

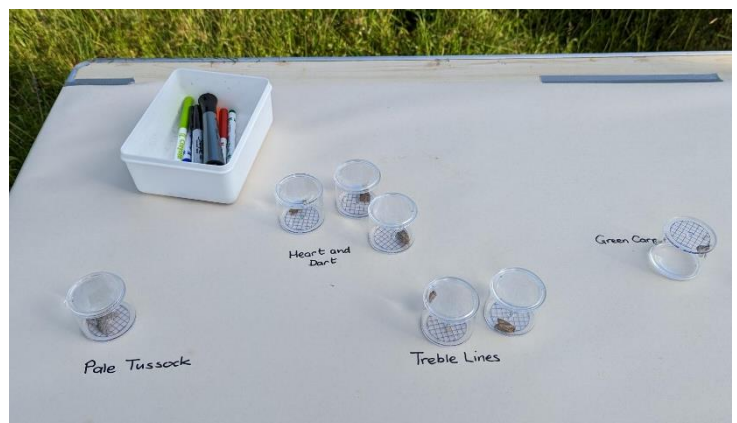
How about doing a Moth Breakfast?

Having been running a moth trap in Trusham Churchyard every few weeks for a year, I wanted to do a moth event so that others could enjoy seeing some of them too. I cannot stay up late in the evening, so I put the idea aside until earlier this year I saw that Ogwild had run a "Moth Breakfast" and I decided this might work for Trusham. It was suggested I should write up what we did for anyone interested in having a go next year!

First, you need someone who can identify the majority of moths at sight. I was told about Sam Grey, who lives in the Teign Valley and who had done an evening event at Dunsford. I was blessed when he agreed to be our expert for the event. We had an onsite meeting to plan where three different traps would go – two mercury vapour and one blue actinic - as they need to be out of sight of each other so as not to confuse the moths. I was also fortunate to have a team of people willing to help with the breakfast side of things as well as other Wildlife Wardens staffing one of the three tables with the traps.

We advertised two dates, using Chudleigh School's newsletter as one avenue of publicity as well as within the parish of Trusham. In the event we were 'good to go' on Saturday 3rd June. We set the traps on the Friday evening and left them to lure the moths in. Meanwhile, the hall next door was set up ready for the 30 people who had booked in to have a continental style breakfast.

Early on Saturday, even before sunrise, Sam was back in the churchyard, going through the traps to note down every species found. I joined him a little later and we put some of the more interesting ones into identification pots (with magnifying tops) and put



them on the table we'd set up next to each trap and onto which we had stuck wallpaper lining paper. We wrote the species of moth next to each pot, like this Green Carpet. All the duplicates and some of the more 'ordinary' ones, Sam left on the egg boxes and replaced them in the traps.

7.30am came, along with all those who had booked to come. We gathered in the village hall next door for the welcome, an explanation of how the event would work and the basic health and safety information required of events organised by Wildlife Wardens (and, yes, I had completed a Risk Assessment which was agreed by Audrey before the event). Then everyone was invited to go into the churchyard and go to one of the three traps to see what had been found, being able to pick up the pot and have a good look at each moth. People could move round and see them all. Finally, they were given the opportunity to try potting up the rest of the moths, getting help identifying them (lots of ID books to help), putting them on the tables and writing the species next to it so everyone knew what each moth was.





It had been a clear but cold night, so we only had 45 species (we didn't bother to keep a tally of how many of each) but, of those 45, 22 were new species for the churchyard! One being this Small Elephant Hawk-moth. People were absolutely fascinated and enjoyed being hands on at potting moths and identifying them. But after about an hour, the cold was beginning to tell, so a warm welcome with drinks, croissants, pain aux chocolate and toast with a lovely variety of jams and marmalades was enjoyed in the hall.

We decided not to charge but to ask for a small donation to cover the cost of the food and, judging by the amount we raised, people had thoroughly enjoyed themselves and been amazed at how much wildlife there is around us that we normally don't see.

It worked really well – better than we had expected in many ways - so I'd recommend it to other Wardens with a particular area where it would work. You do need to have someone who knows their moths better than I do as you can't spend time doing each identification before the people arrive. You need to know them by sight or perhaps just check the odd ones that could be confusing against the ID books.



My particular thanks to Sam and to the Wardens and other helpers who made the event into such a success.