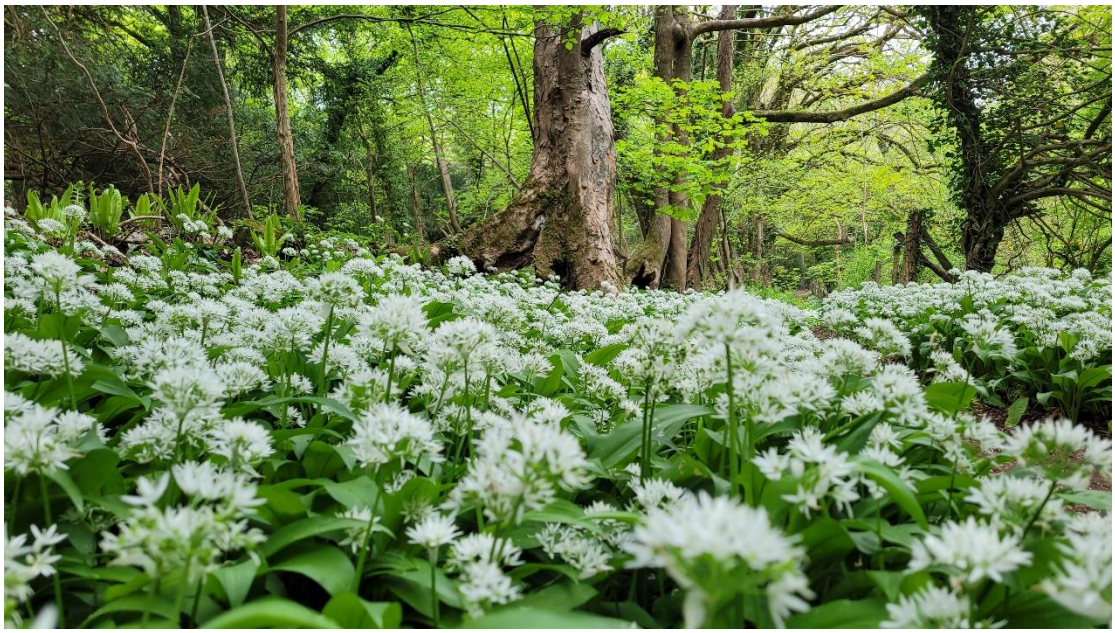
Methodology for Examining Plant-Names in English Place-Names



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Word Count: 32314 (excluding appendices)

Abstract

The origin of this project was born out of the wish to have an understanding of the significance of wild plants whose names occur in place-names. The study of plant place-names is relatively little probed and what follows is the development of a methodology for examining plant place-names in England. Beginning with a scoping exercise to determine the extent of wild plant elements occurring in place-names, this is followed by the analytical approach for examining them. Next is a case study, working through the steps of the analytical approach, looking at the plant-name elements OE *gagel* and *wīr*, long interpreted as denoting bog myrtle (*Myrica gale*). The final section considers the evidence revealed by the analytical approach to see if the locations of, and possible meanings contained in, plant place-names have resonance or value today and notes what questions might be asked of the evidence revealed.

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Maps

Abbreviations

A – Anglian

ABCD – Archaeobotanical Database

Adj. – adjective

AN – Anglo Norman

BSBI – Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

CDEPN – The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place–Names

c. – circa

cent. – Century

Corn. – Cornish

CPNE – Cornish Place–Name Elements

DB – Domesday Book

dial. – dialect

DoE – Dictionary of Old English

DOEPN – Dictionary of Old English Plant–Names

DSL – Dictionaries of the Scots Language

E. – early

eModE – early modern English

EPNE – English Place–Name Elements

EPNS – English Place–Name Society/Survey

f. – feminine

Fr – French

Ger – German

GIS – Geographical Information System

Icel. – Icelandic

Ire – Ireland

JEPN – Journal of the English Place-Name Society

JGer. – Gerard

km – kilometre

L. – Late

LA – Lacnunga

Laud – Laud Glossary

LB – Leech Book

Lat. – Latin

m – metre

m. – masculine

ME – Middle English

MEC – Middle English Compendium

MED – Middle English Dictionary

Med.L. – Medieval Latin

MDut – Middle Dutch

MHGer – Middle High German

Misc. – Miscellaneous

ML – Medieval Latin

ModEdial – Modern English dialect

ModG – Modern German

NDEFN – New Dictionary of English Field–Names

NED –

OE – Old English

OED – Oxford English Dictionary

OFr – Old French

ON – Old Norse

ONP – Dictionary of Old Norse Prose

OS – Ordnance Survey

OSax – Old Saxon

PIE – Proto–Indo–European

p.n. – place-name

PNL – *Place–Names in the Landscape*

RHS – Royal Horticultural Society

Sc – Scotland

Scand – Scandinavian

VEPN – The Vocabulary of English Place-Names

W – Welsh

WS – West Saxon

County Abbreviations

Bk – Berkshire

Bu – Buckinghamshire

C – Cornwall

Ch – Cheshire

Cu – Cumberland

D – Devon

Db – Derbyshire

Do – Dorset

Du – Durham

Gl – Gloucestershire

Ha – Hampshire

Hf – Herefordshire

K – Kent

La – Lancashire

Lei – Leicestershire

L – Lincolnshire

Mon – Monmouthshire

Nf – Norfolk

Nb – Northumberland

O – Oxfordshire

S – Somerset

Sa – Shropshire

St – Staffordshire

Su – Suffolk

Sx – Sussex

We – Westmorland

W – Wiltshire

WRY – West Riding of Yorkshire

Y – Yorkshire

Introduction

Place-names can tell us something about how the naming community or culture understood or made use of that place. For example, Saffron Croft, Lilleshall, Shropshire (nineteenth cent.) indicates a piece of land (possibly with a house attached) on which crocuses were grown.[1] Saffron, an expensive and important medieval herb, was used for culinary purposes and as a dye and 'the harvesting of the stamens was a delicate sort of work for which the womenfolk were best suited'.[2] This one place-name then, captures, compresses and conveys a wealth of information above and beyond the two lexical elements that make it up. The present study is principally concerned with plant place-names attested pre-1500 since names with long histories offer more secure interpretations as well as insights as to how places and their features may have been perceived through the vocabulary chosen to describe them.[3] The main concern here is with 'uncultivated' or 'wild' plants. What the concept 'wild' might mean in the early-medieval period when many place-names are first documented, let alone when they were first coined, is problematic, and will be discussed in more detail below.

The study of plant place-names is relatively little probed compared to, for example, the study of landscape place-names. The various elements within landscape place-names have been dissected and stretched time and again to reveal the corners of history shaded from view in documentary and archaeological evidence. Given that a limited number of plant-names appear to occur in place-names those that do must

[1] Paul Cavill, *A New Dictionary of English Field-Names* (Nottingham: English Place-Name Society, 2018), p. 364.
[2] H. D. G. Foxall, *Shropshire Field Names* (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Archaeological Society, 1980), p. 31. See also Kasia Boddy, Bonnie Lander Johnson and Alice Wickenden, 'Cambridge Saffron: Considering the history of saffron in Cambridgeshire and Essex' (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2022), <https://www.cam.ac.uk/stories/saffron>.
[3] Rebecca Gregory, 'Introduction', in Paul Cavill, *A New Dictionary of English Field Names* (Nottingham: English Place-Name Society, 2018), pp. v–lvi (pp. xxv–vi).

have had a level of significance for whoever coined them.[4] That certain plants were significant enough to have been recorded in both major and minor place-names is perhaps not surprising since they 'supported almost every activity in Anglo-Saxon England'.[5] Other than their abundance or distinctive appearance, characteristics that might result in their occurrence in place-names might include how they were perceived as commodities (foods, feeds, materials), their usefulness (magic, medicine), as gauges (environmental indicators, nuisance), for folkloric understandings, or, because 'this' is the only place locally that the plant occurs and knowing that is important.[6] The following examples of plant place-names, dating from the early-medieval period through to the nineteenth century, perhaps fulfil these imposed modern characteristics:

Echerne Medowe, Forton, Staffordshire (1309), is land 'on which acorns abounded' and 'acorns, from oak trees on or adjacent to the named fields, would have provided feed for swine'.[7]

Feltewelle, Feltwell, Norfolk, ([1042x66]12th) is possibly 'the spring where wild marjoram or mullein grows'.[8] If the marjoram interpretation is supported then the name locates a useful 'aromatic herb [that] yields an oil which can be applied to sprains, etc. and its sweet scent is held to attract cats and repel fleas'.[9]

[4] E. A. Cole, 'Plants, Place Names and Habitats', *Fritillary*, 6 (2015), pp. 94–102 (p. 94).
[5] Carole Biggam, 'The True Staff of Life: The Multiple Roles of Plants', in *The Material Culture of Daily Living in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. by Maren Clegg Hyer and Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), pp. 23–48 (p. 23).
[6] C. P. Biggam, 'An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Studies and to this Special Issue', in *Magic and Medicine: Early Medieval Plant-Name Studies*, ed. by Carole Biggam (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2013), pp. 1–9 (p. 2).
[7] Cavill, *NDEFN*, p. 2.
[8] Victor Watts, *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 228.
[9] Stephen Pollington, *Leechcraft, Early English Charms, Plantlore and Healing* (Hockwold-cum-Wilton, Anglo-Saxon Books: 2000), p. 137.

Netelham, Nettleham, Lincolnshire (1086) is 'homestead, village where nettles grow'.[10] Nettles thrive in ground that has been disturbed by human activity involving, for example, farming where the phosphate levels in soils rise and persist due to the build-up of animal excrement.[11]

Le Thistelforlong, Wallingford, Berkshire (1334) is land 'on which thistles abounded… alluding to the prickly plants of the *Carduus* genus, some of which are harmful to crops'.[12]

Goldhille, Hallam, Nottinghamshire (*c.*1250) may be 'land characterised by a golden colour' possibly named 'from marigolds or other plants'.[13]

Danes Blood, Stevenage, Hertfordshire (nineteenth cent.) a folkloric name alluding 'to danewort… said to have sprung up where Danish blood was spilt'.[14]

That these place-names have endured into the written record suggests that the plant-names within held a level of significance in the landscape for the coiners and the users of the names since the durability 'of names appears to be connected with use of those names by local people, with more significant features being more likely to have names which survive'.[15] Knowing where these plants were was important knowledge. As such, understanding the ways in which plants were perceived, named, and used in the early-medieval period is key to this study, since the significance of the plants in place-names to the cultures and communities that coined them may be instructive as to why they have survived in place-names. The study has the potential to uncover, through plant place-names, information about the history of a place, the natural world

[10] Watts, *CDEPN*, p. 432.
[11] Ann Cole, 'The Use of *Netel* in Place-Names', *JEPNS*, 35 (2003), pp. 49–58.
[12] Cavill, *NDEFN*, pp. 421–422.
[13] Ibid., p. 173.
[14] Ibid., p. 104.
[15] Gregory, 'Introduction', pp. xxv–vi.

and the wider environment as perceived by the people that lived there. As such, there are many questions that can be asked of plant place-names that the development of a methodology for studying them might address, for example:

- Why name places with plant-names?
    - What were the triggers to naming places in relation to plants?
    - Who was doing the naming, and are there detectable differences, for example, between those places named for administrative or governance purposes and those places named by local communities with intimate local knowledge of their environment through daily experience?
- Occurrence and survival
    - Why do so few wild plant place-names appear to occur?
    - What types of records do wild plant place-names survive in?
    - Can plant place-names have circulated latently before they were recorded for long periods of time?
- Early-medieval perceptions and exploitation of the natural world
    - What do plant place-names tell us about early-medieval perceptions of the natural world?
    - Are plant-names themselves used as metaphors or descriptors to characterize and name non-plant features of a landscape, environment or settlement (and have nothing to do with the plant used being present in the locality)? For example, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire (1313) ‘sorrel-coloured hill’ ‘is presumably identical with Mont-sorel [France], but was

no doubt named from the pinkish granite there, which is still being quarried today.'[16]

- Early-medieval exploitation of the natural world
    - Do 'wild' plant place-names tell us something that managed or cultivated plant place-names don't?
    - What do plant place-names tell us about plant-use at time of coining?
- Early-medieval plant knowledge (traditional ecological knowledge)
    - Who needed to know what a plant was called and where it could be found?
    - What was the benefit of knowing what plant was growing where?
    - Who had the (what level of coiners' plant-knowledge do plant place-names imply)? Even in a superficially 'niche' area of naming such as that of plant place-names 'the coining of names might have very different origins'.[17]
    - Are there concentrations of plant place-names that might indicate certain communities' affinity with the natural environment in terms of traditional ecological knowledge?
- The usefulness of understanding plant place-names today
    - Is it possible to draw maps of localized and/or dialect plant names drawn from place-name evidence?
    - What can plant place-names tell us about the past as well as the present environment and environmental change?

Here the principal aim is to develop and test a methodology for unravelling the complexities and layers of meanings in plant place-names to explore the intricate

[16] Kenneth Cameron, *English Place-Names* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1961), p. 87.
[17] Richard Jones, 'Thinking through the manorial affix: people and place in Medieval England', in *Life in Medieval Landscapes: People and Places in the Middle Ages*, ed. by S. Turner and B. Silvester (Oxford: Windgather Press, 2012), pp. 255–271 (p. 265).

early-medieval understandings of the natural world therein contained that might begin to address some of the questions above.

Like place-names, plants are affected by their environment. They can appear and disappear from a landscape, be a rare or fleeting occurrence, and their names are potentially misleading and open to interpretation. OE, ME, colloquial and folkloric plant-names are notoriously difficult to pin down to modern species and just what species is meant in any given plant place-name is thus far from certain.[18] This uncertainty raises questions around why, since we know that early-medieval people named places with great specificity, such as topographical features, we do not appear to have more precise names for plants often inherently so distinct from each other. It was not until relatively recently that plants began to be scientifically categorized and named with a level of permanence;[19] and even these are prone to change. Historically, they were categorized more in terms of how they fitted certain criteria and grouped 'according to various aspects of significance to a particular culture'.[20] *Ælfric's* eleventh-century *Glossary* indicates a concept of botanical criteria with '*gærs oþþe wyrt* (for *herba*) or *trēow* (for *arbor*), *blōstm* (for *flos*), *rind* (for *cortex*) and *lēaf* (for *folium*)'.[21] This study excludes trees since there is some sense that plants and trees were perceived differently. This is illustrated by two of the eight categories in Ælfric's *Glossary*, with '*nomina herbarum* (dealing with herbs)' and '*nomina arborum* (dealing with trees)'.[22] It may be that Ælfric was referencing a Latin source,

[18] Biggam, 'An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Studies', pp. 1–3.
[19] Modern plant taxonomy consists of a hierarchical structure of levels enabling the categorizing of plants according to those levels and is based on *Species Plantarum* (1753) by Carl Linnaeus. The levels include kingdom, division (phylum), class, order, family, genus, species.
[20] Gregory, 'Introduction', pp. xxv–vi.
[21] Ulrike Krischke, 'On the semantics of Old English compound plant names: motivations and associations', in *Old Names – New Growth*, ed. by Peter Bierbaumer and Helmut W. Klug (Peter Lang: Frankfurt, 2009), pp. 211–278 (p. 214). The Latin words are: *herba* 'grass or herb', *arbor* 'tree', *flos* 'flower', *cortex* 'bark, rind', *folium* 'leaf', James Morwood, ed., *Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 2012 online).
[22] Krischke, 'Semantics of Old English compound plant names', p. 213.

but it is noteworthy that most 'of the Old English plant names in the *Glossary* were in general use and belong to the core of the Old English plant name lexicon'.[23] There may also have been a measure of early flora taxonomy in terms of medico-botanical uses with Dioscorides' *De materia medica* categories including 'aromatics, trees, cereals, vegetables, roots, herbs, vines, etc.'[24]

A primary concern for the purposes of this study is defining what might be meant by a 'wild' plant in the early-medieval landscape, and this is problematic since modern perceptions cannot be imposed on the early-medieval world. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* defines 'wild' as 'living in a state of nature; uninhabited, waste; uncontrolled'[25] and of plants or flowers *OED* defines 'wild' as growing 'in a state of nature; not cultivated', referencing attestations in the *Corpus Glossary* (*c.*725) '*Agre[s]tis, wilde*' (Lat. 'in the wild', OE 'wild), LB II (*c.*1000) '*Oleastrum þæt is wilde elebeam*' ('*Oleaster* that is [the] wild olive tree').[26] The *wilde elebeam* example suggests that there was an early-medieval perception of some plants having a wild as opposed to a cultivated characteristic.

Early-medieval medicobotanical texts such as herbals do appear to indicate that plants were understood in terms of their 'wildness'. For example, '*wudu-* to designate a woodland or wild species'.[27] The *Herbarium* 'abundantly indicates' the 'wild and uncultivated nature' of the plants therein, since it contains instructions on how to locate the plants to which it refers,[28] and this is also true of other sources such as *Lacnunga* (L. tenth–E. eleventh cent.). Locating the plants described in herbals is

[23] Krischke, 'Semantics of Old English compound plant names', p. 214.
[24] Richard Jones, *The Medieval Natural World* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2013), p. 91.
[25] T. F. Hoad, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, online version 2003).
[26] *OED*, s.v. 'oleaster (n.), sense 1' <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1205259745>.
[27] Maria Amalia d'Aronco, 'The botanical lexicon of the Old English Herbarium', *Anglo-Saxon England,* 17 (1990), pp. 15–33 (p. 32).
[28] Jacqueline Fay, 'The Farmacy: Wild and Cultivated Plants in Early Medieval England', *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment,* 28:1 (Spring 2021), pp. 186–206 (p. 198).

worth some consideration since many will not have been available in the early-medieval English landscape being, for example, of Mediterranean origin. We can be fairly sure, however, that plants native to England were likely to have been familiar to early-medieval people, and of more importance is 'whether a plant was introduced before 1066'.[29]

Where plants were unavailable there is evidence to indicate, in the *Herbarium*, that substitute native plants or OE plant-names were suggested as alternatives. These alternatives appear in the manuscript as OE glosses and arguably some of the OE names given, 'analysable as autonomous creations… created according to a pattern based on taxonomic categories',[30] may have been considered to be correct identifications of plants denoted by the Latin. For example, OE *hundes tunge*, 'dog's tongue' is used to translate the Latin *lingua bubula*, 'ox-tongue', implying that the plant known as ox-tongue in the Mediterranean was known as dog's tongue in parts of early-medieval England.[31] However, since the *Herbarium* is thought to be a generally faithful tenth-century translation of the fourth-century Latin *Herbarium Apulei*,[32] there are questions about how useful it can be in terms of early-medieval perceptions of wild plants in England. It does, nonetheless, contain 'some 159 vernacular terms denoting plants and herbs, and thirty-eight terms for their parts, fruits, seeds and derivatives, as well as five terms referring to their cultivation or the place where they grow',[33] suggesting that the classical plants referred to may have been available in early-medieval England, and while some will have been cultivated or imported for the purposes described in the *Herbarium*, others will have been available in the wild.

[29] Biggam, 'The True Staff of Life', p. 24.
[30] d'Aronco, 'The botanical lexicon of the Old English Herbarium', p. 32.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Debby Banham, 'The Knowledge and Uses of Plants in Anglo-Saxon England' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1990), p. 6.
[33] d'Aronco, 'The botanical lexicon of the Old English Herbarium', p. 23.

Another way to define the parameters of the wild nature of plants in early-medieval England may be to consider the botanical knowledge we have of them today. That is, plants that would have been impossible to cultivate in an early-medieval environmental climate and plants that are currently considered to be native or archaeophyte may be considered to have been wild in the early-medieval period.[34]

Being multidisciplinary this project is concerned with the wide variety of connections that wild plant place-names may have had with early-medieval perceptions of the natural world and how people interacted with it. Drawing on a wide variety of evidence in order to increase our understanding of what the wild plant place-names that survive may convey (in terms of botany, landscape, geography, geology, agricultural history and food, folklore, magic and medicine) it is hoped that the cumulative results of toponymic, textual, and physical evidence may serve to increase our understanding of the knowledge stored in untapped plant place-names, and that the outcomes will have applicability for scholars across several disciplines leading to further research in this area with relevance outside academia. Relevance in terms of, for example, modern trends towards plant-based diets, increasing interest in the efficacy of plant-based remedies, and the growing need to understand and manage the impact we are having on the natural world. This will be undertaken though the development of a consistent and robust methodology for collecting a corpus, and analysing and interpreting plant place-names therein, together with the testing of this methodology by means of a case study plant-element or elements.

[34] The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) defines archaeophytes as those plants introduced to Britain and Ireland by humans, inadvertently or otherwise, between the Neolithic period and 1500 and which are naturalized, Neophytes, referred to below, are defined as plants introduced from c.1550 onwards. For more detail see < https://bsbi.org/definitions-wild-native-or-alien >.

Literature review

Whereas the number of attested plant place-names are relatively few,[35] plant-names themselves make up an estimated 4–5% of the surviving OE lexicon (this includes native and loan plant words).[36] While trees in place-names have entire books and lengthy articles dedicated to them by place-name scholars, for example Hooke's *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England: Literature, Lore and Landscape*,[37] Coates's 'Box in English Place-Names',[38] there are no comprehensive and few lengthy studies of plant place-names in particular.[39] The subject is seldom discussed in detail, and often only in relation to the generic elements with which they compound. For example, Gelling comments that after 'personal names, references to vegetation (trees and plants) form the next largest group of first elements compounded with *halh*',[40] and 'leaving personal names aside… [one of] the two largest categories of first elements used with *lēah* may be those which refer to specific trees or other types of vegetation'.[41] Similarly, for *wælla*… 'the next largest category [after personal names] is words for vegetation'.[42] Gelling repeatedly draws attention to 'vegetation', which covers both cultivated and uncultivated trees and plants in the most general terms and does not discuss them, or plants in particular, in any detail. Plant-names are conspicuous by their absence in the section on 'Original Nature-names' in Ekwall's dictionary,[43] and while trees and crop plants are briefly discussed in the section on the value of place-

[35] Cole, 'Plants, Place Names and Habitats', pp. 94–102.
[36] Krischke, 'Semantics of Old English compound plant names', p. 213.
[37] Della Hooke, Trees in Anglo-Saxon England: Literature, Lore and Landscape (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013).
[38] Richard Coates, 'Box in English Place-Names', *English Studies*, 80:1 (1999), pp. 2–45.
[39] Further tree place-name studies include Keith Briggs' 'Bixley', *JEPNS*, 43 (2011), pp. 42–54, and Jessica Treacher's forthcoming PhD thesis 'The Arboreal Toponym'.
[40] Margaret Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape* (London, Phoenix Press, 1984, 2000 edn), p. 110.
[41] Gelling, *PNL*, p. 203.
[42] Ibid., p. 31.
[43] E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. xviii–xxi.

name study,[44] wild plants are not mentioned at all. They do of course occur and are interpreted in the dictionary itself. Spittal and Field's bibliography of publications in *A Reader's Guide to the Place-Names of the United Kingdom* lists twenty-one publications in the section 'References to flora & fauna in place-names'.[45] Three relate to vegetation and flora as a whole, six relate specifically to trees and woodland and just two to wild plants. The two include Cox's paper looking at the synonymous plant-names furze, whin and gorse,[46] and James's paper looking at heath, heather and ling.[47] Furze, gorse and whin are revisited, particularly in relation to their distribution in England, by Cameron.[48]

In contrast to the small number of published papers our knowledge of the variety and quantity of plant-names in place-names has increased with the 2018 publication of Cavill's field-name dictionary.[49] The content, with some 45000 entries, is drawn from the EPNS survey volumes and references approximately 150 distinct plant-names, demonstrating the scope for research in this area. To illustrate this further, in gathering a corpus for this study, a possible sixty-one pre-1500 discrete plant-names occur in place-names, and of those a possible twenty-three also occur either at or prior to Domesday.[50]

The EPNS surveys are a major source for any place-name research, including the present study, and plant-name elements occur and are noted and often interpreted

[44] Ekwall, *CDEPN*, p. xxxii.
[45] Jeffrey Spittal and John Field, A Reader's Guide to the Place-Names of the United Kingdom: A Bibliography of Publications (1920–89) and the Place-Names of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands (Stamford, Paul Watkins, 1990), pp. 88–89.
[46] B. H. Cox, 'Furze, gorse and whin: an aside on Rutland place-names', *JEPNS*, 20 (1987–88), pp. 1–7.
[47] A. James, 'Heath, heather and ling in place-names', *The Year Book of the Heather Society*, (1985), pp. 40–45.
[48] Jean Cameron, 'The Distribution of whin, gorse and furze', in *A Commodity of Good Names: Essays in Honour of Margaret Gelling*, ed. by O. J. Padel and David N. Parsons (Donington, Shaun Tyas, 2008) pp. 253–258.
[49] Cavill, *NDEFN*.
[50] At this stage these figures include native, neophyte and archaeophyte plants some of which, such as flax and woad, may be considered as cultivated (but clearly cultivated plants such as barley, turnip, wheat etc. have been excluded).

throughout the survey volumes. The geographical coverage of the EPNS is inevitably an issue since surveys are absent and/or incomplete for large parts of the country. Additionally field-names, in which by far the greatest proportion of plant place-names occur, have received far less in-depth analysis and interpretation than major names. More recent surveys, however, do afford field-names closer attention, and the value of minor and field-names for place-name studies as well as other disciplines is recognised. For example *EPNS* Cheshire LIV, part V(I:ii) has a section entitled 'Vegetation and crops' listing examples of wild plant and other vegetation place-names, and Gregory's introduction to Cavill's *A New Dictionary of English Field-Names* describes the ways in which the evidence contained in field-names can inform lexicography, archaeology, landscape history, present-day farming practices etc.

Beyond place-name scholarship there has been considerable research into the identification of the plants 'meant' by OE plant-names and the uses of plants in the early-medieval period. This is exemplified through work carried out by the Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Survey (1999–2016) hereinafter *ASPNS*, which is 'concerned with plant-names in whatever medium they survive',[51] with aims including: to research 'the plant-names of Anglo-Saxon England and the contexts in which they are found in the surviving records', to identify plants 'by species, genus or family' where possible, and to examine 'their significance in Anglo-Saxon society'.'[52] A significant article in the first collection of *ASPNS* papers seeks to catalogue and discuss plant-names attested uniquely in place-names from the early-medieval period and provides a list of 'Anglo-Saxon Plant-Names Attested Only in Place-Names' (from the dubious to the

[51] Carole Biggam, 'Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Survey', <https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/critical/research/fundedresearchprojects/anglo-saxonplant-namesurvey/>.
[52] Ibid.

relatively secure) drawn from *EPNE* volumes.[53] Of these, three are vague (in that they are interpreted as a 'bush' or 'shrub' etc.), three are crop plants, seventeen are trees, and twenty-five are plants (of which seven are grasses). As well as four in-depth studies of plant place-names (*bulut*, *hymlic*, *safene*, *tunsingwyrt*)[54] the *ASPNS* and its output covers a wide range of topics relevant to the present study and plant place-names studies in general. The papers cover, for example, etymology, the difficulties of interpreting plant-names, plant uses and the early-medieval economy, the Latin medical tradition of plants in the early-medieval pharmacy, the reliability or otherwise of glosses, archaeobotany, and plant-life as represented in artistic and literary sources.

Outside *ASPNS*, both cultivated and wild plants as a source of food, material, medicine, magic etc., have been extensively researched and discussed by Banham, Biggam, and Dendle and Touwaide to name a few.[55] Banham's thesis in particular provides a useful overview and summary of sources and their drawbacks for OE plant-names, such as the fact that the 'literature of Anglo-Saxon medicine' is 'not a distinctively English literature, but a branch of a common western European tradition… dependent, indirectly, on Greek and Roman works such as those of Pliny and Dioscorides'.[56] While useful, then, these sources do have limitations for identifying plant-names occurring in English place-names (given that the expectation is that those plants that do occur must have had some connection with the locality of

[53] Carole Hough, 'Place-Name Evidence for Anglo-Saxon Plant-Names', in Carole. P. Biggam, *From Earth to Art, The Many Aspects of the Plant-World in Anglo-Saxon England, Proceedings of the First ASPNS Symposium*, University of Glasgow, 5–7 April 2000 (Amsterdam-New York: Editions Rodopi, NY 2003), pp. 41–78. Names are also drawn from the 'Analyses of Elements' for volumes that superseded *EPNE*.
[54] These are all in *Magic and Medicine: Early Medieval Plant-Name Studies*, ed. by Carole Biggam (School of English: University of Leeds, 2013): Richard Coates, 'Biting the Bulut: A Problematic Old English Plant-Name in the Light of Place-Name Evidence', pp. 137–145; Irené Wotherspoon, 'Old English Hymlic: Is it Hemlock?', pp. 94–113; Carole P. Biggam, 'Old English *Safene*: Untangling Native and Exotic Junipers in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 206–241; Alaric Hall, 'Elleborus in Anglo-Saxon England, 900–1100: Tunsingwyrt and Wodewistle', pp. 70–93.
[55] Banham, 'The Knowledge and Uses of Plants'; Biggam, 'The True Staff of Life', pp. 23–48; Peter Dendle and Alain Touwaide, eds, *Health and Healing from the Medieval Garden* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015).
[56] Banham, 'The Knowledge and Uses of Plants', p. 6.

that place) since plants listed as ingredients for medicines were not necessarily growing or 'available in England, or indeed the rest of Europe'.[57] Recent studies looking at ethnopharmacology such as that by Watkins et al,[58] and the efficacy of plant-based remedies documented in OE sources such as the *AncientBiotics* project (involving a multidisciplinary team formed in 2013 researching whether medieval medicine 'works'),[59] are also of interest to the present study in terms of how early-medieval remedies may resonate with and inform modern medicine.[60]

Determining how the natural world, including plant-life, might have been perceived by early-medieval people has received much scholarly interest from, for example, Jones, Hyer and Owen-Crocker, and Neville.[61] Neville argues that while 'the Anglo-Saxons did not have a word to indicate "the Natural world" in their native language', they did 'have words for "nature" in the sense of "essence" or "character"', such as *cynd, cynde, gecynd, cyn*, defining the latter as 'race, class, species'.[62] As demonstrated throughout the scholarly literature relating to early-medieval plant-names, determining what the modern equivalent of the plant 'meant' in OE and folk plant-names, let alone their wildness or otherwise, is highly problematic, since they 'do not denote botanical species, but evoke aspects of a plant's appearance, behaviour, usage by humans or animals or even roles in myths and folk-tales; and…

[57] Banham, 'The Knowledge and Uses of Plants', p. 7.
[58] Frances Watkins, Barbara Pendry, Alberto Sanchez-Medina, Olivia Corcoran, 'Antimicrobial assays of three native British plants used in Anglo-Saxon medicine for wound healing formulations in 10th century England', *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, 144 (2012), pp. 408–415.
[59] Christina Lee, 'Ancient Texts', in *The Routledge Companion to Health Humanities*, ed. by Paul Crawford, et al. (Oxford, Routlege, 2020), pp. 368–372 (p. 368).
[60] Comprehensive and in-depth sources for botanical information about individual species are the British Ecological Society's 'Biological Flora of The British Isles' papers in *Journal of Ecology*, <https://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/publications/journals/journal-of-ecology/>.
[61] Richard Jones, *The Medieval Natural World* (Harlow: Pearson, 2013), pp. 85–95; Maren Clegg Hyer and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, eds, *The Material Culture of Daily Living in the Anglo-Saxon World* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011: 2013 edn); Jennifer Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
[62] Neville, *Representations of the Natural World*, pp. 1–2.

these features are not always connected with the same plant'.[63] This problem is exemplified in Biggam's study of the OE plant-name *hæwenhnydele*.[64] There has been much speculation about what plant *hæwenhnydele* might denote having been consistently chosen by scribes as the gloss for *herba britannica* and variously, and speculatively, interpreted as English scurvy grass, hemp nettle, purple dead-nettle, and cowslip. To these interpretations Biggam adds her own reached through the linguistic analysis of the name: *hæwen* 'blue' and *hnydele*, which may be from the 'Indo-European root **nē-* "to sew", which gave rise to… words [that] involved the concept of the sewing instrument, such as Old High German *nâdela* "needle" [leading to] the concept of the sewing material, such as Old Norse *hnoða* 'a ball of thread'. The translation settled on being 'little blue heads', and the plants mooted being devil's-bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis* Moench) and cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus* L.) on account of their blue ball-like flowers.[65]

Plants, then, were not defined in the categorical botanical way in which we tend to understand them today, but 'according to various aspects of significance to a particular culture' often resulting in a wide variety of names being attributed to a single species, even at a very local level.[66] Fay observes that plants used for medical purposes and plants for food were to some extent perceived differently, since 'ongoing cultivation of agricultural plants is little addressed in contemporary texts, whereas advice about medicinal plants—where to find them, how to harvest and use them—is provided in a large body of Anglo-Saxon works both original and translated.'[67] Given these culturally-specific groupings, early and vernacular plant-

[63] Biggam, 'The True Staff of Life', p. 26.
[64] C. P. Biggam, '*Hæwenhnydele*: an Anglo-Saxon Medicinal Plant', *Botanical Journal of Scotland*, 46:4 (1994), pp. 617–622.
[65] Biggam, '*Hæwenhnydele*', p. 620.
[66] Biggam, 'An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Plant-Name Studies', pp. 1–3.
[67] Fay, 'Farmacy', p. 187.

names are notoriously difficult to pin down to a particular species and even genus, adding to the complexity of plant place-names. The problem of early plant-name identification has been extensively researched and plants classified and catalogued by, for example, Hunt, Bierbaumer, Sauer, Klug and Kriscke, and de Vriend.[68]

Bierbaumer et al's *DOEPN* is a significant resource for the study of plant-names. Its construction results from the recognition that although plant-names do occur in OE dictionaries they 'are scattered throughout the books [and] commentaries are very short or entirely missing, and many of the identifications are questionable'.[69] The *DOEPN* database (2007–2016) collates primary sources and research about OE plant-names including, where possible, modern identifications of OE plant-names attested in early-medieval sources. The sources from which data are drawn includes religious and medico-botanical texts, glossaries, dictionaries, and modern research, returning data for some 2500–3000 plants. Early medico-botanical texts are particularly relevant to this study since many are contemporary with the earliest place-name attestations (seventh – twelfth century)[70] and the rendering of OE plant-names therein can be compared with those occurring in place-names. As well as usefully discussing these sources in terms of medical tradition,[71] *ASPNS* research papers analyse a number of OE plants in great detail, for example, *tunsingwort*, *wodewistle*,

[68] Tony Hunt, *Plant names of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989); P. Bierbaumer, H. Sauer, H. W. Klug, U. Krischke, eds, *Dictionary of Old English Plant-Names (DOEPN)*; Hubert de Vriend, ed., *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
[69] Hans Sauer and Ulrike Krischke, 'The Dictionary of Old English Plant-Names (*DOEPN*), or: The Graz-Munich Dictionary Project', in Bierbaumer, Peter and Helmut W. Klug, eds, *Old Names – New Growth*, (Peter Lang: Frankfurt, 2009), pp. 145–180 (p. 145).
[70] For texts referred to in this study see Appendix 2.
[71] For example, Maria Amalia D'Aronco's 'Anglo-Saxon Plant Pharmacy and the Latin Medical Tradition', in *From Earth to Art, The Many Aspects of the Plant-World in Anglo-Saxon England, Proceedings of the First ASPNS Symposium*, University of Glasgow, 5–7 April 2000 (Amsterdam-New York: Editions Rodopi, NY 2003), pp. 133–151.

hymlic, *hymele*.[72] Additionally, these rich plant-name sources have been mined for what they can reveal linguistically, for example by Krischke,[73] and about the process and pitfalls of copying and translating, for example by Biggam, the results and observations from which may prove useful for plant place-name studies.[74]

Since the present study focuses on wild plants it is necessary to be mindful of what might have been meant by 'wild' in the early-medieval period and this has been considered to some extent by Fay who argues that the sense of the wildness of certain plants is implied by the texts themselves.[75] Modern editors of OE dictionaries interpret some plant-names as signifying 'wild' plants, and it is not always clear why they have chosen to do so. A trawl of the *DOEPN* returns many plant-names interpreted as wild without an OE element explicitly indicating wildness in the way it often does with names for fauna and fungi. For example, in Bosworth Toller,[76] names of fauna and fungi containing elements implying wildness include *wudubucca* 'a wild goat', *feldswop* 'a peewit(?)', and *feldswam, feldswamm* 'a field-mushroom, toadstool'.[77] Whereas, plants interpreted by editors as wild without such indicators, include:

- *balsmēþe* (mint-species, undomesticated)
- *more* (wild carrot, *Daucus carota* L.)
- *nǣp* (wild rape, *Brassica napus* L. var. arvensis)

[72] Alaric Hall '*tunsingwort'* and '*wodewistle'*, pp. 70–93, and Irené Wotherspoon '*hymlic*' and '*hymele*', pp. 94–136, in *Magic and Medicine: Early Medieval Plant–Name Studies*, ed. by C. P. Biggam (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2013).
[73] U. Krischke, 'The Old English Complex Plant Names: A Linguistic Survey and a Catalogue', *Münchener Universitätsschriften*, 39 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang Edition, 2013), pp. 394–401.
[74] Biggam, '*Hæwenhnydele'*, pp. 617–622.
[75] Fay, 'Farmacy', p. 198. The *Herbarium* is a twelfth-century medical miscellany.
[76] Thomas Northcote Toller, Christ Sean, and Ondřej Tichy, eds, *Joseph Bosworth, An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online* (Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014) <https://bosworthtoller.com>. Bosworth Toller has been used to illustrate this point since the *Dictionary of Old English: A to I online* remains incomplete and without translations for many of the examples used here.
[77] Toller et al, <https://bosworthtoller.com/36723>; <https://bosworthtoller.com/44664>; <https://bosworthtoller.com/10269>.

