

VC5 Gentians.

I thought it might be interesting to look at the records for Gentians in VC5 this week; a review always helps to identify recording needs particularly for RPR plants. This might be of particular interest as currently the meetings program for 2021 is being prepared and with luck we should have a Gentian site included. No promise we will find them but it will be a wonderful site regardless.

Starting with *gentianella campestris*, on RPR in VC5 as last recorded in 1940 and indeed considered extinct in Somerset. Probably; have to agree with that conclusion but small element of doubt remains as the old sites are not very clearly identified, possibly deliberately and so it is still worthy of some attention.



The above is from Taunton Herbarium, one of the last records for *gentianella campestris* from 1940 and site is given as between Broomstreet and Yenworthy farms. Now both The Atlas Flora of Somerset and the RPR give the 1940 record as between Oare and Porlock. Now geographically Porlock is east of Oare and yet both Broomstreet and Yenworthy are west of Oare. If we look at Captain Roe's comments in his Flora of Somerset he notes N. G. Hadden found it in three separate places in fields between Oare and Porlock in 1920. The Yenworth/Broomstreet area is coastal grassland but poorly served by footpaths and possibly worthy of a fresh look?

Next on the list is *gentianella anglica subsp. anglica* on the RPR as rare in VC5. The last record (although not recorded to subspecies) is May 1999 from Thurlbear quarrylands by SRPG. Of interest in the quantity field the record is for one plant yet in comments “in four separate groupings”. Not sure what to make of that possibly a quarter of a plant in four separate locations making one in all? I have never been to Thurlbear and unaware of recent searches but possibly now extinct in VC5?

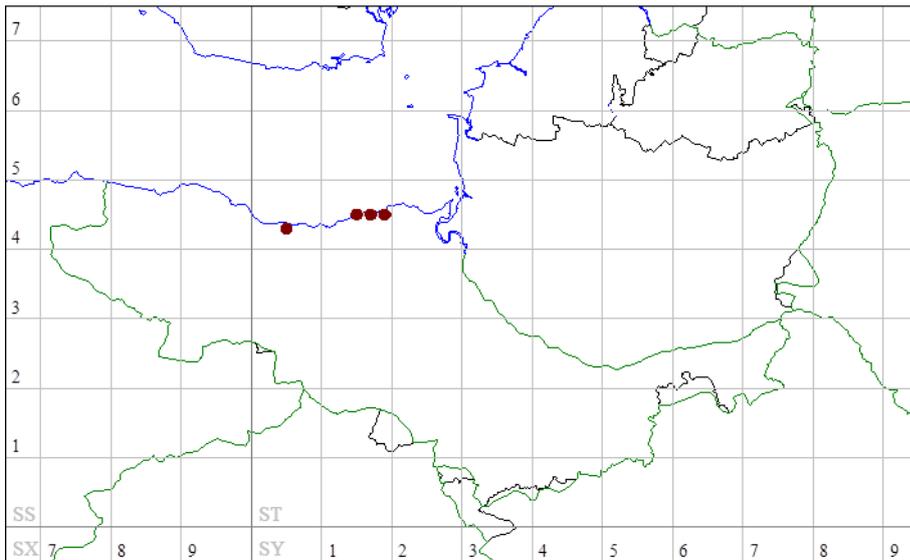
Last but certainly not least *gentianella amarella subsp. amarelle* and highly probable this is last remaining taxa within this genus in VC5.



Here it is at Blue Anchor and for the record this one has been confirmed to subspecies by Tim Rich so a good voucher specimen.

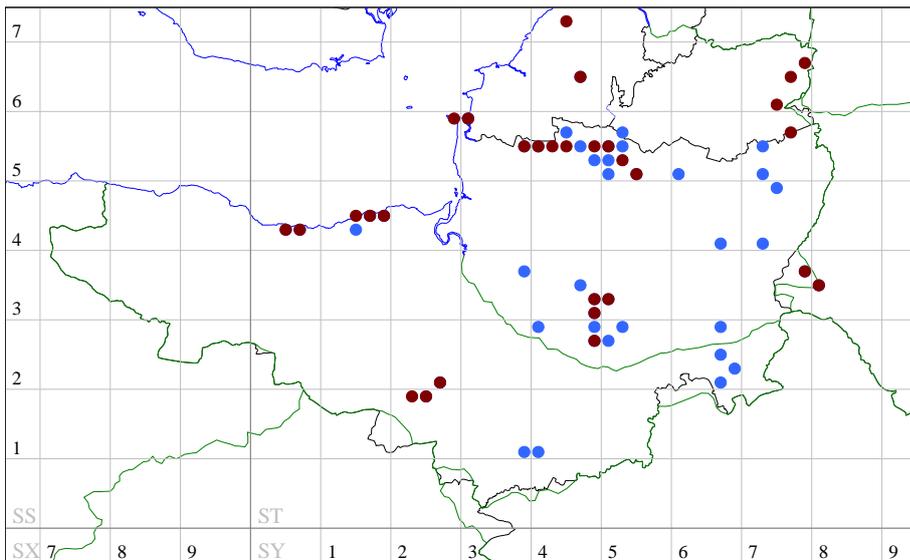
This taxa was target of the Friday group Ian, Ro, Jeanne and myself in 2019 and I think I am correct in that we found it in all its old sites we looked at along the coast.

Gentianella amarella subsp. *amarella* (Autumn Gentian)



Slightly complicated by fact many have not recorded to subspecies so this is map without subspecies.

Gentianella amarella (Autumn Gentian)



So where does that leaves us? I think the blue pre 2000 dot on the coast may be an error as it seems to be one of those 1989 anonymous records? The red dots near Taunton are Thurlbear and fairly up to date, the easterly blue dots are not areas I know at all and perhaps someone would like to take them on one autumn? If you want the old records please say I can send them you.

Graham