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Imagining Rabbits and Squirrels in the English Countryside

ABSTRACT

Drawing on contemporary coverage, particularly in *The Field* and *Country Life*, this article considers the construction of rabbits and squirrels as images of the past in England. By the 1930s, the red squirrel had become increasingly rare in the English countryside. Particularly in towns and suburbs, the population of the grey squirrel was growing rapidly. Those who saw themselves as the custodians of the countryside depicted the grey squirrel as a foreign force inimical to a mythical English way of life as epitomized by the red squirrel. In the post war period, the debate resurfaced about the nature of the countryside and who had a right to defend it. The focus then was upon the spread of myxomatosis from France, which was depicted as a foreign disease. Wild rabbits, who died in the thousands from this infection, became appropriated, as red squirrels before them, as symbols of a lyrical and ordered past in the countryside.

I want to start with a memory of childhood days in the 1950s countryside, walking around Buckhurst Hill and Loughton on the London/Essex borders. My parents and I were always looking for a red squirrel, hoping a grey squirrel with red bits was really a red one - and never finding the real thing. What we did see though were rabbits, diseased rabbits, except I was told not to look at the horrible sight of a rabbit dying painfully through myxomatosis.

When I started the research leading to this article, I first assumed that my memory was wrong, out of time. Surely, we could not have been looking for red squirrels, for they had become virtually extinct some 20 years earlier in almost all England and Wales - and certainly in the southeast. But, as I hope to show, there was a closer relationship between the idea of a red squirrel and a diseased rabbit than would first seem the case.

The Red Squirrel: Image and Reality

Nowadays, although we may recognize a red squirrel when we see one on an advertisement or Christmas card, that is the closest most of us in England will ever come to seeing such a creature. Currently, the only places in England where wild red squirrels are likely to be found are the Isle of Wight, Brownsea Island in Dorset, parts of the northeast and northwest, and parts of East Anglia.²

This scarcity of red squirrels is a relatively new phenomenon. As early as 1840, red squirrels were widespread and, consequently, were criticized for destroying young trees and subjected to summary shooting.³ Before the Great War, the red squirrel was so abundant and so destructive in some areas that shooting clubs were formed to kill them.⁴ By the 1920s, however, there was growing concern about the disappearance of the red squirrel in the wild.⁵ Although such concern was reflected both in the scientific and the “countryside press” of *Country Life* and *The Field*, only in the last 20 years - once “real” red squirrels were long dead and gone - has the red squirrel been consolidated as a motif of England’s heritage. At a time when the red squirrel no longer could be experienced as a living part of the actually existing countryside, the squirrel became a symbol representing a particular idea of England as a nation.⁶

The 1930s saw the origins of the construction of the red squirrel as an indigenous creature threatened by a foreign menace. By the 1950s, red squirrels had almost disappeared, and the grey squirrel was well established. It was in the more recent past that this “sleeping image” was resurrected as a symbol of tradition and nationality.⁷ The red squirrel has become iconic of the nation alongside such symbols of Englishness as red phone boxes, warm beer, and cricket bats.

The disappearance of the red squirrels from the English countryside was countered by their entry into the world of heritage stamps, Tufty club - a road safety campaign for children, hideous garden ornaments, Christmas cards, stuffed displays in provincial museums, and sponsorship of heritage competitions. In the jubilee year of 1977, postage stamps of five British wild animals were issued as examples of threatened wildlife: the hedgehog, hare, otter, badger, and red squirrel.⁸ The increasing visibility of red squirrels as benign characters - rather than destroyers of Highland timber - and as emblems of a mythic past has evolved from their absence as actually existing mammals.

The Friendly Grey Squirrel or Marauding American Tree Rat?

Frequently, the demise of the red squirrel was linked, incorrectly, to the spread of the grey squirrel. The grey squirrels were depicted as distinctive, not because of different colorings (often, they are brown with reddish patches at certain times of the year) but because they are “foreign,” non indigenous mammals. The grey squirrel often was referred to scathingly as an American tree rat.⁹

Although grey squirrels existed in England and Wales from 1830, their spread is usually attributed to the whims of various aristocrats releasing what were domestic pets into the wild, thereby distorting a “natural” environment.¹⁰ A. D. Middleton, who carried out his research on the grey squirrel with a grant from the Empire Marketing Board, was so concerned about the origins of grey squirrels that he catalogued more than 32 separate releases of squirrels into the countryside from 1876 to 1929.¹¹ The foreign origin of the squirrel was particularly important to him: “I know of more than one patriotic Englishman who has been embittered against the whole American nation on account of the presence of their squirrels in his garden.”¹²

