

Coastwise Microscope Project

There are thousands, possibly millions of animals on the shore, largely invisible to the naked eye. Many are the vital first link in the marine food chain which is so important to us, but most of us know nothing about them. What are they like these microscopic organisms? As most look weird, with behaviour beyond imagining, the best answer is to see for yourself, and for that you need a microscope.

To help, Coastwise has bought 3 microscopes, one each for Northam Burrows Visitor Centre, Combe Martin Museum and Morteohoe Heritage Centre, with a £500 grant from the North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Workshops are being held to encourage their use, where Coastwise volunteers and the public can have fun looking, learning and enjoying some of the animals whose adaptations to life on the edge have resulted in extraordinary forms. Afterwards the microscopes will be made available for public use.

THE MICRO DIMENSION – microscope workshops & shore safaris

Enquiries to Jim Monroe 07889134466

1. Saturday 14 May, 10.00 am until 4 pm

Northam Burrows Country Park Visitor Centre – part of an AONB Discovery Day, also includes nature walks & craft sessions led by Visitor Centre, AONB, Biosphere staff & Mrs Recycle.

A free drop-in microscope workshop for all ages
11 am & 2.30 pm - Brief Introductory Talk

Samples will be collected locally & on the associated shore safari (see below) and should include the tiny creatures of the marine turf and open water, larvae of familiar animals such as barnacles and crabs, as well as jewel-like diatoms and other members of the plankton.

Several microscopes will be available all day for use with help and advice from Coastwise members. There will be photographs, video clips, illustrations and ID information.

Coastwise will also be running a Shore Safari at 10 am, Westward Ho! All are welcome though it is particularly aimed at those who want to help collect material from the shore to be viewed later at the microscope workshop.

Meet Main Slipway. Wear clothes suited to weather, footwear appropriate to sand & rocks. Under 16s to be accompanied. Some nets & buckets available.

2. Saturday 21 May, 11 am – 4 pm

Combe Martin Museum - part of AONB Discovery Day, also includes activities with Exmoor Zoo, Ilfracombe Aquarium, Exmoor National Park and the AONB.

A free drop-in microscope workshop for all ages
11.30 am & 2.30 pm Introductory Talks

As above, with a shore safari starting at 1 pm for the low tide, meeting at the top of beach

Morteohoe Microscope Workshop – to be arranged