

## ***Adiantum capillus-veneris* L.**

## **Maidenhair Fern**

Alien

GB & England: Least Concern

GB Scarce

VC5 Scarce; VC6 Scarce

A wintergreen fern found as a native on wet calcareous cliffs in some western coastal sites. Only present as an introduction in Somerset growing in sheltered basements and on walls in urban situations, probably arising from spores from cultivated plants, which may not be of native origin. In VC5, found in Chard by Ian Green in 1995 and in Ilminster by David McCosh in 1996; it persists at both sites. Found in 2000 on a wall at Broadshard, in 2016 in a well at Fairfield House, and in 2018 at Dillington House and also in Bridgwater, growing on the stonework of the canal. In VC6 this species has been known for considerably longer, the first record for Somerset being made in 1853, when E.J. Lowe (*Phytologist* 4: 1100) reported finding three plants in the air shaft of a stone quarry at Combe Down, some thirty feet below ground. In response, W.H. Hawker (*Phytologist* 5: 82) stated that he had found a plant or two on moist rocks in the neighbourhood of Cheddar in 1851. This species has since been discovered at scattered sites with mixed survival rates. In Bath, it is still to be found at several long-known locations, including Batheaston churchyard (first found by C.D. Heginbotham and E.H. Stevenson in 1930), the Roman Baths (first found by Mrs M.J. Oldaker in 1950) and Lyncombe Vale Road (first found by Capt. R.G.B. and Mrs I.G. Roe in 1961). It also grows in several basements in Bath, on walls, in a canal tunnel and on masonry of a railway cutting. In 1978 it was found by Dave Green on a wall in the grounds of Claverton Manor, Bath, where it is now abundant. Now lost from Wrington (ST468625), where it was found by Miss E. Rawlins on the platform masonry of the disused railway station in 1952 and last recorded in 1985; the area has since been redeveloped. Also no longer to be found at Henton (ST489454) where it persisted on a roadside wall for 11 years, first found in 1963 by Miss J. Lorraine. Perhaps at its most splendid at the Bishop's Palace in Wells, where it can be seen festooning the southeast outer walls of the palace gardens and in abundance on the wall surrounding the moat. In 2019 a huge population was discovered by Helena Crouch on the stonework of a railway bridge in Frome. In Somerset, this fern is growing outside its native distribution, which is strictly coastal and western.



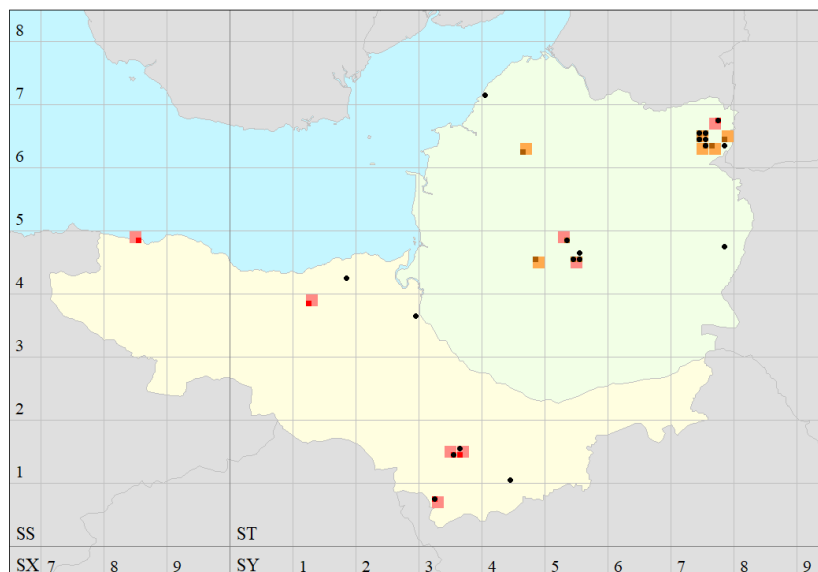
*Adiantum capillus-veneris* at Batheaston (2008). Photo: HJC

## VC5

Worthy	SS857481	1995	GAC	Clump planted on side of track. Did not survive
Lower Halsway	ST124382	1993	IPG	Few plants on brickwork in nursery greenhouse
Fairfield House	ST1842	2016	SRPG	In well in grounds
Chard, Ashfield Terrace	ST32690792	2019	JP	15 small plants on dividing walls along B3162
Ilminster	ST355491477	2018	JP	2 small tufts on wall, N side of road, opp. hotel
Ilminster	ST362147	1999	IPG	In storm drain in Blackdown View
Dillington House	ST36751571	2018	EJMcD	Several small plants around a tufa structure
Broadshard	ST442109	2000	IPG	4 clumps on garden wall, E side of road
Bridgwater Canal	ST293367	2018	SRPG	30 plants in stonework bank of canal

## VC6

Clevedon	ST40437177	2016	EJMcD, CML	Under glass in pavement in Alexandra Road
Wookey Hole	ST5348	2004	IPG	1 plant in Wookey Hole Cave
Wells, High Street	ST54924573	2016	HJC, BPS	At base of down-pipe, on N side of street
Wells, Market Place	ST54994577	2019	IPG	1 clump on drinking fountain
Wells, Bishop's Palace	ST551456	2008	HJC, FJR	Many plants on wall of moat
Wells, Bishop's Palace	ST551457		IPG	Growing in grounds of Bishop's Palace
Wells, Bishop's Palace	ST552456	2008	HJC, FJR	On outer walls of Bishop's Palace gardens
Wells, St Thomas Street	ST55314603	2019	HJC	Few plants on wall on N side of street
Bath, Lwr Oldfield Park Rd	ST743642	2017	KH	1 plant on wall opposite 22a
Bath, Monmouth Street	ST747648	2013	CK, MARK	Frequent in basement of 26 Monmouth Street
Bath, Beaufort Square	ST74816488	2009	HJC, FJR	Several plants in basement
Bath, Bridewell Lane	ST74936486	2018	HJC	Small patch on wall of basement of hospital
Bath, Nelson Place West	ST74316504	2008	HJC, JMC	Basement of 12 Nelson Place West
Bath, Lyncombe Vale Rd	ST75436360	2008	HJC, JMC	On walls either side of road
Widcombe, Church St	ST759639	2019	HJC, BNHS	4 plants on walls outside Widcombe Lodge
Bath, St James' Parade	ST75006454	2009	HJC, FJR	In basement between 35 and 36
Bath, Roman Baths	ST750647	2015	IPG	
Bath, nr Raby Villas	ST75796511	2008	HJC, FJR	30 clumps on W-facing wall of railway cutting
Bath, Cleveland House	ST75896521	2019	HJC	Festooning from roof of canal tunnel
Batheaston churchyard	ST777678	2019	RDR	Basement walls
Batheaston churchyard	ST77736790	2015	HJC, DEG	On retaining wall around W end of church
Claverton Manor	ST78386395	2019	HJC, BNHS	Abundant on retaining wall by drive to stables
Claverton Manor	ST78396395	2019	HJC, BNHS	Abundant on retaining wall by drive to stables
Claverton Manor	ST78426397	2019	HJC, BNHS	Masses on the grotto in garden
Claverton Manor	ST78446390	2018	HJC, BNHS	Masses on tufa rock below patio
Claverton Manor	ST78546393	2019	HJC, BNHS	1 clump on tufa waterfall, outside formal garden
Frome	ST78584798	2019	HJC	Many plants on railway bridge over R. Frome



Distribution of *Adiantum capillus-veneris* in Somerset mapped using MapMate.  
 Black dots: post-2000 records; pink squares: 1987-1999; sepia squares: pre-1987 records