Grey squirrels became very popular, however, because of their perceived friendliness and alertness. They rapidly became favorites with visitors to London parks, emulating the practice in Central Park in New York¹³ and were well established as such by the 1920s.¹⁴ The spread of the grey squirrel in the 1920s, particularly in London and the Home Counties, coincided with a severe decline in the red squirrel population. Scientists tended to view a causal relationship sceptically: The red squirrel population had declined because of

proclivity to certain diseases.¹⁵ “Countrymen” were less considered in their approach. As one declared, “This alien enemy (the grey squirrel) is said to be spreading fast throughout parts of the Home Counties, where, like all aliens it is rapidly dispossessing the native squirrel.”¹⁶

By 1931, countryside public concern, which took scant note of scientists’ opinions, was at its height about the possible demise of the red squirrel and the responsibility of the foreign grey for this deplorable state of affairs. Contributors to *Country Life* and *The Field*, obsessed with the perceived problem, enthusiastically wrote to the magazines about its extent. In a May 1931 *Country Life* lead article, the caption beneath a grey squirrel’s photograph characterized the squirrel as the “prisoner at the bar.”¹⁷

The Squirrel and the Nation in 1930s England

As I have argued elsewhere, the explanation for the popularity or vilification (or protection) of certain animals at different times owes less to the behavior of particular animals and more to broader political, social, and cultural concerns in human society.¹⁸ Campaigns to preserve the English countryside had been developed first in the late nineteenth century. As Octavia Hill, a leading member of the Commons Preservation Society and founder of the National Trust in 1895, expressed it: “Let the grass growing for hay be respected, let the primrose roots be left in their loveliness in the hedges, the birds unmolested and the gates [to paths] shut.”¹⁹

This concern for the countryside, however, took on new forms in the 1920s and 1930s. Although Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin’s 1926 speech, “On England,” has become almost a cliché through over-quoting, his organizing conceit is worth reiterating: “To me, England is the country, and the country is England.”²⁰ This rural idyll became a “key means of representing the nation.”²¹ In different ways, progressives and reactionaries alike were engaged in developing ideas of Englishness in which notions of land, landscape, and country were central. This period saw the establishment and growth of what became the League Against Cruel Sports, with its opposition to hunting wild animals in the countryside and, to counter its campaigns, the British Field Sports Society. Also created at this time were The Ramblers’ Association and British Workers’ Sports Federation, both of which challenged

the privatization of land and exclusion of walkers from the wild.²² In a different vein, Harold John Massingham, the forerunner of the modern ecological movement, looked to organic farming and the benign treatment of animals to create a new way of life: It was to the countryside that England had to look to find and consolidate its roots.²³

Views of Englishness and a return to the land were not confined to the left. Many English countryside enthusiasts looked to Nazi Germany for inspiration.²⁴ Henry Williamson, better known as the author of *Tarka the Otter* than for his fascism, made his own turn to the land in the 1930s working a farm in Norfolk in response to the system he proclaimed as, “made by townsmen, which cared little or nothing for the soil and the people. A nation that neglected its soil, neglected its soul; and its people would perish.”²⁵

The “battle” between the grey and red squirrel took place within this contest for the defining of the countryside within broader political cultures. The red squirrels, despite their previously acknowledged faults of destruction of trees, were constructed as an established symbol of an idyllic rural Britain. The grey squirrel was both alien - destroying indigenous culture - and liked by those seen as anathema to the countryside - people who lived in towns and the suburbs.²⁶ This division between town and suburb and the country was reflected in the heated exchanges in early 1931 in *The Field* and *Country Life*. Questions in parliament and a Ministry of Agriculture conference soon followed. Indeed, it was the very presence of grey squirrels in towns that led, some argued, to their endorsement by those possessing that apparent city characteristic of sentiment.²⁷ A hostile correspondent from Surrey recounted a tale of seeing a group of six grey squirrels being admired by a crowd in London’s Russell Square. “When I ventured to suggest that I should kill [them] with my stick the whole crowd seemed horrified.” The public, he went on, should be taught that the squirrels were, in fact, rats.²⁸