- *sæþerie* (wild basil, *Clinopodium vulgare* L.)[78]

However, certain words used in compound OE plant-names may imply 'wildness' on account of their referencing 'wild places' or 'wild animals', for example:

- *feld-more* 'open country' (wild carrot, *Daucus carota* L.)
- *gēaces sūre* 'cuckoo' (wood sorrel, *Oxalis acetosella* L.)
- *hind-heoloþe* 'hind' (wood-sage, *Teucrium scorodonia* L.)
- *wudu-bind* 'wood, forest' (field bindweed, *Lonicera periclymenum* L.), *wudu-merce* (wild celery, *Apium graveolens* L.), *wudu-rōfe* (woodruff, *Galium odoratum* L.), *wudu-þistel* (thistle, a wild growing species or growing in the woods)
- *wulfes-camb* and *wulfes-tǣse* 'wolf' (fuller's teasel, *Dipsacus fullonum* L.)[79]

This is not an exhaustive list; many more examples can be found in Bosworth Toller using the search terms *wudu-*, *feld-*,[80] and additionally *wild-*. The usefulness of these plant-name terms to the study of plant place-names, other than implying their 'wildness', is perhaps limited since plant place-names do not appear to include *wudu-*, *feld-*, and *wild-* as compounding elements. There is the possibility that plant place-names have lost these qualifying terms but retain the main element. For example, *wudu-merece* 'wild celery' is the specific in Marchington, Hanbury, Staffordshire (1002x1004),[81] but the *wudu-* element is absent from place-name attestations.

[78] Bierbaumer et al, *DOEPN* < http://www.oldenglish-plantnames.org>, search terms: *balsmēþe*, *more*, *nǣp*, and *sæþerie*. The wildness of these, although unexplained, will perhaps have been interpreted as such because of their context.
[79] Ibid., search terms: *feld-more*, *gēaces sūre*, *hind-heoloþe*, *wudu-bind*, *wudu-merce*, *wudu-rōfe, wudu-þistel*,*wulfes-camb*, and *wulfes-tǣse*.
[80] Banham argues that OE *feld*, when used to form compound names, may be interpreted as 'open land, and therefore uncultivated' referring to plants that grow 'in open places... rather than overgrown places such as woods': 'The Knowledge and Uses of Plants', pp. 198–199.
[81] Ann Cole, Janey Cumber, and Margaret Gelling, 'Old English *merece* "Wild Celery, Smallage" in Place-Names', *Nomina*, 23 (2000), pp. 141–146.

Similarly *feld-mædere* 'madder' is the plant-name found in Maddacombe Cross, Abbotskerswell, Devon (956),[82] but again the *feld-* element is absent from the place-name attestations.

Beyond the passing references in place-name literature and the four in-depth *ASPNS* papers, very few detailed studies of plants in place-names have been undertaken. Those that have been include OE *felterode*, *merece*, *netel*, *wīr*, and ON *nata*.[83] Another referencing an archaeophyte rather than native plant (OE *lin*) perhaps also belongs here and there is, additionally, a paper identifying a gap in the literature and research around collective plant-names in place-names.[84] Given this deficiency of in-depth studies and the growing recognition that we need to understand and preserve our vulnerable ecosystems (current and recurring news stories focus on the climate crisis, carbon-footprints, food miles, rewilding, plant-based diets and the antibiotic crisis), a project focussing on plant place-names seems timely. Plants were essential to every part of early-medieval life (as food, material, medicine) at a time when place-names were first being recorded (if not necessarily coined), and as such may prove to be an untapped source of traditional ecological knowledge with relevance to how we might address the environmental issues we are facing. It is also timely in the sense that it can build on ongoing research into vegetation place-names (such as Jessica

[82] *EPNS*, VIII, Devon, Part I, p. 505.
[83] Carole Hough, 'The field-name *Felterode', JEPNS*, 32 (2000), pp. 47–49; E. A. Cole, 'Marcham, *merece* and the Wild Celery Story', *Fritillary*, 2 (2000), pp. 26–28; and Cole et al, 'Old English *merece*', pp. 141–146 (this paper is of particular interest to the present study since while it is concerned with its importance as a culinary and medicinal herb, it also looks at other names by which the plant has been known, the geographical and growing conditions that the plant favours, its association with other *-wudu* place-names, the impact of changes in land-use on the plant's presence in the landscape, and the etymology of *merece*); Ann Cole, 'The Use of *Netel* in Place-Names', *JEPNS*, 35 (2003), pp. 49–58 (Cole reasons that the significant number of those that do, correlate with Roman habitation settlements, positing that such place-names in *netel* may fossilise information about the landscape even after the plants that gave their name to the place cease to exist there, potentially identifying sites ripe for archaeological exploration); Richard Coates, '*Wirral* Revisited', *Nomina*, 36 (2013), pp. 75–105; Ann Cole, 'The Use of ON *Nata* in Place-Names', *JEPNS*, 36 (2004), pp. 51–3.
[84] M. C. Higham, '*Lin* in the Landscape', *Nomina*, 15 (1991–1992), pp. 61–68; Keith Briggs, 'Old English collective plant-names in place-names', *JEPNS*, 51 (2019), pp. 5–14. This paper is of particular interest here since it suggests that the cumulative etymological evidence presented supports a hypothesis that there are many more plant place-name collectives than hitherto thought.

Treacher's forthcoming thesis discussed above), and into place-names as sources for modern environmental management, such as the 'Flood and Flow' project.[85] The cumulative gains that may result from mining these different types of place-names to consider our management of the natural world adds to the timeliness of researching wild-plant place-names.

[85] For more information see <https://waternames.wordpress.com/about/>.

Methodology

The origin of this project was born out of the wish to have an understanding of the significance of wild plants whose names occur in place-names for the cultures and communities that named those places. A further wish was to see if revealing the possible meanings contained in plant place-names have resonance or value today. As discussed in the introduction a significant methodological challenge for this project is that the denotata of plant-name elements are notoriously difficult to pin down and apply to particular genera or species as we understand them today. This makes plant place-names especially awkward to interpret. The intention here is to develop a systematic process for examining plant place-names using a consistent analytical approach. Beginning with a scoping exercise to determine the extent of plant elements in place-names, and narrowing this down using wildness, date (pre-1500) and available evidence as parameters, the following documents the development of this process.

Scoping exercise

To begin with it was necessary to gain a sense of the scale of 'wild' and potentially 'wild' plant elements occurring place-names nationally in order to gauge the extent of the question. This was established through the interrogation of Watts (*CDEPN*, 2004) for major names and Cavill (*NDEFN*, 2018) for minor names since they are both geographically broad in scope and are relatively recent and reliable overviews based on EPNS surveys. The scope of *CDEPN* is place-names in modern usage and includes only names that occur in the 1983 OS Road Atlas of Great Britain (so early names no longer in use were not included), and *NDEFN* builds on the work of John Field's *English Field Names: A Dictionary* (1972) and A *History of English Field-Names* (1993). As well as utilising EPNS surveys *NDEFN* makes use of names occurring in

tithe awards published online allowing for coverage of areas not yet surveyed by EPNS. The raw data collected from Watts' corpus of approximately 18000 place-names and Cavill's of some 45000 indicated that around 2608 (4%) of place-names may contain a plant-name element. Given the ambiguity of early plant-names, the relationship between the species and the place-name elements interpreted as those species is a methodological challenge for any plant place-names research. For the purposes of this initial exercise, however, the identifications of early plant-names with modern species as suggested by Cavill, Watts and EPNS were used. Similarly, since the focus here is wild plant place-names noted in Cavill and Watts those interpreted as referring to plants generally understood to be 'cultivated' were excluded, namely those which contain:[86]

OE *bēan* 'bean'
OE *bere*, OE *bærlic*, ON *barr*, ME *bær*[3] 'barley'
ME **brank* 'buckwheat'[87]
OE *cāl*, *cawel*, ON *kál*, ME *cale*, *cole*, *kale* 'cabbage'
ModE *carrot*
OE *corn* 'corn'
ModE *cucumber*
ON *heggr* 'bird cherry'[88]
OE *hwǣte*, ON *hveiti* 'wheat'
ModE *maize*
OE *nēp*, *nǣp* 'turnip'
OE *pil-āte*, *āte*, ME *ōte* 'oats'
OE, ME *pise* 'peas'
ModE *potato*
ModE *rape*

[86] These headwords and interpretations are taken from *EPNE* unless otherwise specified.
[87] Cavill, *NDEFN*, p. 43.
[88] Watts, *CDEPN*, p. 294.

OE **rogge, rȳge,* ON *rūgr* 'rye'
ModE *ryegrass*
Fr *sain foin* 'healthy hay', 'sainfoin'
ModE *Timothy Grass*
ModE *tobacco*

Table 1: Excluded plant elements understood to be cultivated.[89]

There was a risk that imposing this 'cultivated' view on the plants in the above table would produce false results since some names containing *carrot*, for example, may have referred to wild carrots. However, the point of the exercise was to gain a broad sense of the scale of wild plants occurring in place-names and not to get too bogged down in possibilities that would take too long to determine. The 2608 place-names noted were made up of 142 plant-name elements for consideration (listed in Appendix 1). It must be noted that at this scoping stage the pre-1500 parameter was not yet applied, so OE/ON/ME/OFr forms are not necessarily occurring in these 142 elements. Of the 2608, 587 were attested pre-1500 (201 of which were DB or before) and made up of eighty-four elements. Of the eighty-four, twenty-three occurred at DB or before.

Plant place-name and plant element evidence

The next step involved creating an attributes table to scrutinize the 142 elements identified; this was an important process since the quality and quantity of evidence available determined whether the study of a particular plant-element occurring in place-names was worthwhile. Each element was assessed according to the attributes defined below:

[89] Other excluded elements are those which refer to the product of the plant in some way, for example, 'vineyard'.

Attribute	Options	Purpose of attribute
Occurs in major name/s	Y/N	E.g., township/parish/hundred status.
Occurs in minor name/s	Y/N	E.g., field, farm etc.
Certainty of plant element	Secure/Possible	Confidence in the plant-element interpretation.
Wild	Y/N	To note if the plant is understood to have been 'wild' i.e. native in the early-medieval landscape.
Cultivated	Y/N	To note if the plant is understood to have been considered a cultivated as a resource in the early-medieval period.
Reliable source?	Y/N/TBC	To note if the source of the place-name information is reliable.
Pre-DB (1086 and earlier)	Y/N	To note if the earliest attestation of the place-name is DB or earlier.
1087–1500	Y/N	To note if the earliest attestation of the place-name is dated between 1087–1500.
Post-1500	Y/N	To note if the earliest attestation of the place-name is post-1500.
Problematic plant	Y/N/Both/Unknown	To note if there are any known early-medieval perceptions of the plant being problematic, e.g. poisonous to livestock.
Positive plant	Y/N/Both/Unknown	To note positive perceptions of the plant being useful, e.g. as food/medicine/

		material (see below).
Food	Y/N	To note whether the plant is known to be a source of food or fodder.
Medicinal	Y/N	To note whether the plant is known to have been used for medicinal purposes.
Material	Y/N	To note whether the plant is known to have been used for e.g. building purposes.
Compounding generic	*tūn*, *lēah* etc.	To allow for an assessment of the types of generics with which plant-elements compound.
Archaeobotanical evidence?	Y (if so where)/N	To note if the plant occurs in the 'Archaeobotanical Computer Database' (ABCD).[90]

Table 2: Attribute information collected about each plant-element.

Methodological challenges arose with some of these attributes:

- 'Certainty of plant element': While the interpretation of an element as a plant-name may be secure in one place-name but possible in another, for the purpose of this exercise 'Secure' was recorded where the majority were interpreted securely since for this 'attribute' the purpose was not to be accurate but to establish a sense of scale. For example, Brompton names are largely interpreted as containing OE *brōm* 'broom', but some have alternatives mooted, such as Brompton (Kent) which may be 'Bruni's estate'.[91]

[90] Philippa Tomlinson and Allan R. Hall, 'Archaeobotanical Computer Database', *Internet Archaeology* <https://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue1/tomlinson/toc.html>.
[91] Watts, *CDEPN* p. 92.

- ‘Wild’: If a plant is noted as native by BSBI and not known to be cultivated then ‘Y’ is selected.[92] Uncultivated archaeophytes can arguably be included here since, as discussed in the introduction, they may have been familiar to early-medieval communities.
- ‘Cultivated’: This includes neophytes and plants that are noted in Cavill, Watts, and EPNS and are generally understood to be cultivated. The field was necessary at this stage, since it was not always clear whether a plant might be wild or cultivated, and there was a danger of excluding them too soon.
- ‘Reliable source?’: For example, some charters are known to be forgeries. And, whilst the place-names contained in the bounds of the forgeries may reflect true place-names, the reliability of the source may be questionable in terms of date.

Applying the above attributes to the 142 elements revealed that the following were likely to have related to cultivated species or types of plant in the early-medieval period and so were discounted from further study. *Græs* is also excluded here since, while not necessarily cultivated, in place-names it is generally understood to be part of a managed agricultural environment. (See Appendix 1 for forms and translations):

anis
dodder
esparge
fecche
fenkel
fleax
gār-lēac
gās-berīe
græs

[92] P. A. Stroh, T. A. Humphrey, R. J. Burkmar, O. L. Pescott, D. B. Roy, and K. J. Walker, eds, *BSBI Online Plant Atlas* 2020 <https://plantatlas2020.org/atlas/>.

hænep
hōlī-hok(*ke*)
hoppe
lavendre
lēac
lentil(le)
letües
liquirice
mangoldwurzel
moré
oignon
perresil
rōs maris
rude
safran
sauge
**wealde*
wād

Table 3: Elements likely to refer to plants that were cultivated in the early-medieval period.

Again, some of the above elements may denote a wild plant on occasion, but determining those instances was beyond the scope of the present study. The removal of the above whittled the number of place-names down to 1976 and the number of plant-elements to 115.

Project parameters

The next step was to consider which of the 115 elements to focus on by applying the project-parameters. Here the principal parameters were that the focus plants were wild and attested in place-names pre-1500 since evidence suggests that names recorded by 1500 can have much earlier origins with some field-names shown to have survived for

several centuries,[93] and names recorded by 1500 incorporating OE elements possibly originating prior to 1066.[94] However, those attestations that fall outside of this date-parameter were not disregarded and a corpus with the widest possible date-range was collected since information contained in later place-names may nonetheless yield something of import.[95] As discussed, a complication that must be taken into account in any plant-name study is that many plants were and are known by more than one vernacular name, and different names for what appear to be the same plant to us may have been used with more specificity in the past. For the purposes of this scoping exercise those elements that are widely and currently understood to be likely to refer to the same species were grouped together in the table below. Deeper analysis of these elements may reveal differences in application and perhaps species or variety, but this is beyond the capacity of the present study. Applying the pre-1500 parameter brought the list down to twenty-six elements representing nineteen plants:[96]

[93] Gregory, 'Introduction', pp. xxiv–xxvi. Gregory, when summarising the findings of a number of studies considering the longevity of names, found that the findings strongly suggested 'field- and minor names often survived for several centuries', with 'between a quarter and half' of the examples in the studies surviving 'in some cases up to 700 years'.
[94] Cole, 'Plants, Place Names and Habitats', pp. 94–102.
[95] There is some argument that it is unwise to use an arbitrary 1500 date as an indicator of medieval usage and existence and that evidence should be treated as a whole 'irrespective of when they first appear in the written sources.' Jones, 'Thinking through the manorial affix', p. 257.
[96] While potentially misleading (modern identifications may be questionable), it is necessary to note the modern plant-names/types with which OE plant-elements are identified in order to proceed through the analytical process. The process should help to confirm or otherwise the plausibility of identifications.

	Plant-element	Major/ Minor Name	Certainty of plant-element	Occurrences in scoping survey	Plant status	If not native, when introduced? (RHS)	Archaeobotanical evidence (gathered from *ABCD*) Y/N and no. of sites in England[97]
1	OE *gagel*, ME *gaule* – 'gale, bog-myrtle',	Major and minor	Secure	20	Native		Y: 3
2	OE *wīr*, *wȳr* – 'myrtle, bog myrtle'	Major	Secure	4	Native		As above '*gagel'*
3	ME *braken* – 'fern'	Major and minor	Secure	145	Native		Y: 54
4	OE *brēmel* – 'bramble, blackberry-bush'	Major and minor	Secure	131	Native		Y: 5
5	OE *brōm* – 'broom'	Major and minor	Secure	108	Native		Y: 2
6	OE *glæppa* – 'buckbean'	Major only	Possible	1	Native		Y: 31
7	OE *clāte*	Major only	Secure	7	Native		N
8	OE *merece* – 'wild celery, smallage'	Major only	Secure	3	Native		Y: 23
9	OE *clǣfre* 'clover'	Major and minor	Secure	38	Native		Y: 3

[97] The plant/plant types checked in *ABCD* are those with which the Latin place-name elements have been identified. Again this may be misleading (identification may be contestable), but the point of this exercise was to gauge levels of available evidence rather than strict accuracy.

10	Corn **evor*, W *efwr* – 'cow-parsley, hogweed'	Major only	Possible	1	Native		Y: 12
11	OE *cærse cresse*, *cerse* – 'cress, water-cress'	Major and minor	Secure	42	Native		Y: 4
12	OE dile- 'dill'	Major and minor	Secure	7	Native	Grown in 995	Y: 14
13	OE *docce* – 'dock, water-lily'	Major and minor	Secure	36	Varieties vary		Y: 100+
14	MLat *enula campana* – 'elecampane, horseheal'	Major only	Possible	1	Varieties vary	Grown in 995	N
15	OE *fyrs* – 'furze'	Major and minor	Secure	46	Native		Y: 2
16	OE *gorst* – 'gorse',	Major and minor	Secure	36	Native		As above for '*fyrs'*
17	ON **hvin* – 'whin, gorse'	Major and minor	Secure	34	Native		As above for '*fyrs'*
18	OE **hǣddre* – 'heather'	Major and minor	Secure	126	Native		Y: 53

19	OE *felte, felt-wyrt* – ‘wild marjoram’, ‘mullein’	Major only	Possible	1	Native		Y: 1/1
20	OE *netel*(*e*) – ‘nettle’	Major and minor	Secure	41	Native & Archaeophyte		Y: 4
21	OE *hramsa, hramse* – ‘wild garlic, ramson’	Major and minor	Possible	18	Native		N
22	OE *hreod* – ‘reed, rush’	Major and minor	Secure	30	Native		Y: 3
23	OE *risc* – ‘rush’	Major and minor	Secure	39	Native & Archaeophyte		Y: 100+
24	OE *secg* – ‘sedge, reed, rush’	Minor	Secure	12	Native & Archaeophyte		Y: 100+
25	ON *sef* – ‘sedge’	Minor	Secure	5	Native & Archaeophyte		Y: 100+
26	OE *lǣfer, lēfer* – ‘reeds, rushes’	Major and minor	Secure	4	Native & Archaeophyte		Y: 100+

Table 4: Plant-elements attested pre-1500 with native or archaeophyte botanical status.

The above then were the plant elements of interest to this and future studies, and so the next step was to select plant-elements to methodically analyse using the following analytical process.

Analytical process

The role of the analytical process is the collection of data relating to the chosen element and the characteristics of the plant/s that the element might represent. At this stage it is important to note that while plant information is being collected early on in the process (steps 2-4) any received identification of the plant or plant type may be uncertain or questionable. The collection of plant data is, however, important at an early stage since it is the plant's characteristics and habits together with information about how it might have been perceived and/or used in the past, that will contribute to our understanding of why and where it might be occurring in place-names.

Information gathered necessarily ranges widely since a working-hypothesis is that it is cumulative knowledge that will inform findings. The following analytical process has been written as a step-by-step procedure for investigating plant place-name elements. The steps begin with an examination of the lexical element or elements that make up the plant-name followed by the collection of botanical and archaeobotanical information about the plant or plants thought to be represented by that element. These form the second and third steps of the process as they may inform the fourth step, the collection of a corpus, since the semantic meaning of the plant-name together with information about the plant's habits and uses etc. may be useful for identifying place-names containing the element. For example, if a place-name element for a plant that can only thrive at high altitudes is thought to be present in a place-name at sea level, one might question the interpretation of that element and its inclusion in the corpus. The fifth step, creating the database, could arguably occur at any stage in the process, but is the fifth step here since having some knowledge of the data being collected may inform decisions about what fields to include that are specific to whatever the purpose of the research is. The sixth step involves mapping and is necessarily the penultimate

stage occurring after corpus and database creation but prior to the final step, observations.[98]

Step 1: Language and etymology of plant-names

It is essential to have an understanding of the etymology of the chosen plant-element since this in itself may provide insights into how a plant was perceived or used, for example, the etymology of OE *gorst* 'gorse' is thought to have the 'root-notion' of something prickly.[99] Equally important is to gather information about common, dialect and vernacular names in addition to modern taxonomic names since recognizing whether or not these are potentially occurring as place-name elements may be instructive. Many alternative names will be found in the sources listed under the 'Plants in folklore and herbals' section below, but further invaluable sources for both etymology and alternative names include:

Language Dictionaries

- *OED*, Oxford University Press, <https://www.oed.com/>. The online version is particularly useful since each entry is structured by the following categories: factsheet, meaning & use, etymology, pronunciation, forms, frequency, and compounds & derived words.
    - T. F. Hoad, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), online version 2003). DOI: 0.1093/acref/9780192830982.001.0001.
    - Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al, eds, 'Dictionary of Old English: A to I'

[98] Some reflections on the analytical approach can be seen in Appendix 7.
[99] *OED*, *gorst* <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3283498872>.

<https://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/index.html (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018).

- Thomas Northcote Toller, Christ Sean, and Ondřej Tichy, eds, Joseph Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online* (Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014) <https://bosworthtoller.com>.
- Robert E. Lewis, et al, eds, *MED* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1952-2001, online edition in Frances McSparran, et al, eds, *Middle English Compendium* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 2000-2018) <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary>.
- Jane Roberts and Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy, *A Thesaurus of Old English* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 2017), <http://oldenglishthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/>.

Plant Dictionaries

- Tony Hunt, *Plant names of Medieval England* (D. S. Brewer: Cambridge, 1989).
- P. Bierbaumer, H. Sauer, H.W. Klug, and U. Krischke, eds, *Dictionary of Old English Plant-Names Online* (2007–2009), <http://oldenglish-plantnames.org/> This invaluable database contains some 2500–3000 plants-names, providing grammatical and etymological information, comments (detailed discussions about plant identification), sources of attestation, botanical illustrations where available, and extensive references to relevant academic literature.

Step 2: Botanical information

The botanical information gathered should include the modern taxonomic family and genus, whether evergreen or semi-evergreen, general appearance including size (height, spread and growth time), colour and scent, nature of the stem, flowers, foliage and fruit/seeds through the seasons, habit (i.e. whether it is suckering etc.),

geographical range (where the species can be found), position (sun/shade, aspect, exposure), hardiness, growing conditions (soil type, moisture levels, pH), and whether or not native (not necessarily important if a plant was introduced early enough to be present in the early-medieval period, but essential for having a sense of when a plant may become naturalised and recognizable in the landscape). The following is a list of useful sources of information for collecting botanical data:

- P. A. Stroh, T. A. Humphrey, R. J. Burkmar, O. L. Pescott, D. B. Roy, and K. J. Walker, eds, *BSBI Online Plant Atlas 2020* <https://plantatlas2020.org/atlas/>. *BSBI* provides a comprehensive survey of plants in Britain and Ireland consisting of some thirty million records and collected by BSBI recorders between 2000 and 2019. It also includes data from previous nationwide surveys undertaken in the 1950s and 1990s. Some data is pre-1930. Searchable by taxon and popular name each entry provides, in varying degrees, a description, phenology, distribution and altitude data, growth trends, indigenousness, uses (historical and modern), and conservation status. Extensive references are often supplied. It should be noted that this data is recent in comparison to the age of plant-names and place-names, so conclusions drawn about correlations between plant and place-name distribution need to be made with caution.
- RHS ‘Find a plant’ <https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/search-form>. Searchable by popular name and taxon, this database provides information about size, growing conditions, colour, scent, position, habit, range genus, soil type, other, indigenousness, other names etc. On occasion the information about indigenousness is at odds with *BSBI*.

Step 3: Archaeobotanical information

Archaeobotanical data reveal the presence and potential uses of plants for food, fodder, materials etc. providing evidence of places where plants may have been processed as well as their potential significance in different periods. The following resource, the scope of which is published archaeobotanical records covering the British Isles, provides an invaluable overview of available data.

- Philippa Tomlinson and Allan R. Hall, 'Archaeobotanical Computer Database' (ABCD), <https://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue1/tomlinson/toc.html>. The database records 'macrofossil plant remains from archaeological deposits throughout the British Isles'. Summaries of reports together with refences to full reports are provide for following-up.

Step 4: Ethnobotanical information

Information about both modern and past uses of plants should be gathered for a sense of how plants were and are perceived, and to inform discussions about correlations or otherwise between past and current uses and perceptions.

Uses of plants

- ABCD discussed above provides a useful essay on food plants referencing archaeobotanical data.
- University of Ioannina, 'Medicinal Plants of Epirus', <http://mediplantepirus.med.uoi.gr/pharmacology_en/plant.php>. This useful website provides a database of medicinal plants listed by both popular and taxonomic names and includes pharmacological information such as diseases for which the plant has been used in a treatment, how the treatments are administered

and active compounds and toxicity of the plant etc. Also included are drawings and references.[100]

- The British Ecological Society's 'Biological Flora of The British Isles' papers within the *Journal of Ecology* provide in-depth comprehensive studies about individual species, <https://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/publications/journals/journal-of-ecology/>.
- Anne Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies [The Old English Herbarium and Anglo-Saxon Medicine]* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

Plants in folklore and herbals

- Geoffrey Grigson, *The Englishman's Flora* (Granada Publishing Limited: St Albans, 1975). Here Grigson draws on a wide variety of ancient and modern sources including encyclopaedias, herbals, handbooks, folklore and dialect dictionaries etc., from *c.*AD60 – mid-twentieth century.
- Nicholas Culpeper, *Culpeper's Complete Herbal*, A book of natural remedies for ancient ills (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1995).
- Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, six volumes (London: Henry Frowde, 1898–1905).
- E. S. Orchard Halliwell, *A Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words; Obsolete Phrases, Proverbs, and Ancient Customs, From the Fourteenth Century*, Volumes I–II. A-I, Brixton Hill, 1852.
- Lacnunga manuscript in Oswald Cockayne's *Leechdoms Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part*

[100] Since writing this methodology the database for this website has gone down. The data may still be accessible on request.

Never Before Printed Illustrating the History of Science in this Country Before the Norman Conquest, Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores (Rolls Series), 35, 2 (London: Longman and others, 1864–6), pp. 2–80, online edition <https://archive.org/details/leechdomswortcun03cock>. See <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_585> for a digital facsimile.

- *Bald's Leechbook III*, in Oswald Cockayne (as above), pp. 300–360, online edition <https://archive.org/details/leechdomswortcun18642cock/page/86/mode/2up>. See <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_12_D_XVII> for a digital facsimile.
- Stephen Pollington, *Leechcraft, Early English Charms, Plantlore and Healing*, provides a useful index of plants occurring in Old English Herbarium Manuscript V, Lacnunga, and Bald's Leechbook III.
- *Gerard's Herbal*, <https://www.exclassics.com/herbal/herbalintro.htm> published in 1597 contains descriptions of plants, where and when to find them, and list their 'virtues'.
- Hubert de Vriend, (ed.), *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Step 5: Creating a corpus

Following the collection of data about the chosen plant-element, the next step involves the collection of a comprehensive corpus of place-names in which it

occurs.[101] Beginning with the occurrences of the chosen plant-element in the initial scoping exercise, the corpus can be extended by locating further examples in EPNS survey volumes supplemented by online searches of the *SEPN* and *KEPN* websites.[102] Where place-names occur that may contain the element or which have alternative interpretations or no interpretation, they should also be collected for the corpus in case closer analysis during the study indicates their value. They can always be removed if further scrutiny demonstrates that their evidential value is insufficient. In addition, where studies have already been undertaken about the chosen element, as is the case with *wīr*, *netel*, and *merece*,[103] these can be incorporated.

