

Plant Records, 2016.

The *Flora of Staffordshire* dealt with records made up until the end of 2011. This short account is the fifth annual report listing some of the more interesting results of later fieldwork.

Dates are all 2016, unless stated otherwise.

New records for VC39

- Acaena ovalifolia* SJ8045, at base of hedge, growing above a wall, Keele, I.J. Hopkins.
Acer pensylvanicum SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus, IJH.
A. capillipes SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus, IJH.
A. tataricum SO9098, roundabout ring road, Wolverhampton, P. Newton.
Cardamine quinquefolia SJ7832, naturalised on lane bank, Ginger Lane, Croxton, M.F. Godfrey.
Cercidiphyllum japonicum SJ8244, two places in Barnes Dell, Keele University, IJH.
Choisya ternata SP0293, long established large shrub over several m, by bridge over river, Sandwell Valley, PN.
Cotoneaster cochleatus SO9199, widespread on waste ground. Prostrate, PN.
Disanthus cercidifolius SJ8244, Barnes Dell, Keele University, IJH.
Euphrasia pseudokernerii SK0956, SW slope of Wetton Hill, Manifold Valley, MFG. Mainly recorded from southern and eastern England; there is only one record further N in Britain than this.
Fraxinus americana SJ8244, Springpool Wood, Keele University, IJH.
Geranium x oxonianum var. thurstoniana SJ9357, S. of Lea Laughton, E roadside verge opposite houses, two separate patches, J.E. Hawksford.
Iris reticulata SO9199, 1m x 2m patch, roadside amenity grassland, Wolverhampton, PN.
Magnolia liliiflora 'Nigra' SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus, IJH.
Phygelius capensis SO9198, likely relict, entrance to derelict offices, Wolverhampton, PN.
Pterocarya x rehderiana SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus, IJH.
Rhododendron x kosteranum SJ8244, "Azalea mollis" forms, Barnes Dell, Keele University, IJH.
Rumex x knafii (= *R. conglomeratus x maritimus*) SK2219, Branston Leas Nature Reserve. Trashed by cattle, but appears to be this taxon. Root taken to grow on for final confirmation, M.E. Smith.
Saxifraga x arendsii SK0437, wall, N roadside, by waste ground, Fole, JEH.
Smyrniium perfoliatum SO9494, small colony in a patch of rough ground behind railings along the approach to Clayton Playing Fields, at the S end of Gough Road, Coseley, M. Scarrott.
Sorbus hupehensis SJ8244, young tree by fence line close to the lake and footpath not far from Keele Hall, IJH.
Stewartia pseudocamellia SJ8233, planted in Keele University grounds, IJH.
Styrax japonica SJ8244, planted in campus grounds of Keele University, IJH.
Tiarella cordifolia SJ8244, established in Barnes Dell, E of Keele University, IJH.
Urtica membranacea SJ8850, NW side of Ford Green Road, Smallthorne, S.R. Hinsley.
X Dactyloglossum mixtum (Coeloglossum viride x Dactylorhiza fuchsii) SK0847, near Wardlow Quarry, Rue Hill, R. Pugh

Species seen again after a gap of several years

- Hieracium dentulum* SK1353, 3 plants, Hall Dale, 2015, R. Smith. First record since 1980.
H. peccense SK1353, Hall Dale, 2016, T.C.G. Rich. First record since 1954.
Salix udensis SJ7948, bank of Minnie Lake, coal mining reclamation area. Likely to be 'Sekka', SRH. First record since 1979.
S. x mollisma var. undulata SJ8517, by pond N of Greenfields Farm, near Church Eaton, SRM. First record since the nineteenth century.

New tetrads for rarer taxa

The following have been seen in a total of less than about seven tetrads, since 1994.

- Acanthus mollis* SO8286, naturalised on verge, N of Kinver, A.P. Daly.
Acer negundo SJ7949, introduced by side of former railway, now a greenway with a path, Halmer End, IJH. Also SJ8244, two groups of several trees planted close together either side of the footpath by

the lakes, Keele University, IJH. Also SO9098, one small planted tree, side of car park, Wolverhampton, PN.

Asarina procumbens SO9337, walltop, Moddershall Oaks, Lichfield Wildlife Group.

Calocedrus decurrens SJ8144, Keele University campus, IJH.

Cardamine corymbosa SJ8245, shrub border, Keele University campus, IJH. Also SJ8750, by main pool, Burslem Park, SRH.

Cotoneaster dammeri SO9687. large patch on wall between canal and factory yard, Old Hill, JEH.

Crocus flavus SO9198, roadside grass verge, Wolverhampton, PN.

Cupressus macrocarpa SP0394, several planted, Red House Park, Grove Vale, PN.

Cynoglossum officinale SJ9422, single plant growing from the side of a bridge at Baswich, IJH.

Doronicum x excelsum SJ9422, patch near to the canal towpath, near Baswich, IJH.

Dryopteris x complexa SK0958, Ecton Hill. Spores checked microscopically, MFG.

Epilobium x vicinum SK0224164661, roadside E of Goldstone Moss, M. Wilcox.

