

## **HELE BAY...a Victorian survey revisited**

Jim Monroe, an enthusiast with a keen interest in the work of Victorian naturalists and P.H.Gosse in particular, invited Coastwise members to join him in a survey project at Hele Bay Ilfracombe on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup>.April.

2012 was exactly 160 years after Gosse's visit to North Devon, which resulted in the first of several books which he wrote, devoted to the marine life of our coasts.

To mark this occasion the group of 22 enthusiastic Coastwise members set out to re-survey the marine life of the beach with a view to comparing their findings with those of Gosse. He had given such detailed descriptions of his finds and their environment that it was often possible to locate actual sites. A good low tide made access to the lower shore easy and many interesting finds were made in the rocky crevices among the kelps.

Jim said " The highlight of the day for me was for us to find the Devonshire Cup Corals, just as Gosse had described. It had been my main objective in the survey"

Among the many interesting creatures found were a rare Snapping Shrimp, Sea Urchins, Sea Cucumber, cowries and a splendid Spiny Squat Lobster, but the full species list is included below :-

### **8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2012 - SPECIES LIST**

#### **Sponges**

Particularly wide range on eastern shore

#### **Corals**

Devonshire Cup Corals – 6 found in total (1 on west side of beach, and 5 on the east side – 1 being 4mm in diameter)

#### **Anemones**

Beadlets (Common) mid/lower shores – ratio of red & green species on east side of shore 50/50

Daisy (Frequent ) found in clusters in rock pools – (some c.5mm size)/others approx. 25mm in size – mid/lower shores

Dahlia 1 found in cave on east side - 50mm in diameter  
Gems (Common) – small in size - mid/lower shores  
Snakelocks (Occasional) species with grey tips found on east side  
(Common) on west side  
Strawberry (Occasional) - large in size - 3 on lower shore)  
Unidentified gelatinous dwellers of bored rock, referred to Marlin.

### **Crustaceans**

Edible crabs  
Velvet Swimming Crab  
Furrowed Crab, X pilipes & incisus  
Hermit Crabs  
Shore Crabs  
Hairy Crab  
Broad Clawed porcelain Crabs  
Long Clawed Porcelain Crabs  
Squat lobsters, G squamifera  
Spiny Squat Lobster, G strigosa (1)  
Snapping Shrimp  
Lobster

### **Molluscs**

Chitons  
Saddle oysters  
u/i scallops  
Artic Cowries  
Blue ray limpets, small, embedded mid stipe  
Painted Top shells  
Grey topshells  
Dog Whelks & eggs  
Netted dog whelks & eggs  
Sting winkle and eggs

Thick Lipped dog whelks

### **Bryozoans**

Abundant including Bugula sp as found there by Gosse, and several discoid species

### **Echinoderms**

Common Starfish

Brittlestars, Ophiothrix spp & Amphiolis squamata

Sea Urchins, P miliaris

Sea cucumber, Pawsonia saxicola

### **Tunicates**

Morchellium argos

Star Ascidians

### **Fish**

Shore clingfish (1)

Common Blennies (2)

### **Worms**

Scale worms

Fan worm, Bispira volutacornis

Greenleaf worms

Ragworms

Keelworms

Commonly found animals such as molluscs and crustaceans eg isopods and amphipods present in abundance but not recorded.

Compiled by Marjorie Heath