Although dating parameters will have been decided by this stage, data should be collected for all potential occurrences of the chosen element irrespective of date since observations about later attestations may be instructive.[104] A wider data-range including post-1500 examples may be useful to demonstrate, for example, clusters or trends that enhance the pre-1500 data.[105] The survival of documentary evidence is clearly a significant factor here, and no conclusions can be drawn without considering just how skewed our data is because of the serendipity of documentary survival. Similarly, EPNS survey coverage will inevitably skew data since not every county has been surveyed, the degree to which those that have been surveyed varies, and field-

[101] How many will be sufficient can only be determined as part of the process. If only a few examples survive then all of them will need to be considered, but where a plant element is ubiquitous a set of parameters will need to be set to make the study workable, for example, geographical range.
[102] EPNS, *Survey of English Place-Names* < https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/> and *Key to English Place Names* <https://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk/>.
[103] Coates, '*Wirral*', pp. 75–105; Cole, '*Netel*', pp. 49–58; and Cole et al, '*Merece*', pp. 141–146.
[104] The creation of a corpus including post-1500 attestations allows for interrogation of the data in further research.
[105] For example, how many of the pre-Conquest attestations survive in later attestations and until when? Can a rate of attrition be deduced and/or characterised? Can looking at rates of attrition for plant place-names in general, or for localities, reveal anything about perceptions of plants? Where plant place-names survive or not from e.g. pre-Conquest attestations, does the fact of naming and survival/loss of the name indicate the changing importance of these plants over time?

names (in which plant place-names are most likely to occur) are often consigned to a few limited entries towards the ends of the volumes. As a result, any observations made need to stress the limitations of the evidence.

Ambiguous elements

Place-names are open to interpretation where evidence is scant or late, and to reinterpretation as evidence emerges and theories evolve. Therefore, considering what elements might be indistinguishable with the plant-element being examined is necessary, and those elements likely to be contenders in an interpretation should be noted and discussed. For example, Ramsgill, Kirkby Malzeard, West Riding of Yorkshire (1198) is interpreted as, possibly OE *hramsa* and ON *gil* 'the ravine where wild garlic grows', with the alternatives mooted being the ON personal name *Hrafn* and OE *ramm* 'ram'.[106] As well as revisiting the uncertain place-names in a study of *hramsa*, using the present analytical process, there is also mileage in reevaluating those place-names interpreted as *ramm* and *Hrafn* since the additional information gathered may modify interpretations.

Derived names

The process of collecting the corpus is likely to reveal examples of concentrations of two or more place-names with the same specific element within a locality. While some may have been named in isolation from each other, others will have been derived from the 'original' place for which the name was coined, but it is not necessarily possible to determine which place-name occurred first, even if one or other has an earlier documented date. Where this occurs decisions need to been taken, case-by-case, to treat some concentrations as one occurrence and others as separate; some may have been named separately and without reference to each other, while

[106] Watts, *CDEPN*, p. 491.

others may be derivatives of estate or parish names even if at a distance, on the edge, or outside the estate or parish. Where derived names are apparent because of their having the same name as the parish and/or being prefixed with ‘high’, ‘low’, ‘nether’, for example, these names should be included as one entry in the corpus. Debatable names that may be derived because they are in the same parish but their spellings differ, they lack differentiating prefixes, and where geographical/environment evidence suggests they may be independent, these can be retained in the corpus but highlighted with a symbol (†) to indicate their ambiguity.

Database

A database is essential for handling the corpus data collected. Using the Staffordshire Place-Name Project database and the *SEPN* public interface as guides, the database for the present study was constructed with the fields discussed below, exemplified in the following screenshot and diagram showing the field relationships and picklists. ‘Control criteria’ (included as hover text over each field in the database) was applied to each field, defining the content of each field since consistency is key for collecting a robust, reliable corpus. The use of a database with appropriate fields and buttons, from which reports can be run, will enable the data contained to be searched, filtered, and queried.

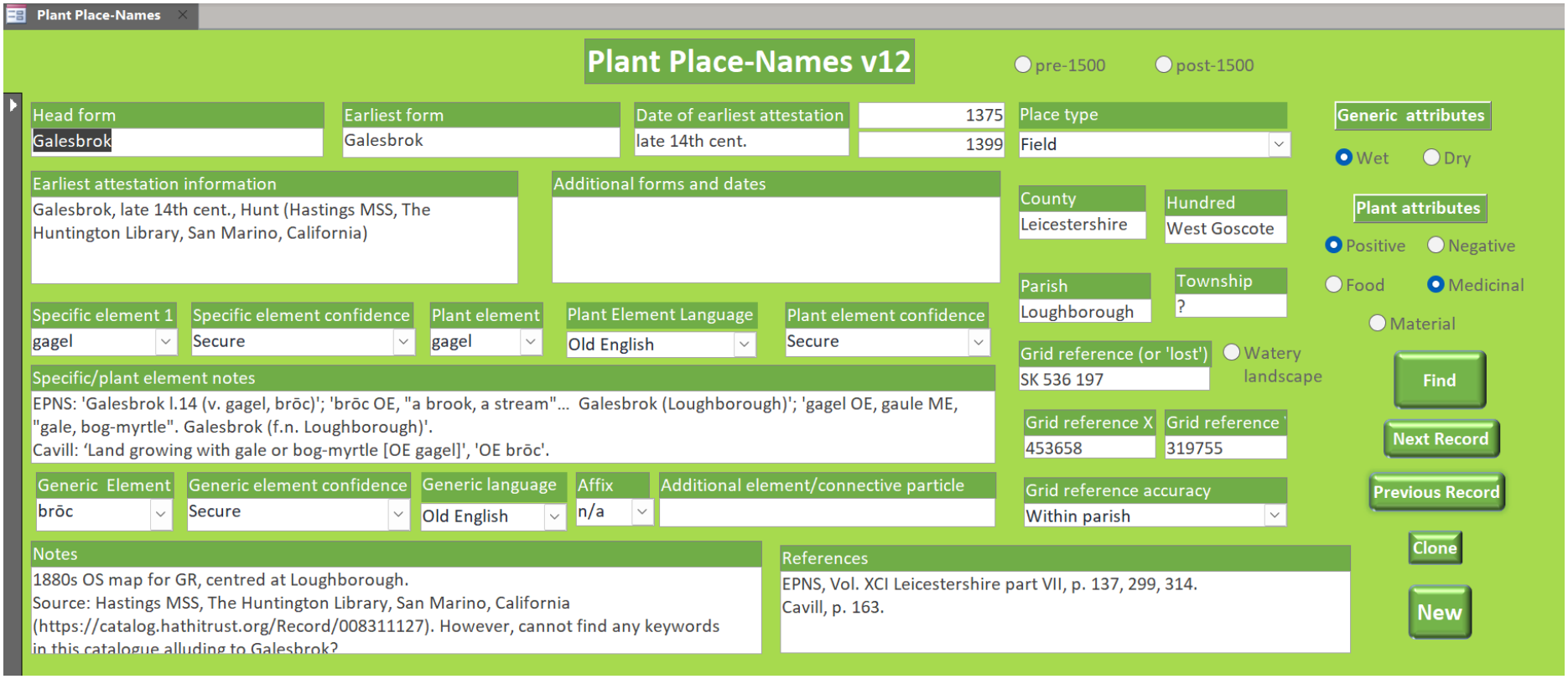

Figure 1: Screenshot of the Plant Place-Names database.

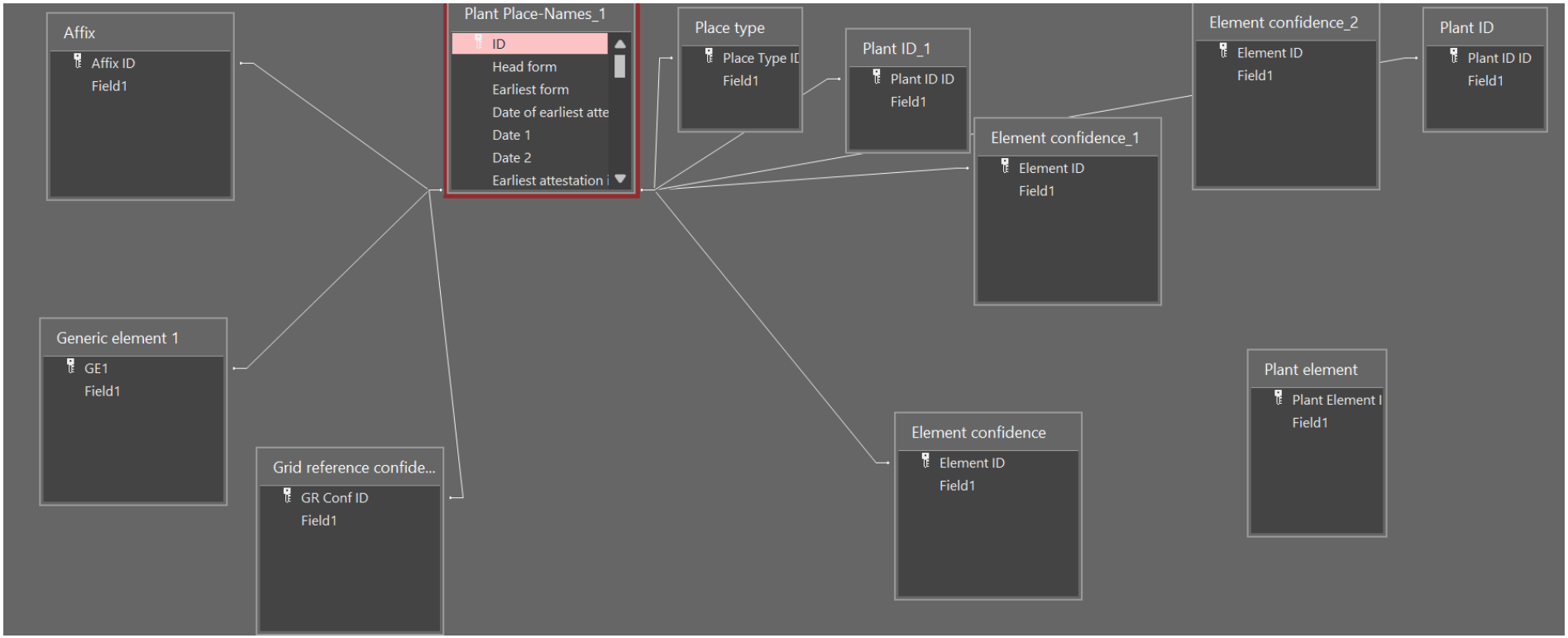

Figure 2: Diagram showing the relationships between the fields in the Plant Place-Name database.

Field	Control Criteria
ID	This is a unique key (autogenerated) to maintain the integrity of each entry
Head form	The form in which the place-name occurs today (or the most recent form)
Earliest form	Earliest form in which the place-name occurs
Date of earliest attestation	Date of earliest attestation (for the purposes of this corpus, where the source is a later copy, the date of the 'original' is used)
Date 1	If 'Date of earliest attestation' is a range, the earlier date is recorded here
Date 2	If 'Date of earliest attestation' is a range, the later date is recorded here
Earliest attestation information	Source document/s in which earliest attestation information occurs
Additional forms and dates	Additional forms, sources, and attestation dates
Specific element	Specific element in the place-name (a pick-list can be created for consistency)
Specific element confidence	This Confidence in the specific element interpretation. Interpretations can be 'secure' or 'possible'. The 'possible' place-names include those where alternative interpretations are mooted or where the specific element is accorded 'possible' or 'probable' interpretations in the literature. Those with alternative interpretations are marked with a symbol (⋆)
Plant element	Plant element (this field enables searches of the plant-element regardless of function within the name)
Plant element language	Language of the plant element (chosen from picklist)
Plant element confidence	Confidence in the plant element interpretation (chosen from picklist). The corpus contains

	place-name interpretations that are both 'secure' and 'possible'. The 'possible' place-names include those where alternative interpretations are mooted or where the specific element is accorded 'possible' or 'probable' interpretations in the literature without alternatives suggested. Those with alternative interpretations are marked with a symbol (⋆).
Specific/plant-element notes	Information about the plant/specific element e.g. discussion of accepted and alternative interpretations
Generic element	Generic element compounding the specific plant element (chosen from picklist)
Generic language	Language of the generic element (chosen from picklist)
Generic element confidence	Confidence in the generic element interpretation (chosen from picklist)
Affix	(Chosen from picklist)
Additional element/connective particles	Any further elements and/or connective particles (free text)
Place type	Major, woodland, field, farm name etc. (chosen from picklist). 'Major name' if occurs in DB, has parish/township/hundred status.
Township	Township in which place-name is located
Parish	Parish in which place-name is located
Hundred	Hundred/ward in which place-name is located
County	County in which place-name is located
Grid reference (or 'lost')	Input grid reference or 'lost' if location unknown
Grid reference X	Self-explanatory
Grid reference Y	Self-explanatory
Grid reference confidence	Accuracy of the grid reference (chosen from picklist)

Notes	Any further information e.g. discussion regarding grid reference decisions, problems of locating, notes about the landscape, geography, other plant place-names in the locality, source reliability etc.
References	Full references of source information e.g. EPNS
Attribute button: pre-1500	The place-name is attested pre-1500
Attribute button: post-1500	The place-name is only attested post-1500
Attribute button: Wet	Generic element is a wet 'indicator'
Attribute button: Dry	Generic element is a dry 'indicator'
Attribute button: Positive	The plant denoted is regarded as 'positive' i.e. as food, medicine, fodder etc.
Attribute button: Negative	The plant denoted is a nuisance for one reason or another e.g. is poisonous to livestock, suppresses crops etc.
Attribute button: Food	The plant denoted is regarded as a food ingredient
Attribute button: Medicinal	The plant denoted is regarded as a medicinal ingredient
Attribute button: Material	The plant denoted is used for e.g. building materials
Attribute button: Watery Landscape	The mapping of the place-name has revealed a watery landscape, particularly important if the place-name is simplex or the generic gives no clue about the natural environment (discuss further in notes field)

Table 5: Fields contained in the Plant Place-Name database with explanations of their purpose.

Source reliability

The motivation behind the creation of the historical documents in which place-names are recorded (noted in the 'Earliest attestation information' and 'Additional forms and dates' fields) needs consideration since this may help us comprehend the level of

understanding that the place-name conveys about the landscape and environment it is describing and therefore its reliability as an indicator of any kind. At this stage, wild-plant place-names seem unlikely to reflect an administrative or power-based naming practice since naming places for wild-plants suggests a more intimate and detailed knowledge of place based on familiarity, suggesting that wild-plant place-names have the capacity to provide us with glimpses of 'the commonplaces of life with which narrative historical sources rarely engage'.[107] For example, a name used to indicate a place by someone who works the land or who gathers resources from it is likely to be different to a name conferred following an administrative process such as an estate survey (where the conferrer may have no practical knowledge of the land). To use the example of Mountsorrel again, at face value this name conveys a raised piece of ground at which the wild plant sorrel grows and is perhaps notable for its abundance or usefulness. However, rather than referring to the wild plant in this instance, it is interpreted as 'sorrel-coloured hill… presumably identical with Mont-sorel [France], but was no doubt named from the pinkish granite there, which is still being quarried today.'[108] While knowledge of the plant, characterized by spikes of pinky-brown flowers and fruit, is clearly indicated and apt as a description of the place, the name is not conveying botanical knowledge of that place, but is rather a transferred name conveying knowledge of the plant, or place, in France.[109]

Dating

Since the earliest documented date for a place-name is usually later than the date at which a place-name arose, dating poses a challenge in all place-name research. The

[107] D. N. Parsons, 'Churls and athelings, kings and reeves: some reflections on place-names and early English society', in *Perceptions of Place: twenty-first-century interpretations of English place-name studies, ed. by* J. Carroll and D. N. Parsons (Nottingham: English Place-Name Society, 2013), pp. 43–72 (p. 45).
[108] Cameron, *English Place-Names*, p. 87.
[109] I owe this point to Jayne Carroll.

challenge is perhaps greater with plant place-names since plant-elements occur more frequently in field- and minor than major names and the documents that record minor names are often, for example, one-off surveys that provide a snapshot in time unlike sequences of deeds that can show the changing of hands of larger pieces of land over hundreds of years with hundreds of years of spellings. Moreover, minor and field names tend to occur in much later documents than the pre-1500 cut-off date chosen here, rendering the etymological evidence less reliable since more interpretations become possible.

Specific/plant-element notes

Where available the etymologies of plant place-name specifics should be recorded here, and is where proposed etymologies can be mooted (i.e. where there is some doubt, or where established etymologies can be probed based on any new information added to the database derived from geographical, environmental and botanical.

Picklist fields necessarily are confined to fixed options to maintain consistency and include:

'Specific/Plant element language' and 'Generic language'[110]

Celtic – 'a family of languages, which includes the language spoken by the inhabitants of Britain before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century and its later forms (Welsh, Cornish), and also Irish and Gaelic'
Old English – 'the Germanic language of the Anglo-Saxons, spoken in England between the fifth and twelfth centuries'
Old Norse – 'the Germanic language of the Vikings, who settled in northern and eastern parts of England in the ninth and tenth centuries'
French – 'the language of the Norman invaders led by William the Conqueror'
Latin – 'the language of the Romans, who conquered Britain in the first century AD, but also the administrative language of the Normans: most Latin in place-names dates from the medieval rather than Roman period'
Middle English – 'this refers to the varieties of English spoken between c.1100 and c.1500'
Modern English – 'this refers to the varieties of English spoken after about 1500'

Table 6: Language picklist applied to the language fields in the database.

Generic element

This picklist can be added to as and when new generics are found as collection occurs.

Those occurring in the corpus collected here include:

æcer
banke
botm
brōc
clos
commun
cot
denu
ecg
ēg
feld
halh
hangra

[110] Definitions taken from the *KEPN* public interface.

(ge)hæg
-ing[2]
-ing[4]
lǣs/lǣswe
land
lēah
mǣd/mǣdwe
(ge)mǣre
mōr
mos
mýrr
n/a
ōra
pece
sīc
slæd
stān
tūn
wælla
wudu

Table 7: Generic elements picklist generated during collection of the present corpus.

Attribute buttons

Attribute buttons can be added to the database at any time and selected or not to flag those place-names that fall into a category of sought information. For example, if an element within a place-name indicates a wet environment the database can include a 'wet' attribute button to capture that information and enable sorting and filtering based on this element-quality. In instances where lexical elements are not indicative of the environment but where the evidence collected points to a wet environment, further attribute buttons can be employed to capture the wet character of the landscape

of each place-name if applicable.[111] These buttons allow for comparisons to be made between place-name and other data.

Queries

Once a sufficient number of place-names containing the plant-element/s have been collected and documented, database queries can be built to interrogate and filter the data useful for analysis in any given study as required.

Step 6: Mapping the corpus

The next step is to map the corpus using GIS software to illustrate the geographical distribution of the plant-name elements occurring. Pin-pointing places fossilised in place-names which are 'lost'[112] can make the detailed examination and relevance of those place-names to a study dubious. This challenge is more difficult here since a main source for plant place-names are field-names, which can migrate, and may no longer be applied to the plot they originally designated. [113] To address this, different levels of accuracy need to be applied to the grid reference stated in the database for each place-name recorded, namely:[114]

[111] This would usually be established at a mapping stage.
[112] That is, where a recorded place-name is no longer use and the location is uncertain.
[113] Matthew Blake, Stories from the Edge: Creating Identities in Early Medieval Staffordshire (Oxford: BAR Publishing: 2020), p. 20.
[114] These are based on those used by the Institute for Name Studies' *Staffordshire Place-Name Project* <https://staffordshireplacenames.esdm.co.uk/>.

Within county
Within hundred
Within parish
Within township
Within 1km
Approximate (within 500m)
Accurate (within 50m)
Uncertain

Table 8: Grid reference accuracy picklist options.

Where the location of a place-name is uncertain or imprecise because of lack of information or the possibility of migration 'it is prudent to examine the wider area in association with that name',[115] noting the surrounding naming practices to see if it is possible to identify similarities (other plant-elements, or concentrations of names using the same generic as the plant place-name in question). The gathering of this information may enable a case for potential locations to be made or not. For example, a conclusion about a *merece* 'wild celery, smallage' place-name occurring near freshwater or in a high and dry landscape would be questionable since the plant favours salt marshes and springs.[116] Whilst any location established or dismissed in this way is inevitably flawed (it cannot be proven one way or another without documentary evidence), when combined with other data such as whether or not the locality was likely to be a suitable environment for the plant in question, it can indicate an approximate location (with caveats) to study. Clearly an imprecise location lessens the value of the geographical and environmental evidence and work

[115] Blake, *Stories from the Edge*, p. 20.
[116] Cole et al, 'Old English *merece*', pp. 141–146.

must go into tracing precise locations where possible, since only those that are accurately located can be reliably interpreted.

Step 7: Observations

Observations should be recorded for each step of the procedure and should note, for example, the generics with which the plant-elements compound (through the running of database queries), patterns observable in terms of dating (through database sorting) and distribution (at the mapping stage).

Applying the methodology

Of the twenty-six plant-elements determined to be of interest above the two elements OE *gagel* and OE *wīr*, widely interpreted as myrtle (*Myrica gale*), have been selected as case studies to test and develop the present methodology.

Bog myrtle, OE *gagel* and *wīr*, case study

OE *gagel* and *wīr* have long been interpreted as denoting bog myrtle. *Wīr* has been extensively examined by Richard Coates,[117] who concluded that *wīr* may have been applied to any bog-plant with wiry characteristics, in terms of their stems or roots, of which bog myrtle was perhaps the most conspicuous.[118] This conclusion begs the question that if *wīr* was applied to bog myrtle (and other plants) to convey a sense of 'wiriness', what was it about bog myrtle that *gagel* expressed? While the discussion here will focus on *gagel* for which a corpus has been collected, information about *wīr* has also been collated for comparison. What follows is the systematic working through of the methodology as set out in the previous section.

Step 1: Language and etymology of plant-names

The known occurrences of *gagel* and *wīr* outside of place-names are catalogued in the *DOEPN*,[119] and listed in Appendix 2.[120] Written evidence of *wīr* predates *gagel* with occurrences in the *Epinal Glossary* (seventh–eighth century), the *Corpus Glossary* (eighth century), the *Erfurt Glossary* (ninth century) and the *Cleopatra Glossary* (tenth century).[121] Both *gagel* and *wīr* occur in *Bald's Leech Book* (compiled around the year 900) and *gagel* occurs additionally in *Lacnunga* (dated to the last quarter of the tenth or first quarter of the eleventh century) and the *Laud Glossary* (twelfth century).

In the earlier glossaries *wīr* is found glossing Latin *myrtus* or *martusmyrtus* six times. The Latin probably refers to *Myrtus communis* rather than *Myrica gale* since

[117] Coates, '*Wirral*'.
[118] Ibid., pp. 96–97.
[119] Bierbaumer et al, *DOEPN*.
[120] Often spelled with the letter wynn 'ƿ' *wīr* occurs as *pir* in many of these sources.
[121] Bierbaumer et al.

the former is a plant of southern Europe and the Mediterranean in particular,[122] where these texts originate, while the latter is one of northern Europe. Yet, rather than either *gagel* or *wīr,* it is the Latin word *myrtus* that has come to form part of the ModE name for *Myrica gale* to which 'bog' is prefixed to distinguish it from common myrtle (*Myrtus communis*). *Gagel* glosses the Latin *mirtus* on one occasion in the *Laud Glossary*. That the two plants represented by *wīr* and *gagel* were distinguishable from one another at one time, is implied in *LB I* where a recipe against *circul adl* calls for both *wīr* and *gagel* as well as *gagel croppan*.[123] Cockayne (see Appendix 2) translates these respectively as 'myrtle', 'gale', and the 'catkins of gale'. That *wīr* is a specific plant, rather than a plant part, is implied further in another recipe calling for the bark of *wīr-rind* 'the bark of *wīr*'. The compounds in which the elements *gagel* and *wīr* occur outside of place-names include:

- *gagel-croppa* 'OE, 'the sprout or top of a plant, a bunch of blooms, a cluster of berries'.[124]
- *wīr-þorn*(?), this compound is marked as 'unsolved' in *DOEPN*, and thought to be a corruption, an error by the glossator, of *worhana* 'a pheasant'.[125]
- *wīr-græfe* 'a myrtle-grove'[126] (*græfe* 'thicket, copse').[127]
- *wīr-rind* 'bark of a tree or other plant, a piece of bark'.[128]
- *wīr-trēo* 'a tree'.[129]
- *wīr-trēowen*, 'of-a tree',[130] 'wooden'.[131]

[122] Unlike *Myrica gale*, *Myrtus communis* is not native and prefers full sun and well-drained soil, and so even if introduced would not grow in the same places.
[123] Cockayne translates *circul adl* as 'shingles', *LB I,* pp. 86–89.
[124] *EPNE*, I, p. 113–4.
[125] Bierbaumer et al, *DOEPN*, search term: '*wīr*'.
[126] Toller et al, <https://bosworthtoller.com/36004>.
[127] Ibid., <https://bosworthtoller.com/51127>.
[128] Frances McSparran, et al. (ed.), *MEC*, '*wīr-rind*'. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 2000–2018).
[129] Toller et al, <https://bosworthtoller.com/30998>.
[130] Ibid., <https://bosworthtoller.com/31005>.
[131] *EPNE*, II, p. 187.

According to the *OED* the earliest attestation for bog myrtle (as opposed to just myrtle) is in *Gerard's Herbal* (1597).[132] While *gagel* survives as the English common name *gale*, there does not appear to be a surviving name derived from *wīr*. It is the classical name 'myrtle', prefixed with 'bog' that has lasted more commonly into modern parlance above both. The prevalence of myrtle is perhaps because it was a more scholarly term and you used it because you 'wished to be regarded as learned',[133] and it has thus prevailed into both scientific and common language. Alternatively, the rise of the written record and increases in literacy together with the presence of myrtle in the Bible may have led to its later dominance. It occurs on six occasions in the Bible (see Appendix 3), the contexts of which include that it is planted together with other trees in the wilderness to improve it,[134] that it is favourable unlike nettles, that its branches can be used together with olive, pine and palm to build 'tabernacles', and God talks to Zechariah through a man (or angel) standing among myrtle trees. While the biblical myrtle almost certainly refers to *Myrtus communis* the fact that myrtle was glossed with *gagel* and *wīr* suggests that a 'variety' of myrtle was thought to exist in England.

As discussed in the introduction, the variety of alternative names applied to a plant and the same name applied to many plants is problematic, and this is intensified when vernacular and dialect names are taken into consideration. However, the names attributed to *Myrica gale* tell us much. The modern name by which it is commonly

[132] *OED*, s.v. 'myrtle (n.), sense 2.c' <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3146771526>.
[133] Christina Lee, 'Body and Soul: Disease and Impairment', in *The Material Culture of Daily Living in the Anglo-Saxon World* ed. by Maren Clegg Hyer and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), pp. 293–309 (p. 294).
[134] This resonates with scientific evidence that bog myrtle may improve forest productivity due to its nitrogen fixing qualities resulting in peatland stabilization and reclamation. Keith R. Skene, Janet I. Sprent, John A. Raven and Lindsey Herman, '*Myrica gale* L.', *Journal of Ecology*, 88 (2000), pp. 1079–1094 (p. 1091).

known, bog myrtle, indicates where it can be found and that it may have been thought, at one time, to have some affinity with the Mediterranean and biblical myrtle (*Myrtus communis*). Other names applied to *Myrica gale*, together with their localities, can be seen in Appendix 4. In summary, there are many vernacular names that may be derived from *gagel* (*gawan, goyle, gale, Scotch gale, sweet gale, gall, gaul, gawel, goil, goule*);[135] that characterize the colour (*gold, gold/golden-withy, golden osier*); that characterize a 'variety', its supposed geographical origin or where it can be found (*Devonshire myrtle, Dutch myrtle, Scotch gale*); that characterize its scent (*sweet, sweet gale, sweet willow, sweet withy, sweet myrtle*); that characterize its uses (*candle berries, flea-wood*); that reference another plant (*sweet withy, gold-withy, golden withy, golden osier, sweet sedge, sweet willow, sweet flag, sweet myrtle*); that indicate through a further lexical element something about the environment in which it occurs (*moor myrtle, moss wythan, bog myrtle*); that characterize its habit (*withywind* [binding, plaiting tendency], *berries* [berry bearing], *flea-wood* [woodiness]); and those that have come to incorporate 'myrtle' and lost either *gagel* or *wīr* (*bog myrtle, Devonshire myrtle, moor myrtle, myrtle*). It is noteworthy that *wīr* is conspicuous by its absence in these names, but perhaps the 'wind' and 'withy' elements in *withywind* resonate with the hypothesis that *wīr* indicates a 'wiry' characteristic; *Withywind/withwind* (Hampshire) being one of those names applied additionally to many plants including bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) (Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Berkshire), larger bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*) (Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire), and honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*)

[135] These vernacular names may also recall yellow/gold flowers, and this is perhaps supported by the plant-names *Gallwort* 'yellow toadflax' and *Gall-wood* 'wormwood', both of which bear yellow flowers.

(Devon).[136] Other similar vernacular names include *withywine* applied to old man's beard (*Clematis vitalba*) (Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire), and *withywinny* applied to black bryony (*Tamus communis*) (Devon).[137] These names describing plants noted for their winding, climbing habits appear to have a southern range, and their 'wiriness' relates most obviously to their above ground habit whereas bog myrtle's is subterranean, relating to its rooting system. While beyond the scope of the present study, a cursory search of some of these names demonstrated that they may be occurring in place-names and so such alternative names may be an interesting area for further research (see below speculative discussion of Sweet Hills, Nun Monkton, West Riding of Yorkshire (1577)).

The etymology of *gagel* is unknown. The OE forms and forms of cognates in other Germanic languages include OE *gagel*, *gagelle*, *gagol*, *gagolle*, MDut *gaghel*, ModG *gagel*, and possibly ON **gagl* (in *gaglviðr*).[138] It developed into ME *gail(e), gale, gagel, gaighel, gau(e)l, gael*;[139] Scots *gale, gaal, gaul gall, gaul, gaal, gaule, ga*;[140] and Icelandic *gagl.*[141] *Gagel* survives in the English common name (sweet) gale, and Scots forms are noted in literary texts from 1726 to 1953 with a variety of spellings and is noted in the compound *bog-gaul* and the derived *gaully* 'covered in bog myrtle'.[142] The etymon of OE *gagel* also survives in the cognate modern German word *gagelstrauch* 'gale-shrub/bush', sometimes prefixed with *moor*, 'bog, moor'.

[136] Geoffrey Grigson, *The Englishman's Flora* (London, Paladin, 1958, 1975 edn), pp. 261, 308–309, 309–310, 380.
[137] Ibid., p. 458.
[138] *OED*, 'gale, n.¹' <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1037351551>.
[139] Robert E. Lewis et al, eds, *MED* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1952–2001, online edition in Frances McSparran, et al, eds, *MEC* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 2000–2018).
[140] *DSL*, <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/gall>.
[141] Noted in Vigfusson's *Old Icelandic-English Dictionary'*, the compound term *gaglviðr* is interpreted as 'the forest of gale *or* bog myrtle', Aurelijus Vijūnas, 'Old Icelandic *gaglviðr', Quidditas*, 28 (2007), p. 135. However, the first element can also be translated as 'a small goose, a gosling, a bird', Aldís Sigurðardóttir et al, eds, *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 1989–2021). *OED* remarks that bog myrtle is a doubtful translation.
[142] *DSL*, <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/gall>.

Other modern German names include *talg strauch/busch/baum* ‘tallow shrub/bush/tree’, on account of the waxy resin it exudes that was used for candle making.[143]

Gagel is synonymous with *pors* in modern Germanic, including Scandinavian, languages and occurs in both settlement- and field-names in Germany,[144] and is mooted as a possible element in place-names in Sweden.[145] In *ONP pors* is translated as ‘sweet gale’. The homonymous *pors*, an obsolete OE word for ‘purse’, is listed in the *OED*, and in ME is noted as being used of plants with purse-like characteristics.[146] While it may worth investigating whether or not the two words have cognacy, a preliminary search for *pors* in place-names in England yielded no instances.

The etymology of OE *wīr* ‘metal wrought into the form of a slender rod or thread, formerly by hammering, now by the operation of wire-drawing’ is comparatively straightforward. Cognate with ON **vírr* and OHG *wiara*, *OED* compares ‘wire’ with ‘withe’ OE *wiððe*/*wiþþe* ‘willow’, ‘a band, tie, or shackle consisting of a tough flexible twig or branch, as of willow or osier, used for binding or tying, and sometimes for plaiting.’[147] The characteristic of the plant that the etymology of the plant-name evokes, then, is perhaps its suckering root system since it is through this method of propagation that the plant forms its distinctive clumps (see below).