Eranthis hyemalis SJ9223, self-sown between fallen grave stones and scattered about mown turf at St. Mary's Church.. Also young plants in mown turf on bank in Victoria Park, Stafford, SJ9222, IJH.

Escallonia x langleyensis SO9198, likely relict. grass verge by road, Wolverhampton, PN.

Eucalyptus gunnii SP0292, two single mature trees, edge of golf course, Sandwell Valley, PN.

Galanthus elwesii SO9199, several patches, roadside grass verge/amenity grassland, Wolverhampton, PN.

Geranium psilostemon SJ9356, W road verge, Gratton, JEH.

Ginkgo biloba SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus. Quite young, six in total, IJH. Also: SO9098, 9 street trees, Wolverhampton, PN.

Helichrysum italicum SO9187, footpath above railway bridge, Brierley Hill, J. Hough.

Hieracium britannicum SK1354, 8 or more flowering plants, S facing outcrops by car park, Sunny Bank, Mill Dale, 2015, RS. Also SK1353, Hall Dale, TCGR.

H. daedalolepioides SK0847, scattered about on regraded limestone spoil slopes to the S of the active Wardlow Quarry. Often with *Ophrys* & *Leontodon hispidus*, IJH.

Juncus ranarius SK0263, three patches, roadsides, NE of Upper Hulme. Also: SK0466 & 0567, roadsides, W of Hollinsclough. Also: SK0268, roadside, Axe Edge. Also: SK0565, roadside, SW of Hollinsclough. All MW.

Lavandula angustifolia SO9198, relict, or spreading, by ring road, Wolverhampton, PN.

Lysimachia ciliata SJ8545, purple-leaved form growing at the foot of a street tree, E of Keele University, IJH.

Malus baccata x prunifolia 'John Downie' SP0294, many scattered trees, Tame Valley, Grove Vale. Probably bird sown, PN.

Mespilus germanica SJ8244, planted in campus grounds of Keele University & Keele Woods, IJH.

Nothofagus alpina SJ8244, one tree at top of bank to W of marshy hollow, Keele Woods, overlooking Barnes Dell, IJH.

Paulownia tomentosa SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus, IJH.

Persicaria amplexicaulis SJ7624, roadside hedge, Weston Jones, PN.

Pinus pinaster SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus, IJH.

P. radiata SP0292, single tree, secondary woodland, Sandwell Valley, PN.

Polypogon monspeliensis SJ8745, two patches, Stoke station car park, SRH.

Primula x pruhonicensis SP0394, several, probably 'Wanda', some stolen, canal bank, Grove Vale, PN.

Pterocarya fraxinifolia SJ8244, between two of the Keele University lakes, IJH.

Rubus spectabilis SJ8144, thicket by a path S of the Keele University allotment plots. Also: SJ8244, suckering clump (2-3 sq m) near path, Keele Woods & thicket at the N end of the most northerly of the Keele Lakes. Also: SJ9911, forming part of a hedge between fence and stream path (with fruit) E of Cannock, between Blackfords and Hawks Green. All IJH.

Rumex x dufftii (= *R. obtusifolius x sanguineus*) SK0229, a couple of plants, W roadside ditchside, W of Kingstone, JEH.

Salix acutifolia SJ8515, in hedgerow on path to Rusty Pitts Pool, Little Onn, S.R. Moore.

Samolus valerandi SK2219, on muddy, grassy, cattle-poached margin of pool: two on S side and two on N side. Branston Lees N.R., D. Wall & A.M. Pettigrew.

Sasa palmata SK0108, well established patch in wooded damp area behind houses, Norton Canes, PN.

Staphylea pinnata SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus, IJH.

Stellaria pallida SK1209, edge of pavement,, N roadside of A5127, Lichfield, MES. Also: SK251229, patchy mown grassland by conifers, N side of Library Drive, Burton. Both MES.

Trifolium resupinatum SJ8847 a single plant in the extensive flower beds in front of the new council buildings in Hanley, which had been previously been sown with a rather exotic “wild-flower seed-mix” which had given rise to numerous plants of *Ammi majus*, *Coreopsis* spp., *Linum* spp., *Nigella damascena*, *Echium plantagineum*, *Glebionis coronaria*, *G. segetum*, *Salvia sclarea*, *Eschscholzia californica*, *Malcolmia maritima* and others. Given there was only one *Trifolium* plant, its relative inconspicuous appearance, and its low stature, it most likely arrived as a contaminant in the seed mix, IJH.

T. subterraneum SJ9423, one plant on mown, dry sandy bank, by the roadside near campus at Beaconside, Baswich, IJH.

Verbascum phlomoides SJ8415, edge of old airfield backing on to gardens, Little Onn. Likely escape, SRM.

Weigela florida SJ9743, bush growing by the side of a footpath, Dilhorne, IJH.

***Xanthocyparis nootkatensis* 'Pendula'** SJ8144, planted in the grounds of the Keele University campus, IJH.

A selection of other observations concerning rarer taxa

In Update No. 2, July 2012 to the “Flora of Staffordshire” is a list of plants which hold British height records and their sites near Flash. To them can now be added an English height record:

Berberis vulgaris SK0368, 420m, IJH. A single bush on the bank by a minor road, NE of Flash. It is quite isolated, and there are not many bushes of any species present along that stretch of hillside lane, with mostly open, heathy, upland pasture on both sides.

