 1533h today!

**4<sup>th</sup> Jan** – yesterday morning there was a red in the one remaining trap!

That trap was removed, which now leaves none. This could be hard work and luck ... the grey was here for two minutes at 0956h today!

But the red was as well



**6<sup>th</sup> Jan** – after going walkabouts for a day or two, the grey was back today for just over an hour from 1115h – the red is visiting more now as well

**8<sup>th</sup> Jan** – I hate this! And because it's me there has to be a story.

Yesterday I was here before lunch and the grey did turn up; well not quite turn up, but I could see it.

Anyway, I finally had a shot and this is now getting too frequent ... I think I hit it, but I didn't kill it outright (or at all!)

However, up to 12Md today it hasn't returned.

Red or even, reds, are frequently visiting the feeder.

**9<sup>th</sup> Jan** – up to 1230h today no visits from either red or grey in the last 24Hrs.

**11<sup>th</sup> Jan** – up to 15h today still no grey. No red today but was here quite a bit yesterday. But see ‘other sightings’ re a grey.

**12<sup>th</sup> Jan** – still only red.

**14<sup>th</sup> Jan** – still only red

**18<sup>th</sup> Jan** – red may not yet have been here today (11h), but it has been here a lot the last few days – but see ‘Well Head’s’ entry for today. Where those greys live I do not know - and everyone likes a snowy picture:



**24<sup>th</sup> Jan** – back today after the storms and the **greys** just keep on coming! Virtually all red and regular, but on the 21<sup>st</sup> a grey popped up for two minutes. It hasn't been back since

In my few years of doing this I've never known it so bad in Crosby Ravensworth

**27<sup>th</sup> Jan** – red was here a lot on the 25<sup>th</sup> (no greys), but no visits since

**31<sup>st</sup> Jan** – still only red and visiting most days

**4<sup>th</sup> Feb** – red visits every day, but doesn't seem to take that much food – no greys

**6<sup>th</sup> Feb** – a red every day and no grey – have moved the camera up the river to the Summer House.



**10<sup>th</sup> Feb** – food all gone and camera brought back

**17<sup>th</sup> Feb** – during my five days away a red(s) have been her every day.

**25<sup>th</sup> Feb** – all remains good with a red(s) visiting daily

**29<sup>th</sup> Feb** – position remains the same

## Other Sightings:-

### DECEMBER

**5<sup>th</sup>** – went up to the new feeder at Crosby Gill, none of the food has been taken

**9<sup>th</sup>** – went up to the new feeder at Crosby Gill, none of the food has been taken

**15<sup>th</sup>** - I am currently watching a red squirrel in a tree in my garden.

We live in Crosby Ravensworth opposite the church -- Naomi

**23<sup>rd</sup>** - went up to the new feeder at Crosby Gill, none of the food has been taken.

Come the New Year and no change I will have to move it further up the gill.

**29<sup>th</sup>** – **GREY** – south end of village sat on a tree stump in the field above the penfold. Is it the same one that is in the copse at Bank Lane?

### JANUARY

**6<sup>th</sup>** – went up to the new feeder at Crosby Gill, none of the food has been taken.

**14<sup>th</sup>** – now removed the feeder from Crosby Gill

### FEBRUARY

**16<sup>th</sup>** – from Debbie McCall on Silver Street, who adds that it is the first red that they've seen on their garden feeder in ages.



**At the end of the period:**

Things seem back to normal in the village with no greys seen or reported for a while now.

# Reagill

The feeders that I (did) have were:

**Pithills Plantation (PH) – X2** – regular visits by at least two reds

**Wyegill Plantation (WP + WPGL [Green Lane])** – very regular visits from at least two reds.



**Prickly Bank Wood – photo by Robin Woodstover**

## **Start of the period**

All was generally OK - Reds are fairly abundant and making regular visits to the feeders that I have out and there were no on-going reports of greys, which would make it the only village hereabouts to be in that position.

In the final week of autumn a report did come in re greys in Pithills Plantation, but various checks, cameras put up, etc, nothing was found.

At the start of this period those checks were coming to a close.

Unfortunately we then learnt that Lowther were clear felling Wyegill Plantation and thinning out Pithills Plantation during February and I had to remove my feeders.

Because of this a feeder was put into Postage Stamp wood at the start of February.

## DECEMBER

6<sup>th</sup> – have made several visits so far this month and have not seen a grey and nothing has turned up on any of the cameras, which have covered all of the feeders at various times.