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[143] Heinz Messinger, *Langenscheidts Großes Schulwörterbuch Deutsch-Englisch* (Berlin: Langenscheidts, 1977, 1981 edn), p. 1055.
[144] Peter Seidensticker, ‘Myrica Gale L., der Gagel. Ein apokryphes Lemma im “Promptuarium Medicine”’, *Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik*, 68, Jahrg., H. 1 (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2001), pp. 27–42 (pp. 35–36). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4050466>.
[145] Gunnar Pellijeff, Ortnamnen I Norrbottens Län: Del 9 Luleå Kommun, Bebyggelsenamn (Västervik: AB C. O. Ekblad & Co., 1990), p. 32 and Catarina Röjder, Ortnamnen I Göteborgs och Bohus Län XIX, Ortnamnen I Tanums Härad, 1., Bebyggelsenamn (Gothenburg: Eslöv HB, 2013), p.102.
[146] *OED*, s.v. ‘purse (n.), sense II.7.b’ <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1145745017>.
[147] *OED*, s.v. ‘wire (n.1), Etymology’ <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4160155738> and s.v. ‘withe | with (n.), Etymology’ <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3279600503>.

Step 2: Botanical information

Appearance

Myrica gale is a 'much branched' shrubby plant with dark green leaves, red-gold and yellow clustering catkin flowers that mature brown, and yellow-brown fruits.[148] It tends to grow in clumps and has a spread and reach of 1.5–2 metres. It bears deciduous foliage from April until November, produces flowers in April and May, and fruits in the summer months.

Figure 3: Botanical drawing of *Myrica gale*.[149]

Leaves

[148] Stroh et al, '*Myrica gale*'.
[149] Otto Wilhelm Thomé, *Flora von Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1938).

The dark green, deciduous and aromatic leaves can grow to 6cm in length and are arranged alternately on a 'prominent midrib'. Covered in 'fine hairs', the oblong leaves are rounded at the tip tapering to a point at the base (oblanceolate), and the upper part of the leaf edge is 'coarsely toothed'.[150]

Flowers

Red-gold and yellow flowers (catkins) develop on the previous year's growth, appearing largely before the plant is in leaf (April–May), and darkening to brown as they age.

Fruits

Growing to 2.5cm in diameter the spherical yellow-brown fruits are cone-like nuts with a warty appearance that exude wax.[151]

Habitat

It thrives in 'base-poor bogs and moorland, lowland raised bogs, wet heaths and acid carr; in all its sites, moving groundwater is a constant feature'.[152]

Propagation

An essentially dioecious plant (individual plants produce female or male flowers), it has been noted with 'monoecious and hermaphrodite flowers'.[153] It can be propagated via seed, wood and semi-wood cuttings, root division, and via its suckers. Propagation is not straight-forward however, with seed cultivation needing to take place in autumn and requiring constant humidity.[154]

[150] Skene et al, '*Myrica gale* L.', p. 1079.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Stroh et al, '*Myrica gale*'.
[153] Skene et al, p. 1079.
[154] Ibid., p. 1084. The article indicates that these requirements mean that 'seedlings are rare in the field' (Poore, 1956)'.

Soil

The soil conditions in which it can thrive are varied. RHS indicates it requires poorly drained acid, alkaline or neutral chalk and sandy soils that can be water-logged. BSBI indicates that it is typically found on fen peat and moist acidic soil (where moving ground water is a significant feature) and because it can synthesise the nitrogen it requires independently it can also grow in loam and clay.[155]

Aspect

Preferring a sunny, exposed aspect bog myrtle can thrive in anything from open heathland to partially cleared woodland, tolerating full sun, partial shade, and exposed or sheltered conditions.[156]

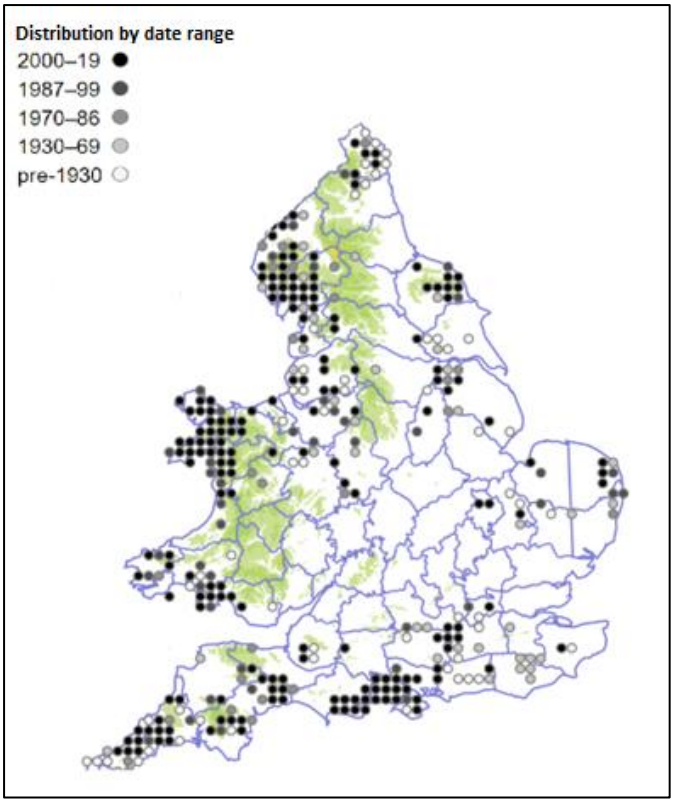
Altitude

The range of altitudes in which bog myrtle can grow extends from under 100m up to 1000m, with the highest official record of 799m at Glen Coe.[157] Bog myrtle's range, being wide, renders this data rather less useful, since not many places in England are higher than 799m.

Distribution

The following map showing the distribution of *Myrica gale* is a version of the BSBI map, edited to exclude Scotland and Ireland. As with the place-name evidence, the plant distribution evidence is coloured by the geographical range and the quality of the data collected.

[155] Skene et al, '*Myrica gale* L.', p. 1081.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Stroh et al, '*Myrica gale*'.



Map 1: Edited version of the Myrica gale distribution map produced by BSBI.[158]

Excluding Wales, the highest concentrations of distribution appear to be Cumberland, Lancashire, Westmorland, the north-east of Northumberland, Yorkshire (particularly in the east of the North Riding, and the west of the East Riding as it borders Lincolnshire), the north-west of Lincolnshire, the eastern border between Norfolk and Suffolk, Surrey, Dorset, Hampshire, Devon and Cornwall. The plant also occurs, to a lesser recorded extent, in Cheshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire and the north of Shropshire, Cambridgeshire, and Sussex. Comparisons with the place-name corpus, while useful, will inevitably have limitations since the botanical data only goes back as far as 'pre-1930',[159] and environmental conditions over the previous 1000 years or more, from which place-name evidence is drawn, will inevitably have fluctuated if not

[158] Stroh et al, '*Myrica gale*'.
[159] How far pre-1930 is not disclosed, presumably because records vary extensively across the country. A more in-depth study about the distribution of a particular plant species could involve contact with BSBI to determine the age of the records of plants being examined.

permanently altered. Further, while surveys are extant for 99% of Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, the number of recording days, and so quantity of data, varies across the country. For example, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, the East Riding of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk have had the least (with under 100 recording days in places), while Cornwall, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Somerset, Lancashire, Cumberland and the North Riding of Yorkshire have had the most (with up to 400 recording days).[160]

Step 3: Archaeobotanical information

The archaeobotanical data for *Myrica gale* recorded on *ABCD* is minimal,[161] but what there is has been presented in tables in Appendix 5. The data comes from only six sites across England and Scotland, and discounting the Scottish sites leaves just three, two in York, and one in Beverley. The Tanner Row (York) samples found in occupation layers, fills, and build-ups, as well as 'organic accumulation' date largely to a Roman layer at a waterlogged lowland river-side. Later Anglo-Scandinavian, Norman, early medieval and medieval layers are categorised as pit or well fills. The samples consisted of buds, bud-scales, propagules, seeds, catkins and leaves. The small Eastgate (Beverley) samples, consisting of propagules and seeds, were found in waterlogged sandy silt in an urban occupation area and were dated pre-eighth-century. The Coppergate (York) samples were dated to an Anglo-Scandinavian layer in a waterlogged urban occupation area in a lowland river valley. The samples consisted of propagules, seeds and leaves. Notably, one of the lines of enquiry for the Tanner Row excavations was to establish whether the place-name indicated the presence of a

[160] See 'Figure 1' in Stroh et al, '*Myrica gale*'.
[161] Tomlinson and Hall, ABCD.

medieval tanning industry.[162] In the findings, however, bog myrtle is not discussed as a tanning plant.[163] Further, while acknowledging the many uses of bog myrtle the Coppergate report for the Anglos-Scandinavian period was not able to establish if the plant was being used or simply growing there.[164] However, the report does list bog myrtle as both a flavouring, a dye plant, and a potential dye plant in the Anglo-Scandinavian period, noting that it was found along with other known dye plants (weld, agrimony and hop).[165]

Step 4: Ethnobotanical information

In order to understand why *Myrica gale* occurs in place-names, it is necessary to consider the cultural, agricultural, medicinal and folkloric significance of the plant itself. What was it about the plant that made it worth noting in place-names? Appendix 2 tabulates the evidence for bog myrtle in terms of its use and value as a material collected from the sources listed in the methodology, but in summary it is documented as being used for a wide variety of purposes including: insect repellent (fleas, midges), linen protection (moths and worms), faggots for cloam ovens,[166] a yellow dye (bark), tanning (bark), flavouring ale or beer, candle wax, and in the treatment of ailments including (as *gagel*) *circul adl* 'circle disease', *lungen adle* 'lung disease', *hpostan* 'a cough', *adle* 'illness', in a recipe for a *leoht drenc* 'a light drink', a *grene sealf* 'green salve'; (as *wīr*) for when a *mannes getapa beoþ sare oðde āþundene* 'a man's instrument be sore or swollen', *dolhdrenc* 'a wound drink', and *smeapyrme* for 'a penetrating worm'. Notably the medicinal uses are confined to the

[162] A. R. Hall and H. K. Kenward, *Environmental Evidence from the Colonia* (Dorchester: The Dorset Press, 1990), p. 293.
[163] Ibid., pp. 299, 414.
[164] H. K. Kenward and A. R. Hall, *Biological Evidence from 16–22 Coppergate* (Dorchester: The Dorset Press, 1995), p. 627.
[165] Ibid., pp. 692, 715, 770.
[166] An 'obsolete (except south-western) dialect word meaning mud or clay, from OE *clām*, ME *clome***,** becoming *cloame* by the 1600s', *OED*, 'cloam' <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6272585886>.

early sources (tenth–fourteenth century), with the remaining uses documented from the sixteenth–nineteenth century. Scientific and ethnobotanical studies of *Myrica gale* looking at the antimicrobial and antioxidant properties bear out and add to some of the above uses with evidence indicating its anticancer, anti-catarrhal and mucolytic activities and its use in the treatment of stomach and cardiac disorders. It has also been noted to have been used as an abortifacient and emmenagogue, and in treatments for dermal disease and dysentery, and perhaps shingles.[167] Additionally the use of plant parts as a spice for food, a flavouring for beer, and a perfume for linen are documented.[168]

Step 5: The corpus

There are thirteen *gagel* and twenty-one *wīr* place-names in the pre-1500 corpus. Four (12%) are major names, and twenty-nine (88%) minor. The thirty-four names in this corpus consists of both 'secure' and 'possible' attestations. 'Possible' attestations are those described as 'possible' or 'probable' in the literature or that have alternative interpretations mooted as well as *gagel* or *wīr*. For clarity those place-names that are 'possible' are marked with '⋆' throughout and their alternative interpretations presented in the tables that follow in Section 6 so that they can form part of the discussion. Similarly, where names may be derived, these are marked with '†'.

[167] Skene et al., '*Myrica gale* L.', quoting Gildemeister & Hoffman (1956); Grieve (1971); Hoppe (1975); Simpson *et al.* (1996), p. 1091. This reference to shingles resonates with Cockayne's translation of *circl adl* as shingles.
[168] M. Sylvestre, J. Legault, D. Dufour, A. Pichette, 'Chemical composition and anticancer activity of leaf essential oil of *Myrica gale* L', *Phytomedicine* 12:4 (2005), pp. 299–304, and Mayuko Nakata, Takao Myoda, Yoichi Wakita, Takahiro Sato, Ikuko Tanahashi, Kazuki Toeda, Takane Fujimori, Makoto Nishizawa, 'Volatile Components of Essential Oil from Cultivated *Myrica gale* var. *tomentosa* and its Antioxidant and Antimicrobial Activities', *Journal of Oleo Science*, pp. 755–762.

Ambiguous elements

The act of collecting the corpus revealed a number of confusable elements, particularly where early forms were wanting and so open to more than one interpretation. They included:

pre-1500 corpus

- Celtic personal name *Gall*[169]
- OE *gafol* – 'tax, tribute, rent'[170]
- OE *gafol*, *geafol* – 'a river fork'[171]
- Dialect *gorl*, *goal* – 'violent wind, howling wind'[172]
- Lincolnshire dialect *gyle-hole* – 'pool or creek left in a tidal area'[173]
- OE personal name *Wighere*[174]
- *werri* – 'willow'[175]
- Dialect *wire-thorn* – 'yew'[176]

post-1500 corpus

- ON *geil* – 'a narrow ravine, a way, esp. a narrow lane'[177]
- OE *wer*, *wær* – 'a weir, a river-dam, a fishing-enclosure in a river'[178]
- ME *quarrelle* ME – 'a quarry'[179]

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[169] *EPNS*, VIII, Devon, part I, pp. 88–9.
[170] *EPNE*, I, p. 192. This element has been noted as being confusable with *gagel* in *EPNS*, XLVI, Cheshire part III, p. 172, with the example of Gavel Green (which is included in the corpus collected here).
[171] *EPNE*, I, pp. 191–192
[172] David Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Brewood: D. Horovitz, 2003), p. 273.
[173] Coates, 'Azure Mouse', p. 88.
[174] *EPNS*, XLVI, Cheshire, part III, p. 112.
[175] *EPNS*, XXI, Cumberland, part II, p. 270.
[176] *EPNS*, LIII, Dorset, Part II, p. 54, 62.
[177] *EPNE*, I, p. 199. This element occurs in 'High Gale, Gale Bank YN, Gale Hall Cu; Hugill We (hoh), Skelgill Cu, Skell Gill YN (skali), in some of which it is confused with gil'. Having a largely northern and eastern range, this element is unlikley to be occuring elsewhere.
[178] *EPNE*, II, p. 255.
[179] Ibid. p. 76.

- ME *weyour* – 'a pond'[180]

Evaluating those names that are ambiguous using the methodology (etymology, looking at the plant itself, the geography and the botanical, archaeobotanical, and ethnobotanical information) may swing the weight of interpretation one way or another. Some of these elements however, as well as being etymologically difficult to distinguish from the development of *gagel* and *wīr*, are also difficult to distinguish on geographical and environmental grounds. For example *galla*/*gealla*, *gafol*/*geafol*, *go*(*u*)*le*, *gyle*, *wer*, *wær* and *weyour* all imply a watery landscape or feature and, since bog myrtle requires a watery environment to thrive, distinguishing these elements from *gagel* or *wīr* is complicated. There is the possibility too that a place-name coined with *gagel* has over time become corrupted to *gafol* or vice versa since bog myrtle may occur in river environments. Arguably *gafol* 'river fork' could describe the branching nature of a plant.

Step 6: Mapping the corpus

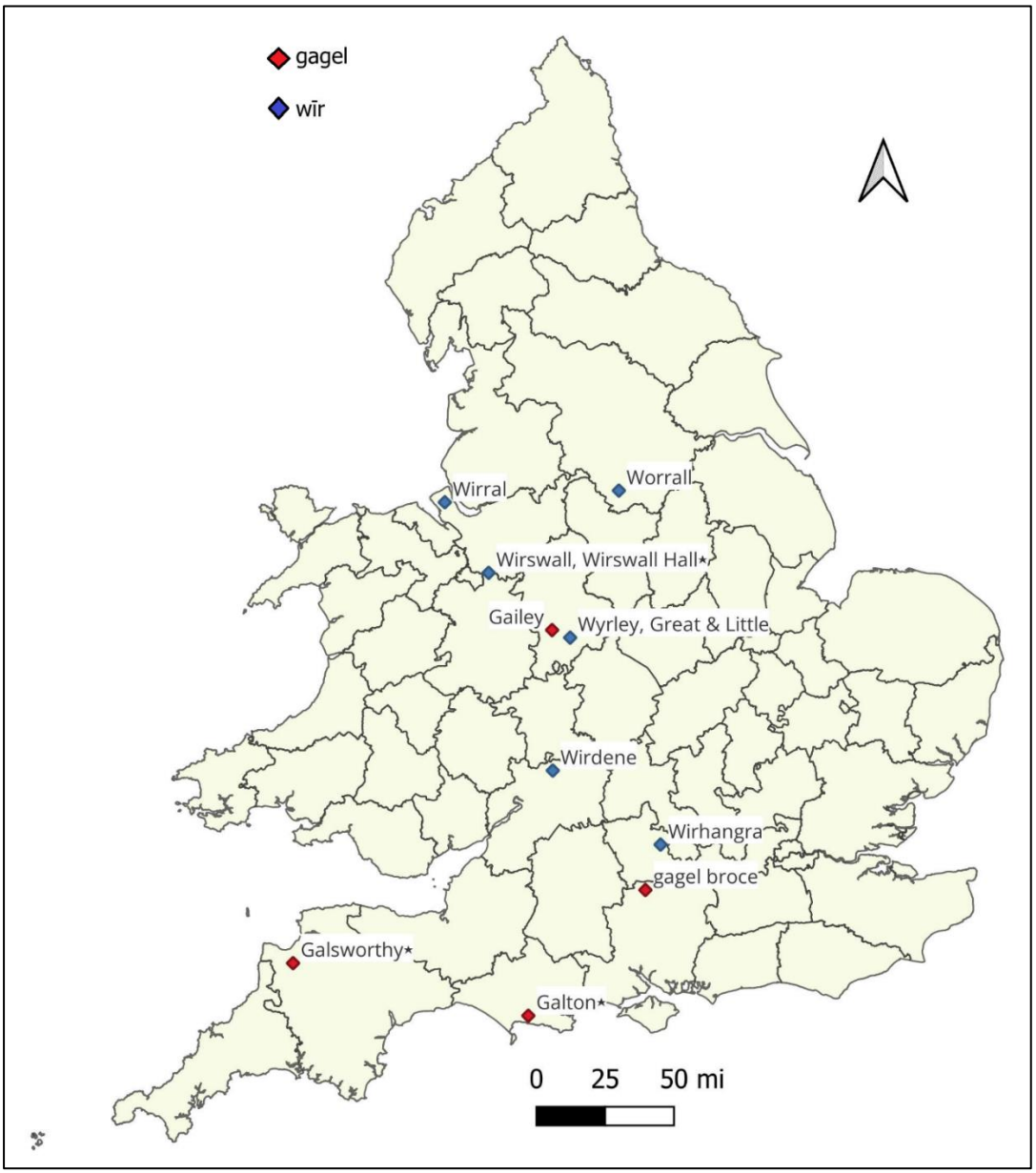
As discussed in the analytical process the survival of documentary evidence geographically and across time, and the coverage of EPNS surveys, must be borne in mind in any place-name study and this is particularly important when drawing maps to record incidence and distribution. Our perceptions are necessarily skewed by the serendipity of documentary survival, particularly for early place-names for which fewer records survive.

1086 and pre-Conquest place-names

The distribution of the Domesday and earlier place-name evidence, while scant, indicates that half are broadly in the middle of the country, largely in the west, with

[180] *EPNE*, II, p. 257.

four *wīr* names and one *gagel*. The other half are towards the south and southwest of the country, with two *wīr* names and three *gagel.* Arguably *wīr* predominates towards the north of the country, and *gagel* in the south. There are no examples of either name north of the West Riding of Yorkshire, the one example being in the far south of the county. There are only two compounding generics for those mid-country, *halh* with *wīr*, and *lēah* with *gagel* and once with *wīr*. Those in the south of the country all have differing compounding generics, including (with *wīr*), *hangra, wælla*, *denu* and (with *gagel*) *brōc⋆, ōra⋆, tūn⋆*.



Map 2: Pre-1086 distribution of *gagel* and *wīr* place-names.

Pre-1500 wīr place-names

There are twenty–one pre-1500 attestations of *wīr* place-names in the corpus and distribution shows a concentration of the names in Cheshire and the bordering counties of Shropshire and Staffordshire, a looser distribution towards the south and west (Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Somerset), with the remaining examples in the Northwest Riding of Yorkshire and Cumberland. Of these sixteen are secure and five possible. The table below lists place-names interpreted as containing OE *wīr* as well as those where a *wīr* interpretation is 'possible' or alternative interpretations in addition to bog myrtle have been mooted.

Head form	Earliest form	Parish	County	Date	Alternative interpretation
Wirdene	*Wirdene*	Stoke Orchard	Gl	777 x 779	n/a
Wirral	(on) *Wirhealum*, (of) *Wirheale*	n/a (hundred name)	Ch	894	n/a
Wirhangra	*Wirhangra*	Aston Tirrold	Bk	944	n/a
Worrall	*Wihale*, *Wihala*.	Ecclesfield	WRY	1086	n/a
Wyrley, Great & Little	*Wireleia*	Cannock/Norton Canes	St	1086	n/a
Wirswall, Wirswall Hall⋆	*Wireswelle*, *Wiresuelle*⋆	Wirswall	Ch	1086	'*Wighere's* spring', from the OE pers.n. *Wighere* and *wella*.' However, Coates includes this as a possible occurrence in his dataset of place-names including the word *wīr*.[181]

[181] *EPNS*, XLVI, Cheshire, part III, p. 112, and Coates, *'Wirral'*, p. 84.

Wirhal	*Wirhal*	Wadworth/Lower Strafforth	Y	1218	n/a
Wyrley	*Werley*	Ightfield	Sa	1271–2	n/a
Wyrlone/Wyrloue	*Wyrlone/Wyrloue*	Uncertain (lost)	Ch	*c.*1290	n/a
Weary Hall⋆	*Wyrihal⋆*	Boltons	Cu	13th cent.	'Ekwall takes the first element to be *Werri*, as in Willow Holme in Carlisle'. Coates includes this occurrence in his dataset of place-names including the word *wīr*'.[182]
Wirfurlong⋆	*Wirfurlong⋆*	Sturminster Marshall	Do	L.13th cent.	Probably 'from *wīr* 'bog myrtle'.[183]
Wreden Plantation⋆	*Wiredon⋆*	Puddletown	Do	1306	May 'contain *wīr* "bog myrtle" with *dūn*'.[184]
Worrall Hill	*Wyralehul*	Mobberley	Ch	*c.*1306 (15th)	n/a
Wirslade, la	*Wirslade, la*	Lambourn	Bk	1318–19	n/a
Wearyall Hill	*Wirral Park*	Glastonbury	S	*c.*1343	n/a
Wiremor, le	*Wiremor, le*	Frodsham	Ch	1347	n/a
Whirley, Whirley Hall	*Wyrlegh*	Alderley	Ch	1348	n/a
Worralls Field	*Weralgrews*	Frodsham	Ch	1349	n/a
Wyringe, boscus de⋆	*Wyringe, boscus de⋆*	Uncertain (lost)	Ch	1357 (1620)	Perhaps 'place where the bog–myrtle grows'.[185]

[182] *EPNS*, XXI, Cumberland, part II, p. 270 and Coates, '*Wirral'*, pp. 79, 87. However, see discussion of this place-name below, p. 81.
[183] *EPNS*, LIII, Dorset, part II, p. 54, *EPNS*, LIII, Dorset, part II, p. 62.
[184] *EPNS*, LII, Dorset, part I, p. 323. *EPNS*, XLIV, Cheshire, part I, p. 54.
[185] *EPNS*, XLIV, Cheshire, part I, p. 54.

Wyrecotesfeld	*Wyrecotesfeld*	Prestbury	Ch	1363	n/a
Wirthorne, le⋆	*le Wirthorne⋆*	Sturminster Marshall	Do	E.14th cent.	'Professor Löfvenberg notes that this would seem to be an early instance of dial. *wire-thorn* "the yew" … he adds, however, that the term may be used here to denote some kind of wild myrtle, comparing OE *wir-treow* "myrtle" and NED… and myrtle-tree'. [186]

Table 9: Pre-1500 *wīr* place-names.

Weary Hall⋆, Boltons, Cumberland (thirteenth cent.) requires some discussion here. While the authors of the EPNS survey and Coates are cautious of a date earlier than 1578 for this place-name, having reconsidered the evidence I believe the thirteenth-century date deliberated over by both to be safe. A paper by F. H. M Parker discusses the Inquistion Post Mortem in which Simon de Wyrihal is named as a juror, and identifies him with Weary Hall just outside the Inglewood Forest.[187] Parker notes that fifteen of the people named in the document, including Simon, also have locative names that refer to places in the vicinity of the Forest (which itself is the subject of this part of the document). Notably there is a William de Wardwyck, identified with a local Warwick rather than that in Warwickshire. This, together with Coates' view that the spellings of this place-name 'tilts the balance of probability back towards connecting Simon de Wyrihal with one of the small places in Cumberland',[188] renders this attestation safe to retain in the pre-1500 *wīr* place-names under discussion here.

[186] *EPNS*, LIII, Dorset, part II, pp. 54, 62.
[187] F. H. M. Parker, 'Inglewood Forest', *Transactions of the Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society*, 5 (1866), pp. 35–61 (p. 53).
[188] Coates, '*Wirral*', p. 80.

Map 3: Pre-1500 distribution of *wīr* place-names.

Pre-1500 gagel place-names

Turning to the thirteen pre-1500 *gagel* place-names, the distribution shows a concentration of names in the middle of the country in four bordering counties, Cheshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, and an outlier in Lincolnshire, with the rest in

the south and west (Hampshire, Dorset, Devon), and one attestation in the far north in Durham. Of these nine are secure and four are possible. Of the nine that are secure three namely *Gavel Green/Gale Field*, Whitegate, Cheshire (1475), *Gauledge*, Alstonefield, Staffordshire (1415) and *Galton*, Owermoigne, Dorset (1086) do have other interpretations mooted but *gagel* is ultimately settled upon or considered probable. For transparency, all probable instances and those with alternative interpretations are included in the following table of *gagel* place-names marked with '⋆'.

Head form	Earliest form	Parish	County	Date	Alternative interpretation
gagel broce	*gagel broce*	Burghclere	Ha	943	n/a
Gailey, Gailey Hay etc.	*Gageleage*	Penkridge	St	1002x1004	n/a
Galton⋆	*Galtone*, *Gavelton*⋆	Owermoigne	Do	1086	Ekwall (1963) proposes *gagel*, while Watts (1974–1975) argues that *gafol* is more plausible, since 'Ekwall's alternative suggestion… is not possible in view of the DB form *Gaveltone'*.[189] However, environmental data and local naming practice may favour *gagel* (see below).
Galsworthy, Galsworthy Moor⋆	*Galeshora*	Buckland Brewer	D	1086	Galsworthy may contain a Celtic personal name, *Gall*, although

[189] *EPNS*, LII, Dorset, part I, pp. 139–40.

					Ekwall argues that *gagel* is possible.[190]
Gayel More	*Gayel More*	Runcorn	Ch	1249–60	n/a
Geylmaresiche	*Geylmaresiche*	St Oswald's	Ch	1290–1293	n/a
Gale⋆	*la Gale*	Bickington	D	1315	'Professor Ekwall suggests that this is the OE plant-name *gagel*, "bog-myrtle"'.[191]
Gavel Green and Gale Field⋆	*the Gale, the Gale feld, Galefeld*	Whitegate	Ch	1475	'"Place where bog-myrtle grows", from *gagel* and *feld*, *grēne*. The first el. has been confused with *gafol* "a rent, a tax."' This example favours *gagel* over the alternative *gagol*.[192]
le Gawel⋆	*le Gawel⋆*	Sedgefield	Du	*c.*1200	Possibly 'OE *gafol* "a fork", esp. in a stream; *gagel* "gale, bog-myrtle" is also possible'.[193]
Galesbrok	*Galesbrok*	Loughborough	Lei	L.14th cent.	n/a
Gauledge⋆	*Gorlage⋆*	Alstonefield	St	1415	Gauledge may be 'dialect *gorl*, *goal* "violent wind, howling wind" but Horovitz favours *gagel*.[194]
Guilicar Lane⋆	*Gaigelker⋆*	North Kelsey	L	1409	Alternatively interpreted as 'pooly carr'.[195]

[190] Ekwall, p.191.
[191] *EPNS*, VIII, Devon, part I, p. 465.
[192] *EPNS*, XLVI, Cheshire part III, p. 172.
[193] *EPNS*, LXXXIII, Durham, part I, p. 173.
[194] Horovitz, *Place-Names of Staffordshire*, p. 270.
[195] Coates, 'Azure Mouse', p. 88.

Gaulond	*Gaulond*	Billesdon	Lei	1467x1484	n/a

Table 10: Pre-1500 *gagel* place-names.

Map 4: Distribution of pre-1500 *gagel* place-names.

Step 7: Observations

Pre-1500 wīr generics

The mapping demonstrates that pre-1500 *wīr* place-names show a generally western distribution, with a significant proportion of attestations in Cheshire. There are no simplex forms, and compounding generics (with number of occurrences in brackets) include:[196]

- *cot* (1) – OE 'cottage',[197] OE 'cottage, hut, animal shelter'[198]
- *denu* (1) – OE 'valley', later used of 'the deep wooded vale of a rivulet',[199] OE 'long, narrow valley'[200]
- *dūn* (1) – OE 'hill',[201] OE 'low hill, upland pasture'[202]
- *furlang* (1) – OE 'furlong',[203] OE 'main division of a common field', 'the length of a furrow'[204]
- *halh* (7) – OE 'nook, corner of land', 'water-meadow'[205]
- *hangra* (1) – OE 'wood on a hill-side', mostly 'combined with words denoting trees and plants',[206] OE 'tree-covered steep hill-side'[207]
- *-ing*[2] (1) – OE 'p.n. forming suffix'[208]
- *lane* or *hlāw* (1) – OE 'lane' or OE 'mound, hill'[209]

[196] Where generics are associated with minor names, definition are taken from both *VEPN* and *NDEFN*. References to element interpretations are given at their first occurrence, but not subsequently.
[197] David N. Parsons and Tania Styles, eds, *VEPN, Á-BOX* (Nottingham: Centre for English Name-Studies, 2000), p. 141.
[198] *NDEFN*, p. 478.
[199] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 142, *EPNE*, I, p. 130.
[200] *NDEFN*, p. 479.
[201] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 142.
[202] *NDEFN*, p. 479.
[203] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 142.
[204] *NDEFN*, p. 481.
[205] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 143, *EPNE*, I, p. 223. The definition in *NDEFN* is identical.
[206] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 143, *EPNE*, I, p. 233.
[207] *NDEFN*, p. 483.
[208] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 144. The definition in *NDEFN* is identical.
[209] Ibid., pp. 143–144. The definition for *lane* is identical in *NDEFN*, *hlaw* does not occur.

- *lēah* (3) – OE ‘clearing, wood’, ‘clearing in a wood’,[210] OE ‘glade or woodland, clearing, open woodland’[211]
- *mōr* (1) – OE ‘waste-land, marsh’,[212] OE ‘barren waste land, usually wet’, later ‘high uncultivated land’[213]
- *slæd* (1) – OE ‘a valley’, but has a variety of meanings including ‘low flat marshy ground’,[214] OE ‘valley, meadow, marshy greensward’[215]
- *wælla* (1) – OE ‘spring, stream, well’,[216] Mercian OE ‘stream’[217]
- *þorn* (1) – OE ‘thorn-tree’[218]

The following table shows all of the place-names in the pre-1500 *wīr* corpus.

Generic	Head form	Parish	County	Date	Place Type
cot	*Wyrecotesfeld*	Prestbury	Ch	1363	Field
denu	*Wirdene*	Stoke Orchard	Gl	777 x 779	Minor name
dūn	Wreden Plantation⋆	Puddletown	Do	1306	Field
furlang	*Wirfurlong⋆*	Sturminster Marshall	Do	L.13th cent.	Field
halh	Wirral	n/a (hundred name)	Ch	894	Major name
halh	Worrall	Ecclesfield	WRY	1086	Minor name
halh	*Wirhal*	Wadworth/Lower Strafforth	Y	1218	Field
halh	Worralls Field	Frodsham	Ch	1349	Field
halh	Weary Hall⋆	Boltons	Cu	13th cent.	Farm
halh	Worrall Hill	Mobberley	Ch	*c.*1306 (15th)	Field

[210] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 144, *EPNE*, II, pp. 18–21.
[211] *NDEFN*, p. 486.
[212] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 145.
[213] *NDEFN*, p. 487.
[214] *EPNE*, II, p. 127.
[215] *NDEFN*, p. 491.
[216] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 147.
[217] *NDEFN*, p. 495.
[218] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 147. The definition in *NDEFN* is identical.

halh	Wearyall Hill	Glastonbury	S	*c.*1343	Minor name
hangra	*Wirhangra*	Aston Tirrold	Bk	944	Woodland
ing[2]	*Wyringe, boscus de*⋆	Uncertain (lost)	Ch	1357 (1620)	Woodland
lane/lone/lanu or hlāw	*Wyrlone/Wyrloue*	Uncertain (lost)	Ch	*c.*1290	Street
lēah	Wyrley, Great & Little	Cannock/Norton Canes	St	1086	Minor name
lēah	Whirley, Whirley Hall	Alderley	Ch	1348	Farm
lēah	Wyrley	Ightfield	Sa	1271–2	Minor name
mōr	*Wiremor, le*	Frodsham	Ch	1347	Field
slæd	*Wirslade, la*	Lambourn	Bk	1318–19	Field
þorn	*Wirthorne, le*⋆	Sturminster Marshall	Do	E.14th cent.	Field
wælla	Wirswall, Wirswall Hall⋆	Wirswall	Ch	1086	Minor name

Table 11: Pre-1500 generics compounding with of *wīr*.

