

January 2012

2012 SPRING PROGRAMME

January

12 Victorian marine naturalists,
Jim Monroe

19 Edible Seaweeds, phycologist
Sarah Hotchkiss

26 Birds & Beadlets, Rob Jutsum
& Paula Ferris

February

2 Inspirational Nature, John
Broomhead & Mark Haworth-
Booth

9 The Grand Banks Cod Collapse,
John Bradbeer

16 Chivenor Search & Rescue,
Andy Batchelor

23 The Ice Age and after in
Westward Ho! Tom Cadbury

March

1 Shorelife Quirks & Quiz

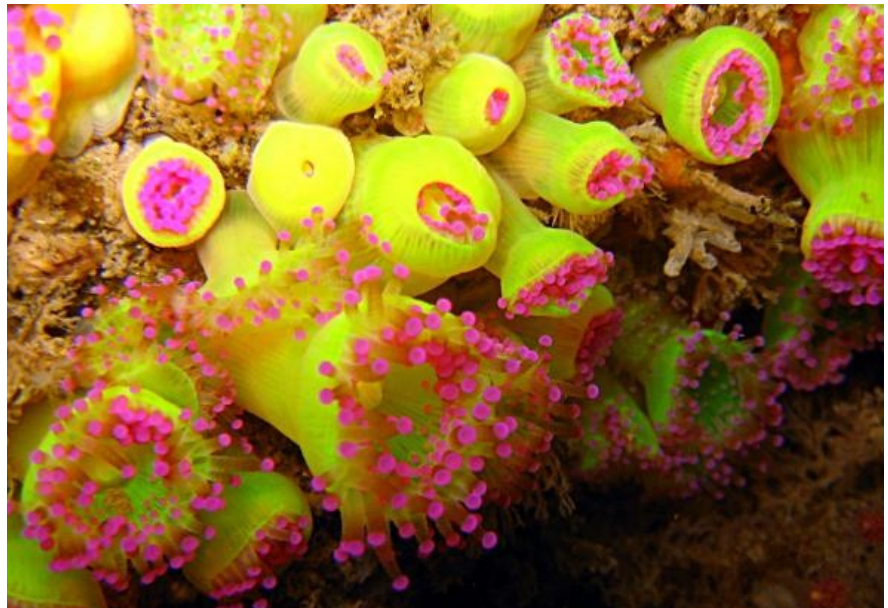
8 Beach Visit

15 Lundy & Seabirds, Tim Jones

About half the talks draw upon the knowledge and enthusiasm of Coastwise members and most have been inspired by members' suggestions. That is why they cover such a wide range from pre-history to contemporary issues. We will range along our coast north & south, as we take in a shore safari at Lee or Barricane and archaeology at Westward Ho! The artist's and the airman's perspectives are covered, and wildlife from Algae to Birds.

Some talks will link to visits, such as forthcoming bird trips to the Taw & Exe estuaries, others to projects, including Jim Monroe's opening talk. He explains "I want to capture Coastwise enthusiasm for projects and by repeating some of the wildlife surveys by Gosse and others to see how much is still there today."

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Jewel Anemones - just one of many spectacular 2011 underwater images captured by diver Chris Mandry and shared with Coastwise members.

FORGING REGIONAL ALLIANCES

Coastwise has come a long way in just a few years. Well over 50 people regularly sign up for each new talks series, and over 1000 people took part in last summer's events programme run by a core of twenty or so volunteers. Coastwise has earned local recognition for its distinctive hands-on approach and is now looking to forge alliances further afield.

In December Cornwall Wildlife Trust's Abby Crosby gave a talk about the Your Shore project to reinvigorate Cornwall's 5 VMCA's through voluntary action. "Abby was inspirational" says Programme Co-ordinator John Broomhead who is determined that we should build on her approach. All who heard Abby shared his view, so on 25th February Coastwise will be taking a group to a conference organised by Abby to consider the future of the south west's Voluntary Marine Conservation Areas. Paula Ferris says "One of our aims is to reinvigorate the enthusiasm that led to North Devon's VMCA designation in 1994 so we are happy to fly the flag in Cornwall, and see what we can learn from one another."

The local designation originally ran from Combe Martin to Morte Point, later extended as far as Croyde, and was supported by Devon Wildlife Trust for as long as resources permitted. Since then Coastwise has tried to fill the gap, working alongside other agencies such as the AONB and National Trust. It is hoped that representatives of these and other local interests will join the Coastwise delegation to Cornwall.