Removed the cameras today.

Saw Tom from Reagill Grange and he tells me that he hasn't seen any greys

16<sup>th</sup> – did all the woods this afternoon and all seems ok

16<sup>th</sup> – **GREY** – seen in woods 50m south of High Green -- Tom Wilcox

18<sup>th</sup> – popped out re 17<sup>th</sup> and had a word with Judith and Tom (different Tom) at High Green and they've not seen anything and still have x1 red visiting their garden. This is in the same area where greys were seen at the end of Nov', but near to clarify with the right Tom how many and exactly where – hope to do so later.

Turns out that the grey actually fell out of the tree!

It landed on the road, survived the fall and ran off into Pithills Plantation chased by Tom's dog, who unfortunately did not catch it.

I will return and scatter some feed about and use a camera to monitor what turns up.

## JANUARY

6<sup>th</sup> – have popped up a few times this last week and all seems fine.

13<sup>th</sup> – no more reports of greys since the last one in December and did the rounds today and everything seemed OK.

26<sup>th</sup> – did the rounds today and all seemed ok, but have just got the news tonight that as of the 1<sup>st</sup> Feb Wyegill Plantation is to be clear felled and Pithills Plantation is being 'thinned out'

Lowther haven't informed Jerry.

That is going to be a lot of displacement and I will have to go and take all my feeders down, or lose them!

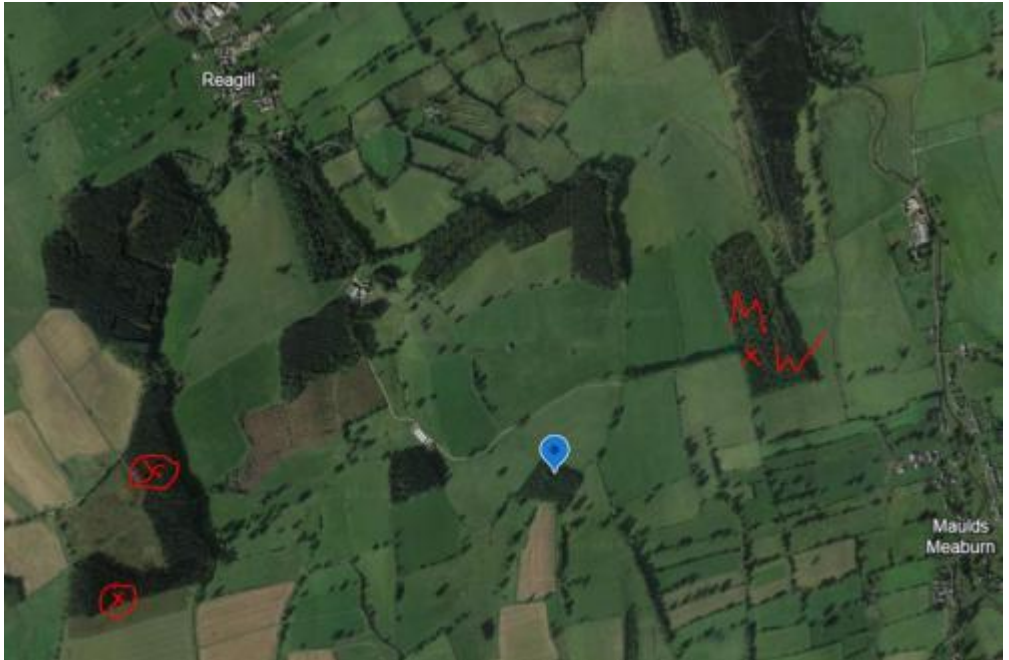
31<sup>st</sup> – went and removed all of the feeders out of the two plantations  
I now have no feeders of my own in Reagill

## FEBRUARY

5<sup>th</sup> – now I simply cannot cover all possibilities, but where will the reds from Wyegill Plantation re-locate to?

I have had my eye on 'Postage Stamp Wood' for a while as a possibility and I have no doubt that there will already be some reds in there, but it is a bit of a walk to get there. It is a little bit of in the middle of nowhere.

However, today I went and put a feeder up and took the camera from Mains Wood (Morland Bank) as I went by – this is where Postage Stamp wood is, the blue pin



the circles with red crosses are Wyegill Plantation and Mains Wood is on the right

There were some cones on the ground that had been eaten, so fingers crossed.