Those working in the countryside were not enchanted by squirrel antics: “These squirrel rats are everywhere and for every one shot there are 50 dancing defiance on the tree tops; skipping along fences or camouflaging themselves where nobody can see them.”²⁹ These foreign hordes were castigated for such crimes as attacking pheasant chicks, chewing up celandines, and eating - precisely - 174 young shoots and 252 cones from one fir tree.³⁰

This invasion represented more than the destruction of economic livelihood or cherished gardens: The spread of the grey squirrel was seen as a threat both to the actual indigenous red squirrel and to the embryonic mythical way of life the red represented. As a leading article in *The Field* suggested, "We are confronted today, in short, with the opening stages of a plague In a short time the whole face of England will have been invaded by a foreign rodent which is omnivorous."³¹ Farmers, concerned with the dumping of foreign sludge in British jams or vegetable imports that undermined the home market or the need for preferential tariffs within the empire, identified with the red squirrel against the grey squirrel as a metaphor of foreign destruction.³² According to the *Field*, the grey squirrel was an enemy of the farmer, the fruit grower, the naturalist, and the lover of English birds. Those who sought to kill the squirrels with a vigor more extensive than in the past were defending not just their livelihoods but a particular idea of Englishness and establishing *who* had a right to defend that idea.³³

Parliamentary debate balanced the countryside demands for wholesale slaughter with the preservation of grey squirrels in town parks.³⁴ In due course, a conference was held in May 1931 with representatives of farmers and rural local authorities together with those such as the National Trust and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds concerned with the preservation and creation of heritage. The conference thus represented a coming together of those defending a particular sort of English land both literally and metaphorically.³⁵ A key participant at the conference was the newly formed National Anti-Grey Squirrel Campaign run by L. Swainson from his home in Boxmoor in Hertfordshire, with the intention of reducing the squirrels to a vanishing point.³⁶ Some suggested the introduction of particular traps, recipes for grey squirrel pies, or "early rising and a gun."³⁷ The government confined its immediate activities to issuing an advisory leaflet through the Ministry of Agriculture, which felt it necessary to describe the grey squirrels - with prominent eyes and rather small ears - as if their appearance was not widely known. It advised forming squirrel clubs or "general vermin clubs" among landowners and farmers to kill the first squirrels who migrated into an area by shooting or trapping.³⁸

Post war Squirrels

In the post war period, the need to defend a particular notion of the land and the nation was set against the recent conflict, as H. J. Massingham suggested:

To be destroying the earth - birds, beasts, fishes, vegetation and, most of all, soil - in order to make money out of it, and for nearly every country in the world to be fighting either within itself or with other countries does not make sense.³⁹

By the 1950s, however, attempts to conserve the red squirrels as actually existing animals had almost perished, alongside the squirrels themselves.⁴⁰ But the invective against the grey squirrel remained.⁴¹ Even publications about British wildlife aimed at children discussed the best ways of destroying grey squirrels: "The poking down of dreys during winter months is an excellent method of combatting the grey squirrel, but the indiscriminate discharging of a cartridge into each drey first is not a sensible practice."⁴²

Reissuing its earlier advice leaflet in a revised form in 1954, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries expressed its own concern. Here was cold war rhetoric that inflamed fear of foreign invasion: "Every English county . . . has been entered." It "invades country," it "will fell standing corn"; in fruit areas, "it will eat fruit," it is a "frequent robber of birds' nests, taking both eggs and chicks." *English* animals - pheasants, partridges, and poultry - were declared the grey squirrel's "victims." In response, farmers were advised always to "carry a gun through squirrel infested land" (sic). A non-native animal and a half-breed at that, "an intermediate between two sub species,"⁴³ wreaked this havoc.

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Forestry Commission gave financial incentives to those killing grey squirrels. Cartridges were issued free to approved grey squirrel clubs; for those operating independently, 1/- (5p) was given per tail sent to the county pest officer in bundles of six.⁴⁴ Some relished the thought of using new poisons, ICI explosives, gas, and elaborate traps against the grey offenders.⁴⁵ Boys allegedly were removing tails from live squirrels. The Forestry commission advised enticing squirrels into sacks to kill them (probably haphazardly) through a blow to the head with a sharp stick.⁴⁶ Some members of Parliament, however, were critical of the cruelty involved - especially in the young queen's Coronation year (1953).⁴⁷ Attempts

to eradicate the grey squirrels nationwide were thwarted by the general sympathy exhibited toward them in towns. By early 1954, hysteria about the grey squirrel as a foreign invader had faded. Nevertheless, the idea of an English way of life being undermined by a foreign threat that affected wildlife remained, albeit expressed in different ways.

