Red Deer Stag

The red deer is the largest deer in Britain. Red deer can be seen today at Windsor Great Park, the remains of an ancient hunting forest which once extended over much of eastern Berkshire. They are at their most spectacular during the autumn rut, when the stags roar and fight one another for control of herds of females.

Berkshire is famous for its deer: the stag is the symbol of the county and is shown in its emblem. Several other species – the roe, fallow and muntjac – can be found here. The males can be recognised by the different shapes of their antlers. Male red deer have branched antlers with many points; fallow deer have the end of the antler flattened like a hand; roe deer have short antlers with a few points and a knobbly base; muntjac have tiny antlers with just one or two points.

This stag was presented to the museum by King George V, together with a hind and calf, from the royal herd at Windsor. They were stuffed by the taxidermy firm Rowland Ward, of Piccadilly, London. Most of the internal parts of the body were removed but part of the skull and teeth are still there. The skin was supported on a dummy frame of wire, padding and plaster, and anchored to a base. At the time this stag was killed, almost 90 years ago, it was common practice to shoot animals for display. Today, opinion has changed, and Reading Museum Service does not kill any birds, mammals or fish for display purposes.

Reference

Gordon B. Corbet and Stephen H. Harris. (eds).

The handbook of British mammals, (1991).

Brian Staines, The red deer, (1980).



Red deer stag
Object no. 1995.144.45.1=2

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