7<sup>th</sup> – well. Went back to Postage Stamp Wood this afternoon and as I walked to the feeder I thought '*nothing's been here*' but once I got to it I saw a few chewed seeds on the floor.

And upon checking the camera ... two reds.

They 'found' the feeder this morning and have been on it for a while, but they've not really worked out what it is and how to get in yet – they soon will

The walk was worth it!



**10<sup>th</sup>** – a little, but not a lot of activity in Postage Stamp Wood; I think that the reds here are just not quite sure about the feeder!

**19<sup>th</sup> – a.m.** – was away last week due to ½ term, but back this morning and all seems OK.

Moved the camera from Postage Stamp Wood to Morland Bank Duck Ponds. When I approached Postage Stamp Wood a red popped out of the feeder and went up the tree. It must have been in there a while as when I went to empty all the detritus out of it, it was quite warm!

When I checked the camera later the pair of reds had really been messing about 11-14<sup>th</sup> and it was back to *'how do we get into this thing?'*

On the 14<sup>th</sup> they finally cracked it ... again!

And only today have they worked out that it is probably easier just to climb inside and munch away!



**23<sup>rd</sup>** – haven't been up to the plantations recently, but even from my house I can see that they are coming down.

Postage Stamp Wood – the reds there have now well and truly mastered the feeder

**28<sup>th</sup>** – in Postage Stamp Wood every last bit of food gone.

### **End of the period:**

Well Postage Stamp Wood is fine, but it's a case of sit and wait for the felling of Wyegill Plantation to finish and to see how Pithills Plantation is left. Then I can get back and look to put some feeders back up.

## **Kings Meaburn / Littlebeck + Sleagill + Newby**

**24<sup>th</sup> Dec** – Spoke to Dave Natrass today who tells me that he's not seen any greys in Barnholme Wood (Kings Meaburn) for a long time now

**13<sup>th</sup> Jan** – **NEWBY** – Jerry informed of a grey and dealing.

**7<sup>th</sup> Feb** – **Kings Meaburn** – a.m. red seen crossing the road north end of village

**23<sup>rd</sup> Feb** – **GREY** – **Kings Meaburn** - near Kelds farm

**27<sup>th</sup> Feb** – **\*\*X2 GREYS DESPATCHED\*\*** - **Kings Meaburn**, Keld farm  
However, Jerry did also see a third

## Oddendale + CastleHowe Scar

This is the plantation immediately on the left as you turn off the Shap to Crosby Ravensworth road to go down to Oddendale.

You wouldn't immediately think that it would support quite a large number of reds. Liz from Shap 'looks after' the reds here, popping up every other day or so to top up the feeders – at her own expense.

**15<sup>th</sup> Dec** – Janet Douglas, who lives nearby, tells me that they walk here every other day and often see two or three reds, but today they saw ... five

I let Liz know about the above and who then told me:

*"Oh, isn't that lovely! They may be more visible at the moment as yesterday I had to put the food in the feeders by the stile as the cows were around my own feeders. I've discovered who the 'stile' feeders belong to, by the way..... An elderly couple used to come regularly to put feed there, I haven't seen them since well before lockdown, could be ten years even, but I saw the husband there last week. His wife has now died but he says he still comes once or twice a month - up from Burneside!! - to put food there and sit and watch for a while!! How's that for dedication!" Liz*

**ED:** that is indeed dedication

**18<sup>th</sup> Feb** – saw x2 reds in the plantation this morning -- Andrew and Barbara Wallis

**26<sup>th</sup> Feb** – update from Liz – “I've moved the squirrel feeders to within a few feet of the stile, as the cattle in the plantation can be difficult to spot and are very enthusiastic and fast moving if they think you have food!

I have two cameras up too, not the best photos because they're not in a good position light-wise but as far as I can tell, there are no greys.....!

Also this week, from someone else I have been told that: seeing reds down at the bottom end of the wood near the quarry and also seeing reds moving in between the two woods (the one in red below)





## Morland

**There are a good number of woods hereabouts and all with reds, but greys are a constant nuisance in woods around Cross Rigg**

**1<sup>st</sup> Feb** – Jerry tells me that the greys just keep on coming to the woods around Cross Rigg.

Recently he cleared the wood of greys only for new ones to turn up about four days later

**unfortunately a distinct lack of news from the village – there will be news, but I'm just not receiving it**

**Darren Rogers 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024**