The Rabbit as a Symbol of an Enduring English Countryside

The wild rabbit started to be appropriated as an image of the past in the countryside and as a symbol of resistance to change. Due to a lack of gamekeepers and the ineffective work of council pest departments, the rabbit population had grown during and after the 1939-1945 war, despite the increased use of prussic acid and traps.⁴⁸ In addition, a foreign threat created a particular "moment" for the rabbit - in this case myxomatosis.⁴⁹ Fear of this invading disease and its effects, rather than an invading animal, aroused controversy. In 1936, Cambridge scientists first had attempted unsuccessfully to introduce myxomatosis deliberately to eradicate rabbits on the isle of Skokholm off the Pembrokeshire coast in Wales.⁵⁰ The first outbreak in England, however, was in October 1953 at Bough Beech, in Edenbridge on the Kent/Sussex borders. The strain of the virus present in English rabbits was traced to the work of Dr Armand Delille, a French scientist and landowner who had obtained the virus from diseased domestic rabbits in Brazil by way of Switzerland. Controversially, he deliberately had inoculated two rabbits on his land - and by the end of 1954, 90% of wild rabbits in France were dead.⁵¹

By October 1954, myxomatosis had spread to all except one of the counties of England and Wales and to 28 counties in Scotland.⁵² By May 1955, it was estimated that, depending on the locality, between 95% and 100% of wild rabbits in Britain had been killed.⁵³ This disease inflicted a slow and painful death on rabbits: They became both blind and deaf, lost their balance, and often staggered in distress for up to 14 days before dying. Myxomatosis was clearly welcomed by some farmers, several of whom encouraged its deliberate spread by forcibly removing infected rabbits to non-infected areas.⁵⁴ The government, however, decided to take no measures to stop its spread and refused to legislate against the deliberate transmission of the disease.⁵⁵

Many farmers and countryside dwellers as well as city people were appalled by the cruelty of the slaughter that was widely observed in the summer

months.⁵⁶ In the immediate post war period when the rabbit population had grown and there had been fierce debate about how to control its numbers, the intentional spread of this deadly disease had not even been discussed. For although rabbits could be a pest, they, nevertheless, were seen as part of the established order of the countryside, acting as food for foxes, predators of smaller animals, and cheap meals for people. Their removal heralded a shift in the natural balance of the countryside at a time when other significant changes were happening. Chemicals, especially DDT, and intensive farming, as exemplified by battery hens, were being introduced, and people were moving into the country from the towns.⁵⁷ It was this context of perceived change to a natural order and undermining of a particular notion of England that led even many devotees of *The Field* to be appalled by the role of people in spreading myxomatosis: "Can a man who inoculates one of God's creatures with a loathsome disease to save the headlands of his field automatically expect the same creator to bless the crop in the rest of the field"?⁵⁸

One of *The Field's* correspondents suggested injecting human spreaders of the disease with anthrax while others deplored the "torture" of rabbits in this way.⁵⁹ Animal welfare organizations intervened in different ways. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals killed suffering rabbits; the redoubtable Louise Lind af Hageby and her Animal Defence Society condemned the rising tide of cruelty to animals that the 1950s heralded.⁶⁰ A parliamentary petition of more than 126,000 signatures was collected in a few weeks, calling for the outlawing of the spread of the disease. Petitioners were concerned both about protracted and widespread suffering and the dangers of germ and virus warfare.⁶¹ The rabbit - like the red squirrel before - had become an object of human interest epitomizing an earlier, less brutal world.

In my opening story, my memory was not at fault. There was an elision between the red squirrel and the rabbit. We *were* looking for a red squirrel, already a symbol of an earlier time when nasty things like eye-popping disease in rabbits (and world war and nuclear annihilation) did not exist. The squirrel and the rabbit were both symbols of a particular sort of innocence. What we actually saw was an example of a brutalizing present.

