

Lichens at St James's churchyard Southam - Warwickshire



Churchyards support a great diversity of lichens because of the variety of stone used for the church walls and the headstones and monuments.

Of the 2050+ British lichen species, over a third have been found in churchyards and more than 600 have been found growing on churchyard stone in lowland England.

Many are scarce and some seldom, if ever, occur in other habitats. Around 60 lichen species were recorded at St James' churchyard in a survey by members of the British Lichen Society in 2026.

Common and more easily spotted lichens at St James's churchyard, Southam, Warwickshire







Further information about the importance of lichens in churchyards, churchyard management and the conservation of churchyard lichens can be found on the British Lichen Society website.

These photos are organised into groups that are often found together. The English names are taken from *Lichens of Britain and Ireland: An Introductory Guide*, by Rebecca Yahr and Frances Stoakley, published in 2025. This is a highly recommended book for beginners who would like to start learning about lichens.

Try using your phone magnifier to zoom up close to lichens to see the details!

Lichens on lime-rich stone







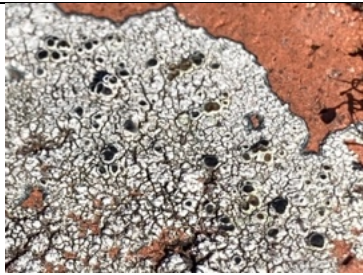

Lime-rich stone often has the yellow-orange circles of *Variospora flavescens*.

<p><i>Protoblastenia rupestris</i></p> <p>Rotten Oranges</p>	<p>On damp lime-rich stone, with tiny orange fruits</p>		
<p><i>Variospora flavescens</i></p> <p>Limestone Firedot</p>	<p>On lime-rich stone, with bright yellow-orange margins, often white in the centre</p>		
<p><i>Verrucaria nigrescens</i></p> <p>Blackwart Lichen</p>	<p>Black tar-like crusts on lime-rich stone</p>		


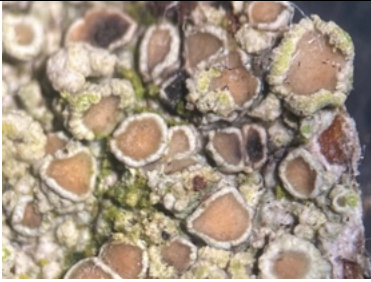

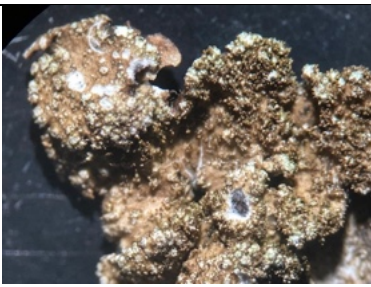
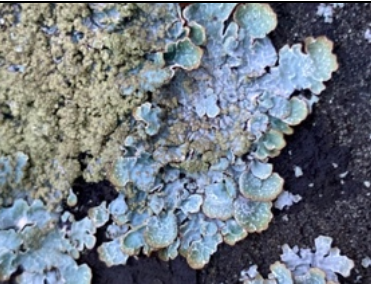






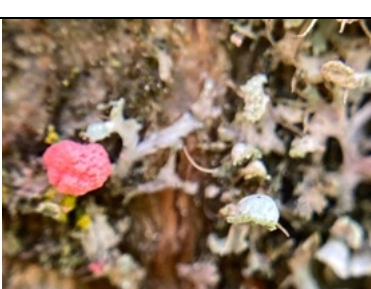
Common and more easily spotted lichens at St James's churchyard, Southam, Warwickshire

Lichens on silica-rich stone and on brick

Examples of silica-rich stone are sandstone and granite. They tend to have far fewer yellow lichens.



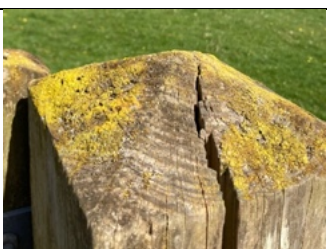








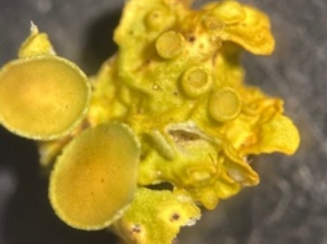
<p><i>Acarospora fuscata</i> Brown Cobblestone Lichen</p>	<p>On sandstone, looking rather like dried mud</p>		
<p><i>Porpidia tuberculosa</i> Cigarette Ash Lichen</p>	<p>On sandstone, with dark grey scurfy patches</p>		
<p><i>Rhizocarpon reductum</i> Little Brown Map Lichen</p>	<p>On sandstone, a cracked lichen with black fruits</p>		
<p><i>Tephromela atra</i> Black Eye Lichen</p>	<p>On the brick perimeter wall, a porridge-like lumpy lichen with black fruits with white margins</p>		

