

Moles in Lyng cemetery.

The Council reviewed its decision in June 2022 that it would not seek to kill the moles in Lyng Cemetery. Although moles make hills which some people consider unsightly, killing moles is costly and ineffective. When the moles in an area are killed others quickly move in to colonise the now-empty space. Instead moles should be seen as part of the natural wildlife of the cemetery.

Moles (*Talpidae*) are members of a species very commonly found throughout Britain. They can sometimes be seen moving across the surface of the ground, but usually their presence is known by molehills. These are heaps of soil dug out from their burrows. Moles are constantly moving along their tunnels searching for earthworms and do live inside the hills. As they move in the top 18 inches of soil, moles do not damage burials. The presence of moles is normally beneficial to the natural landscape. Moles turn and aerate the soil, making it more fertile, accelerating the growth of new grass and help drainage. The soil of their molehills is excellent for growing new plants.

Moles eat mostly earthworms with a few kinds of nuts. They do not eat roots of plants, though they may dislodge them by accident. Their tunnels are found generally in the top foot or so below the surface. Moles do not dig vertical shafts. The removal of molehills is not a problem for moles.

Molecatchers were a common sight in Victorian Britain: they caught moles for their skins, not exterminate them. Earth does not cling to mole fur, so moleskin trousers were popular with canal and railway navvies. In the early 20th century Queen Alexandra ordered a moleskin coat and thus turned a working class trade into high fashion. Molecatchers naturally were careful not to exterminate their source of income. Moles were not hunted for food, as they have a foul taste.

Moles were considered a pest in landscaped parks because it was considered that molehills spoilt the appearance of green lawns. Later with the introduction of mechanised farming there was concern that the uneven ground created when molehills were thrown up might damage farming equipment.