

Tadnoll and Winfrith Heathland Heritage Traineeship



Bracken Bruising



Over this summer I have been involved with a variety of tasks and experiences that have helped me develop new skills and gain a greater understanding for the work that I am doing, which is so important for Dorset's wildlife. The summer tasks are extremely varied and I started with fenceline construction. This is a key task to ensuring our reserves are secure and that conservation livestock don't escape. I enjoyed this work as upon completing the task there is something tangible to show for it. I then moved onto completing a variety of surveys with the team: butterfly transects (including a silver-spotted skipper survey), reptile and dormouse surveys which was great to encounter all the reptile species on our heathlands; although I am yet to see a dormouse! Another species I have had the chance to be involved with is the ladybird spiders on Winfrith Heath. This was extremely interesting to work with such a rare species and rewarding to be helping the process of restoring their numbers there.

I have also had to work with new equipment such as the BCS pedestrian mower, the quadbike with bracken bruiser attached as well as the Kubota mini tractor with the flail, which we used for keeping scrub encroachment in check and fire defendable lines clear on our heathlands such as Winfrith. Getting to grips with these essential bits of equipment has been incredibly useful and are key for any future work I may need them for.

Lastly, I have been able to use my drone with the Dorset Wildlife Trust's ecologist in order to take aerial stills of some of our sites. This will allow us to monitor the success of our management. I have also taken photographs of DWT's beaver re-introduction enclosure site. It will be very interesting to take further aerial photographs in the future to see the effect they have had on the ecology there.