Lichens on the lime trees

<p><i>Lecanora</i> group Rim Lichens</p>	<p>These have fruits like tiny jam tarts</p>		
<p><i>Melanelixia subaurifera</i> Abraded Camouflage Lichen</p>	<p>This can be difficult to spot as it is often similar in colour to the wood or bark</p>		
<p><i>Parmelia sulcata</i> Hammered Shield</p>	<p>On wood, bark or stone and often bluish, with tiny white marks on the lobes</p>		
<p><i>Punctelia subrudecta</i> Speckled Shield</p>	<p>On wood and bark, with white spots filled with 'soredia' that can start new lichens</p>		
<p><i>Ramalina fastigiata</i> 'Shrek's Ears'</p>	<p>The 'Shrek's Ears' produce spores, another way that lichens reproduce</p>		
<p><i>Illosporopsis christiansenii</i> A parasitic fungus that grows on lichens (no English name)</p>	<p>It grows inside the lichen and then produces pink spore masses in spring</p>		

Lichens that indicate nutrient-enrichment

Biodiversity is greatest where there is minimal nutrient enrichment. 'Enrichment' sounds good, but it refers to pollution from activities such as slurry spreading, fertiliser applications and emissions from vehicle exhausts.

<p><i>Arthonia radiata</i> Asterisk Lichen</p>	<p>Found on tree bark, on twigs, branches and trunks</p>		
<p><i>Candelariella vitellina</i> Common Goldspeck</p>	<p>On nutrient-enriched stone and wood</p>		
<p><i>Phaeophyscia orbicularis</i> Mealy Shadow Lichen</p>	<p>On nutrient-enriched stone, bark and wood</p>		
<p><i>Physcia tenella</i> Fringed Rosette Lichen</p>	<p>Often on twigs, with tiny fluffy lobe edges</p>		
<p><i>Protoparmeliopsis muralis</i> Chewing Gum Lichen</p>	<p>On paths, with lobed edges and jam tart fruits</p>		
<p><i>Xanthoria parietina</i> Common Sunburst Lichen</p>	<p>Very common on trees and walls near to animal farming</p>		

Common and more easily spotted lichens at St James's churchyard, Southam, Warwickshire

The full list of lichens and lichenicolous fungi:

<i>Arthonia radiata</i>	<i>Lecanora stenotropa</i>
<i>Acarospora fuscata</i>	<i>Lecanora symmicta</i>
<i>Amandinea punctata</i>	<i>Lecidella elaeochroma</i>
<i>Blennothallia crispa</i>	<i>Lecidella stigmatia</i>
<i>Buellia aethalea</i>	<i>Lepraria incana</i> s. str.
<i>Buellia ocellata</i>	<i>Melanelixia subaurifera</i>
<i>Calogaya pusilla</i>	<i>Melanohalea elegantula</i>
<i>Caloplaca citrina</i> s. lat.	<i>Myriolecis antiqua</i>
<i>Caloplaca decipiens</i>	<i>Parmelia sulcata</i>
<i>Candelariella aurella</i>	<i>Parmotrema perlatum</i>
<i>Candelariella medians</i>	<i>Phaeophyscia orbicularis</i>
<i>Candelariella vitellina</i>	<i>Physcia adscendens</i>
<i>Candelariella xanthostigmoides</i>	<i>Physcia tenella</i>
<i>Circinaria contorta</i>	<i>Physconia grisea</i>
<i>Erythricium aurantiacum</i>	<i>Polycauliona polycarpa</i>
<i>Flavoparmelia soledians</i>	<i>Porpidia tuberculosa</i>
<i>Flavoplaca arcis</i>	<i>Protoblastenia rupestris</i>
<i>Flavoplaca oasis</i>	<i>Protoparmeliopsis muralis</i>
<i>Haematomma ochroleucum</i>	<i>Psilolechia lucida</i>
<i>Hyperphyscia adglutinata</i>	<i>Punctelia subrudecta</i> s. str.
<i>Illosporiopsis christiansenii</i>	<i>Pyrrhospora quernea</i>
<i>Kuettlingeria ceracea</i> ?	<i>Ramalina fastigiata</i>
<i>Lathagrium auriforme</i>	<i>Rhizocarpon reductum</i>
<i>Lathagrium fuscovirens</i>	<i>Scoliciosporum umbrinum</i>
<i>Lecania hutchinsiae</i>	<i>Taeniolella phaeophysciae</i>
<i>Lecanora albescens</i>	<i>Tephromela atra</i>
<i>Lecanora campestris</i>	<i>Toniniopsis aromatica</i>
<i>Lecanora crenulata</i>	<i>Variospora flavescens</i>
<i>Lecanora expallens</i>	<i>Verrucaria nigrescens</i>
<i>Lecanora horiza</i>	<i>Verrucaria viridula</i>
<i>Lecanora orosthea</i>	<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>

Lichen survey by Di Napier, Stephanie Gaskin and Sheila Snowden, March 2026, for the Diocese of Coventry's Churchyard Biodiversity and Heritage Project. Photos © 2026 Di Napier.