Wyrlone/Wyrloue, lost, Cheshire (*c.*1290), has an obscure generic since the spelling is uncertain and so two interpretations *lane* and *hlāw* are mooted. No other pre- or post-1500 *wīr* place-names in the corpus compound with *hlāw*, but there is a post-1500 example compounding with *lane* in *Wirlane*, Clint, West Riding of Yorkshire (1729), so perhaps *lane* is more plausible. Since *Wyrlone/Wyrloue* is 'lost' environmental and archaeological evidence one way or another is lacking.

Accounting for ten (47.6%) of the place-names, watery generics include *mōr*, *wælla*, and arguably *halh* and *slæd*. *Slæd* may be included in its sense 'low flat marshy ground', and *halh* in its senses 'dry ground in a marsh', 'valley with a stream-bend', 'tongue of land between two rivers', 'promontory into marsh', and 'land in a river-bend'.[219] The only generic expressing marginality is *halh*. The remaining

[219] Gelling, *PNL*, pp.100–110.

generics include *cot, denu, dūn, furlang, hangra*, *ing*, *lane/lone/lanu* (or *hlāw*), *þorn*, *wælla*, with *cot* being the one habitative element in the corpus. *Halh* is the generic most frequently compounding with *wīr*, with seven (36.6%) attestations. As well as having a watery sense, *halhs* have a number of other possible senses depending on their locality and circumstances including 'island of dry ground', 'land in a projection of an administrative unit', 'small valley', and 'hollow'. The sense in the majority of these as well as the watery senses above imply marginality,[220] the edge of something, whether that is a river, a marsh, or an administrative unit. The significant number of examples compounding *wīr* with *halh* is discussed extensively by Coates who concludes that the concentration of these indicates that *halhs* characterised by *wīr* was a frequent and recognisable enough landscape feature to become an established 'lexical compound' noting that no 'other plant-word except *brōm* 'broom' comes close to matching the frequency of *wīr* with *h(e)alh'*.[221]

[220] Gelling, *PNL*, pp.100–110.
[221] Coates, '*Wirral*', p. 99. Notably *brōm* is one of the twenty-six plant-elements identified at the beginning of this project as suitable of further investigation.

Map 5: Pre-1500 generics associated with *wīr*.

The generics distribution map for *wīr* shows *halh* and *lēah* dominating in the middle of the country, with *halh* having two outliers in the far north and far south.

Pre-1500 gagel generics

There are three simplex forms, Gale⋆, Bickington, Devon (1315), *le Gawel⋆*, Sedgefield, Durham (*c.*1200) and Gavel Green etc., Whitegate, Cheshire (1475). Compounding generics (with number of occurrences in brackets) include:[222]

- *brōc* (2) – OE 'brook, stream'[223]
- *ecg* (1) – OE 'edge',[224] OE 'edge, ridge'[225]
- *kjarr* (1) – ON 'brushwood, marsh',[226] ON 'marshland; land growing with brushwood'[227]
- *land* (1) – OE 'land',[228] OE, ME 'selion or strip in the common field', later 'plot of land'[229]
- *lēah* (1) – OE 'clearing, wood', 'clearing in a wood', 'glade or woodland, clearing, open woodland'
- (*ge*)*mǣre-sīc* (1) – OE 'boundary-stream',[230] OE 'boundary' and OE 'small stream, drainage channel'[231]
- *mōr/mór* (1) – OE/ON 'waste-land, marsh'. 'There is no distinction in p.ns. between the OE and ON words'[232]
- *ōra* (1) – OE 'border, margin, bank, edge', 'riverbank, shore, foreshore'[233]

[222] Where generics are associated with minor names, definition are taken from both *VEPN* and *NDEFN*. Where references to definitions have been given previously, they are not repeated here.
[223] David N. Parsons and Tania Styles, *VEPN* (*BRACE–CÆSTER*) (Nottingham: Centre for English Name–Studies, 2000), pp. 36–38. The *NDEFN* definition is also OE 'brook', p. 476.
[224] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 142.
[225] *NDEFN*, p. 480.
[226] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 144.
[227] *NDEFN*, p. 485.
[228] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 144.
[229] *NDEFN*, p. 485.
[230] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, pp. 144, 146. *Geylmaresiche* may have initially been coined as *Maresiche* 'boundary stream' with *gagel* added later.
[231] *NDEFN*, pp. 487, 491.
[232] *EPNE*, II, p. 42.
[233] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX* , p. 145, *EPNE*, II, p. 55. *EPNE* remarks that in compounds this element is found with plant- and tree-names. The *NDEFN* definition is simply 'bank', p. 488.

- *tūn* (1) – OE ‘enclosure, farmstead, estate, village’, later ‘town’, if coined early enough ‘a fenced, hedged or enclosed piece of ground’[234]

Generic	Head form	Parish	County	Date	Place Type
simplex	Gale⋆	Bickington	D	1315	Field
simplex	Gavel Green and Gale Field⋆	Whitegate	Ch	1475	Field
simplex	*le Gawel*⋆	Sedgefield	Du	*c.*1200	Field
brōc	*gagel broce*	Burghclere	Ha	943	Running water
brōc	*Galesbrok*	Loughborough	Lei	L.14th cent.	Field
ecg	Gauledge⋆	Alstonefield	St	1415	Farm
kjarr	Guilicar Lane⋆	North Kelsey	L	1409	Street
land	*Gaulond*	Billesdon	Lei	1467x1484	Field
lēah	Gailey, Gailey Hay etc.	Penkridge	St	1002x1004	Major name
(ge)mǣre-sīc	*Geylmaresiche*	St Oswald's	Ch	1290–1293	Field
mōr	*Gayel More*	Runcorn	Ch	1249–60	Field
ōra	Galsworthy, Galsworthy Moor⋆	Buckland Brewer	D	1086	Major name
tūn	Galton⋆	Owermoigne	Do	1086	Major name

Table 12: Pre-1500 generics compounding with of *gagel*.

The generic that occurs twice, *brōc*, is associated with both the earliest and the latest attestations; *gagel broce*, Burghclere, Hampshire (943) *Galesbrok*, Loughborough Leicestershire (late-fourteenth century). Watery generics include *brōc*, *kjarr*, (*ge*)*mǣre-sīc*, and *mōr* with *ōra* arguably included in its sense ‘riverbank, shore, foreshore’,[235] making up 46.2% of the names. Three have marginal connotations

[234] *EPNE*, II, p. 188. The *NDEFN* definition is almost identical, p. 494.
[235] *EPNE*, II, p.55.

including *ecg*, and again (*ge*)*mǣre-sīc* and *ōra* in its ‘a border, a margin, a bank, an edge’ sense making up 23% of the names. Combined (counting the elements that occur in both categories once) the examples implying wateriness and marginality make up 54% of the names in *gagel*. The remaining three generics are *lēah*, *lond*, and *tūn*, with the latter being the one habitative element in the pre-1500 *gagel* corpus. The three simplex names are notable as they make up a relatively high proportion of examples (23%). It is notable that both *gagel* and *wīr* compound with elements implying wateriness and marginality but not the same ones.

Map 6: Pre-1500 generics compounding with *gagel*.

Post-1500 place-name evidence

While the principal evidence for this case study comes from the pre-1500 place-names, data for post-1500 attestations have also been collected to see what can be observed. There are seventy-six post-1500 place-names in the corpus, forty-two *gagel* and thirty-four *wīr*. Notably all seventy-six are minor names. Again, the corpus

consists of both ‘secure’ and ‘possible’ attestations and alternative interpretations are presented in the table that follows. The initial impression when comparing the pre- and post-1500 maps is that although there are more examples of both *gagel* and *wīr* place-names (as would be expected given the increase in surviving documentary evidence), the pattern of distribution is remarkably similar. A notable difference is that there are more attestations in the north of the country in the West Riding of Yorkshire, Cumberland and Northumberland where pre-1500 place-name evidence is either minimal or lacking, and an attestation in Norfolk.

Of the *wīr* names ten are secure and twenty–four are possible. The post-1500 geographical distribution is fairly similar to the pre-1500, but with a few examples in the east of the country (in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk).

Map 7: Post-1500 *wīr* place-names.

Head form	Earliest form	Parish	County	Date	Alternative interpretation
Wyrall Streete, Wyrall end croft, Wyrrall end	*Wyrall strete*	Penkridge	St	1598	n/a
Wyrebothom, the	*Wyrebothom, the*	Yeardsley cum Whaley	Ch	1611	n/a
Worrall Hill	*Wyrrall hill*	West Dean	Gl	1655	n/a
Wyre, halfe wyre	*Wyre, halfe wyre*	Baswich or Berkswich	St	1675	n/a
Wyrley Bank†	*Wirley Banck*†	Cannock	St	1691	
Whir⋆	Whir⋆	Leigh	Do	1840	Perhaps '*wīr* "(bog) myrtle"'.[236]
Whyr Coppice, Whyr (Bottom), Whip (sic)⋆	Whyr Coppice etc., and Whip (sic) *Whir*⋆	Hillfield	Do	1843	Possibly '*wīr* "(bog) myrtle"'.[237]
Weyre Close⋆	Weyre Close⋆	Blewbury	Bk	1839	May 'well contain weir.'[238]
Wirehill (The)⋆	*weare hill*⋆	Buildwas	Sa	1603	As above.[239]
Worrel Leys⋆	*Worell-leys*⋆	Garthorpe	Le	1660	Perhaps 'nook of land where bog-myrtle abounds'.[240]
Wirlane	*Wirlane*	Clint	WRY	1729	n/a
Wyrley Bank†	*Worley Bank*†	Cannock	St	1755	n/a
Whyr/Whir Farm⋆	*The Wire*⋆	Winterbourne Bassett	W	1773	'It is not clear whether this late-recorded name contains *wīr*'.[241]

[236] *EPNS*, LXXXVI–VII, Dorset, part IV, p. 209.
[237] Ibid., p. 159.
[238] Coates, '*Wirral*' p. 84.
[239] Ibid., pp. 81, 88.
[240] *EPNS*, LXXVII, Leicestershire, part II, p. 154.
[241] Coates, p. 85.

Wirral House⋆†	Wirral House⋆†	Birkenhead	Ch	1831	Not interpreted.[242]
Wiresytch⋆	Weirsych Meadow etc.⋆	Little Stretton	Sa	1837	EPNS suggests 'small stream by a weir', but Coates includes this as a possible occurrence in his dataset of place-names including the word *wīr*.[243]
Wire Shard⋆	Wire Shard⋆	Stourpaine	Do	1840	Perhaps '*wīr* "bog myrtle."'[244]
Whir⋆	Whir⋆	Leigh	Do	1840	n/a
Wire Meadow⋆	Wire Meadow⋆	Stoke St. Milborough	Sa	1842	EPNS suggests 'weir',[245] but Coates includes this as a possible occurrence in his dataset of place-names including the word *wīr*.[246]
Wirrall Looms†	Wirrall Looms†	Bebington	Ch	1843	n/a
Wirrall Field	Wirrall Field	Handley	Ch	1844	n/a
Wirelock⋆	Wirelock⋆	Bassingham	L	1851	Coates includes this as a possible occurrence in his dataset of place-names including the word *wīr*.[247]
Wiral/The Wirral	Wiral/The Wirral	Cwmyoy	Mon	19th cent.	n/a
Worrall House Farm⋆	Worrall House Farm⋆	Downholland	La	19th cent.	As above.[248]

[242] *EPNS*, XLVII, Cheshire part IV, p. 315.
[243] *EPNS*, LXXXII, Shropshire, part V, p. 237.
[244] *EPNS*, LIII, Dorset, part II, p. 119.
[245] *EPNS*, LXXVI, Shropshire, part III, p. 218.
[246] Coates, '*Wirral*', p. 85.
[247] Ibid., p. 85.
[248] Ibid., pp. 80, 87.

Wyre Leasow⋆†	Wyre Leasow⋆†	Aston Botterell	Sa	19th cent.	Perhaps 'OE *wer* 'weir', but OE *wīr* "(bog) myrtle" is also possible if the habitat was formerly appropriate'.[249]
Wyrley⋆	Wyrley⋆	Shipdham	Nf	19th cent.	Might 'derive from a surname originating from one of the West Midland places'.[250]
Wyre Meadow⋆	Wyre Meadow⋆	Aston Botterell	Sa	19th cent.	'Either refers to "land by a pond" ME *weyour* or land where Bog Myrtle OE *wīr*, *wýr* grows'.[251]
Wiery Piece, The⋆	Wiery Piece, The⋆	Morville	Sa	19th cent.	Perhaps 'OE *wer* "weir"; alternatively OE *wīr* "(bog) myrtle, if the topography is appropriate"'.[252]
Weirsitch⋆	Weirsitch⋆	Church Stretton	Sa	19th cent.	'Another name for Bog Myrtle is OE *wīr* or *wȳr*, which may be present'.[253]
Wire Stone⋆	Wire Stone⋆	Ashover	De	19th cent.	Not interpreted.[254]
Wierfield⋆	Wierfield⋆	Hopton Castle	Sa	19th cent.	Another name for Bog Myrtle is OE *wīr* or w*ýr*, which may be present in Wierfield'.[255]
Weary Hill⋆	Weary Hill⋆	Skyrack (Ilkley)	WRY	19th cent.	Coates includes this as a possible occurrence in his

[249] *EPNS*, XCII, Shropshire, part VII, p. 318.
[250] Coates, '*Wirral*', pp. 83, 88.
[251] Foxall, Shropshire Field-Names, p. 50.
[252] *EPNS*, XCII, Shropshire, part VII, p. 240.
[253] Foxall, p.50
[254] *EPNS*, XXVIII, Derbyshire, part II, p. 195.
[255] Foxall, p. 50.

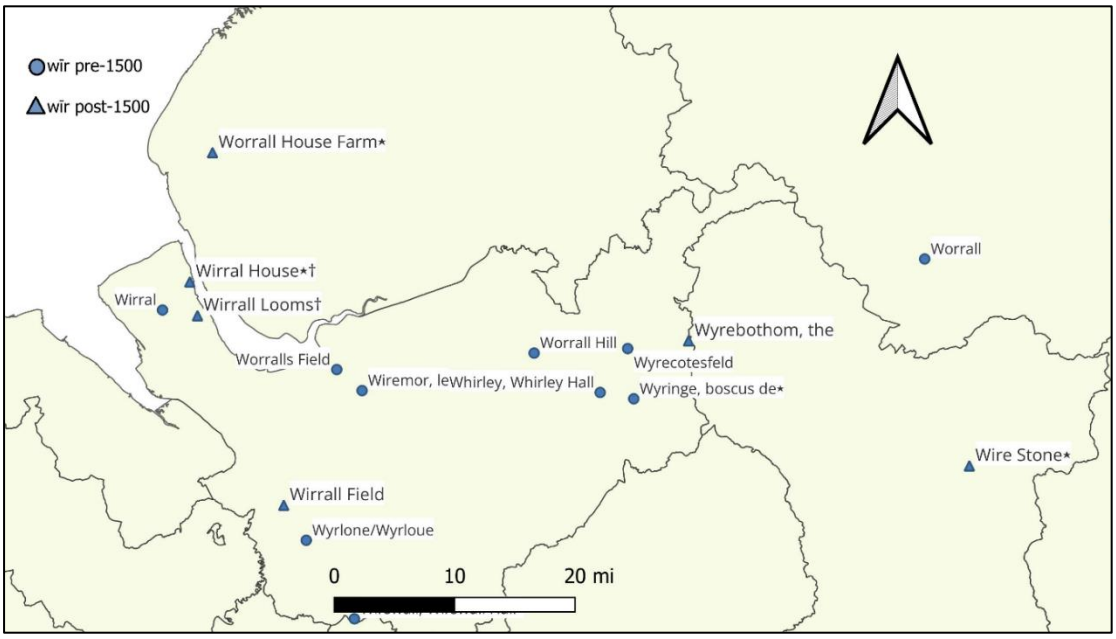
					dataset of place-names including the word *wīr* with *h(e)alh*.[256]
Weary Hall⋆	Weary Hall⋆	Holme Abbey	Cu	19th cent.	As above.
Wire Hall⋆	Wire Hall⋆	Birstall	WRY	19th cent.	As above, but EPNS suggests '*quarrelle*, dial. *wharrel* "quarry"'.[257]
Wire Hole⋆	Wire Hole⋆	Clunbury	Sa	19th cent.	Coates includes this as a possible occurrence in his dataset of place-names including the word *wīr* with *h(e)alh*.[258]
Wyre Hall†	Wyre Hall†	Penkridge	St	19th cent.	n/a

Table 13: Post-1500 *wīr* place-names.

The difficulty of derived names is more apparent in post-1500 *wīr* names of Cheshire, particularly evident in the Wirral and surrounding area, with Wirral House⋆† (Birkenhead, Cheshire (1831), Wirrall Looms†, Bebbington, Cheshire (1843), Wirrall Field, Handley, Cheshire (1844), and *the Wyrebothom*, Yeardsley cum Whaley, Cheshire (1611) etc. Coates comments that *wīr* 'is common out of all proportion to what we find in the rest of England' and while this 'may be a genuine phenomenon' or 'down to the exceptional industry of the county editor', the 'first difficulty is that it is found in the most prominent name of all, Wirral, a place where these days there is no residual evidence either for acid bogs or for *Myrica gale*…we do not know whether some of the names… are secondary and derived from that of the

[256] Coates, '*Wirral*', pp. 76, 87.
[257] *EPNS*, XXXII, WRY, part III, p. 21.
[258] Coates, p. 84.

peninsula, or whether the set of what they denote collectively contributes to the peninsula name.'[259]



Map 8: *Wīr* place-names on and around the Wirral peninsula.

Of the thirty-four post-1500 *wīr* place-names in the corpus, all of which are minor names, four are simplex, *Wyre*, Baswich, Staffordshire (1675), *Whyr⋆*, Winterbourne Bassett, Wiltshire (1773), Whir⋆, Leigh, Dorset (1840), and Whyr⋆, Hillfield, Dorset (1873). The most common generic compounding with *wīr* is *halh* (14), followed by *lēah* (3) and then *mǣd/mǣdwe* (2) and *sīc* (2). Of the thirty-four generics sixteen of them, 47%, indicate a wet or watery landscape, namely *halh* and *sīc*. Generics that occur in both pre- and post-1500 place-names include *halh*, *lēah*, and *lane/lone/lonu*. Other generics (with numbers of occurrences in brackets) include:[260]

- *botm* (1) – OE 'bottom, floor of a valley',[261] OE 'valley bottom; a wide stretch of valley floor'[262]

[259] Coates, '*Wirral*', p. 102.
[260] Where references to definitions have been given previously, they are not repeated here.
[261] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, pp 133–134.
[262] *NDEFN*, p. 475.

- *clos* (1) – OFr ‘enclosure’,[263] ME ‘an enclosure’[264]
- *feld* (1) – OE ‘open country’,[265] later ‘land for pasture or cultivation’; then ‘the common arable of a parish or township’; commonly now ‘an enclosed plot of land bigger than a garden or yard’[266]
- *halh* (14) – OE ‘nook, corner of land’, ‘water-meadow’
- *lǣs/lǣswe* (1) – OE ‘pasture’,[267] OE ‘pasture, meadowland’/OE ‘leasow; pasture, meadow’[268]
- *lane/lone/lanu* (1) – OE ‘lane’
- *lēah* (3) – OE ‘clearing, wood’, ‘clearing in a wood’, glade or woodland, clearing, open woodland’
- *loc/loca* (1) – OE, ‘a lock, a bolt, a fold’, ‘enclosure’,[269] OE ‘enclosed land, an enclosure’[270]
- *mǣd/mǣdwe* (2) – OE ‘meadow’,[271] OE ‘meadow, grassland’[272]
- *pece* (1) – OFr ‘piece, plot’,[273] ME ‘piece, small plot of land, portion, fragment’[274]
- *sceard* (1) – OE ‘shard, cleft’,[275] OE ‘gap’[276]
- *sīc* (2) – OE ‘small stream, drainage channel’
- *stān* (1) – OE ‘stone’[277]

[263] Parsons, David N., *VEPN* (*CEAFOR–COCK-PIT*) (Nottingham: English Place-Name Society, 2004), pp. 166–120.
[264] *NDEFN*, p. 475.
[265] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 142.
[266] *NDEFN*, p. 480.
[267] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 144.
[268] *NDEFN*, pp. 485–6.
[269] *EPNE*, II, pp. 25–26.
[270] *NDEFN*, p. 486.
[271] *EPNE*, II, p. 31.
[272] *NDEFN*, p. 486.
[273] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 145.
[274] *NDEFN*, p. 488.
[275] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 146.
[276] *NDEFN*, p. 490.
[277] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 146. The *NDEFN* definition is identical, p. 492.

Generic	Head form	Parish	County	Place Type	Date
simplex	*Wyre, halfe wyre*	Baswich or Berkswich	St	Field	1675
simplex	Whyr Coppice, Whyr (Bottom), Whip (sic)⋆	Hillfield	Do	Field	1843
simplex	Whyr/Whir Farm⋆	Winterbourne Bassett	W	Farm	1773
simplex	Whir⋆	Leigh	Do	Field	1840
botm	*Wyrebothom, the*	Yeardsley cum Whaley	Ch	Field	1611
clos	Weyre Close⋆	Blewbury	Bk	Field	1839
feld	Wierfield⋆	Hopton Castle	Sa	Field	19th cent.
halh	Weary Hall⋆	Holme Abbey	Cu	Farm	19th cent.
halh	Weary Hill⋆	Skyrack (Ilkley)	WRY	Minor name	19th cent.
halh	Wire Hall⋆	Birstall	WRY	Minor name	19th cent.
halh	Wire Hole⋆	Clunbury	Sa	Field	19th cent.
halh	Wirehill (The)⋆	Buildwas	Sa	Field	1603
halh	Wirral House⋆†	Birkenhead	Ch	Building	1831
halh	Worrall House Farm⋆	Downholland	La	Farm	19th cent.
halh	Worrel Leys⋆	Garthorpe	Lei	Field	1660
halh	Wiral/The Wirral	Cwmyoy	Mon	Minor name	19th cent.
halh	Wyre Hall†	Penkridge	St	Field	19th cent.?
halh	Wirrall Field	Handley	Ch	Field	1844
halh	Wirrall Looms	Bebington	Ch	Field	1843
halh	Worrall Hill	West Dean	Gl	Minor name	1655
halh	*Wyrall Streete, Wyrall end*	Penkridge	St	Street	1598

	croft, Wyrrall end				
lǣs/lǣswe	Wyre Leasow⋆†	Aston Botterell	Sa	Field	19th cent.
lane/lone/lanu	*Wirlane*	Clint	WRY	Field	1729
lēah	Wyrley Bank†	Cannock	St	Field	1755
lēah	Wyrley⋆	Shipdham	Nf	Farm	19th cent.
lēah	*Wyrley Bank†*	Cannock	St	Minor name	1691
loc/loca	Wirelock⋆	Bassingham	L	Building	1851
mǣd/mǣdwe	Wire Meadow⋆	Stoke St. Milborough	Sa	Field	1842
mǣd/mǣdwe	Wyre Meadow⋆	Aston Botterell	Sa	Field	19th cent.
pece	Wiery Piece, The⋆	Morville	Sa	Field	19th cent.
sceard	Wire Shard⋆	Stourpaine	Do	Field	1840
sīc	Weirsitch⋆	Church Stretton	Sa	Field	19th cent.
sīc	Wiresytch⋆	Little Stretton	Sa	Field	1837
stān	Wire Stone⋆	Ashover	De	Landscape feature	19th cent.

Table 14: Post-1500 generics compounding with *wīr*.

Map 9: Post-1500 generics compounding with *wīr*.

The geographical distribution of the generics shows the most frequently occurring generics (*halh*, *lēah*) favouring the midlands and north largely in the west of the country. There are a couple of examples in the far north and the east of the country too. The simplex forms are largely in the south.

Post-1500 examples of gagel in place-names

Of the *gagel* names thirty-five are secure and seven are possible.

Head form	Parish	County	Date	Place Type	Alternative interpretation
Galesyke⋆	Nether Wasdale	Cu	1570	Running water	'The first element may be *geil*, but more probably it is *gagel* "bog-myrtle"'.[278]
Gale Common	Above Derwent	Cu	1578	Field	Probably OE *gagel*, 'bog-myrtle'.[279]
Gale Moss	Aspatria	Cu	1578	Field	n/a
Galemire⋆	Hensingham	Cu	1616	Farm	'Probably "bog-myrtle *mȳrr*" from OE *gagel*.'[280]
Gaile Close⋆	Lucker and Detchant	Nb	1620	Field	'Land growing with gale or bog-myrtle [OE *gagel*] probably belongs here'.[281]
Galemoor	Frodsham	Ch	1637	Field	n/a
Gale Lowns	West Kirby	Ch	1639	Field	n/a
Gaily, Big & Little	Malpas	Ch	1670	Field	n/a
Gale Moss⋆	Dean	Cu	1689	Field	Probably 'from OE *gagel*, "bog-myrtle"'.[282]
Gale Moor, Little Gale Moor	Tarvin	Ch	1692	Field	n/a
Gale Moor	Frodsham	Ch	1780	Field	n/a
Gale Brook	Great Budworth	Ch	1831	Running water	n/a
Gailey Wood	Lymm	Ch	1831	Minor name	n/a
Gale Bog	Rostherne	Ch	1831	Field	n/a
Galey Wood	Goostrey Cum Barnshaw	Ch	1831	Minor name	n/a
Gales (The), Galey Meadow	Marbury	Ch	1837	Field	n/a
Gally Wood Field	Bowdon	Ch	1838	Field	n/a

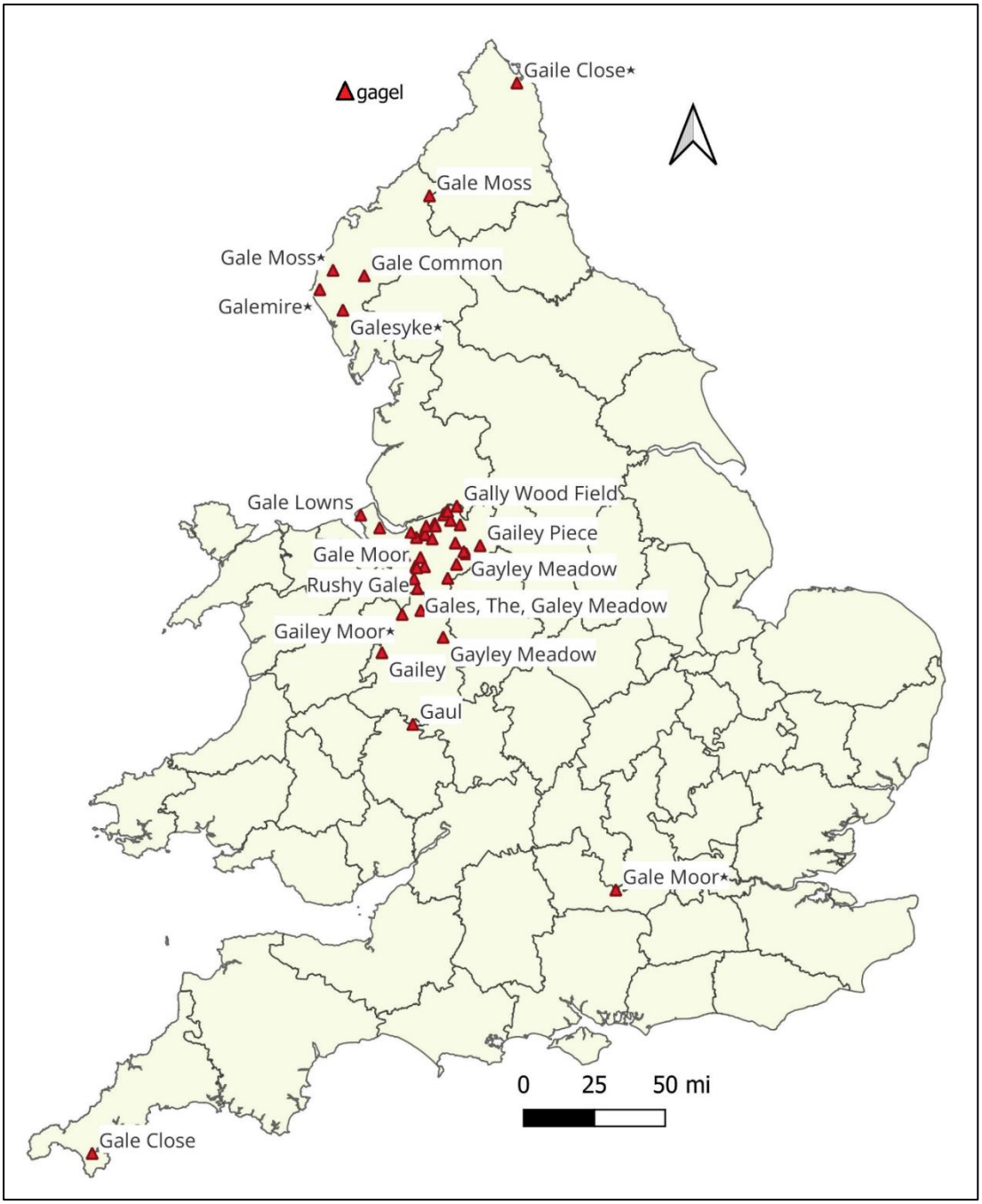
[278] *EPNS*, XXI, Cumberland, part II, p. 441.
[279] Ibid., p. 374.
[280] Ibid., p. 401.
[281] *NDEFN*, p. 163.
[282] *EPNS*, XXI, Cumberland, part II, p. 369.

Gale Riddings	Tarporley	Ch	1838	Field	n/a
Gale Field	Bowdon	Ch	1839	Field	n/a
Gale Field	Weaverham	Ch	1839	Field	n/a
Gauley, Big & Little, Meadow	Eastham	Ch	1839	Field	n/a
Gailey Piece	Astbury	Ch	1839	Field	n/a
Gayley Meadow	Swettenham	Ch	1839	Field	n/a
Gales Moss	Mobberley	Ch	1839	Field	n/a
Gaul	Richard's Castle	Sa	1840	Field	n/a
Gales Bank, Gale Meadow	Prees	Sa	1840	Field	n/a
Gailey Moor⋆	Wem	Sa	1840	Field	Not interpreted, but has been retained on account of the evidence of surrounding field names showing both a watery landscape and plant naming practice (Gorsy Bank, Mist Ground, Peat Moor, Pool Meadow, Quabs 'bog', Weir Corner, Wolverley Pool and Little Yewtree Field).[283]
Galley Field	Sandbach	Ch	1841	Field	n/a
Gayley Meadow	Edgmond	Sa	1841	Field	n/a
Gale Meadow	Great Budworth	Ch	1841	Field	n/a
Gale Moor⋆	Tilehurst	Bk	1843	Field	First 'el. possibly *gagel*'.[284]
Gales, The, Gales Wood	Hatton	Ch	1844	Field	n/a
Galebrook Farm†	Great Budworth	Ch	1844	Field	n/a
Gale Moss	Great Budworth	Ch	1844	Field	n/a
Galemoss Farm†	Great Budworth	Ch	1844	Field	n/a
Galacre	Weston	Ch	1846	Field	n/a

[283] *EPNS*, LXXXII, Shropshire, part IV, p. 261.
[284] *EPNS*, XLIX, Berkshire, part I, p. 196.

