

## A review of the Offord x20 Microscope.

Andy Chick  
Nottingham U.K.

For a while I have been looking for a dissection microscope for micro-dissection, the early fruits of my labour can be found in the article “the simple dissection microscope: a quick and easy substitute”. However my fiancée noticed in the run up to Xmas I was hanging my nose over an Offord x20X microscope on eBay for £5 including postage and needless to say it became an Xmas present. As I have found little about the scope online I thought it as well to review this quirky little scope.

### **Opening the box**

The scope arrived in its original packaging, of a thick cardboard with a picture of the ‘scope on the front, included in the box is a light source (this model only has top lighting, apparently the deluxe tlx20, had a transmitted light base), a reversible stage plate, an instructions and suggestions leaflet and of course the scope itself.



The light source is a simple battery powered tungsten torch which provides adequate lighting for the x20 magnification (and “ok” lighting in a pinch when travelling, for the lower magnifications of a “freshman” microscope as described in Grays “basic micro technique”) being battery powered it ideal for travelling with the ‘scope.

The reversible stage plate is most useful, each side has a small depression to allow wet mounts to be prepared, it also has a measuring grid on each side divided into 1mm increments.

The construction of scope itself is interesting, the only metal on it forms the upright of the stand and the lenses appear to be plastic leading to a somewhat

lightweight stand. However the scope performs well, as it is designed to be used at a magnification of x20. The head of the ‘scope can be adjusted to allow viewing of larger specimens. Focus is adjusted by twisting the objective lens. While the scope suffers from a somewhat small field of view, however the images are crisp when focused.

From a personal point of view, for its price the Offord X20 would make an ideal alternative to the “toy” scopes, and it works as low power scope for a number of purposes. The light source while not ideal works. All in all it’s a good bit of low cost kit. Myself? I use it to prepare slides under as it frees up bench space compared to my

stereo zoom (see pic) and I don't have to worry about damage from the chemicals



used when making resinous mounts. It is also useful for microdissection.

Contact author, email: Andy.Chick AT gmail DOT com

Published in the March 2012 issue of Micscape Magazine,  
[www.micscape.org](http://www.micscape.org).