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Notes

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- ² H. G. Lloyd, 'Past and Present Distribution of Red and Grey Squirrels,' *Mammal Review*, vol. 13 nos 2/3/4 1983, pp. 69-80; John Gurnell, *The Natural History of Squirrels*, 1987, p. 161; 'The Red Squirrel', Joint Nature Conservation Committee and NPI, 1998.
- ³ George Waring, *The Squirrels and Other Animals*, London, 1840, p. 7.
- ⁴ Gurnell, *Natural History of Squirrels*, p. 162. The prolific Highlands red squirrel was so disregarded as a creature worth preserving that it became recommended as a tasty wartime dish since its flesh exhibited 'an ineradicable "piney" flavour' drawn from its diet of conifers. L. C. R. Cameron, *The Wild Foods of Great Britain*, Routledge, London, 1917.
- ⁵ Cpt. C. W. R. Knight, *Wild Life in the Tree Tops*, Thornton Butterworth, London, 1921, pp. 49-50; Gurnell, *The Natural History of Squirrels*, p. 162.
- ⁶ Cpt. C. W. R. Knight, *Wild Life in the Tree Tops*, Thornton Butterworth, London, 1921, pp. 49-50; Gurnell, *The Natural History of Squirrels*, p. 162. See Hilda Kean, 'Save "our" red squirrel: kill the American grey tree rat' in eds. Hilda Kean, Paul Martin and Sally Morgan, *Seeing History. Public History in Britian Now*, Francis Boutle, 2000, pp. 51-64 for an exploration of this idea.
- ⁷ Raphael Samuel, Introduction: 'Exciting to be English' in Raphael Samuel ed. *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, vol. 1. Routledge, London, 1989, p. xxxii.
- ⁸ David Black, 'British Wildlife,' *British Philatelic Bulletin*, vol. 15 no. 2 October 1977, pp. 13-14.
- ⁹ F. Howard Lancum, *Wild Animals and the Land*, 1947, p. 69; Eric Leyland, *Wild Animals*, 1955, p. 63.
- ¹⁰ The Duke of Bedford who was responsible for releasing grey squirrels into Woburn Park and Regents' Park was seen as a particular culprit. A. D. Middleton, *The Grey Squirrel*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1931, pp. 14-21; Boyd Watt, 'On the American Grey Squirrel', *The Essex Naturalist*, vol. 20, 1923, p. 192.
- ¹¹ 18 A. D. Middleton, *The Grey Squirrel*, 1931, p. 22. See too Hugh Boyd Watt, 'On the American Grey Squirrel in the British Isles'. *The Essex Naturalist*, vol. 20, 1923, pp. 189-205.
- ¹² 19 A. D. Middleton, *The Grey Squirrel*, 1931, p. 1.

- ¹³ Ernest T. Seton, 'Migration of the Gray Squirrel,' *Journal of Mammalogy*, vol. 1:2 February 1920, p. 56.
- ¹⁴ By 1922 the British government was considering introducing bird sanctuaries in London's royal parks and recognised the potential conflict of interest between rare birds and marauding squirrels. Eradication, however, of the squirrels was rejected outright as an option because public opinion in their favour was already so established. Ministry of Works Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in Royal Parks, *Bird Sanctuaries in Royal Parks*, HMSO, London, 1922, p. 5.
- ¹⁵ Middleton, *Grey Squirrel*, p. 75; Gurnell, *Natural History*, p. 162; I. F. Keyner, 'Diseases of Squirrels in Britain,' *Mammal Review*, vol. 13 nos 2/3/4, 1983, p. 155; Lloyd, 'Past and Present distribution,' p. 69; Boyd Watt, *On the American Grey Squirrel*, p. 203.
- ¹⁶ Cameron, *Wild Foods of Great Britain*, p. 21.
- ¹⁷ 'The Grey Squirrel', *Country Life*, May 23rd, 1931, p. xlviii.
- ¹⁸ Hilda Kean, *Animal Rights. Political and Social Change in Britain since 1800*, Reaktion Books 1998 (paperback 2000).
- ¹⁹ William Thomson Hill, *Octavia Hill. Pioneer of the National Trust and Housing Reformer* (London, 1956) p. 148.
- ²⁰ Stanley Baldwin, 'On England' in Stanley Baldwin, *On England*, Philip Allan, London 1926, pp. 6-7.
- ²¹ Sophie Breese, 'In Search of Englishness; in Search of Votes' in Eds. John Arnold, Kate Davies and Simon Ditchfield, *History and Heritage*, Donhead, Shaftesbury, 1998, p. 156.
- ²² Kean, *Animal Rights*, pp. 185-7; Letter from James Fitzwilliam, *The Field*, 4 July 1931; *Cruel Sports* vol. IV: 9 September 1930, p. 73.
- ²³ David Wilkinson, 'Pioneering Champion of Ecology: The Life and Work of H. J. Massingham (1888-1952),' *Country Life*, August 18, 1977; Edward Abelson ed., *A Mirror of England. An Anthology of the Writings of H. J. Massingham*, Green Books, Devon, 1988; Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th century*, Yale University Press, 1989, pp. 125-130.
- ²⁴ Patrick Wright, *The Village That Died for England. The Strange Story of Tynemouth*, London, 1996, pp. 150-194; Philip Coupland, 'The Blackshirted Utopians', *Journal of Contemporary History* 33: 2 April 1998, p. 266.
- ²⁵ Henry Williamson, *The Story of a Norfolk Farm*, 1941, pp. 186-7.
- ²⁶ For Middleton a problem, was that grey squirrels *were* popular in towns. They were 'ideal "park animals"', but outside their native country there was 'no limit to [their] depredations'. A. D. Middleton, 'The Grey Squirrel,' *Empire Forestry Journal* Vol. 10: 1 1931, p. 15 See also A. D. Middleton, 'The Grey Squirrel in the British Isles,' *Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, vol. xxxvii no. 11 February 1931, p. 1078.
- ²⁷ Bournemouth was reputedly being over run and the squirrel was 'regarded with