Gailey Moor	Bunbury	Ch	1846	Field	n/a
Gailey Piece	Gawsworth	Ch	1847	Field	n/a
Rushy Gale	Bunbury	Ch	1848	Field	n/a
Middle Gale, Gale Intake	Bunbury	Ch	1848	Field	n/a
Gale Close	Mawgan (Meneage)	C	*c.*1850	Field	n/a
Gailey	Westbury	Sa	*c.*1850	Field	n/a

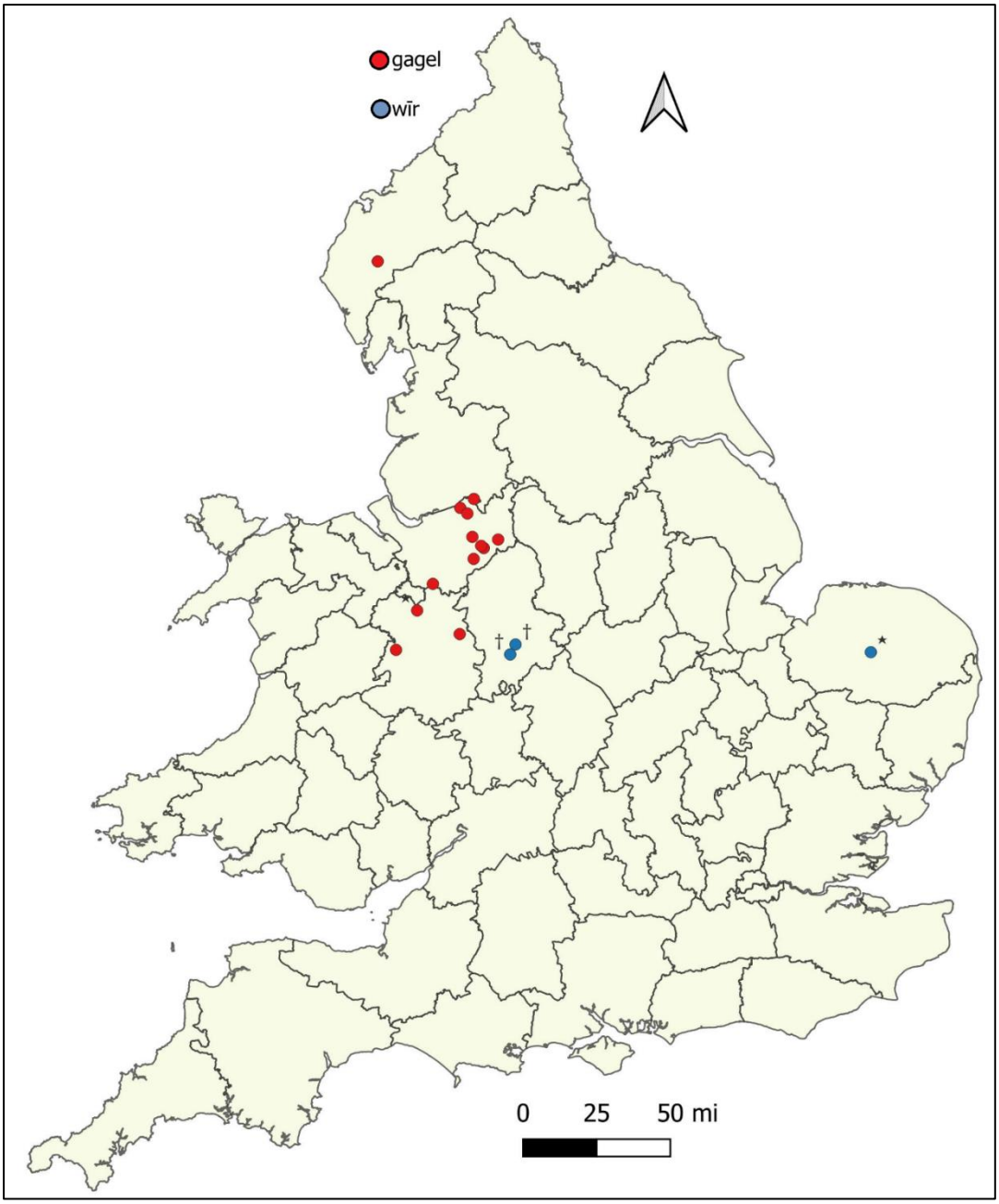
Table 15: Post-1500 *gagel* place-names.



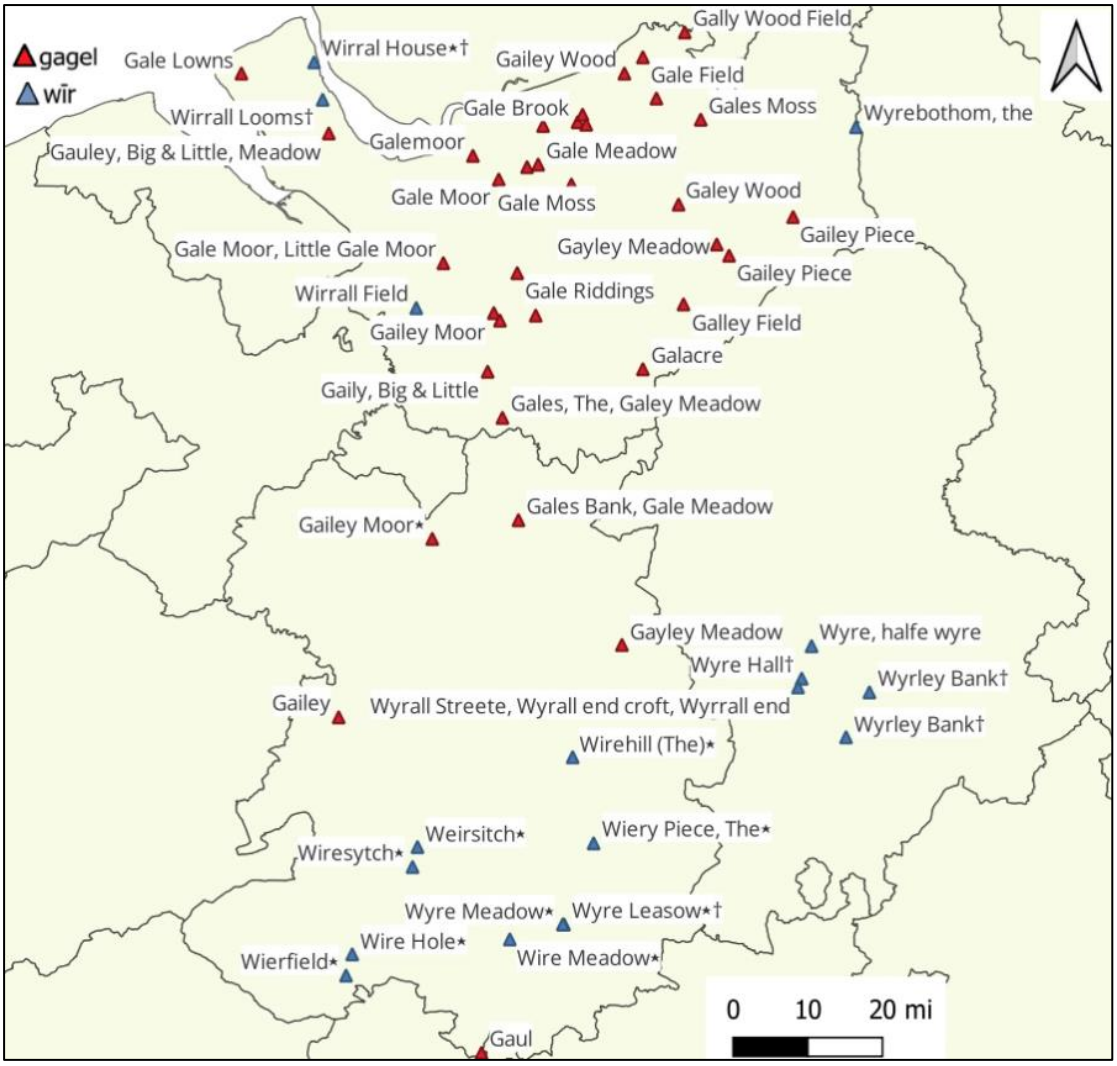
Map 10: Distribution of post-1500 *gagel* place-names.[285]

Similarly to the pre-1500 distribution, the post-1500 examples cluster in Cheshire in particular, but also Shropshire and Staffordshire, with just one example in the southwest but comparatively more examples (seven) in the north of the country (Cumberland and Northumberland).

[285] See Map 12 for post-1500 *gagel* (and *wīr*) place-names in Cheshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire absent from this map (due to scale).



Map 11: Map showing the concentration of post-1500 *lēah* place-names in Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire.



Map 12: Detail of the concentration of post-1500 *gagel* and *wīr* names in Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire.

Of the forty–two post-1500 *gagel* place-names, all of which are minor names, three are simplex, Gaul, Richard's Castle, Shropshire (1840), Gales, Hatton, Cheshire (1844), and Rushy Gale, Bunbury, Cheshire (1848). Together with Gales are a further two examples that are perhaps derived names and have been treated as such here; namely Gales Wood† and Galey Meadow†. Arguably Galey Meadow†, Marbury, Cheshire (1837) may not be derived from Gale as they are associated with separate watery landscapes (Big Mere and Little Mere), however they are in close proximity (within 550m) and occur on the same tithe at the same date. Rushy Gale, Bunbury, Cheshire (1848) has *gagel* as the generic suggesting it was once simplex with OE

riscig ‘rushy’ prefixed at a later to distinguish it from another ‘gale’ place. There are, however, no early forms to corroborate this. That one plant-element in adjective form OE *riscig* ‘rushy’ (perhaps *Junucs effusus*, soft or common rush) is being used to describe another is notable since it conveys a sense of how it was perceived as well as knowledge of both plants, that the two plants were known to grow in the same localities, thus providing environmental information since rushes too favour a watery growing environment and are found in ‘rivers, streams, lakes and ponds, and in marshes, wet grassland, ditches and open wet woodland’).[286] Post-1500 generics (with numbers of occurrences in brackets) include:[287]

- *æcer* (1) – OE ‘plot or strip of cultivated land’, ‘acre, specific measure of ploughland’, ‘arable land’,[288] OE (1) an arable strip; a holding in the common field; (2) a piece of arable land; (3) a unit of area, either statute or local, particularly used with numbers in recent field names’[289]
- *banke* (1) – ODan ‘ridge, hill, slope, bank, artificial embankment’,[290] ME ‘bank; slope, ridge, artificial embankment’[291]
- *brōc* (2) – OE ‘brook, stream’
- *clos* (2) – OFr ‘enclosure’, ME ‘an enclosure’
- *ēg* (1) – OE ‘island’[292] NB. This specific may be *lēah* (see further discussion below)

[286] Stroh et al, Plant Atlas 2020, ‘*Juncus effusus’*.
[287] Where references to definitions have been given previously, they are not repeated here.
[288] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 26.
[289] *NDEFN*, p. 474.
[290] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 47.
[291] *NDEFN*, p. 474.
[292] *VEPN*, *Á-BOX*, p. 142. The *NDEFN* definition is identical.

- *feld* (2) – OE ‘open country’, later ‘land for pasture or cultivation’; then ‘the common arable of a parish or township’; commonly now ‘an enclosed plot of land bigger than a garden or yard’
- (*ge*)*hæg* (1) – OE ‘fence, enclosure’[293]
- *inntak* (1) – ON ‘land newly taken into cultivation’,[294] ON ‘land taken in from waste’[295]
- *land* (1) – OE, ME ‘land’, ‘selion or strip in the common field’, later ‘plot of land
- *lēah* (12) – OE ‘clearing, wood’, ‘clearing in a wood’, ‘glade or woodland, clearing, open woodland’
- *mǣd*/*mǣdwe* (1) – OE ‘meadow, grassland’
- *mōr* (6) – OE ‘waste land, marsh’
- *mos* (4) – OE ‘bog’,[296] OE ‘marsh, bog, moss-covered land’[297]
- *mýrr* (1) – ON ‘mire, bog, swampy ground’[298]
- **ryding* (1) – OE ‘clearing’[299]
- *sīc* – (1) OE ‘small stream, drainage channel’

Generic	Head form	Parish	County	Date	Place Type
simplex	Gaul	Richard's Castle	Sa	1840	Field
simplex	Rushy Gale	Bunbury	Ch	1848	Field
simplex	Gales, The, Gales Wood	Hatton	Ch	1844	Field
æcer	Galacre	Weston	Ch	1846	Field
banke	Gales Bank, Gale Meadow	Prees	Sa	1840	Field
brōc	Gale Brook	Great Budworth	Ch	1831	Running water
brōc	Galebrook Farm†	Great Budworth	Ch	1844	Field

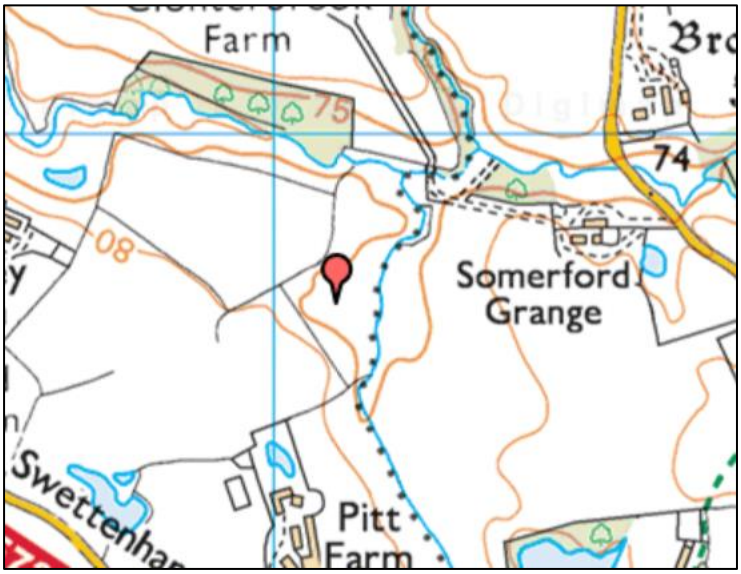
[293] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 143. The *NDEFN* defintion is identical.
[294] Ibid., p. 144.
[295] *NDEFN*, p. 485.
[296] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 145.
[297] *NDEFN*, p. 487.
[298] *EPNE*, II, p. 47. *NDEFN* additionally inlcudes ‘marsh’ in its definition, p. 487.
[299] *VEPN, Á-BOX*, p. 145. *NDEFN* additionally inlcudes ‘assart’ in its definition, p. 490.

clos	Gale Close	Mawgan (Meneage)	C	*c.*1850	Field
clos	*Gaile Close*⋆	Lucker and Detchant	Nb	1620	Field
feld	Gale Field	Bowdon	Ch	1839	Field
feld	Gale Field	Weaverham	Ch	1839	Field
(ge)hæg	Gauley, Big & Little, Meadow	Eastham	Ch	1839	Field
inntak	Middle Gale, Gale Intake	Bunbury	Ch	1848	Field
land	*Gale Lowns*	West Kirby	Ch	1639	Field
lēah	Gailey	Mawgan (Meneage)	Sa	*c.*1850	Field
lēah	Gailey Piece	Astbury	Ch	1839	Field
lēah	Gailey Piece	Gawsworth	Ch	1847	Field
lēah	Gailey Wood	Lymm	Ch	1831	Minor name
lēah	Gale Bog	Rostherne	Ch	1831	Field
lēah	*Gale Common*	Above Derwent	Cu	1578	Field
lēah	Gales (The), Galey Meadow	Marbury	Ch	1837	Field
lēah	Galey Wood	Goostrey Cum Barnshaw	Ch	1831	Minor name
lēah	Galley Field	Sandbach	Ch	1841	Field
lēah	Gally Wood Field	Bowdon	Ch	1838	Field
lēah	Gayley Meadow	Edgmond	Sa	1841	Field
lēah/ēg	Gayley Meadow	Swettenham	Ch	1839	Field
lēah	Gailey Moor⋆	Wem	Sa	1840	Field
mǣd/mǣdwe	Gale Meadow	Great Budworth	Ch	1841	Field
mōr	Gailey Moor	Bunbury	Ch	1846	Field
mōr	Gaily, Big & Little	Malpas	Ch	1670	Field
mōr	Gale Moor	Frodsham	Ch	1780	Field
mōr	Gale Moor, Little Gale Moor	Tarvin	Ch	1692	Field
mōr	Galemoor	Frodsham	Ch	1637	Field
mōr	Gale Moor⋆	Tilehurst	Bk	1843	Field
mos	*Gale Moss*	Aspatria	Cu	1578	Field
mos	Gale Moss	Great Budworth	Ch	1844	Field
mos	Gales Moss	Mobberley	Ch	1839	Field
mos	*Gale Moss*⋆	Dean	Cu	1689	Field
mos	Galemoss Farm†	Great Budworth	Ch	1844	Field
mýrr	*Galemire*⋆	Hensingham	Cu	1616	Farm

ryding	Gale Riddings	Tarporley	Ch	1838	Field
sīc	*Galesyke⋆*	Nether Wasdale	Cu	1570	Running water

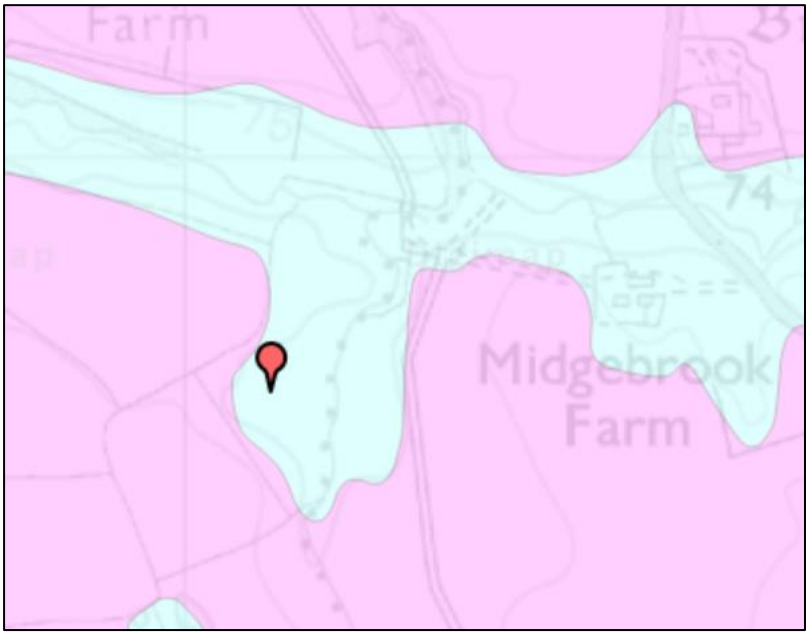
Table 16: Post-1500 generics compounding with *gagel*.

Lēah stands out as far and away the most common generic compounding with *gagel*, followed by *mōr* and *mos*. Of the forty–two generics sixteen of them, 38%, indicate a wet or watery landscape, i.e. *brōc, ēg, mōr, mos, mýrr,* and *sīc*. Generics that occur in both pre- and post-1500 place-names include *brōc*, *lond*, *lēah*, and *mōr*. Interestingly, within Kingsley township, Cheshire, there is a pre-1500 *wīr* name, le Wiremor (1347) and a post-1500 *gagel* name, Gale Moor (1780) with the same generic. Sadly neither of these have been accurately located to draw any conclusions. That *ēg* is mooted along with *lēah* as the possible generic in Gayley Meadow, Swettenham, Cheshire (1839) warrants further investigation, particularly since it is possible to locate this place-name accurately (within 50m) and is the only example in the corpus of a *gagel-ēg* compound. At first glance *ēg* appears less likely since it is located on lower rather than higher ground.



Map 13: Location of Gayley Meadow.

However it is located in the bend of a watercourse, and the geological map shows a distinctly island-like area of till (Devensian – Diamicton) surrounded on three sides by glaciofluvial sheet deposits (sand and gravel). Since till, material deposited directly by glaciers, is impermeable and does not drain as well as sand and gravel, the geology perhaps support an *ēg* interpretation, particularly if the physical appearance of this geological feature was visibly island-like.



Map 14: Location of Gayley Meadow on till surrounded by glaciofluvial sheet deposits.

The likelihood of this geology being observable enough to form the generic element in the place-name is debatable, and, together with the presence of another *lēah* name nearby (Cawley Farm) and the facts that *lēah* is the most frequently compounding generic with *gagel* perhaps swings the balance of probability in favour of *lēah*.

Observations

The principal aim of this study was to develop a methodology for considering the significance of place-names containing the names of wild plants, to see if revealing the locations of and possible meanings contained in plant place-names have resonance or value today and to note what questions might be asked of the evidence revealed. The purpose of this section is to summarise and discuss the observations of the case study using the methodology to gauge the value of the exercise.[300] The intention is not to undertake full interpretations of observations but to highlight and discuss points of interest that may warrant further research, perhaps in relation to the twenty-six plant place-name elements identified at the scoping phase. Since Coates dealt with *wīr* extensively, discussions where examples are required will focus on *gagel* with references to *wīr* where appropriate or illuminating.

Summary of place-name mapping evidence

Looking at the pre-1500 place-names for both elements, and geographical bias of EPNS survey coverage aside, the majority of *gagel* names occur in the north midlands (Staffordshire, Cheshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire), the rest in the south-west (Devon, Dorset, Hampshire), with one outlier in Durham. *Wīr* names cluster similarly in the midlands (predominantly Cheshire, but also Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, the south of the West Riding of Yorkshire), have a southern range (Somerset, Dorset, Berkshire, Oxfordshire), and a northern outlier in Cumberland. Together *gagel* and *wīr* names form a string of names along a rough Mercian/Northumbrian border above which only two names occur, *Weary Hall⋆*, Boltons, Cumberland (thirteenth cent.) and *le Gawel⋆*, Sedgefield, Durham (*c.*1200). Notably, these two names and those that occur in the far south of the country (Devon

[300] Some reflections on the analytical approach can be seen in Appendix 7.

and Dorset) are 'possible' attestations. Neither element features significantly in areas of Scandinavian influence outside of Cheshire.[301] This, together with the possible 'midland range' of *gagel* and *wīr* names, raises questions about whether or not these elements signal a Mercian dialect or naming practice. Of the southern and northern examples four, Galsworthy⋆, Buckland Brewer, Devon (1086), Galton⋆, Owermoigne, Dorset (1086) Gale⋆, Bickington, Devon (1315), *le Gawel*⋆, Sedgefield, Durham (*c.*1200) and *Weary Hall*⋆, Boltons, Cumberland (thirteenth cent.) may be discounted on grounds of being contestable interpretations. This makes the Mercian occurrences more conspicuous and the probability of something dialectical going on more credible, even after three of the contestable Mercian occurrences, *Guilicar Lane*⋆, North Kelsey, Lincolnshire (1409), *Wirswall*⋆, Wirswall, Cheshire (1086), *and boscus de Wyringe*⋆, lost, Cheshire (1357) are removed. [302] A dialectical practice is perhaps supported by the Domesday and pre-Conquest examples where all the Mercian place-names compound with either *halh* or *lēah*. If not reflecting Mercian dialect the abundance of names may point to the importance of the plant within a regional culture perhaps signalling a naming practice relating to processing activities such as brewing, dyeing or tanning.A potential line of investigation, beyond the scope of the present study would be to follow-up on the activities that might engender naming practices involving the processing of plants. Brewing, for example, could be investigated given that bog myrtle is known to have

[301] Those that do include *Galesbrok*, Loughborough Leicestershire (late fourteenth cent.), *Gaulond*, Billesdon, Leicestershire (1467x1484), *Guilicar Lane*⋆, North Kelsey, Lincolnshire (1409), and *le Gawel*⋆, Sedgefield, Durham (*c.*1200).

[302] It is important to note when suggesting such dialectical possibilities that, while EPNS surveys were methodically searched for both major and minor names containing or possibly containing the elements *gagel* and *wīr*, the geographical patterns observed and any conclusions drawn are necessarily coloured by the incomplete coverage of the EPNS surveys and their inconsistent treatment of major and minor names. The distribution of the terms may also be influenced by the environmental conditions of particular geographical areas, in that only in areas where the habitat was suitable for these plants would their names be expected to occur. However, any smaller-scale patterns created by localised environmental factors would not be expected to have a significant impact on the patterns which are observable at a broader regional level.

been used as an ale flavouring in the early-medieval period in England and across Scandinavia.[303]

Areas of Scandinavian influence

The comparatively fewer names in areas of Scandinavian influence outside of Cheshire provide an opportunity, given the impact that Scandinavian languages have had on place-names in for example Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire (where archaeobotanical evidence is present) to consider whether an ON plant-name may have been in use in these areas. Notably only *gagel* is found compounding with ON-derived generics; *kjarr*, North Kelsey, Lincolnshire (1409) and in the post-1500 corpus with *mýrr*, Hensingham, Cumberland (1616), and *inntak*, Bunbury, Cheshire (1848).[304] *Wīr* does not compound with any ON generics in the corpus. The case study identified *pors* as the Scandinavian name for bog myrtle common to the Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Icelandic languages; it is noted in German and Swedish (and almost certainly other) place-names and occurs in ON literature. Examples of this element in English place-names, however, do not appear to exist. The lack of evidence for an element such as *pors* in place-names under Scandinavian influence, particularly in areas where *gagel* and *wīr* names are abundant such as the Wirral, together with the occurrence of *gagel* names compounding with ON generics, suggests a measure of language assimilation. That OE plant-element specifics were being used by Scandinavians or Scandinavianized people to name places (and/or early-medieval communities were coining place-names with ON generics and OE plant-names) speaks to a measure of integration that included shared perceptions of

[303] Sabine Karg, ed., *Medieval food traditions in Northern Europe* (Copenhagen: PNM, 2007), p. 189, with specific examples for Denmark (p. 149), and Norway (p.167).
[304] Given the dates of these attestations the generic elements have been described as 'ON-derived' since they may well be ME loanwords. I owe this point to my examiners Rebecca Gregory and Eleanor Rye.

the natural world. Further, since naming places for plants may suggest a longstanding knowledge of the landscape, it is arguable that Scandinavian-Anglo-Saxon hybrid plant place-names may be indicators of settlement and integration.

That Scandinavian people in early-medieval England would have known of and used bog myrtle for brewing and dyeing is understood,[305] and so *pors* is perhaps conspicuous by its absence. The observation that *gagel* and *wīr* place-names appear to be in low numbers (or are absent from) large areas of Scandinavian influence together with this apparent absence of the Scandinavian *pors* element in highly Scandinavianized areas such as the Wirral (where *gagel* and *wīr* are demonstrably abundant) suggests that an instructive study to undertake would be around ON wild plant-names compounding with OE generics and vice versa. The scoping exercise highlighted ON **brækni* 'bracken', **hvin* 'gorse', *lyng* 'heather', and *sef* 'sedge' and the case study noted ON *kjarr* and *mór* (pre-1500) and ON *mýrr* (post-1500) generics. A study of **hvin*, OE *fyrs* 'furze' and OE *gorst*, 'gorse',[306] accepted as denoting the same plant and even specific species *ulex*,[307] may be a starting point. The findings have already shown their distribution evidence to be informative. Names in **hvin* occur largely within the bounds of the 'Danelaw', names in *gorst* occur largely in the West Midlands, and names in *fyrs* occur largely in the south and east of England.[308] A closer look at the chronology of these elements may also prove instructive. Their synonymity, like that of *gagel* and *wīr* is notable, and in addition to signalling geographical, dialectical and cultural differences it is possible that these synonymous

[305] For brewing, Karg (ed.), *Medieval food traditions*, pp. 149, 167, and for dyeing Kenward and Hall, *Coppergate*, p.715.
[306] All of these, however, have cognate OE words that make it difficult to distinguish between an ON and an OE derivation.
[307] Cameron, 'Distribution of whin, gorse and furze', p. 253.
[308] Ibid.

plant-names, when captured in place-names, are conveying different characteristics or habits of import to the coiners.

Compounding generics

The generics with which *gagel* and *wīr* compound were discussed at length in the case study, with watery and marginal generic elements making up 46.9% of the pre-1500 names (notably these watery/marginal generics are not shared), and each compounding with one habitative generic; *wīr* with *cot*, and *gagel* with *tūn*.[309] 36% of the post-1500 *gagel* and *wīr* names compound with watery and marginal generics. While these statistics seem noteworthy, any level of significance is difficult to assess without data about how they compare across place-names more widely. There is some continuity in terms of generics compounding with both pre- and post-1500 *wīr* names (*halh*, *lēah*, *lane*), and pre- and post-1500 *gagel* names (*brōc*, *land*, *lēah*, *mōr*). Both the post-1500 generics for *gagel* and *wīr* include simplex forms and, unlike the pre-1500 examples, do share some compounding generics (*clos*, *feld*, *lēah*, *mǣd/mǣdwe*, *sīc*). Both *wīr* and *gagel* have a compounding generic that stands out as far and away their most common in *halh* (14) and *lēah* (12) respectively. As with *wīr-halh*, *gagel-lēah* is perhaps a further example of an 'established' and 'recurrent' appellative, indicating that *gagel* grew in *lēahs* 'often enough for such things to be familiar'?[310] This may be borne out by the fact that *halh* and *lēah* are the most common compounding generics up to 1086, indicating that these appellatives may be of some age. Moreover, since the only woodland in which bog myrtle can thrive needs to be open, the *gagel-lēah* appellative reinforces the interpretation of *lēah* as 'clearing, open woodland', demonstrating the potential value of plant place-names for our

[309] Notably, unlike the pre-1500 examples, none of the post-1500 *wīr* and *gagel* place-names are major names and none are habitative.
[310] Coates, '*Wirral*', p. 99.

understanding of Old English, particularly with regard to furthering our understanding of the generics with which they compound through the detailed study of the plant-specifics.

Ambiguous elements and orthography

A further area of interest raised by the methodology relates to elements that may be confusable with *gagel* and *wīr.* Focussing on *gagel,* Appendix 6 shows a table of early-attested *gagel* place-names, some with long runs of spellings, illustrating the variety of ways in which names have evolved over time to demonstrate how modern spellings would appear inconclusive were it not for early attestations. The purpose of the table is to demonstrate how the later spellings of places (that have early spellings that provide secure interpretations) may be compared to those with only post-1500 attestations to add weight, or not, to *gagel* interpretations. A further purpose is to demonstrate how some place-names, where specifics have been interpreted alternatively on account of orthography, may be reviewed. For example, the long run of spellings for Gavel Green and Gale Field, Whitegate, Cheshire (1475) is instructive. The EPNS entry indicates that here the specific has been 'confused' with gafol[2] 'a rent, a tax',[311] on account of the medial <v> in some forms, but the presence of earlier spellings without <v> provide the evidence for a *gagel* interpretation. Had the *Gavill* (1541–2, 1724) attestations been the earliest forms supported by the later Gravel Green forms (1831, 1842) the rent/tax interpretation would perhaps have been favoured. Given that the majority of *gagel* names (and plant-names in general on account of their minor-nature) occur post-1500 there is room, then, to reconsider some of those place-names interpreted as *gafol*[2], OE *gafol*[1], *geafol* 'a river fork',[312] and OE

[311] *EPNS*, XLVI, Cheshire, part III, p. 172.
[312] *EPNE*, I, pp. 191–192.

galga, *gealga*, ON, *galgi*, 'gallows'. An anomaly is *Geylmaresiche*, St Oswald's, Cheshire (1290-1293) since it occurs just once in the documentary evidence. To date the *geyl*- form does not occur in any other place-names interpreted as *gagel*. But if credible, there is perhaps a case to be made for revisiting other names with similar renditions of the specific such as *Geyllheywod*, Holme, West Riding of Yorkshire (1572). The elements here are interpreted as ON *geil* 'ravine' with OE (*ge*)*hæg* 'enclosure'.[313] Further evidence to support either the *gagel* or *geil* interpretation would need to be sought, however there are precedents for *gagel* occurring with (*ge*)*hæg* in *Gailey Hay*, Penkridge, Staffordshire (1002x1004) and in Eastham, Cheshire (1839) a late set of field-names, Big, Little, and Gauley Meadow are interpreted as OE *gagel* with (*ge*)*hæg* rather than *lēah* on account of other nearby field-names names in (*ge*)*hæg*. While uncertain, the point of this discussion is to demonstrate that there may be more plant place-names than has previously been supposed that the present analytical process might expose.

