

Reserves Update from Fiona Scully (February 2021)

I've recently started my role as South Downs Landscape Officer for BC. This means I'm responsible for managing MHD and Yew Hill nature reserves. A key part of this role is to influence the wider management of the South Downs landscape through working in partnership with other organisations and landowners and delivering collaborative projects.

A lot of ground work is already underway identifying land where we can work with landowners to restore habitat and demonstrate best management, providing more suitable habitat to connect key downland sites. The intention is to strengthen the populations of our highest priority species - namely the Duke of Burgundy, Striped Lynchis, Small Blue and the Adonis Blue - in the Hampshire region. This is building on the great work that's already been achieved by volunteers and keeps us rallying on to safeguard as much land as we possibly can to ensure the survival of our butterflies and their intricate life cycles.

It's frustrating that we've not been able to continue with practical scrub clearance on the reserves this winter. But livestock have now returned to Magdalen Hill Down, the transects should be able to continue and I will definitely need volunteers to help with plant and butterfly surveys on the sites and surrounding area. Please get in touch if you are interested in getting involved - volunteering@butterfly-conservation.org.

Meanwhile, at Bentley Station Meadow, Natural England assessed the condition of the site in the summer and have reported that the Site of Special Scientific Interest is in favourable condition, which is great news. If you have any comments or queries regarding this reserve, please contact Steve Wheatley (swheatley@butterfly-conservation.org)