

*Melicerita* Brown, 1952: 164–165 (for synonyms); Lagaaij, 1952: 54; Rogick, 1956: 248.

TYPE SPECIES (by monotypy): *Melicerita charlesworthii* Milne-Edwards, 1836. Pliocene, Coralline Crag, England.

*Generic Diagnosis* (after Rogick, 1956: 248): Cellariidae with erect, compressed branched or unbranched, but unjointed bilamellar fronds, loosely attached by intertwining radicles. Zooids hexagonal, arranged in transverse rows. Orifice crescent-shaped, dimorphic, larger in ovicelled zooids, the proximal lip developed as a broad plate with two projecting lateral denticles. A pair of accessory denticles frequently occur within the distal margin of the opesia also. Avicularia interzoecial, interspersed throughout the colony or restricted to the margins; sometimes wanting altogether. Ovicell with a semi-elliptical frontal pore.

*Melicerita angustiloba* Tenison-Woods, 1862, plate 1, figs. 1-6; pl. 2, figs. 7-9.

*Melicerita angustiloba* Brown, 1952, p. 165, fig. 113 (references).

*Melicerita angustiloba* Brown, 1954, p. 420, figs. 1, 2.

*Melicerita* sp. Macken, 1958, p. 104.

*Diagnosis* (emended Brown, 1952: 165). Unbranched ligulate *Melicerita*, the orifice sometimes with two stout lateral bars resulting from fusion of the distal and proximal pairs of denticles. Avicularia smaller than the autozooids, situated at the margins of the colony. Ovicells bifenestrate.

*Description: Colony* erect, comprising flattened bilamellar fronds, expanded distally, curved and tapering towards the base. *Zooids* hexagonal, somewhat alate at the margins; arranged in regular transverse rows, the mural rims elevated and angular. *Orifice* sub-terminal, crescentic, wider in ovicelled zooids, the proximal lip plate-like, curved, extending upwards frontally, flanked by a pair of inwardly-directed denticles; occasionally fusing with an accessory pair distally to form two stout lateral bars. *Cryptocyst* extensive, pustulose, steeply inclined distally and laterally, flattened and depressed frontally, markedly lobate around the distal margin of the orifice. *Avicularia* interzoecial, occurring sporadically along the margins of the colony, opesia elliptical, oriented obliquely distally, crossbars entire. *Ovicell* mitriform, overlapped by the two adjacent zooids distally, frontal surface pustulose with a large depressed fenestra at each lateral margin, containing small, radiating slit-like pores. *Voeciopore* semi-elliptical, situated in the angle formed by the intersection of the mural rims. *Radicles* arising near the base of the colony and branching into a tangled mass of rootlets.

*Remarks:*

In the present material the length of the mature frond varies between 12 and 38mm, the characteristically crescentic outline of the adult colony being imparted by the strongly-curved proximal region (Fig. 4). The vegetative zone is always extensive (Fig. 2) occupying about two-thirds of the total length of the frond. Distally, the breeding zone (Figs. 2, 5, 7, 9) comprises the broadest part of the mature frond, measuring between 2 and 4mm in the specimens at hand. In one colony (Figs. 3, 8), breeding is followed by a renewal of the vegetative phase; as a result the frond becomes somewhat tapered distally. The abnormally thickened mural rims limiting the seventh zooidal row of this phase (Fig. 8) indicate a temporary cessation of budding; the 11 subsequent rows of zooids comprising new seasonal growth. The twelfth row marks the inception of a second breeding phase and results in a renewed expansion of the frond (Fig. 3).

Polypide degeneration in this species is frequently manifested externally by the growth of calcareous laminae over the zooidal orifices (Fig. 6), especially in the