While the earliest spellings are necessarily heavily relied upon when determining interpretations of both place-names and plant-names they do need to be considered with caution. An early attestation of *Gailey*, Penkridge, Staffordshire (1002x1004) occurs as *Gageleage* and shows the medial <g> of *gagel* which persists in attestations up until the thirteenth century. Later attestations have either lost this medial <g> altogether, or it has been replaced by <v>, <u>, <y>, or <w>. It also has two spellings that appear anomalous: the 1086 *Gragelie* form, and the fourteenth-century *Gan*(*e*)*ley*(*e*) form. *Gragelie*, with its unexpected <r> appears to be a scribal error since it does not occur otherwise, and the *Gan*(*e*)*ley*(*e*) form with its unexpected <n> is perhaps another (or may also be a misreading by the survey researcher given

[313] *EPNS*, XLVI, Cheshire, part III, p. 289.

that <u> and <n> are often rendered similarly).[314] Similarly, there has been some debate about the specific in Galton⋆, Owermoigne, Dorset. That is, whether it is *gagel* or *gafol*.[315] While the *Gaveltone* (1086) spelling does favour the latter interpretation, the *Galtone* (1086) spelling, although lacking the medial <g> that might be expected to be present at Domesday,[316] together with environmental data and local naming practice supports a *gagel* interpretation. That is, there are springs in the vicinity together with evidence of modern drainage, and nearby plant place-names include *Whinfrith*, *Hethfelton* (notably compounding with *tūn*), and *Lincott* a further potential plant place-name with a habitative generic. Again, the point of this discussion is to show that where there is debate about the interpretation of early spellings environmental data may be able to help, and may demonstrate that there are more potential plant place-names to explore than we realise. This resonates with Briggs' hypothesis, discussed in the literature review, that there are many more plant place-name collectives than hitherto thought,[317] particularly since plants had so many varied roles in early-medieval England supporting and enabling nearly all activities undertaken.[318]

Etymology and botanical knowledge

Since the etymology of *gagel* is uncertain, there is an opportunity to reconsider this lexical element. Old English plant-names as well as being made up of elements describing their use (*cicena mete* 'chicken food'), like place-names, are often descriptive (*hræfnes fōt* 'crow's foot' so named on account of leaf-shape). Given this

[314] To be sure the original document would need to be checked. Transcribing <n> for <u> is not uncommon, and also happens with a post-1500 example, where Gauley, Big & Little, Meadow (Cheshire) are rendered 'Ganley' on the Cheshire Tithes website, 'Cheshire Tithe Maps Online'.
[315] 'Farm subject to tax or rent', *EPNS* LII, Dorset, part I, pp. 139–40.
[316] I owe this point to John Baker.
[317] Briggs, 'Old English collective plant-names', pp. 5–14.
[318] Biggam, 'The True Staff of Life', p. 23.

naming habit for plants, a thorough knowledge and understanding of the plant may result in observations that provide insights about characteristics and uses lending weight to contestable plant place-name interpretations. This is demonstrated by Coates' verdict concerning *wīr*, that it is 'reasonable to probe the possibility that *wīr* is related to the homophonous word meaning "wire" in Old English', recalling the suckering tendrils of certain types of plant.[319] Similarly, it may be reasonable to probe that *gagel* conveys a physical characteristic, and is perhaps also homophonous with (or related to) a word conveying a characteristic or habit of the plant. Elements superficially worth considering include OE *gagol*, *geagle* 'sportive, playful, frolicsome, unrestrained, unruly' or when glossing *lascivus* 'unrestrained, wanton, lascivious'; and OE *gagol*, *gægl*, *geagl* 'lascivious, wanton'.[320] These senses are perhaps echoed in *Gowder Bank*, Kirkby Stephen, Westmorland (1844), which may be Westmorland dialect *gowder* relating to the copulation of animals, 'North Country' dialect *gowdy* 'lascivious, wanton';[321] and OE *gāl* 'wanton' which may occur in *Galsey Wood*, Bletsoe, Bedfordshire (1276).[322] Whether such arguments can be borne out is a matter of debate but the possibilities, when etymologies are uncertain, are worth considering. The connotations of OE *gagol*, with the sense 'unrestrained' or 'unruly' provides a metaphorical possibility perhaps applicable to plants that are difficult to control (for *gagel* perhaps because of its suckering habit resulting in localised thickets that spread in unpredictable directions, or because of its difficulty to propagate). How far such a metaphorical interpretation of *gagol* may be stretched to recall *gagel* is dubious, but the sense of the word, somehow desirable yet difficult to

[319] Coates, '*Wirral'*, pp. 96–97.
[320] Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al, eds, *Dictionary of Old English: A to I online* (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018).
[321] *EPNS*, XLIII, Westmorland, part II, p. 6.
[322] *EPNS*, III, Bedfordshire & Huntingdonshire, p. 28.

control, together with its phonological similarity is appealing. Bog myrtle's physical characteristics, it being a 'much branched shrub',[323] may recall *gafol* 'fork',[324] true of many plants, however, in the same way that the wiriness is. Additionally, ON *gagl*, as in *gaglviður*, may warrant revisiting as the potential element, rather than *gagel*, particularly when occurring in place-names where Scandinavian influence is marked.

Botanical distribution and vernacular names

Comparing the pre-1500 place-name distribution with modern botanical distribution suggests that bog myrtle was more abundant in the midlands (particularly the Cheshire area) than it is today supporting, to some extent, the abundance of place-names in that region. Taking the two elements separately distributions of *wīr* suggest that the plant may have had a wider geographical range than it does today, specifically in the centre of the country (Gloucestershire and Berkshire). The pre-1500 place-names in *gagel* correlate more closely with botanical distributions but indicate that the plant may have been more abundant than modern botanical evidence implies in Leicestershire and Durham. The lack of pre-1500 place-name evidence for both *gagel* and *wīr* in Norfolk, Suffolk, Surrey and Sussex parallels with the modern botanical data in that the plant is present if not exceptionally abundant. Place-name survey coverage, however, may be colouring these observations since there is no EPNS survey for Suffolk and in the Surrey and Sussex surveys field-names, where plant-names are most likely to be found, are consigned to a few limited entries towards the ends of the volumes. Notwithstanding the lack of surveys, parallels must be made with caution since the modern botanical data covers only the last 100 years or so, and

[323] Stroh et al, '*Myrica gale*'.
[324] While not homophonous, this element is mooted as the possible element alongside *gagel* in some place-names, for example, *le Gawel⋆*, Sedgefield, Durham (*c.*1200). *Gafol* , 'rent', 'tax' may also be worth revisiting in some instances.

agricultural and drainage activity over the last 1000 years or more will have had an impact on where the plant is found today. In addition it must be noted that while the presence of place-names with these elements may indicate that a plant is conspicuous in its environment for one reason or another, that is not to say that the lack of place-names represents a lack of the plant. A place abounding in bog myrtle may have no referent place-names at all.

There is little correspondence between the modern botanical data and the pre-1500 place-name data for Cumberland, Northumberland, the North Riding of Yorkshire, the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, and Cornwall where bog myrtle currently appears to have something of a stronghold. While the lack of correspondence may be due in part to the absence of published EPNS surveys for Cornwall,[325] Lancashire, Northumberland, Suffolk and part of Norfolk, this does not stand for Cumberland, Westmorland and the North Riding of Yorkshire where surveys have been carried out. Having said that the introduction to the third Cumberland volume indicates that early documentary evidence is scant (only a small portion of the county is included in Domesday) and at times unreliable,[326] and the volume for the North Riding of Yorkshire indicates that the entries 'include hardly any Old English forms'.[327] Looking at Cumberland, where the modern botanical distribution is strong more closely, the county has just one pre-1500 *wīr* name in the corpus Weary Hall⋆, Boltons, Cumberland (thirteenth cent.), and none in *gagel*. While

[325] I have not been able to locate a Cornish word for bog myrtle. In Welsh, cognate with Cornish, it is *helyg Mair* 'Mary's willow' (perhaps a biblical name) and Corn. *heligen* is 'willow-tree, sallow' (*CPNE*, p. 128, and Frederick W. P. Jago, *An English-Cornish Dictionary* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1887). A Corn. 'willow' name, then, may have been in use in the same way as the Sussex vernacular bog myrtle name 'sweet willow', Grigson, pp. 242–243. Notably, Grigson records *Gawan*, *Gold*, *Goyle*, etc. as bog myrtle names in Cornwall but this does not appear to be reflected in place-names noted in *CPNE*.
[326] Bruce Dickins (ed.), *The Place-Names of Cumberland*, XXII, part III (London: Cambridge University Press, 1952; 1971 reprint), p. v.
[327] A. Smith, *The Place-Names of the North Riding of Yorkshire*, V (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928; 1979 edn), p. xxix.

the lack of place-name surveys for the areas where botanical evidence is strong is clearly of import, the lack of correlation is at present a deficiency of data rather than diverging evidence. Additionally it may be possible that place-names in these areas, with confusable specific elements such as *geil, gafol, wēr* etc., have been interpreted as neither *gagel* nor *wīr*, or, that the plant may have been known by other dialect or vernacular names as yet unidentified as place-name elements.[328] If dialect and vernacular names are taken into consideration possibilities include: *flea-wood* (Northumberland), *moor-myrtle, sweet* (Yorkshire, North England), *moss wythan* (Cumberland, Westmorland), *golden-with* (Southern England), *sweet willow* (Sussex).[329] Taking *moss wythan* as an example, there are a number of Cumberland place-names that include the OE *wīðig*/**wīðign* element that may be present in the *wythan* component. These include *Wyth Burn*, *Wythburn*, *Wythegill Sike*, *Wythemoor*, *Wythesheld*, *Wythop*, and *Wythwaite*.[330] The difficulties here of course are that OE *wīðig* and names in *with*/*wyth* have a wide semantic range when it comes to plant-names and are present in other vernacular plant-names, particularly the various *salix* species. As such, identifying any of these examples as bog myrtle is more than contestable, notwithstanding that it is found in similar environmental conditions to *salix* species. While this question of specific identification matters to us today, if the point was not to identify a particular plant but a type of plant with *withy* characteristics, because it was useful or because it signified something in terms of the environment, then specificity in identifications and names was neither necessary nor important.

[328] See Appendix 4 for other names by which bog myrtle was or has become known.
[329] Grigson, *Englishman's Flora*, pp. 242–243.
[330] *EPNS*, XXII, *Cumberland*, part III, p. 559.

That *wīr* is conspicuous by its absence in vernacular plant-names while variations of *gagel* are frequent seems noteworthy. Only the 'wind' element of the *withywind* name applied to bog myrtle (Hampshire) comes close to implying the suckering tendrils of plants that *wīr* may allude to. Conversely, the extensive and varied occurrences of potentially *gagel*-derived names, together with other vernacular names that appear to note qualities of the plant, suggests that there may be many more place-names featuring this plant than we realise (and this may be true of many more plant-names). For example, for bog myrtle, those names speaking to the characteristics of the plant (gold, sweet),[331] the landscape in which it thrives (bog, moor, moss) and its uses (candle, flea).

That a name like Sweet Hills, Nun Monkton, West Riding of Yorkshire (1577), for example, might incorporate the bog myrtle name 'sweet', a vernacular name that is recorded in Yorkshire,[332] while implausible, is not impossible since:

- there are no gagel names in the West Riding of Yorkshire (from the collected corpus), but five names in wīr,
- the geographical and environmental conditions are favourable (there is no hill, but there is evidence of drainage),
- the modern botanical distribution does not include the immediate locality of Sweet Hills (but the plant is recorded in the region both botanically and archaeobotanically, and the lack locally may be as a result of drainage),

[331] Vernacular names that recall the yellow/gold flowers include 'gold' and 'golden withy', and perhaps *gall, gaul*, *gawel*, *goil*, and *goule*. *Gall* is perhaps the element present in Gallwort 'yellow toadflax' and Gall-wood 'wormwood' (which also bear yellow flowers).
[332] Grigson, *Englishman's Flora*, pp. 242–243.

- the naming practice within the parish includes a number of watery landscapes including: Carr Little Close, Moor End, Mill Syke, Poolbrigg House, and Spring Wood, as well as plant place-names such as Dokmyre and Saffron Wood.333

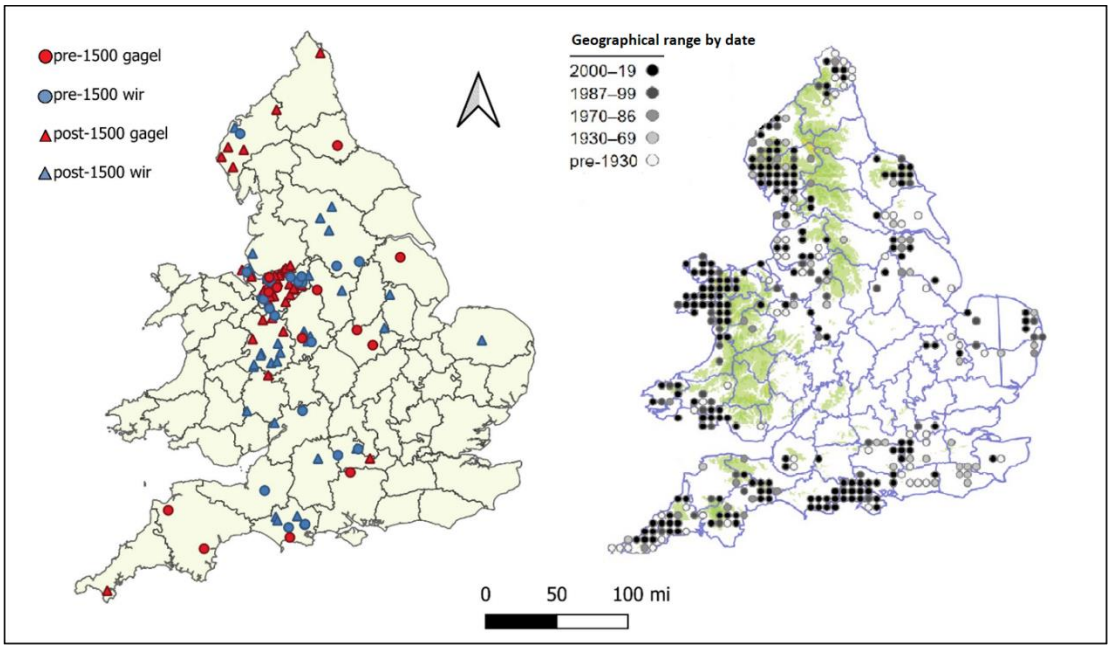
While such a hypothetical process might yield a great number of possibilities and results that suit any given argument the possibility exists that, taken together, the cumulative evidence from several disciplines might point to a plant place-name interpretation where previously no plant-element was proposed. It must be accepted, however, that in practice it will not be possible to identify some, if not a great many, plant place-names.

Archaeobotanical evidence

Bog myrtle is distinctive in its landscape because of its bright catkins and flowers that occur largely before the plant is in leaf in April and May, its habit of forming clumps, and its aromatic scent. Its conspicuousness may also be as a result of where it grows, on marginal boggy land, often out in the open, where it has a colonizing effect on account of its suckering habit. The plant has declined as a result of human intervention through drainage for agricultural purposes, peat extraction, and falling water-tables leading to the loss of lowland bogs and increased tree-cover.[334] This may be borne out by the modern geographical distribution of the plant which largely shows it to be absent or in low numbers in lowland areas of the country where agriculture is at its most intensive. However, the concentrations of the pre- and post-1500 distribution of both *gagel* and *wīr* are not at odds with this modern botanical distribution where we might expect to see more place-names in low-land areas. There are a few examples, in Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire,

[333] *SEPN*, <https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/browse/id/532881fcb47fc40c81004584-Sweet+Hills>.
[334] Stroh et al, '*Myrica gale*'.

Northamptonshire, and Suffolk, where the place-names do not correlate with the botanical distribution that arguably may reflect loss and possible climate/environmental changes, but this discrepancy may also be due to the more systematic recording carried out by BSBI in upland, northern, and western areas.[335]



Map 15: Comparison of pre- and post-1500 *gagel* and *wīr* names with modern botanical distribution.[336]

The archaeobotanical data is demonstrably scant and sites where *Myrica gale* has been found in Anglo-Scandinavian layers (York and Beverley) do not correlate with the place-name distribution of the corpus with no examples in the Yorkshire East Riding. The insufficiency of evidence in terms of the number and geographical range of dig sites makes it difficult to draw any conclusions. However absence of archaeobotanical evidence in localities where place-name evidence is strong is not necessarily evidence of absence of the plant since the preservation of remains may be dependent on how and where the plant was processed. That is, those plants that were brought into house-sites are more likely to be noted than plants processed

[335] Stroh et al, '*Myrica gale*'.
[336] Edited version of the Stroh et al '*Myrica gale*' distribution map.

elsewhere.[337] That the York and Beverley samples were found in areas of urban occupation is of interest since this may indicate that, if not simply growing there,[338] the plant was being processed in some way. That Anglo-Scandinavian samples were found on Tanner Row is tantalizing since a noted later ethnobotanical use of the bark was in the tanning process. The archaeobotanical data indicates that 'very large numbers of samples' were found across the 'Roman-Anglo-Scand-medieval' period, and that the samples for the early-medieval period were found in pit fills. Bark, however, was not noted (only buds, propagules, seeds, leaves, and catkins).[339]

Ethnobotanical evidence

Since *wīr* glosses the Latin for myrtle in OE medicobotanical texts of classical origin, the one occasion on which *gagel* glosses *mirtus* in the twelfth-century *Laud Glossary*, appears anomalous. Seemingly, the copyist or translator undertaking the *Laud* glossing who chose *gagel* did believe it to be a correct translation or was copying from an earlier gloss that used *gagel*. Alternatively, it is possible that the copyist made the translation themselves by opting for a familiar plant that had similar characteristics or possessed the same curative properties of *mirtus*.[340] Biggam proposes that 'if the Anglo-Saxon translator knew of a native plant which effected the same cures, that would influence his identification',[341] whilst Banham notes that the 'the existence of a particular gloss in Anglo-Saxon texts is evidence that at least someone in the Anglo-Saxon period believed it represented a correct translation'.[342] A

[337] Banham, 'Knowledge and Uses of Plants', p. 14. A further line of enquiry then would be to look at where the various types of processing of bog myrtle were likely to take place.
[338] The locations in which the samples were found do correlate with the botanical distribution map.
[339] Tomlinson and Hall, 'ABCD'.
[340] Stracke argues that, given the apparent difficulties that he had with OE letter forms, the scribe was probably Norman, possibly writing in a dialect originating south of the Humber, most probably in the West Midlands area. J. R. Stracke, *The Laud Herbal Glossary* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1974), pp. 5–6.
[341] Biggam, '*Hœwenhnydele*', pp. 617–622.
[342] Banham, 'Knowledge and Uses of Plants', p. 5.

later copy of an early-medieval text, there is a possibility that this anomalous gloss in *Laud* occurred because *wīr* was no longer in use as a plant-name, and *gagel* was the most familiar *mirtus*-like plant. That there is some confusion about our modern understanding of *gagel* and *wīr* is suggested by the fact that both occur in one recipe in *Bald's Leech Book* (tenth-century). Moreover, since this is one of 'the oldest medical texts from Northern Europe' thought to demonstrate 'the medical attainments of at least one Anglo-Saxon physician',[343] and because the two ingredients are not positioned adjacently in the recipe it is conceivable that, at least at this time, they were not considered to be the same plant by a knowledgeable person. This is supported by the different ways in which parts of the plants are described, with *wīr*-rind 'the bark of *wīr*' being called for in one recipe, *gagel croppan* 'the tops' or 'flowers of *gagel'* in another, and *leaf gageles* 'leaves of *gagel'* in another. *Gagel* does not occur with *rind* and *wīr* does not occur with *cropp* or *leaf*. This implies that when *gagel* and *wīr* place-names were being coined these plant-elements were describing different plants. None of the place-names with these elements, however, can have been describing myrtle (*Myrtus communis*) since this plant cannot, even if introduced, given its growing requirements, have grown in the same places as *Myrica gale*. The affix of 'bog' to 'myrtle' to form the common name that has dominated since the sixteenth century perhaps suggests that it was latterly perceived to be a 'variety' of myrtle that could grow in and tolerate a boggy environment, perhaps on account of their physical similarities which include the wax or resin they both exude, their reddish stems, and their aromatic scents. The fruits and flowers, however, are

[343] Michael Lapidge et al,. eds, *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999; 2001 edn), p. 304.

very different the latter bearing blue berries and white blossom-like flowers, the former red-gold and yellow catkins.

Its wide variety of uses over a long period of time indicates that bog myrtle was recognisably of value in the early-medieval period through to modern times and scientific scholarship substantiates many of the uses documented, including: brewing, perfuming linen, candle-making, tanning, dyeing, as a spice or flavouring, and a tea.[344] The efficacy of the active ingredients have also been borne out to some extent, with some modern research resonating with historical uses. The use of the plant for skin and wound treatments echo the green salve (salves relate particularly to the treatment of wounds and the skin), and the treatments for *circul adl* 'shingles' and a sore or swollen penis (see Appendix 2). This raises questions about how other plant place-names may provide clues to useful plants and whether or not there are other useful plants signposted in place-names that do not feature in early-medieval medicobotanical sources.

The wood of bog myrtle seems to have limited recorded usages other than as a fuel in domestic ovens,[345] and the biblical mention of myrtle as a building material in the construction of booths must relate to *Mirtus communis*.[346] Indeed bog myrtle is noted for 'its limited value for wood production',[347] and another biblical connection, perhaps confusing the Mediterranean myrtle with bog myrtle, is in an Irish folkloric reference recorded in Grigson that 'Gale had dwindled to a low shrub because the Cross had been made of it'.[348] Ecologically, however, 'the species has possible uses in

[344] M. Sylvestre, J. Legault, D. Dufour, A. Pichette, 'Chemical composition and anticancer activity of leaf essential oil of *Myrica gale* L', *Phytomedicine*, 12:4 (2005), p. 299.
[345] Grigson, *Englishman's Flora*, pp. 242–243.
[346] Nehemiah 8.15.
[347] Skene et al, '*Myrica gale* L.', p. 1091.
[348] Grigson's source is S. Ó Súilleabháin, *The Handbook of Irish Folklore*, 1942. This reference perhaps resonates with the Welsh name for bog myrtle, *helyg Mair*, discussed above.

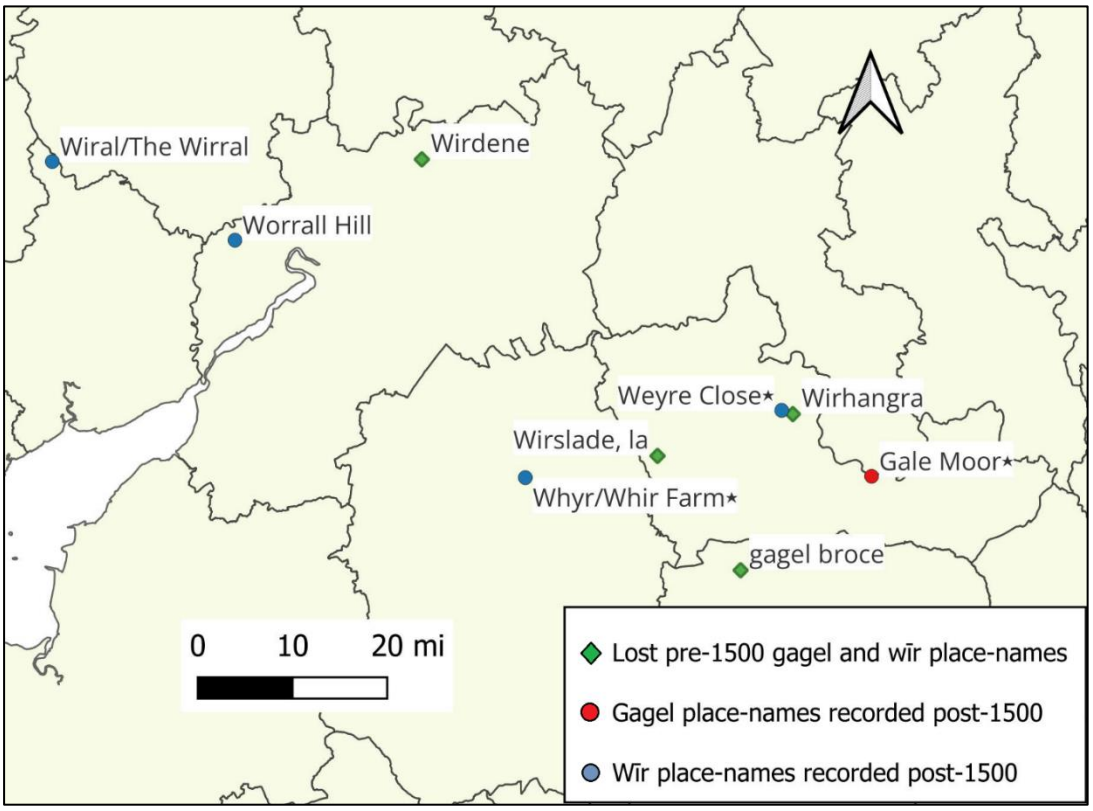
improving forest productivity on wet acid peatland owing to nitrogen fixation (Sprent & Scott 1979), and in the stabilization and reclamation of peatland (Schwintzer & Lancelle 1983)'.[349] Whether these nitrogen fixing and stabilization of peatland effects of bog myrtle on a landscape were perceived, or indeed recognized, as beneficial is difficult to argue but it may be conceivable that places where bog myrtle abounded were recognised as places where 'forest productivity' was improving.[350]

Post-1500 place-name evidence

Keeping in mind the issues inherent when relying on later place-name evidence discussed in the methodology, if post-1500 place-name evidence is taken into account there is more of a correlation between the botanical data and the place-name evidence for Cumberland, Northumberland and to a lesser extent Norfolk and Cornwall. For Cumberland, for example, the post-1500 place-name evidence addresses the disparity by adding six names. This increasing correspondence arguably provides evidence for those names being older, despite the lack of documentary evidence. Areas where place-name evidence is strong but botanical evidence is scant (such as south Shropshire with eight post-1500 names in *wīr*) may signal environmental or climate change caused by, for example, intensive agricultural practices involving drainage leading to lower water tables. A further area of research then would be to consider if plant place-names, where there appear to be chronological breaks in naming places for plants, indicate changes in land use and climate. For example, in the adjacent counties of Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Gloucestershire there are four 'lost' place-names; their earliest and only recorded dates are 943, 944 and 1318-19, and 777x779 respectively. The post-1500 place-names in those counties are recorded in 1773 and

[349] Skene et al, '*Myrica gale* L.', p. 1091.
[350] Ibid.

1820 (Wiltshire), 1839 and 1843 (Berkshire), 1655 and 1669 (Gloucestershire). With the gaps in attestations being greatest in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire the question is did loss of the plant lead to loss of the plant place-name for the intervening centuries, and are the later attested names a result of the reemergence of the plant. If breaks in naming can be discerned, then plant place-names may be useful indicators of environmental change. However, all this might indicate is a gap in the written record for the intervening years and nothing more. A study of the other plant elements identified at the methodology stage of this project may reveal more.



Map 16: Lost pre-1500 and post-1500 place-names in *gagel* and *wīr*.

Conclusion

The construction of a methodical and multidisciplinary analytical approach for examining plant place-names has shown itself to be of great value. It has demonstrated that the range of questions we can ask of plant place-names are many and the extent to which we may mine the layers of meaning and information they store is varied and interesting. Given that plant place-names make up some 4% of place-names in England and since the evidence and knowledge they contain is demonstrably important to a wide variety of disciplines it is appropriate that they acquire their own term: 'Floratoponyms'.[351] The variety of research possibilities are wide ranging and may include, for example, an historical botanical mapping exercise using plant place-names, supplementing modern botanical mapping data and looking at environmental change; ethnobotanical studies looking at place-names containing plants known to have been processed for brewing, dyeing, tanning and used in medicine etc.; language research in terms of dialects; etymology where the elements concerned are uncertain; and how plant place-name elements may further our understanding of the elements with which they compound. More than affirming, if not extending, our semantic understanding of their generic elements, plant place-names may additionally enable us to push back the date of place-names for which we only have late attestations. For example, those which contain what appear to have become distinct lexical compounds (*gagel-lēah* and *wīr-halh*). A detailed study of how these two elements combine with their other generics may reveal more about how they may have been used differently, at different times perhaps, or for different purposes.

We have seen that both OE *gagel* and *wīr* occur in major (4.4%) but predominantly minor (95.6%) names in largely the same localities as each other and

[351] This thought and choice of term I owe entirely to Rebecca Gregory.

their earliest attestations are broadly contemporaneous. That they predominate in minor rather than major place-names is perhaps not surprising. Their coining in many instances must have required the environmental knowledge of established communities likely to be born out of daily familiarity, since many wild plants look very different, or are visually absent, at different times of year. The consideration of plant-names outside of place-name evidence prompts areas for re-evaluation. As discussed, despite our assumption that *gagel* and *wīr* represent the same plant there is evidence to suggest that they were distinguishable from one another at one time since they both occur in the same tenth-century remedy, and a further tenth-century remedy calls for *wīr-rind* 'the bark of *wīr*' implying that *wīr* may have denoted a plant in itself. It may be, of course, that *wīr* refers to a part common to many plants (as Coates suggests), like leaves or flowers, and it is the *rind* of any appropriate *wīr* that is required.[352] The reconsideration of the specifics in potential plant place-names, particularly with *gagel* because of its uncertain etymology, together with vernacular names, widens the spectrum of potential extant plant place-names. Where plant place-name evidence is contestable or late (post-1500), the accumulation of environmental, geographical, and ethnobotanical information etc. together with the evidence of local naming practices can strengthen the case for dubious or uninterpreted plant place-names. Cumulatively, the greater and more detailed the data we have about plants the better we can understand their landscapes, the environments in which they occur, the place-names that contain them, and ultimately the societies that produced those names.

[352] This perhaps recalls Krischke's observation that plants underwent a semblance of documented categorization in the early-medieval period; perhaps 'wiriness' is one of these undocumented categories: 'On the semantics of Old English compound plant names', p. 214.

Appendix 1: Plant-elements noted in place-names in Cavill and Watts

These head forms, unless otherwise specified, are taken from *VEPN*, *EPNE*, *MED* and *OED*.

ME *affoldil*, a*ffadil*, *affedil* – 'ramson, other species of Allium, ?asphodel, ?rhododaphne' and 'daffodil'[353]

OFr *anis*, Lat. *anīsum* – 'aniseed'[354]

Dial. *apple pye* – 'willow herb'[355]

OE *balsam*, *balsam*, *balzama*, *-e* – 'balsam'[356]

L. *berberis*, *barbaris* – 'barberry'[357]

OE *beolone*, *belene* – 'henbane'[358]

ModE *bilberry*, ON *blá-ber* – 'blaeberry, bilberry'[359]

ME *bit(t)er-swēte* – 'woody nightshade'[360]

OE *blǣdre*, *blæddre* + OE *wyrt* – 'bladderwort'[361]

AN *blew*, *bliu*, *blu*, *blwe*, *bluw* + OE *belle* – 'bluebell'[362]

AN *blew*, *bliu*, *blu*, *blwe*, *bluw* + OE *mōr* + *gærs*, *græs*, *gres*, ON *gres* – 'blue moor-grass'[363]

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[353] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED722/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350 and *OED*, <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/affodill_n?tab=etymology#9186541>.
[354] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED1665/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[355] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/apple-pie_n?tab=meaning_and_use#121209175>.
[356] *OED*, s.v. "balsam, n., sense III.8", July 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/2992188235> and <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/balsam_n?tab=etymology#28558363>.
[357] *OED* <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/7013425535>.
[358] *EPNE*, I, p. 276.
[359] *VEPN*, *Á-Box*, pp. 99, 107.
[360] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED4985/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350> and Cavill, p. 32.
[361] *EPNE* I, p. 39, and II, p. 280.
[362] *OED* < https://www.oed.com/dictionary/bluebell_n?tab=meaning_and_use#17822021>.
[363] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/bluegrass_n?tab=etymology#17549114>, *VEPN*, I, p. 145, *EPNE*, I, p. 191,

ModE *blue-button* – 'devil's bit (scabious)'[364]

ModE *bluecap* – 'sheep's bit (scabious)'[365]

ModE *boggard* – 'ghost, goblin', 'Yorkshire boggart-flower or dog's mercury'[366]

ME *braken* – 'fern'[367]

OE *brēmel* – 'bramble, blackberry-bush'[368]

OE *brōm* – 'broom'[369]

OF *bo(u)ton* – 'bud of a plant', 'button cap'[370]

OE *bulut* – 'horehound, ragged robin'[371]

ME **bur-blade*, dial. *burblek* – 'bog-rhubarb'[372]

OE *butere* + ME *burre* – 'butterbur'[373]

OE *cammoc* – 'cammock, rest-harrow, hog's fennel, buckthorn, yarrow, furze, kex, cow-parsley'[374]

ModE *carrot* + *wild* – 'wild-carrot'[375]

ML *carui*, OFr *carvi, caroi* – 'carraway'[376]

OE *cærse cresse, cerse* – 'cress, water-cress'[377]

OE *cerlic*, **cearloc* – 'charlock'[378]

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[364] *VEPN, Á-Box*, p. 155, and Cavill, p. 36.
[365] Ibid.
[366] *VEPN, Á-Box*, p. 122, Cavill, p. 37.
[367] *VEPN, Brace-Cæster*, pp. 4–5.
[368] Ibid., pp. 17–19.
[369] Ibid., pp. 42–44.
[370] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED5656/track?counter=2&search_id=26763350>, Cavill, p. 56.
[371] *VEPN, Brace-Cæster*, p.67.
[372] Ibid., p.71.
[373] Ibid., pp. 71, 99.
[374] Ibid., p. 135-5, *EPNE*, I, p. 79.
[375] VEPN, *Brace-Cæster*, p. 144.
[376] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED6804/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[377] *EPNE*, I, p. 76.
[378] Ibid., p. 90.