Coastwise members visited Kimmeridge VMCA in Dorset last summer and are keen to learn more from Warden Julie Hatcher at the Cornwall conference. Somerset may not have any VMCA's but has shown an interest in the Coastwise model so a Somerset addition to the region's marine volunteer community may also be in the offing.

MARINE CONSERVATION ZONES & THE BIOSPHERE PARTNERSHIP

Robert Down is the Coastwise representative on the Partnership and Chair of the Biosphere's Marine Working Group. Robert has been asked to oversee the extension of the Group's remit to cover emerging marine issues in due course.

Meanwhile he reports on recent activities:

- The BMWG submitted its MCZ recommendations to Finding Sanctuary, DEFRA's public consultation delivery agent for the South-West. These were well-received, and Finding Sanctuary commended the Biosphere on the integrity and quality of the submission. The Science Advisory Panel has published its recommendations to the government, its advice is that the South West suite of MCZs will provide good ecological status as a network, but it warns that the protection measures may need to be improved. The SAP also comments that there are not enough reference sites in the south west that meet the Ecological Network Guidance. The MCZs recommended by the Biosphere MWG received good scores on the SAP's assessment scale, but we do not yet know whether they will all be adopted.

The timetable has now been extended to "include an in depth review of the evidence base for recommendations [&] carry out seabed and habitat monitoring" *Defra*. The public consultation due early 2012 will now take place by end 2012.

- The Fisheries Local Action Group received an offer of £1.1M for North Devon to fund projects for the local fisheries industry, to be matched by 40% private funding, Further discussions between North Devon+ and the MMO appear to have eased this requirement, but negotiations continue.

ATLANTIC ARRAY

The potential impact of the Atlantic Array windfarm came home to the public this autumn when developers RWE ran a series of public displays, including the preliminary environmental impact assessment. Coastwise will be a formal consultee when the full assessment is available in 2012, meanwhile members responded as individuals having consulted informally. Opinions differ over the merits of offshore wind, but it is government policy, and Coastwise will focus on the environmental impact of this particular development: 1500 MW from 188 - 417 turbines, between 160-220 metres tall, 10 or so miles from the coasts of Lundy, North Devon & Wales, covering 350 sq mi of the Channel.

A provisional position statement drafted by Robert Down & Malcolm Roberts was agreed at the AGM, which noted that "the influence of the turbines and associated construction, noise, vibration and magnetic fields on marine animals is not fully understood and the effect on birds may be significant. Coastwise will therefore reserve its position on this pending better information".

GIVE IT A HAMMERING

Fancy getting together for a workshop knocking up Dormouse boxes? Member and Dormouse expert Janice Whittington has found an ideal location and the National Trust as landowners have indicated support. The woods

alongside the coast path between Bucks Mills and Peppercombe provide the right habitat where Janice has found evidence of Dormice. Where does Coastwise come in - we donate the wood and make 20 or so boxes to a design provided by Janice, in a Trust workshop. Interested? Contact - janwhittington@yahoo.co.uk

This is the latest in our very welcome links with the Trust. Steve Mulberry and Jonathon Fairhurst's recent joint session on managing Baggy proved very popular. We regularly collaborate with NT Warden Jemma Lowin to ensure that our rock-pool ramble programmes complement one another and provide us with opportunities to work alongside Trust staff. Planning for summer 2012 is underway.

AUTUMN 2011

- Our first and last speakers shared a passion for marine life and were wonderful communicators. Not so surprising - Tegwyn Harris and Abby Crosby were lecturer and student at Exeter University, the one the inspiration of the other, and both inspirational to Coastwise.
- In between a lot of ground was covered, a breadth reflected in the diversity of contributions to the final Members' Year session: Michael Hassell on his appointment as Chairman of the National Biodiversity Network, diver Chris Mandry with his underwater photos, and artist & poet Paula Newbery reading her poetry including *Elements* inspired by 2010 Art Walks at Northam Burrows.
- Nine Spoonbills and a hovering kingfisher had greeted us on Rob Jutsum's bird trip to Isley Marsh in November. No poetry then, just oohs and aahs.
- 65 members signed up for Autumn 2011. Socials were held in the Boston T, attracting several of the new members, and John Broomhead again organized a popular Christmas lunch.

COMMITTEE

Members of the committee were reappointed at the recent AGM with a few comings and goings: observers Brenda Aydon and Eric Pufahl become full members, as does Sandy Johnson, and Janice Whittington, Robert Durrant, Jill Portsmouth & Mark Haworth-Booth become new observers.

More details www.coastwisenorthdevon.org.uk

Edited: Paula Ferris 1/2012