

Country Notes for December 2025

Walking through the fields with Bracken and Tilly a few days ago, as the afternoon light was fading, I saw what appeared to be a group of brown and white birds flying low over the field with an up and down motion similar to that of a woodpecker. However, these birds seemed quite large. It was not until they were right in front of me that I realised that it was not a flock of birds at all but a group of four roe deer. These deer, rather than running straight, always have a bouncing motion and in the dimming light I had initially been confused about what they were. The white markings that I had witnessed were their white bob tails as they ran to get away from me and my two spaniels.

In the past our villages were home to only the odd passing deer but we clearly have a few that are now resident as it is not the first time that I have seen them. The group on this occasion were all does but I have also seen a buck at least once. Large numbers of deer can be quite destructive, eating and killing young trees. However the few that we have in our villages are definitely not a problem and I find it quite a thrill to see them.

Roe deer are relatively small in comparison to fallow and red deer. Muntjac and Chinese water deer are much smaller and about the size of a large dog. With their white bob tails there was no doubt that these were roe deer.

As far as I know these are the only deer to have been seen in our villages – with one exception. There have been reports most years of a small group of reindeer being seen, but interestingly only over the Christmas period. They are quite tame and often associated with a man in a red coat with a long white beard. The man himself has often been seen on people's rooftops examining their chimneys. However, I have been told that he is quite harmless and there is absolutely no need to call the police. If you have never seen a reindeer the only wild herd of reindeer in the country is on Cairngorm Mountain in Scotland. I have enjoyed seeing them on many occasions but my older spaniel Bracken hides behind me when they approach. Some guard dog!

A very merry Christmas to you all!

Andrew G Snowden