Lat. *chamaemēlon*, *chamomilla*, OF *camemile* – 'chamomile'[379]

Fr *cichorée* – 'chicory'[380]

OE *clāte* – 'burdock'[381]

OE *clǣfre* – 'clover'[382]

Dial. *cleat* – 'coltsfoot'[383]

OE *clife*, *cliðe*, – 'burdock'[384]

Dial. *clochs* – 'seeds of the dandelion'[385]

OE *crop*(*p*), *croppa* – 'the sprout or top of a plant, a bunch of blooms, a cluster of berries'[386]

OE *cwice* – 'quitch'[387]

OE *dæges ēage* – 'daisy'[388]

Lat *Delphīnium* – 'larkspur'[389]

OE *Dene* + *wyrt* – 'Danewort, dwarf elder'[390]

Fr dial. *dernelle*, *darnette* – 'darnel'[391]

OE *dile* – 'dill'[392]

OE *docce* – 'dock, water-lily'[393]

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[379] *MED* < https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED6606/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[380] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/chicory_n?tab=etymology#9471266>.
[381] *VEPN*, *Ceafor–Cock-pit*, pp. 84–85.
[382] Ibid., pp. 90–91.
[383] *EPNE*, I, p. 97.
[384] Ibid., p. 99.
[385] *OED*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1089171116>.
[386] *EPNE*, I, pp. 113–4. Arguably this element does not belong in this list.
[387] Ibid., p. 122.
[388] *OED* < https://www.oed.com/dictionary/daisy_n?tab=etymology#7398230>.
[389] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/delphinium_n?tab=etymology#7269885>.
[390] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/danewort_n?tab=etymology#7431747>.
[391] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED10555/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[392] *VEPN*, *Á-Box*, p. 142.
[393] *EPNE*, I, p. 133.

Dial. *dodder* – 'corn spurrey'[394]

ModE *dog's tail* – 'dog's tail grass'[395]

ModE dial. *egg* – 'snowberry'[396]

MLat *enula campana* – 'elecampane, horseheal'[397]

OE *eorðhnutu* – 'earth chestnut, pignut'[398]

OF *esparge, esperge, sperage, sparage,* AF *sparge* – 'asparagus'[399]

Corn **evor*, W *efwr* – 'cow-parley, hogweed'[400]

Lat *febrifuga* – 'feverfew'[401]

AF *fecche* – 'vetch'[402]

OE *felte, felt-wyrt* – 'wild marjoram', 'mullein'[403]

ME *fenkel* – 'fennel'[404]

ModE *fiddle* + *dock* – 'fiddle-dock'[405]

ModE *fig* + wort – 'figwort'[406]

OE *fleax,* ME *'flax, flex* – 'flax'[407]

OF *flour, flor, flur* – 'flower'[408]

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[394] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/dodder_n?tab=meaning_and_use#6355423>.
[395] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/dogs-tail_n?tab=meaning_and_use#6382139>.
[396] *NDEFN*, p. 125.
[397] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED13250/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[398] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/earthnut_n?tab=meaning_and_use#5919210>.
[399] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED41965/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[400] *CPNE*, p. 96.
[401] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/feverfew_n?tab=etymology#4388225>.
[402] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED15418/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[403] *EPNE*, I, p. 169.
[404] *EPNE*, I, p. 169.
[405] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/fiddle-dock_n?tab=etymology&tl=true>.
[406] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/fig-wort_n?tab=factsheet#4453631>.
[407] *EPNE*, I, p. 176.
[408] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED16421/track?counter=3&search_id=26763350>.

ModE *forget* + *me* + *not* – 'forget-me-not'[409]

OE *foxes* + *glófa* – 'foxglove'[410]

ModE *fox* + *tail* – 'foxtail grass'[411]

OE *fyrs* – 'furze'[412]

OE *gagel*, ME *gaule* – 'gale, bog-myrtle'[413]

Fr *galant* – 'anemone, windflower'[414]

WS *gār-lēac*, A *gār-lēc* – 'garlic'[415]

ME *gās-berīe* – 'gooseberry',[416] or ModE *goose* + *berry*[417]

Lat *gentiāna,* Fr *gentiana* – 'gentian'[418]

Lat *geranium* – 'geranium'[419]

OE *glæppa* – 'buckbean'[420]

OE *golde* – 'marigold, marsh marigold'[421]

ModE *goose* + *foot* – 'goosefoot'[422]

OE *gorst* – 'gorse'[423]

OE *græs, gærs* – 'grass'[424]

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[409] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/forget-me-not_n?tab=etymology#3786958>.
[410] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/foxglove_n?tab=etymology#3619132>.
[411] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/foxtail-grass_n?tab=factsheet#993620475>.
[412] *EPNE*, I, p. 190.
[413] *EPNE*, I, p. 192.
[414] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/gallant_adj?tab=etymology#3403550>.
[415] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED18221/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[416] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED18255/track?counter=1&search_id=27924450>.
[417] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/gooseberry_n?tab=etymology#2883369>.
[418] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/gentian_n?tab=etymology#3078005>.
[419] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/geranium_n?tab=etymology#3106441>.
[420] *EPNE*, I, p. 203.
[421] *EPNE*, II, p. 205.
[422] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/goose-foot_n?tab=etymology#2884913>.
[423] *VEPN, Á-Box*, p. 143.
[424] *EPNE*, I, p. 207. Grass is problematic since the variety can be difficult if not impossible to determine, and therefore the wildness or otherwise cannot be inferred.

ModE *hair* + *grass* – 'hairgrass'[425]

OE *hamor-secg* – 'hammer-sedge'[426]

OE *hamor-wyrt* – 'hammer-wort'[427]

OE *hǣddre* – 'heather'[428]

OE *hænep, henep*, ON *hemp* – 'hemp'[429]

OE *heope, heopa* – 'the fruit of the wild rose, a hip', 'the dog rose, a bramble'[430]

Lat *herba*, OF *erbe* – 'herb'[431]

ME *hōlī* + *hok*(*ke*) – 'marsh mallow'[432]

ME *hoppe* – 'hop plant'[433]

ME *hors-tail* – 'horsetail'[434]

OE *hramsa, hramse* – 'wild garlic, ramson'[435]

OE *hreod* – 'reed, rush'[436]

ON **hvin* – 'whin, gorse'[437]

OE *hymlic, -humlic, -lice* – 'hemlock'[438]

OE *īfig* – 'ivy'[439]

ModE *Jacob's* + *ladder* – 'Jacob's ladder'.[440]

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[425] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/hair-grass_n?tab=meaning_and_use#2196971>.
[426] *EPNE*, I, p. 231.
[427] Ibid.
[428] Ibid., p. 214.
[429] Ibid., p 217.
[430] Ibid., p 243.
[431] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED20450/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[432] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED21029/track?counter=1&search_id= 26763350>.
[433] *EPNE*, I, p. 260. Hops can be both wild and cultivated.
[434] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED21248/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[435] *EPNE*, I, p. 264.
[436] Ibid.
[437] *VEPN, Á-Box*, p. 144.
[438] *EPNE*, I, p. 276.
[439] Ibid., p. 279.
[440] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/jacobs-ladder_n?tab=etymology#40556802>.

OF *lavendre* – 'lavender'[441]

OE *lēac* – 'herb, vegetable', 'leek, garlic'[442]

Fr *lentil(le)* – 'lentil'[443]

OFr *letües* – 'lettuce'[444]

OE *lilie* – 'lily'[445]

OF *liquirice, licorice, licorece* – 'liquorice'[446]

Fr *luzerne* – 'lucern, purple medick'[447]

OE *mageðe, mægeðe* – 'stinking chamomile'[448]

Lat *malva* – 'mallow'[449]

Ger *Mangoldwurzel* – 'mangle-wurzel'[450]

OE *mæddre, mædere* – 'madder'[451]

OE *merece* – 'wild celery, smallage'[452]

ModE *monkshood* – 'wolf's bane, monkshood'[453]

Scand *marram* – 'marram'[454]

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[441] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED24886/track?counter=2&search_id=26763350>.
[442] *VEPN, Á-Box*, p. 144, *EPNE*, I, p. 18. It is difficult to determine whether a general term for vegetation or a specific plant is being referenced in place-names containing this element.
[443] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED25146/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[444] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED25288/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[445] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED25592/track?counter=1&search_id= 26763350>.
[446] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED25428/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[447] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/lucerne_n2?tab=meaning_and_use#38665070>.
[448] *MED* < https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26573/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[449] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/mallow_n?tab=etymology#38302668>.
[450] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/mangel-wurzel_n?tab=etymology#38406359>.
[451] *EPNE*, II, p. 31.
[452] *EPNE*, I, p. 39.
[453] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/wolfs-bane_n?tab=etymology#14232793>.
[454] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/marram_n?tab=etymology>.

ME *marī-gold*(*e*) – ‘marigold’[455]

OE *mægðe* – ‘mayweed’[456]

OE *melde* – ‘goosefoot, orache, fat hen’[457]

OE *minte* – ‘mint’[458]

OFr *moré* – ‘mulberry’[459]

OF *mostarde, mustarde* – ‘mustard’[460]

OE *netel*(*e*) – ‘nettle’[461]

OF *oignon, oingnon, ongnon, ognon* – ‘onion’[462]

Lat *papāver* – ‘poppy’[463]

ME *peni-wort* – ‘pennywort’[464]

OFr *perresil*, *percil*, *peresil*, AF *persylle*, OE *peter-silige*, *peter-silie* – ‘parsley’[465]

Dial. *pickpocket* – ‘shepherd's purse’[466]

Dial. *pissy-bed* – ‘dandelion’[467]

ME *prīmerol(e)* – ‘primrose, cowslip’ also ‘daisy, comfrey’[468]

ModE *quaking* + *grass* – ‘quaking grass’[469]

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[455] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED26915/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[456] *EPNE*, II, p. 32.
[457] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/miles_n1?tab=meaning_and_use#36832999>.
[458] *VEPN*, *Á-Box*, p. 145.
[459] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED28941/track?counter=2&search_id=26763350>.
[460] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED28973/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[461] *EPNE*, II, p. 50.
[462] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED30480/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[463] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED32326/track?counter=1&search_id= 26763350>.
[464] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED32844/track?counter=2&search_id=26763350>.
[465] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED33078/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[466] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/pickpocket_n?tab=meaning_and_use#30558725>.
[467] *OED* <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1089171116>.
[468] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED34637/track?counter=1&search_id= 26763350>.
[469] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/quaking-grass_n?tab=factsheet#27351399>.

ME *ratele* – 'rattle (yellow and red), ground pine, common/wall germander'[470]

OE *rōse*, OF *rose*, Lat *rosa* – 'rose'[471]

Lat *rōs maris, rōs marīnus*, OF *romarin, ros(e)marin* – 'rosemary'[472]

OE *rude* – 'rue'[473]

OE *risc* – 'rush'[474]

ModE *rye* + *brome* + *grass* – 'rye brome grass'[475]

OFr *safran, saffran, saffren, safram, saphren, safour safran* – 'saffron'[476]

OFr *sauge, saulge* – 'sage'[477]

ModE *sea* + *kale* – 'sea kale'[478]

OE *secg* – 'sedge, reed, rush'[479]

ModE(?) *star-eye* – 'starflower, borage'[480]

OE *streaw-berige* – 'strawberry'[481]

OE *sure* – 'sorrel'[482]

OFr *tanesie* – 'tansy'[483]

ME *tār(e)* – 'vetch, darnel'[484]

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[470] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED35975/track?counter=3&search_id= 26763350>.
[471] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED37864/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[472] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED37870/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[473] *EPNE*, II, p. 88.
[474] *VEPN*, *Á-Box*, p. 145.
[475] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/rye-brome_n?tab=etymology#24561593>.
[476] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED38255/track?counter=1&search_id= 26763350>.
[477] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED38587/track?counter=3&search_id=26763350>.
[478] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/sea-kale_n?tab=etymology#23910474>.
[479] *EPNE*, I, p. 117.
[480] *NDEFN*, p. 400. This name does not occur in *OED*.
[481] *EPNE*, II, p. 163.
[482] Ibid., p. 169.
[483] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED44492/track?counter=1&search_id= 26763350>.
[484] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED44536/track?counter=2&search_id=26763350>.

OE *tāsel* – 'teasel'[485]

Dial. *thunderbolt* – 'corn poppy, bladder campion, white campion, iris'[486]

Lat *thymum, timum,* OF *thym* – 'thyme'[487]

OF *trefueil,* AF *trefoil(e), trefle, trifoil(e)* – 'trefoil'[488]

OE *þistil* – 'thistle'[489]

OFr *vigne, vine* – 'vine', 'climbing plant'[490]

OFr *violete, violette* – 'violet'[491]

OE *wād* – 'woad'[492]

OE **wealde* – 'weld'[493]

OE *wēod* – 'weed, herb'[494]

OE *wermōd, weremōd, wærmōd, wyrmōd* – 'wormwood'[495]

[485] *EPNE*, II, p. 177.
[486] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/thunderbolt_n?tab=meaning_and_use#18341926>.
[487] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED45870/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[488] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED46892/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[489] *EPNE*, II, p. 204.
[490] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED51176/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>, *OED*, s.v. "vine, n., Etymology", July 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1016295786>.
[491] *MED* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED51217/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.
[492] *VEPN*, *Á-Box*, p. 147.
[493] *OED* <https://www.oed.com/dictionary/weld_n1?tab=etymology#14865997>.
[494] *VEPN*, *Á-Box*, p. 147.
[495] *MED* < https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED52296/track?counter=1&search_id=26763350>.

Appendix 2: Occurrences of gagel and wīr outside of place-names

Date	Type of use	Use	Term and (part of plant)	Source
7th-8th cent.			*Martus* is glossed with *uuyr*.[496]	*Epinal glossary*
8th-9th cent.			*Myrtus* is glossed with *uuir*.[497]	*Corpus glossary*
8th-9th cent.			*Myrtus* is glossed with *uuyr*.[498]	*Erfurt glossary*
10th cent.	Medicinal	Cough	*gagel* (unspecified)	*LB* I
10th cent.	Medicinal	Lung disease	*gagel* (unspecified)	*LB* I
10th cent.	Medicinal	Sore or swollen penis[499]	*wīr* (unspecified)	*LB* I
10th cent.	Medicinal	Circle adle[500]	*wīr* (unspecified)	*LB* I
10th cent.	Medicinal	Circle adle[501]	*gagel* (unspecified)	*LB* I
10th cent.	Medicinal	Circle adle[502]	*gagel croppan* (flower/catkin?)	*LB* I
10th cent.	Medicinal	A wound drink[503]	*wīr rinde* (rind, bark)	*LB* I
10th cent.	Medicinal	A light drink[504]	*gagel* (unspecified)	*LB* II
10th cent.	Medicinal	A light drink[505]	*gagel* (unspecified)	*LB* II
10th cent.	Medicinal	Lung disease[506]	*gagel* (unspecified)	*LB* III
10th cent.	Medicinal	For a worm[507]	*wīr rinde* (rind, bark)	*LB* III
10th cent.			*myrtus* is glossed with *wīr* [*pir*] and *wīrtreow* [*pirtreop*[508]	*Cleopatra glossary*
10th -11th cent.	Medicinal	A green salve[509]	*gagel* (unspecified, but green implies leaves)	*LA*
10th -11th cent.	Medicinal	Lung disease[510]	*gagel* (unspecified)	*LA*

[496] *DOEPN*, search term '*wīr*'
[497] Ibid., '*wīr'*.
[498] Ibid., search term '*wīr'* .
[499] *LB* I, pp. 70–71.
[500] Ibid., pp. 86–89.
[501] Ibid.
[502] Ibid.
[503] Ibid., pp. 98–99.
[504] *LB* II, pp. 264–266. Cockayne adds 'sweet'to all his translations of *gagel*. This does not occur in the manuscript.
[505] Ibid., p. 274.
[506] *LB* III, p. 316.
[507] Ibid., pp. 323–333.
[508] Seeing a digital copy of the original manuscript for this occurrence demonstrated the importance of looking, where possible, at original material rather than printed editions and transcriptions: in *Cleopatra Glossary* ed. Quinn.spells it *wyr* and fails to note *pirtreop*.
[509] *LB* III, p. 7.
[510] Ibid., p. 23.

10th -11th cent.	Medicinal	Against illness	*gagel* (unspecified)	*LA*
12th cent.			The only early extant occasion on which *gagel* glosses myrtle	*Laud*[511]
14th cent.(?)			gale	Halliwell
1597	Brewing	Put into beer or ale	Unspecified	Gerard
1597	Insect repellent for cloth	To repel moths and worms	The 'whole shrub, fruit and all'	Gerard
	Cooking heat (domestic)	Fagots for a cloam oven	Unspecified	Grigson
	Insect repellent (domestic)	To keep fleas away	Unspecified	Grigson
	Insect repellent for cloth (domestic)	Put among linen to repel moths	Unspecified	Grigson
	Dye (domestic/trade ?)	Yellow dye	Unspecified (bark?)	Grigson
	Brewing	Flavouring for ale of beer	Unspecified	Grigson
	Light	Candle wax	'Cones'	? Pollington[512]
	Tanning	Tanning	Unspecified (bark?)	? Pollington
	Insect repellent	In mattresses 'to keep fleas away'	Unspecified 'this plant'	? Pollington
	Insect repellent	In the hat to repel midges	'a sprig'	? Pollington
1863, 1893	Brewing	Gale-beer	'a drink made from twigs of sweet-gale'.	*OED*. Source unspecified.

[511] J. R. Stracke, *The Laud Herbal Glossary* (Amsterdam: Rodopi,1974), p. 50.
[512] '? Pollington' indicates that the source of this information is not specified by him.

Appendix 3: Occurrences of myrtle in the Bible (King James)[513]

1. Isaiah 41:19 '*dabo in solitudine cedrum et spinam et myrtum et lignum olivae* … I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, and the thorn, and the myrtle'.[514]
2. Isaiah 55:13 '*et pro urtica crescet myrtus*… and instead of the nettle, shall come up the myrtle'.[515]
3. Nehemiah 8:15, '*egredimini in montem et adferte frondes olivae et frondes ligni pulcherrimi frondes myrti et ramos palmarum et frondes ligni nemorosi ut fiant tabernacula sicut scriptum est*… Go forth to the mount, and fetch branches of olive, and branches of beautiful wood, branches of myrtle, and branches of palm, and branches of thick trees, to make tabernacles, as it is written.[516]
4. Zechariah 1:8, '*et ipse stabat inter myrteta*… and he stood among the myrtle trees'.[517]
5. Zechariah 1:10, '*et respondit vir qui stabat inter myrteta*… And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered…'.[518]
6. Zechariah 1:11, '*et responderunt angelo Domini qui stabat inter myrteta* … And they answered the angel of the Lord, that stood among the myrtle trees'.[519]

[513] The 'Bible Gateway' website was searched using the term 'myrtle'. Transcriptions are taken from the website. <https://www.biblegateway.com/>.
[514] Ibid., <https://vulgate.org/ot/isaiah_41.htm>.
[515] Ibid., <https://vulgate.org/ot/isaiah_55.htm>.
[516] Ibid., <https://vulgate.org/ot/nehemiah_8.htm>.
[517] Ibid., <https://vulgate.org/ot/zechariah_1.htm>.
[518] Ibid.
[519] Ibid.

Appendix 4: Colloquial and vernacular names in language, dialect, & plant dictionaries

Englishman's Flora

In Grigson's *Englishman's Flora*, first published in 1955, local names include:[520]

Bog Myrtle (Isle of Wight, Scotland).

Candle Berries (Somerset).

Devonshire Myrtle (Somerset).

Dutch Myrtle (Somerset).

Flea-wood (Northumberland).

Gale [in various forms – Gawan, Gold, Goyle, etc.] (Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Lincolnshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cumbria, Scotland, Northern Ireland).

Golden Osier (Isle of Wight).

Golden-Withy (Hampshire, Isle of Wight, South England).

Gold-withy (Hampshire, Isle of Wight).

Moor Myrtle (Yorkshire).

Moss Wythan (Cumbria).

Myrtle (Scotland).

Scotch Gale (Scotland).

Sweet (Yorkshire, North England).

[520] Grigson, *Englishman's Flora*, pp. 242–243. Grigson draws on a wide variety of ancient and modern sources including, encyclopaedias, herbals, handbooks, folklore and dialect dictionaries etc., from c.AD. 60 – mid-twentieth century.

Sweet Gale (Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Renfrewshire).

Sweet Willow (Sussex).

Sweet Withy (Isle of Wight).

Withywind (Hampshire).

The entry continues:

'A useful as well as sweetly resinous shrub. It provided faggots for the cloam oven, it kept flies away, and Highlanders slept on flea-proof beds of the Bog Myrtle (128),[521] it was put among linen to repel moths, it gave a yellow dye; and more important, it was one of those plants which gave a flavouring to ale or beer before the popularization of hops (see *Humulus lupulus*). 'It is tried by experience that it is good to be put in beare both by me and by divers other in Summersetshyre', William Turner reported in his *Herbal*. Gerard said that 'Gaule' gave a headiness to beer or ale, which was then 'fit to make a man quickly drunke'. Gale-beer was long brewed in Yorkshire. On the adverse side are Irish beliefs that Gale had dwindled to a low shrub because the Cross had been made of it (137),[522] that it was an unlucky plant not to be used for cattle switches because Jesus was scourged with it by Pilate before he was delivered to crucifixion. Bog Myrtle must have been much more common before the reclamation of wet land, the draining of the Fens etc. Where it is locally dominant, for instance in parts of the wet, sandy basin of the New Forest, it sends out a delicious fragrance, especially in the flowering months of April and May.' 523

[521] Grigson's source is N. McNeill, *Colonsay*, 1910.
[522] Grigson's source is S. Ó Súilleabháin, *The Handbook of Irish Folklore*, 1942.
[523] Grigson, *Englishman's Flora*, pp. 242–243.

Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words

In Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words,*[524] the term 'gale' has nine interpretations, one of which reads 'Wild myrtle. *Cumb*.'

Plant Names of Medieval England

According to Hunt's *Plant Names of Medieval England,*[525] names that bog myrtle may also have been known by include:

Sweet Flag

Sweet Gale

Sweet Myrtle

Sweet Sedge

Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*

In Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* volume II there are ten terms covered by 'gale', with the first reading 'the wild or bog-myrtle', *Myrica gale'* and variously spelled as:[526]

gall (Sc)

gaul (Sc, Cu, D)

gawan (Cu)

gawel (Cu)

[524] E. S. Orchard Halliwell, *A Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words; Obsolete Phrases, Proverbs, and Ancient Customs, From the Fourteenth Century*, Volume II. J-V (Brixton Hill: Blumenfield Press,1852; 2013 reprint).
[525] Hunt, *Plant Names of Medieval England*, p. 36.
[526] Joseph Wright, *The English Dialect Dictionary Volume II. D-G*, London, 1900, pp. 539–540.

goil (C)

goule (K)

goyle (C)

The entry reads:

‘A shrub which grows plentifully in wild moorland marshes. The scent of it is exceedingly strong, *Gall. Encycl*. (JAM.) Gall. Brushing through the ‘gall’ bushes, CROCKETT *Bog-Myrtle* (1895) 293. Cum. *Gl*. (1851); HUTCHINSON *Hist. Cum*. (1794) I. App.43; Cum[12], YKS. (B. & H.), Lan.[I], ne.Lan.[I] n.Lin.[I]. Often called ‘sweet-gale.’ It is reputed to have the power of driving away moths and fleas. Ken. (G.B.), Ken.[I], Dev., Cor. (B. & H.), Cor.[a] Hence Gale-Beer, *sb*. A kind of beer derived from the bog-myrtle or ‘gale’. n.YKS. She brewed gale-beer, SIMPSON *Jeanie o’ Biggersdale* (1893) III; A kind of beer, called gale beer, is brewed from the plant at Ampleforth, Yorks (B. & H.). [This Gaule growety plentifully in sundry places of England, as in the Ile of Ely, & in the Fennie countries thereabouts, wherof there is much store in that countrey, that they make fagots of it and sheaues, which they call Gaule sheaues, to burn and heat their ouens. It groweth also by Colebrooke, GERARDE *Herb*. (ed. 1633) 1414; Gawl, fowayle, *Mirtus, Prompt*. OE. *gagel*, Du. *gagel*, a bastard myrtle tree (HEXHAM.)]

<u>Bog myrtle’s other names are recorded as:</u>

Gold

Gowan

sweet sedge

Sweet withy

Other words from Wright of interest to this study include:

Gall – 'A barren or unfertile spot in a field, through which springs of water constantly ooze up; wet, spongy land".[527]

Gallow-grass – 'The hemp' (Su, S).[528]

Gall-wood – 'The wormwood' (Sc).[529]

Gallwort – 'The yellow toadflax' (Sx).[530]

Gally – 'Sickly, delicate; yellow. Speaking of the wheat plant, which was looking very yellow after some late frosts, the farm-man said, "It looks so gally".'[531]

Gally – 'To confuse with noise' (O, Bk, S, 19th cent.)[532]

Gally – 'To drive or scare away' (Gl, Ha, Do, D, S).[533]

Guile, gule, gull – 'The corn-marigold' (Sc, Cu).[534]

Myrtle-Berries – "The plants of Skiddaw are the myrtle-berries, generally called blackberries… moss berries' (Cu, 1751).[535]

Wire – 'Wire-bent, the mat-grass, *Nardus stricta*; … [wire]-grass, the common knot-grass *Polygonum aviculare*… [wire]-ling, the black crowberry, *Empetrum nigrum*,…

[527] Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 541, entry 6. This is an interesting word as the definition implies the moving ground water that bog myrtle requires to thrive. The word was noted in 'w.Yks, Nhp., War., Shr, Hrf., Glo., Suf., Som., Dev.' and that 'hence (1) Galled, (2) Gally or Gals-eye, (3) Galty, *adj*. of land: spongy, wet, full of springs.', p. 541.
[528] Ibid., p. 544.
[529] Ibid, p. 545.
[530] Ibid.
[531] Ibid., p. 546.
[532] Ibid.
[533] Ibid.
[534] Ibid., p. 683.
[535] Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*, Vol. IV, p. 216.

the cross-leaved heat, *Erica Tetralix*… the toughest twigs of ling, used for making the strongest birch-brooms… [wire]-rush, the hard rush *Juncus glaucus*… [wire]-weed, the meadowsweet, *Spirara Ulmaria*… … The stem of any thin-growing, tough stalked plant; a strawberry-runner; a hop-tendrill. Cum. 'Peats are hard to find within reach o' Skiddaw top. You see… it's lost its wire, and peat without wire in it is nae use for making a "low" wid.' I saw that what he called wire were the rootlets of the ancient undergrowth of years gone by, *Penrith Obs*. (Apr. 29, 1902) 5. n.Yks.[1] Blaeberry-wires. War.[2] War.[3] These strawberry wires must be cut. w.Wor.[1], s.Wor.[1] Shr.[1] Wimberry-wires. Hrf. (E.M.W.), Hrf.[2], Glo.[1]… …*v*. of a plant: to make tendrils… w.Wor.[1] The 'ops is wierin' ahl over the ground."[536]

Wire-thorn – 'The yew, Taxus baccata; the wood of the yew when found buried under the peat.'[537]

Wirral – 'Also in forms worral, wurral… The black whorehound, *Ballota nigra*.'[538]

[536] Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary*, Vol. VI, p. 514.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Ibid., p. 515. Coates discussed this interpretation in 'Biting the Bulut', pp. 137–145.

Appendix 5: Archaeobotanical information

The data are edited extracts from ABCD.[539]

Sites with archaeobotanical evidence of *Myrica gale*		
Site	**Location**	**Period**
Over Rig	Near Girvan, Dumfries & Galloway, Scotland	(?) Iron Age
St Paul St 77-8	Aberdeen, Farquar & Gill, Grampian, Scotland	Mesolithic/*c.*1200/post medieval
General Accident York 83-4	York, 24-30 Tanner Row, North Yorkshire, England	Roman-AS-medieval
Eastgate Beverley 83-86	Beverley, Humberside, England	Anglian-medieval
Lussa River	Jura, Strathclyde, Scotland	Mesolithic
Coppergate 76-81	York, North Yorkshire, England	Roman-Anglo-Scand-medieval

Focussing on the England examples, the following information was recorded:

ABCD: 1616, General Accident York 83-4, York, 24-30 Tanner Row, 1990, North Yorkshire, England (SE599517)

Period: roman-AS-medieval

Category: urban occupation

Notes: very large numbers of samples

[539] Tomlinson and Hall, 'ABCD'.

Topography: lowland river-side

Condition: waterlogged

Report type: macrofossil reports

Sample	Type	Sediment	Period
1616a	occupation layers	-	undated pre-Roman/Roman
1616b	build-up & ditch fill	-	Roman
1616c	feature fills, build-ups	-	Roman
1616d	organic accumulation/build-up	-	Roman
1616e	organic accumulation	organic	Roman
1616f	occupation layers/build-up	-	Roman
1616g	well fill	-	Roman
1616h	build-up	-	Roman & ?later
1616i	pit fills	-	Anglo-Scand/Norman
1616j	pit fills	-	early medieval
1616k	pit or well fills	-	Medieval

Samples within this location consisted of buds and/or bud-scales, propagule/s, seed/s, leaves, catkins.[540]

[540] Tomlinson and Hall, 'ABCD'.

ABCD: 1926, Eastgate Beverley 83-86 Beverley, 1992, Humberside, England (TA038393)

Period: Anglian-medieval

Category: urban occupation

Notes: one combined list

Topography: lowland boulder clay

Condition: waterlogged

Report type: macrofossil reports

Samples within this location consisted of propagule/s and seed/s.[541]

Sample	Type	Sediment	Period
1926a	extensive layer	sandy silt	pre 8thc
1926b	extensive layer	dark organic	pre-conquest
1926c	occupation deposits	mostly organic	medieval onwards

ABCD: 1920, Coppergate 76-81, York, 1995, North Yorkshire, England (SE603516)

Period: Roman-Anglo-Scand-medieval

Category: urban occupation

Topography: lowland river valley

Condition: waterlogged

Report type: macrofossil reports

[541] Tomlinson and Hall, 'ABCD'.

Samples within this location consisted of propagule/s, seed/s, and leaves. Sediment data was not available for this location. [542]

Sample	Type	Period
1920a	combined data	Anglo-Scand
1920b	combined data	Anglo-Scand
1920c	combined data	Anglo-Scand

[542] Tomlinson and Hall, 'ABCD'. The intergrity of material from this site was called into question with issues including that the material is not from a well-defined context, the archaeology was not clear, sampling methods were doubtful, and the samples may not have realted to the archaeologist's contexts.

Appendix 6: Spellings of gagel in place-names, tenth–nineteenth cent.

Cent.	Gailey, Gailey Hay	Guilicar Lane	Galsworthy	Galton	Gauledge	Gavel Green, and Gale Field
10th						
11th	Gageleage		Galeshora	Gaveltone		
	Gragelie			Galton		
12th	Gau(e)ley(e), Gau(e)legh					
13th	Gaeleg'		Galles(h)oure	Galdon		
	Gaghley		Galeshore	Gauton		
	Gavele			Gaulton		
	Gaele			Gauleton		
	Gaule			Galton		
	Gav(e)legh, Gav(e)ley(e)			Gawelton(e)		
				Gauelton		
				Gawelton(e) iuxta Ogeres		

				Este Gauelton		
				Est(e) Gaulton, Weste Gaulton		
14th	Gan(e)ley(e)		Galsore	Ga(u)lwelton		
				Est Gawelton(e), West Gawelton(e)		
				Caulton		
				Gawlton		
				Galmelton		
15th	Gavleyhay(e)	Gaigelker	Gallissore	Gauulton	Gorlage	the Gale, the Gale feld, Galefeld
	Gaw(e)ley			Gawleton		
	Gauuelegh (the kings hay of)			Est Gaulton		
				Gaulveton		

16th	Gauvell als Gaveley als Gawley als Galeighe als Galey als Gauvell Haye als Gauvley haye als Galey haye				Gorlege	Gavill
17th		Guile Carr(e), Guilecar	South Galesworthy		Gorlidge, Gorledge	Gale
		Gile Car, Gile-Carr	Gallesworth al. Galsworthy		Gozledge	Goale in Over
		Ghile Car, Ghilecar			Gorlige	Gale in Over
		Guyle Carr				Yale Green
18th	Galey	Gile Carr				Galegreen
						Gaywell Green
19th	Galey Hay				Gauledge	Gravel Green
	Gailey				Gawild	Gavel Green

Appendix 7: Some reflections on the methodology

Adjustments and improvements to the Methodology were made throughout the Case Study phase, with tweaks made to the corpus database as the study progressed. A useful later addition was an 'Exclude' button for dubious entries that were initially included in the corpus but then rejected on grounds of insufficient evidence etc. An addition not made, but perhaps one that would benefit future research would be to include an ethnobotanical element that could tie in with the locality or dating of the place-name. The attribute buttons were not particularly useful and a better solution for indicating attributes such as wateriness would perhaps to have a dedicated field with a picklist of distances from a watery feature in a similar way to the 'Grid reference confidence' field (within 10m, 50m etc.). Similarly, a refinement for future research using the Methodology would be to have fewer, more precise and considered definitions for the 'Place-type' field in the database. Benefits of a consistent methodology include the steps involving the reviewing original of material where possible since this can reveal areas ripe for re-evaluation (such as with Galton⋆), the steps involving the consideration of vernacular and dialect plant-names since this opened up the prospect of more plant place-name occurring, and the use of post-1500 place-name evidence to inform discussion.[543]

[543] Further post-1500 plant place-name research may be augmented by later sources such as early-modern recipe books and farming manuals.

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