Ian suggests that few outside of Staffordshire realise how elevated the area about Flash actually is compared to better-known upland areas in other counties.

In Update No. 5, October 2015, Ian wrote of a second-hand report of ***Colchicum autumnale*** of c. early- to mid-2000s from a former student whose mother may have seen it, once, apparently whilst “pony trekking” (whether she was actually on horseback, or on foot holding the horse’s bridle for another rider was not made clear), at the margin of a wood in the Longdon area. Ian suggested that this could have been at Georges Hayes/Piggots Bottom. This original report was of course second-hand and vague. He was assured that the plant certainly was not the pink, late summer-autumn flowering *Cyclamen hederifolium*, and that it was found somewhat to the south of Upper Longdon. There is plenty of woodland to the west of Upper Longdon, but to the south lie only lanes (albeit sometimes with tall hedges) and eventually the woods Georges Hayes and Piggots Bottom. Given that there are riding schools in that general area, the supposition was his that this was perhaps the area concerned. It seems to have proved so!

In 2016 he was in that area, and along the surrounding lanes looking at colonies of Wild Daffodils. He decided to keep a look out for any *Colchicum* leaves, as they can be often be easier to detect than the flowers (He knows of a wood in Worcestershire (Trench Wood, about 6 miles NE of Worcester) where leaves of *Colchicum autumnale* are quite frequently to be found in spring in many parts, yet flowering later in the year is only obvious at one spot at the edge of one particular ride where the local management team deliberately cut back and clear an area in mid-summer specifically to encourage flowering.

What he actually found was rather interesting:-

Bardy Lane, SK0614, a single clump of ***Colchicum*** leaves on the grassy verge on the eastern side of Bardy Lane. The leaves were definitely larger and more developed than those of the plants described below, although this could simply be due to the lack of shading. The aspect is fairly open and the only competing vegetation would be various grasses, although the verges of this lane have in the past certainly been subject to mowing operations at least once in the year.

Georges Hayes, SK0613. It rather looks as if a rough path is in the process of being created by a person or persons accessing the wood directly from Bardy Lane at a point where there is no fencing, rather than from the usual car parking spot further south. Two small, trampled clumps of ***Colchicum*** were present, with four other clumps nearby on top of a bank, mostly likely to be quite heavily shaded when the leaves of the trees and scrub expand.

He supposes flowers seen at either location might go some way to explaining that sighting of some years ago. Obviously the exact identity of these *Colchicum* plants is unknown given the obvious absence of flowers. All he can suggest is that they are not species or hybrids characterised by leaves which have a somewhat "pleated" appearance. It should be noted that there have been various introductions of plants in Georges Hayes reserve in earlier years.

"*C. autumnale*" is certainly listed in many bulb catalogues, but it is rarely grown now in gardens: it doesn't flower freely enough! Most garden *Colchicums* are now of various hybrids, or forms of *C. cilicicum* or *C. speciosum*.

The following is a more detailed discussion of a topic raised in Plant Records, 2015.

Hieracium acuminatum was previously thought to be widespread in Britain. In the later stages of the preparation of the Flora of Staffordshire, following publication of volume 4 of Sell & Murrell's "Flora of Great Britain and Ireland" and consultation with David McCosh, it became apparent that this was not the case: it is largely restricted to S. Wales.

Our plants were likely to be either *H. consociatum* or *H. argillaceum* and, post-2008, these are what we recorded. The vast key in Sell & Murrell is difficult to use and separates them by means of leaf shape and length of involucral bracts. Bill Thompson (often in Worcs. and Yorks.) and Vincent Jones (often in Yorks.) have done much work on them and, from their writings, the following seems a much more straightforward key:

Hieracium consociatum: some teeth on basal leaves > 6mm; teeth on upper stem leaves > 6mm (up to 10mm); basal leaves 4 to 5 cm wide;

H. argillaceum: teeth on basal leaves < 6mm; teeth on upper stem leaves < 6mm; basal leaves up to 4cm wide. It is a less robust plant.

These characters can be clearly seen in the photographs on pages 134 & 135 of Vincent's superlative "Yorkshire Hawkweeds".

Examination of records in the BSBI Distribution database seems to suggest a very uneven distribution of the two taxa across the vice-counties. The true picture is obscured because they can sometimes be ignored or misunderstood. Examples of post-2008 statistics are as below, with the two figures being respectively for *H. consociatum* and *H. argillaceum*:

All Britain & Ireland	68 & 221
NE Yorkshire	3 & 19
Worcestershire	3 & 4
Staffordshire	47 & 11
Shropshire	0 & 3
Derbyshire	0 & 0
Cheshire	3 & 0
Warwickshire	0 & 14

Vincent & Bill were pioneers, in these counties, in recognising the two taxa earlier than 2009 and to the figures above can be added, for 2000-2008:

NE Yorkshire	7 & 34
Worcestershire	126 & 115

and All Britain & Ireland 176 & 292