

## ***Gentianella campestris* (L.) Börner**

## **Field Gentian**

Native

GB: Vulnerable

England: Endangered

UKBAP & Section 41

VC5 Extinct; VC6 Extinct

A biennial or rarely annual herb of pastures, dunes, road verges and other grassland, usually on acidic to neutral soils, but also on limestone capped with non-calcareous deposits. In VC5, first found in 1920 by N.G. Hadden, in three different fields between Oare and Porlock [SS84]. Last seen by Hadden in two of these sites in 1940; there have been no subsequent records for VC5 or Somerset. First recorded for VC6 by R.C. Alexander, from Lansdown and Brassknocker, near Bath (Babington, 1839). These were believed by White (1912) to be errors, but a specimen in **MANCH** collected from Bath in 1837 by A.J. Mary Gray and Samuel Octavius Gray is purportedly this (<http://herbariaunited.org/specimen/206082/>). H.F. Parsons recorded this species on Long Knoll, near Kilmington (Murray, 1896); however Marshall (1914) doubted his identification and there have been no further records from that site. In 1856, Amy F. Clark of Street collected a specimen (now in **BIRM**, see <http://herbariaunited.org/specimen/255849/>) which is annotated by H.S. Thompson “probably on the Lias of Ivy Thorn, near Street, Somerset, where I have seen it grow”. The identification of the specimen has been confirmed; however there have been no later records from that area. *Gentianella campestris* was once found scattered across Britain and Ireland, but has declined throughout its range, particularly in England, due to overgrazing, undergrazing or agricultural improvement. It is now extremely rare in southern England and extinct in many counties, including Somerset.