



CLARENCE HOUSE

21st January 2021 is Red Squirrel Awareness Day and, as Patron of the Red Squirrel Survival Trust, my thoughts turn naturally to all those throughout the United Kingdom who volunteer their skills and their time to fight for the survival of the red squirrel, and for native British trees, the natural woodland habitat in which it evolved.

Without your efforts, we simply could not hope to succeed in the task we have set ourselves. Generations to come would be denied the pleasure we take for granted in the healthy woods that are now threatened as never before, and of which the red squirrel is both the symbol and, by its presence, the benchmark.

As you will all know so well, these charming and intelligent creatures never fail to delight. I take enormous pleasure in having them around – and in! – the house when I am at home in Scotland. They are such inquisitive and delightful characters; they have even been known to hunt down a few of their favourite nuts left out in an unguarded jacket pocket!

I need hardly say that it is most encouraging when I see the thirty-nine organizations that make up the U.K. Squirrel Accord working together in harmony, and when I read of the Accord's advancing research into practical grey squirrel control. Above all, it is enormously heartening to encounter the passionate enthusiasm of the men and women who volunteer their time to protect woods and red squirrels against destruction.

I am so very grateful to all of you, as volunteers, for the crucial role you play in this ongoing battle to protect and restore a precious part of our natural heritage. This brings you all my warmest good wishes, together with every possible encouragement for the task ahead.