- favour by occupants of perambulators and by dear old ladies of both sexes.' Editorial article *The Field*, 28 March 1931, p. 420.
- ²⁸ Letter from D. W. Laker, Coulsdon, Surrey, *The Field*, June 20th 1931, p. 901.
- ²⁹ Letter from Wentworth, Crawley, *The Field*, 23rd May 1931, p. 745.
- ³⁰ Letter from John Balden, Bretton, Wakefield, *The Field*, 21 March 1931, p. 398; Letter from J. C. Handcross, Hampstead Heath, *The Field*, April 18th 1931, p. 551; Letter from A. J. Smith, Hertford, *The Field*, 25th April 1931, p. 587.
- ³¹ 'The Menace of Grey Squirrels,' *The Field*, 21 February 1931, p. 239.
- ³² Editorials, *The Field*, 23 May 1931, p. 731; 31 October 1931, p. 645, 'The Agreements at Ottawa,' *Country Life*, August 27th 1932, p. 227.
- ³³ Editorial, *The Field*, 7th November 1931.
- ³⁴ *Hansard* vol. 246, 8th December 1930, pp. 49-51; vol. 249, 2 March 1931, pp. 19-20; vol. 251, 20 April 1931 pp. 598-9; vol. 252, 21 May 1931, pp. 2192-3.
- ³⁵ *Hansard* vol. 252, 14 May 1931, pp. 1367-8.
- ³⁶ 'Menace of Grey Squirrels' *The Field*, 21 February 1931, p. 239; 16 May 1931, p. 693.
- ³⁷ Cheviot, 'The Menace of Grey Squirrels,' *The Field*, 23 May 1931 p. 740; letter from Richard Hale, *The Field*, 21 November 1931, p. 781; 'The Grey Squirrel,' *Country Life*, 23 May 1931, p. xlvi.
- ³⁸ *The Grey Squirrel*, Ministry of Agriculture Advisory Leaflet no. 58 1931. Although legislation was introduced in 1931 against destructive 'non-indigenous animals' the creature which bore the brunt of the law was the muskrat. (Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932, which became law in March 1932. *Hailsbury's Statutes* vol. 2 1991).
- ³⁹ H. J. Massingham, *The Wisdom of the Fields*, 1945, pp. 251-2 as printed in ed. Edward Abelson, *A Mirror of England*, 1988, p. 187.
- ⁴⁰ Lt. Col. Sir Richard Cottrell (Chair of Forestry Committee on the grey squirrel) 'Three against the grey squirrel,' *The Field*, 7 January 1954, pp. 12-3. He described last seeing a red squirrel in September 1946.
- ⁴¹ C. M. Morrison, 'The Campaign against Vermin,' *The Field*, 26 February 1953, p. 331.
- ⁴² Richard L. E. Ford, *British Wild Animals*, London 1953, p. 75. It also recommends that children fix a Kindhart trap over a garden shed to kill the grey squirrels by shock!
- ⁴³ The Ministry accepted that the considerable fluctuations in numbers of red squirrels were probably caused by disease. *The Grey Squirrel*, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Leaflet no. 58, Revised Edition 1954. H. G. Lloyd, 'Past and Present Distribution of Red and Grey Squirrels', *Mammal Review*, vol. 13 nos. 2/3/4, 1983, p. 75.
- ⁴⁴ Robert Colville 'A Shilling for a tail,' *The Field*, 19 March 1953, p. 467, *Hansard* vol. 508, 4 December 1952, pp. 1739-40, vol. 514, 23 April 1953, pp. 1382-3.

