

***Scutellaria altissima* L.**

Somerset Skullcap

Neophyte

VC5 Absent; VC6 Rare

A perennial herb of woodlands and hedgerows, native to southeast Europe, reaching Hungary and Galicia in the northwest. First discovered in Somerset, in a wooded valley near Mells, by H.Trevor Baker in 1929. Here in the Wadbury Valley it is found both sides of the stream, being particularly abundant on the north side, along an old wall and extending far up the rocky wooded slope behind it. This deeply incised valley was formerly intensively industrialised, the site of Fussell's iron works and later a water-powered sawmill (Farrant, 2008). When first found in 1929, the plants were thought to be *S. columnnae*; they were re-determined as *S. altissima* by A. Melderis (1958). In 2017 this species was found by Helena Crouch and Dave Green under trees in Locksbrook Cemetery in Bath and on stonework of the Kennet & Avon Canal at Claverton. Long naturalised in Somerset, hence its accepted English name, this pretty neophyte has since been found in at least 18 other vice-counties in England and Scotland.

VC6

Wadbury Valley	ST73524881	2017	HJC, GHR	Large patch on bank opposite small building
Wadbury Valley	ST73714879	2017	HJC, GHR	Large patch on bank on S side of stream
Wadbury Valley	ST737488	2017	HJC, GHR	Abundant on old wall and on slopes above
Bath	ST73216528	2017	HJC, DEG	1 clump under trees in Locksbrook Cemetery
Claverton	ST79066420	2017	HJC, DEG	1 plant on stonework of canal



Scutellaria altissima in the Wadbury Valley (2012). Photo: HJC