



Person: Watson, Peter William (1761 – 1830)  
Description: Reference in county flora.  
Source: Robinson, J. F. 1902. The flora of the East Riding of Yorkshire. Hull. p 11-12.  
Date: 1902  
Repository:  
Transcription date: 2014 October 24  
Annotated by: Richard Middleton  
Notes:

*Transcription reproduced with kind permission of The British Newspaper Archive ([www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk))*

*"The year 1805 saw the publication of Messrs. Dillwyn & Turner's "Botanists' Guide through the Counties of England and Wales." Under "Yorkshire" the compilers acknowledge their indebtedness to the work of Mr. Robert Teesdale above mentioned; and the greater number of East Riding records are subscribed by his name. There are, however, several others that are authorities for certain plants, some of whom had undoubtedly a practical acquaintance with the flora, and add a number of species not determined as East Riding plants by Teesdale. Amongst these may be mentioned Colonel Machell, Mr. Knowlton, Mrs. Wharton, Mr. P. W. Watson, F.L.S., Mr. Archibald Pierson, all of whom, in some small degree, augment the number of items of the Botanical Guide. Our information concerning any of these is only meagre, but foremost amongst them, as a botanist to whom we are able to give fuller notice, was P. W. Watson, a gentleman whose work brings us several steps forward in our botanical history.*

*Peter William Watson, F.L.S., was a native of Hull (baptized at Holy Trinity Church, 26th August, 1761), and resident for some years at Cottingham, an honorary member of the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society, and a founder of the first Hull Botanic Garden, 1812. In the introduction to his "Dendrologia Britannica" (pub. 1825), a beautifully illustrated book in two vols., dealing with exotic shrubs and trees growing in English parks and woods, he shows that he was also well acquainted with our native plants. Speaking of the flourishing Botanic Garden just mentioned, Watson writes: – "I hope I shall not be considered vain in adding my own endeavours to furnish the institution with many indigenous plants which I collected at considerable expense and labour by traversing the whole of the East Riding of Yorkshire in my gig, with proper apparatus for cutting up roots, collecting seeds, &c., of the rarer sorts, whose habitats had been rendered familiar to me from numerous previous herborisations." We know of nothing that remains of P. W. Watson's collections or observations except the records in the Old Botanists' Guide already referred to; but for these few records we are grateful, and trust they will to some extent avert from the devoted head of this pioneer exterminator the anathemas of subsequent lovers of our native plants. Watson seems also to have included in his "herborisations" the careful measurements of the trunks of old trees, and has left the dimensions in his day of trees at Bishop Burton and other places in East Yorkshire. "*