- ⁴⁵ Colville 'A shilling for a tail,' *The Field* 19 March 1953, p. 467; The shooting editor 'The grey squirrel menace' *The Field* 12 March 1953, pp. 406-7; 'Squirrel trap campaign' *The Field*, 7 May 1953, p. 763; Lord Dorchester 'The grey squirrel war' *The Field* 3 December 1953, p. 1010. Joy was also expressed about the recent introduction of warfarin to kill rats (C. M. Morrison 'Campaign against Vermin' *The Field*, 26 February 1953, p. 331; J. K. Stanford, 'A plea for plain speaking' *The Field*, 19 March 1953, p. 455); F. Howard Lancum, *Wild Animals and the Land*, 1947, p. 66ff.
- ⁴⁶ *Hansard* 11 June 1953, pp. 27-8; 2 July 1953, p. 572.
- ⁴⁷ W. R. Williams thought it despicable especially in Coronation year to deprive 'these poor things of their tails' *Hansard*, vol. 514, 23 April 1953, pp. 1382-3.
- ⁴⁸ J. M. Herrington 'Gas against the rabbit pest' *The Field*, 12 March 1953, p. 418; U. F. A. W. 'Living on the Farmer's Charity' 1946; F. Howard Lancum, *Wild Animals and the Land*, 1947, pp. 52-55.
- ⁴⁹ See Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Advisory Committee on Myxomatosis *Myxomatosis. Second Report of the Advisory Committee on Myxomatosis* HMSO, London 1955.
- ⁵⁰ Frank Fenner and F. N. Ratcliffe, *Myxomatosis*, CUP 1963, p. 308.
- ⁵¹ Frank Fenner and F. N. Ratcliffe, *Myxomatosis*, CUP 1963, pp. 317, 322.
- ⁵² *Hansard* vol. 520, 19 November 1953, p. 183; vol. 531, 21 October 1954, p. 1370.
- ⁵³ *Hansard* vol. 529, 1 July 1954, p. 1502, vol. 540, 2 May 1955, p. 1324.
- ⁵⁴ E. S. Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage*, Centaur, West Sussex, 1992, pp. 310-312; *Hansard* vol. 527, 13 May 1954, p. 1426; J. K. Stanford 'The changing year' *The Field*, 15 July 1954, p. 111.
- ⁵⁵ T. Dugdale Minister of Agriculture, *Hansard* vol. 529, 1 July 1954, p. 1502; Mr. Amory, Minister of Agriculture *Hansard*, vol. 531, 21 October 1954, p. 1370.
- ⁵⁶ C. A. Nunn letter to *The Field*, 29 July 1954, p. 218.
- ⁵⁷ *Hansard* vol. 517, 14 July 1953, p. 152; J. K. Stanford 'A Plea for plain speaking' *The Field*, 19 March 1953, p. 455 (on warfarin); John L. Hunt 'Safer Sprays for farm crops' *The Field*, 21 May 1953, p. 832 (on the safety of DDT); Ralph Whitlock 'For and Against the Hen Battery' *The Field*, 5 November 1953, pp. 796-7; editorial 'The drift from the towns' *The Field*, 27 May 1954.
- ⁵⁸ K. V. Howe, Tean, Staffs, letter to *The Field*, 9 September 1954, p. 477.
- ⁵⁹ C. A. Nunn letter *The Field*, 29 July 1954, p. 218; R. J. Flexman letter *The Field*, 16 September 1954, p. 528, Henry Duckworth letter *The Field*, 10 December 1953, p. 1005.
- ⁶⁰ RSPCA leaflet as reproduced in Frank Fenner and F. N. Ratcliffe, *Myxomatosis* CUP 1963, p. 325; Louise Lind af Hageby, *Civilisation: 'charity' and justice to animals*, 1953, pp. 3, 24; Louise Lind af Hageby, *You and the Animals in Peace and War*, 1947, pp. 139-141.
- ⁶¹ *Hansard* vol. 532, 3 November 1954, p. 349.