

How many moths live in a churchyard ?

Well, we didn't know until two enthusiasts, Michele Beverley and Lindsey Bowes came along with their moth trapping kit.

The churchyard at St Mary's, Marton-on- the Forest has become a lovely flowery meadow over the last few years, as Sarah Sigsworth has managed its development. We have seen a lot of butterflies this summer. But what would the night life be like?



Recently on a calm, clear summer evening I had the pleasure of watching moths fluttering around as they were drawn to the lights of the monitoring traps such as this. Once attracted to the UV light they sought a dark place to rest, like the underside of the egg box. Each one was then carefully transferred into a collecting box, taken home, photographed and released in the early morning. Normally the monitoring traps are left out overnight, but with three traps, over a 2 hour period 98 individuals representing 21 species were caught. What a rich moth population.

They are beautiful creatures, with some equally wonderful names. These were the three most common.



Common rustic by Lindsey



Setaceous Hebrew Character by Lindsey



Dingy Footman by Michele

Many thanks to Sarah Sigsworth for creating the moth friendly churchyard and to Lindsey Bowes and Michele Beverley for revealing the rich night life and taking such stunning photos.

Margaret Price